

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 12 February 2021 07:35
To: A1 in Northumberland: Morpeth to Ellingham
<A1inNorthumberland@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Cc: [REDACTED]@causeypark.co.uk>
Subject: RE: Which contact person please?

Hello George,

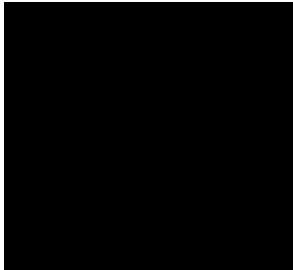

Thanks for replying. I am one of many local residents who feel perplexed and thwarted by the complexities of the overall project development system. The consultancy is delegated to many successive sub-contracts, so the baton keeps getting passed. Many points have been made by us over the past few years, in letter, in person, in meetings, and we feel not listened to or responded to adequately, and some are quite serious to us. It is as if there is a veneer of consultation/democracy, whilst the machine is simply left to 'do what it wants.'

I am hoping that, now the project is being tabled and scrutinised at an inspectorate level, voices might be heard. I did read the timetable of opportunities to be present at hearings etc, but that actually seems closed now?

I am attaching a letter which contains many of the points we've repeatedly made over the past years, in the hope that they'll get a hearing. It is addressed to one of the past A1 Highways England project representatives.

Could you tell me if these points will have a voice somewhere in your considerations?

Thank you, Robin Duckett





Monday, 18 May 2020

response to Highways England letter TR010041 April 2020

Dear Mark Stoneman,

In response to your letter TR010041 April 2020, I have listed various comments below. They question various of the processes and rationales in the report. I am noting various seeming contradictions, unproven assertions and inconsistencies, in the hope that the general process will be further scrutinised and brought to better account than we were able to do during the 'consultation.'


These are all prompted by the basic agenda of disapproving in principle the choice of the Green route for the southern section. My position is one of a local resident and so know the irreparable destruction to the land and environment which this route will make, in my view unnecessarily, as it is the most destructive (and expensive) of the three choices.

Please note that your records have my details as Robin Duckett, 
. This is actually the address of  and .

Thank you, Robin Duckett

The accompanying letter TR0100041 April 2020:

"an opportunity has been identified ..." . This is a very strange explanation in the introduction to combining the planning applications: identified by whom? What opportunity? When? What is different to before? Did the opportunity not exist before, or is this a new strategy?

The letter stated that responses had to be in by midday Thursday 14th May – however the date stated on the HE website and subsequently confirmed by 's email is 21st May.

The Report

1.1.2

To note: (a) proposes to take 167 hectares of land. (b) proposes to take 74.6 hectares. Nearly 100 hectares more in the case of (a) However this does not take into account additional land which is made marginal through slicing up fields.

1.1.5

The proposed local road has been 'end-stopped' in detailed plans which were tabled after the main 'choice' consultation . The reason for this has not been explained. It also means that it will not such a be a local road but will require traffic to join the new envisaged A1 in any case.

1.1.5

‘provision of new access tracks and bridges’: New Houses Farm tenants have repeatedly been denied requests to have an access bridge. On the current plans this will imply an additional daily 8 mile journey, going north, then south again, (if we are travelling south) for the same destination.

3.1.5

In general the assertions for the bases of choice are unproven. – and, with the rationales for N and S sections taken together, seem also contradictory (arguments for *not* tabling choices in the N section would also seem to apply but inversely, to The current Green choice on the S section (cost, value for money, disruption.)

(a) We contested this at the time as we counted many more submitted objections than did the Land Agency (one response said that several objections had been ‘consolidated’ or discounted.)

(d) This does not provide a N-S route for New Houses Farm tenants/residents. In general the ‘provision of an alternative route should closures be required’ seems so random as to be irrelevant as a design factor – it is not enacted elsewhere in the dualling scheme (e.g. it is shown as an option but discounted, for the N section.)

(f) ‘affects fewer landowners’ this is a disingenuous phrase. The scheme will destroy many hectares of prime farmland. Since when has the number of landowners affected been a factor? The ‘more agricultural land’ is considerable more than 100 hectares greater than the Alnwick / Ellingham section quoted in the document, as it will render unusable many further hectares to those already identified for direct use by the green route.

NB no mention is made of the two houses/homesteads which have already been swallowed up by the scheme.

NB2

Comparing 3.1.5 and 3.1.10 the rationales for choice in the two schemes seem entirely opposite. For example the main reason for not choosing a land-take route on the northern section is that it is ‘more expensive’ and will have ‘an adverse impact on the environment.’ These are both obvious factors which will occur in the choice of green on the Southern section. These factors do not seem to be of any significance in the choices made in the southern section. (I am led to wonder whether other factors may be in play, which are not tabled in the consultation – the choices are such inverse mirrors of each other.)

4.1.5

The green route was changed subsequent to the main consultation period, taking land which was outside the corridor of the consulted green route. No good explanation for this was made – we did receive a letter that the original map was indicative only, that there may have been an error in the sketch given out for consultation, but that in any case the consultation was non-statutory.

5.6.3

Environmental impact on ancient woodland and watercourses.:

We all know that new planting does not equate to ‘replacing ancient woodland.’

Simply saying that 'effects will not be significant due to appointing an ecologist' will not be taken lightly by anyone who knows the effects that works have on ecological natural systems, and stating that 'advice will be taken' seems to simply be an attempt to paper over the likely detrimental effects. Simply stating that 'it would take time to establish a woodland of similar ecological function' seems slightly to be glossing over the effects: "Ancient woodland takes hundreds of years to establish and is defined as an irreplaceable habitat" - (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-and-veteran-trees-protection-surveys-licences>.)

5.9.3

Informing people by newsletter of works does not reduce the negative affect of works.

5.9.5

'support to local businesses due to construction-related jobs': Is there a commitment for materials and jobs/services to be sourced locally? Is this in the procurement brief?

NB the maps on pp 19 and 20:

One has a disclaimer; one doesn't. Is there a reason for this?

Yours sincerely,

Robin Duckett