

Dear Mrs Gordon

I am responding to your email of 23 February sent to the Planning Inspectorate

You refer to the Stage 1 consultation document we issued in 2015. At that early stage in the evolution of the MetroWest scheme we had contemplated the use of Hayes Mays Lane, but a number of factors came to light during the course of the design and technical development of our proposals between in 2015 as we considered the likely impact of the initial proposal. By the Winter of 2105 we had decided to look at the current location for the emergency access and late 2017 the current proposals were shown when our second consultation commenced.

In our formal Stage 2 Public Consultation launched in late 2017 we proposed a revised arrangement to use the alignment (previously used by Network Rail in 2001 for the works to the Portbury Freight Line -see page 17 of the attached formal consultation leaflet). This alignment from Chapel Pill Lane down to the railway follows close to the boundary of the field to the east of Hayes Mays Lane and results in the least possible environmental impact. The factors that led to our decision to use this alignment in favour of using Hayes Mays Lane were as follows:

1. Access is required for the emergency services for fire engines and ambulances in the event of an accident or incident either in Pill tunnel or along the section of railway from the Avon Gorge to Pill tunnel.
2. The technical requirements for the railway in relation to the construction works and future maintenance of the railway to enable the re-introduction of scheduled passenger train services on the branch line, changed from the existing technical requirements for the maintenance of the existing Portbury Freight Line.
3. In order to undertake the necessary construction works, occasional HGV access is required to the section of railway from the northern end of Avon Gorge to Pill tunnel eastern portal.
4. There is no suitable highway access to the railway for over 5 kilometres from north

of the Avon Gorge to Pill. This HGV access point is will provide a vital point of access to the railway for maintenance purposes, although this access point will be an infrequently used access in respect of the frequency of HGV movements.

5. The width of Hayes Mays Lane is not sufficient to accommodate HGV's. Hedgerows and mature trees are in close proximity on both sides. It would therefore be necessary to remove the hedgerow and trees along one side to accommodate HGV's. This would be disruptive to the residents of Hart Close and would have adverse impacts on the landscape and ecology of the area. The alignment that we selected in late 2015 and consulted on in 2017 does not entail extensive removal of vegetation other than a small section of hedgerow at the northern end of Hayes Mays Lane and Chapel Pill Lane, in order to widen the access into the field to re-instate the former track down to the railway used in 2001.

Our previous proposal in 2015 which entailed creating a compound on the field to the south of Hayes Mays Lane, would have resulted in significant landscape and visual impacts. This is because the land to the south of Hayes Mays Lane has open views across an expansive area, including registered park and garden and a listed Building (Leigh Court) and significant earthworks would have been required to provide the secure compound and access. The location of the compound that we have proposed since late 2015 is at the bottom of a sloping field and will be largely out of view except for the track, but this is a relatively narrow width.

In respect of grasscrete, this is not a suitable material for the track because of the gradient of the field would cause the wheels of vehicles to spin particularly in wet whether traveling up the gradient. In respect of lighting, no permanent lighting is proposed. The only lighting that will be used is mobile lighting during construction and very infrequently post re-introduction of passenger trains, for line maintenance activity.

In respect of the Community Land Trust, our proposals were put into the public domain in late 2017 in the attached formal consultation leaflet, but our base drawing shows the change occurred in late 2015, which was significantly before the Community Land Trust came forward with their proposals.

MetroWest is not supporting or facilitating the Community Land Trust's proposals. We have provided our plans to the CLT to allow the CLT to take in to account MetroWest's proposals when working up the CLT's scheme proposals. The Community Land Trust proposals will be a matter for the North Somerset Local Planning Authority to determine.

I hope this explanation is helpful,

Richard Guyatt

Partner

Womble Bond Dickinson (UK) LLP

d: +44 117 989 6877

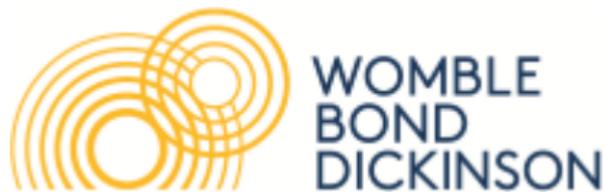


t: +44 345 415 0000

e: richard.guyatt@wbd-uk.com

COVID-19 alert - Please only send us post if it is essential

Sign up for legal updates, e-newsletters and event invitations



wombledonddickinson.com

