

16<sup>th</sup> December 2019

Dear Nigel,

We are writing to you as the Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning and in light of the draft Climate Change Strategy you are presenting to Cabinet on Friday 20th December. We are a group of residents from Teddington and Alstone who are concerned about the planned expansion of the A46 from Junction 9 to the Teddington Hands Roundabout. We are campaigning on behalf of residents in both villages and our mandate is to ensure that any expansion/rerouting of the A46 does not adversely affect our two villages. Since our formation in May 2018, we have corresponded and met with a number of relevant parties including the A46 Partnership Group, Midlands Connect, Western Gateway, Tewkesbury Borough Council, CPRE, AONB and Laurence Robertson MP. We have also commissioned an independent expert Gerald Kells, to report on the issues and impacts a new road would result in. This report can be found on our website [www.taagroup.co.uk](http://www.taagroup.co.uk).

### **Road traffic Pollution**

One of our main concerns is the environmental impact a dual carriageway and upgraded Teddington Hands (TH) roundabout will have on our villages. Gloucestershire County Council signed a Climate Emergency Declaration in May this year and we appreciate the work you have done on this. However we think the proposed new plans for the A46 near Teddington does not dovetail with the council's commitment to strive to become carbon neutral by 2030. With the construction of new homes in Ashchurch we acknowledge that a new road may need to be built but this does not need to be a dual carriageway nor run all the way to the TH roundabout. A dual carriageway will result in induced traffic and a bottleneck at TH roundabout and more CO<sub>2</sub>, Nitric Oxide and other traffic generating poisons polluting our villages. Independent research commissioned by CPRE and published in 2017 in 'The Impact of Road Building in England' analysed the impact of 13 road schemes, based on post-operative data from Highways England. Their analysis confirmed earlier studies which concluded that new inter-urban road capacity increases traffic beyond normal growth. The report can be found on their website [The Impact of Road Projects in England](#).

### **Extreme weather and flooding**

Climate change will result in more extreme weather in Gloucestershire. The Tewkesbury area is vulnerable to flooding. Since the major flooding in 2007, the A435 and A46 have been a few inches underwater on several occasions. Most recently the A435 near Teddington was almost impassable during the week of 12th November as was the A46 by Beckford. Further land grab for a major road scheme will only make the matter worse.

Friends of the Earth (FOE) has analysed how Tewkesbury Borough Council are taking action to cut greenhouse gases. The results of their analysis can be found here by typing-in any Tewkesbury postcode [FOE How Climate Friendly is your area?](#)

Please note that the first point on the summary is "Cease supporting or promoting new high carbon infrastructure, such as roads or airports".

The issues they've identified should be addressed before planning and agreeing any major infrastructure.

## **Noise pollution**

Noise pollution affecting our villages is a major concern to us. The prevailing wind direction (westerly) results in considerable noise already. Further traffic, especially HGVs, will make this intolerable. Also any increase in speed limits would exacerbate the noise due to the increase in vehicle speed. The wind direction results in our villages suffering more acutely than the proximity would suggest and therefore it is imperative that any bypass of the new Ashchurch Town joins the A46 as far west of the TH roundabout as possible.

Not only is road noise unpleasant but it is increasingly recognised as being harmful to health. An article published in The Guardian on 3/7/2018 written by Richard Godwin states: "There's consistent evidence that road traffic noise leads to heart attacks," says Dr Yutong Samuel Cai, an epidemiologist at Imperial College London. He recently analysed the health data of 356,000 people in Britain and Norway and found that long-term exposure to traffic noise affects our blood biochemistry, over and above the effects of exhaust fumes."

A book published by The Royal Society of Chemistry, titled "Environmental Impacts of Road Vehicles" has a chapter "Cardiovascular Health Effects of Road Traffic Noise" which can be found here [Environmental Impacts of Road Vehicles](#) .

There are many other examples.

## **Biodiversity and trees**

Land grab for major infrastructure projects and the subsequent construction is a sure-fire way of destroying biodiversity and the very plants and trees that protect our environment by removing CO2 from the air. Furthermore, open fields and woodland are vital to support wildlife. This is not something that we, in Teddington and Alstone, want and believe that most people are now aware that we need to reduce journeys in the car to be 'green'. There are many ways to reduce congestion and our Councils should be doing everything in their power to do this. We should be encouraging walking by having safe footpaths, many more miles of cycle paths, a better, more reliable rail service, improved bus services, where possible encouraging companies to allow home working and encourage companies to promote lift sharing reducing congestion at peak times.

Please see this example of how innovation and will, can help reduce car journeys, emissions and save money as well [FOE - Car Sharing In Warwickshire](#) .

Ultimately, any new roads, especially dual carriageways would only encourage car use at a time when we need to reduce the amount of car journeys. Affordable, regular public transportation services along the A46 will reduce the amount of congestion, negating the need for potentially unnecessary new roads.

## **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)**

Teddington is dissected by an AONB and the part that isn't in an AONB has been designated a Special Landscape Area. We have been in correspondence with the AONB in Gloucestershire and were interested to hear that their scope of influence extends to cover areas that affect the AONB, i.e. they can influence development that lies outside of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty if the development detrimentally affects that area.

The anticipated cost of the Western Gateway submission is £170-£180m. Vernon Smith at our local parish council meeting indicated an estimate cost of between £250m and £350m. Is this the best use of public money? Surely the sensible answer is a less intrusive new road and investment in greener solutions to congestion. Please do not sleepwalk into accepting that this road is necessary (even Western Gateway don't, as the proposal is ranked 15 out of 15 schemes for 'overall corridor sequencing of economic impact'). Furthermore, the CPRE report mentioned above states that many economic benefits of road projects are often overstated: "Of 25 road schemes justified on the basis that they would benefit the local economy, only five had any evidence of any economic effects. Even for these five, the economic effects may have arisen from changes incidental to the road scheme, or involved development in an inappropriate location, or involved changes that were as likely to suck money out of the local area as to bring it in" (Page 6).

We see that Hereford Council have paused the work on the Hereford bypass and relief road as the new council is concerned about induced traffic and the climate emergency. Councillor John Harrington, cabinet member for infrastructure and transport said: "all options need to be considered as we look to the long term and providing a high quality, integrated and low carbon transport system for the whole of Herefordshire not just the immediate future but for generations to come".

Finally, whilst the A46 does suffer from congestion at certain times of the day, mostly it is free flowing, as much as traffic light controlled traffic can be. A small relief road may well be the answer rather than the huge infrastructure project planned by Western Gateway, supported by Midlands Connect. Henry Brocklebank of Sussex Wildlife Trust said: "what's the point of making something a UK priority if it's actually not a priority. It stands for nothing if you go for an option just to take a couple of minutes off people's journey times".

We would very much like to understand your views on the A46 proposal and our comments above. We would welcome the opportunity to meet you to discuss this further, either at your offices or here at one of our houses in Teddington.

Yours sincerely

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