

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Metrowest1](#)
Subject: Deadline 6 Submission - Issue Specific Hearing 5, Dealing With Environmental Matters, 4th March 2021 - Comment Regarding Action 31
Date: 14 March 2021 21:44:14

Application by North Somerset District Council for an Order granting Development Consent for the Portishead branch line – MetroWest Phase 1

Issue Specific Hearing 5, Dealing With Environmental Matters, 4th March 2021

Action No. 31 for Applicant:

"Provide a written response to the concerns raised orally at the hearing by Mr Ovel and Mr Berry regarding a possible siding at Lodway and why the haul road cannot be made 2 way to accommodate construction workers traffic"

I have the following observations to make on behalf of Pill & Easton-in-Gordano Parish Council regarding the wording of this Action:

1. Action 31 makes no mention of the concerns that Mr Berry and I expressed at the hearing regarding the unsuitability of the Pill and Easton-in-Gordano road system for construction HGV traffic. On the routes identified in the DCO for Metro West construction traffic we have particular concerns with regard to Lodway and The Breaches, especially for movements to/from the Lodway Farm Compound, due to the narrow and winding villages roads. We strongly disagree with Mr Willcock's assessment, expressed during the hearing, that these roads are suitable for construction HGV traffic. We raised the questions about the haul road and the railway siding mentioned in Action 31 because of these concerns. It is fundamental to the safety and well being of the village residents who use these roads that the overwhelming majority of the HGV traffic using the Lodway Farm Compound be channelled along the haul road alongside the disused railway. For this to be the uninterrupted case throughout the construction phase, the haul road must be made fit for purpose from the outset. This will require:

a. The load-bearing surface to be strong enough and durable enough to sustain intensive movements of heavily laden vehicles for a period of up to two years. If the haul road had to be closed for repairs for more than a day or two during the construction phase this would inevitably place huge pressure on the contractors to divert HGV traffic to The Breaches access to Lodway Farm.

b. The haul road to be widened wherever possible to enable two HGVs to pass one another. It is our contention that this is essential in order to make the haul road route viable for multiple inbound and outbound journeys to/from the Lodway Farm Compound. Otherwise, it can be envisioned that a one-way system might be instituted using The Breaches to ingress Lodway Farm and the haul road for outbound traffic in order to maintain traffic flow through the compound. This should be specifically ruled out in the DCO, as it would place an unacceptable burden on the surrounding roads. Mr Willcock stated that water features adjacent to the haul road preclude this. There are, indeed, short sections of the haul road where that might be the case but from personal observation I believe that there is space for the great majority of the road to be widened to two-lane width to enable vehicles to pass safely.

The underlying objection from MetroWest to making the haul road fit for purpose

appeared to be one of cost. We recognise that cost control is very important but contend that not to upgrade the haul road prior to the start of the construction phase would be a false economy. Indeed it was conceded by Mr Willcock that the road would, in all probability, have to be repaired at the end of the construction phase, so money will have to be spent on it anyway.

2. With regard to my comments at the Hearing about the possible railway siding into the Lodway Farm Compound mentioned in the DCO, it is clear that a viable haul road capable of sustaining two-way traffic will be required anyway. Provided that MetroWest project HGV's are kept away from the village road structure, it is not of direct concern to us whether the materials are transported to/from the Lodway Farm Compound via the haul road or by rail. Intuitively, it seems that a dedicated railway siding would be the better option for the local environment. However, it was clear from the comments made by Mr Willcock and, I think, Mr Willmot that, for a variety of reasons, this would not be a practicable solution. The appearance of the railway siding option in the DCO is therefore something of a red herring. This again, reinforces the necessity of ensuring that the haul road is improved to make it fit for purpose from the outset.

3. I became aware during the course of the Hearing of a new factor potentially affecting the haul road when it emerged that the direction of laying of the new track laying would now be to the west commencing from the Pill end. On the DCO 2.4 General Arrangement Plan the haul road is shown as running through the M5 overbridge in the same space as the railway line. Given the narrow width through the overbridge, it seems very unlikely that there is room for the haul road to run side-by-side with the railway, especially when the new line is being laid through the over bridge. Thus, there is a severe risk that once laying of the new line commences it would be only a short time before the haul road access to the Lodway Farm Compound would become unviable. In that case, the only other access identified for Lodway Farm would be via The Breaches. This takes us back to the heart of our concerns about continuous availability of the haul road. Therefore, I request that the Applicant also address this issue when responding to Action 31.

4. Finally, I would like to reaffirm Pill & Easton-in-Gordano Parish Council's continuing broad support for the MetroWest scheme. However, we are concerned to ensure that realistic plans exist to keep the village streets free from the vast majority of the Lodway Farm Compound traffic, particularly HGVs. We therefore request assurance from the Applicant that it shares this objective with us and that it is also enshrined in the DCO, specifically the Construction Traffic Management Plan, rather than being left to the discretion of the contractor (when one is eventually engaged), as is the situation currently. We accept that some light vehicle traffic to/from Lodway Farm may need to use the access from The Breaches, but not HGV traffic.

Bill Ovel

Councillor

Pill & Easton-in-Gordano Parish Council