Issue 1 - Junction design at optioneering stage

In Deadline 5 (D5) Submission - 8.26 Comments on Responses Received by Deadline 4¹ Highways state the details the assumptions that were applied to both Option 12 and Option 30. This document I believe was published after the Public Consultation. I believe the A417 Consultation Brochure showed the 2 options to the members of the public as:

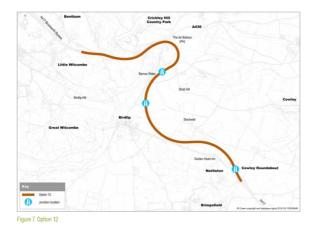
Our proposed route options: an overview

This section provides a high-level description of our two route options

Option 12

A four mile surface route reusing sections of the existing A417 on Crickley Hill and Birdlip. New sections of road will be built at Nettleton and Emma's Grove. This option would include three

new junctions – one at Cowley roundabout, one on the existing A417 close to the B4070 junction at Birdlip and one to the north of Barrow Wake. There would be three lanes of carriageway going up Crickley Hill and two lanes coming down.



Option 30

A 3.4-mile surface route following the alignment of the existing A417 at Crickley Hill with less of a slope. A new section of road will be built through Shab Hill to the east of the existing A417, re-joining the existing road near Cowley roundabout.

Option 30 would include two new junctions – one at Shab Hill and one on the existing A417 close to Barrow Wake with a link road in-between. There would be three lanes of carriageway going up Crickley Hill and two lanes coming down.

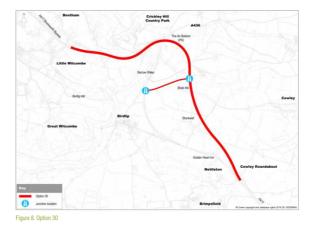
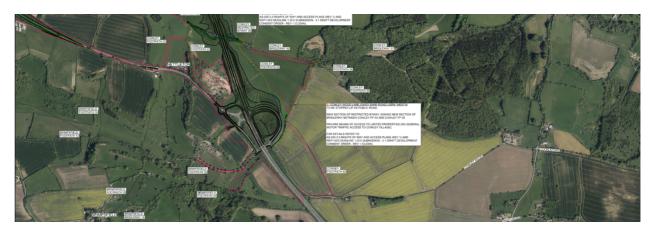


Image taken from A417 Consultation Brochure, showing the 2 route options that were presented at the time of the Public Consultation in 2018. Clearly there is no junction at the Cowley Roundabout for Option 30, and Highways state that this was *for engineering reasons related to level differences and geology.*

The current proposal for a junction at the Cowley Roundabout for Option 30 is²:



I think it is clear from the above that *level differences and geology* were not reasons for omitting a junction at the Cowley Roundabout at the time of the Public Consultation, as the current Option 30 has a junction in the same location as that for Option 12.

 $^{^{\}rm 1}$ 8.26 Comments on Responses received by Deadline 4, Para 2.12, dated March 2022

² TR010056 - 8.21 Comments on Responses received by Deadline 2 (February 2022), Annex A

Question: Put simply, can the ExA be appraised <u>again</u> as to why Option 12 had a junction at Cowley Roundabout in the design put forward <u>for the Public Consultation</u>, whilst it was assessed that Option 30 did not require it. The Applicant's response to the previous question has not provided a credible response as it relates to after the Public Consultation – Section 6.7 of the SAR (Document Reference 7.4, APP-420). The ExA must now seriously question whether at the time of Public Consultation, Highways descoped the design for Option 30 to keep the cost of the Option within the estimated cost range of 250 - 500 million. Highways have been given the opportunity to explain why, but they have clearly contradicted themselves in their latest response - *level differences and geology* clearly were not the reasons.

Question: Can the ExA be appraised as to whether at the time of the consultation, if the junction layouts had been of similar number and design, would the monetised costs and benefits of both options have been more similar or even in favour of Option 12?

Issue 2 – I do not believe that Highways have responded to this issue

The Technical Appraisal Report states on page 54 that the Crickley Hill Country Park is located adjacent to Option 12 and within 1km of Option 30³. Crickley Hill Country Park runs parallel with the A417 as the road runs up to the Air Balloon roundabout, de facto, adjacent to both Option 12 and Option 30.

Question: Can the ExA be appraised by Highways as to where Option 30 is assessed not to be adjacent to the Crickley Hill Country Park, as we believe both Options are adjacent.

Question: Considering this, can the ExA be assured that many of the environmental impacts for Option 30 have not been understated when compared with Option 12, which in turn could have had a biased impact on the Public Consultations and the views of the public?

Issue 3 – the Microclimate

Highways stated in their written response⁴ that the scheme traffic model is representative of an annual average weekday within the year as required to support the design, environmental assessment and the business case for the scheme. The scheme benefits are therefore representative of the average conditions, and this is the basis of the design and business case.

Highways England made a comment about the "volatile microclimate" that exists where the scheme will be built.

Highways acknowledge that a "volatile microclimate" exists on the proposed route, however for the design their model is representative of an annual average weekday within the year. One would assume that for safety reasons, knowing issues with the weather, detailed modelling and assessments would have been undertaken.

Question: Can the ExA be assured that Highways have adequately considered the "volatile microclimate" that is relatively common during the winter, and that they are satisfied that speed restrictions will not be introduced which will erode the perceived benefit of Option 30?

Issue 4 – Traffic data regarding the operation of Barnwood and Longlevens junctions

Highways provided traffic data⁵ and as predicted there is an increase in traffic of up to 8%. This is on top of what are already extremely busy road junctions at peak times where there are already large delays.

³ TR010056-000602-7.9 Technical Appraisal Report (February 2018), Page 54, Para 3.14.20

 $^{^{4}}$ 8.26 Comments on Responses received by Deadline 4, Para 2.12, Table 2-3, dated March 2022

⁵ 8.26 Comments on Responses received by Deadline 4, Para 2.12, Table 2-1 and 2-2, dated March 2022

Highways model would suggest an increase in journey time from 30 seconds in the 2041 DM to 36 seconds in the 2041 DS scenario for the AM average hour. This represents a 20% increase in journey time caused by Option 30.

Question: Can the ExA be assured that the increase in journey time shown for the Barnwood and Longlevens junctions will not erode all the perceived benefits on the assumed economic and environmental benefits of Option 30. Are the ExA satisfied that Option 30 is not just passing the traffic management problems further down the A417 to the next major road junction?