

It's only a few weeks since our last newsletter but, as you may have seen, the recent mail drop from Cllr Vernon Smith included his thoughts on the M5/J9 A46 Business Case. As this provides some details on a potential route, it might be helpful to summarise our interpretation and how this aligns with our position.

The route outlined proposes a new dualled highway which runs from the M5 junction 10 (approval was recently given to make this 4-way) across to a new hamburger* (sic) roundabout positioned to the west of the existing Teddington Hands Roundabout. This is a distance of circa 7 miles.

** A "hamburger" roundabout is one where a major road passes through the centre of the roundabout with other connecting minor roads following a circling flow. For those familiar, the Elmbridge Court roundabout near Gloucester adopts this design and uses traffic signals.*

Our immediate thoughts are:

- It is suggested that a bypass is required to support the strategic ambition of a transport corridor as well as assisting local economic growth and alleviating traffic congestion. While we acknowledge that a new road may be necessary to facilitate the building of the proposed Ashchurch Garden Town, we question the rationale that this should also form part of a 70 mile A46/M69 expressway when there is limited, if any, local benefit. Also, if the Garden Town were not to proceed, congestion could be addressed by more proportionate and cheaper actions.
- In the absence of a relevant business case, we continue to challenge the need for a dual rather than a single carriageway solution.
- Where a new bypass joins with the M5 is largely immaterial to the impact on our villages. However, it does look like that joining with the existing J9 is increasingly unlikely given the level of adjacent development while there is logic with the cost argument for using J10 rather than building a new junction somewhere between the two. Other communities are clearly impacted by this decision.

- A number of points listed indicate this route will steer clear of using/upgrading the A435 or passing in between our villages and the amenities located at the Teddington Hands roundabout. These are both hugely important to us, because a route which *doesn't* follow the A435 could avoid or mitigate the very serious concerns we have around significantly increased traffic volumes, road access to our villages and the many negative environmental consequences. A bypass proposal that uses the existing A435 would be unacceptable. Therefore, it is very welcome to see that this is recognised in Vernon's proposal. Of course, how far away an alternative road to the west of the A435 is sited could still affect the degree of noise and other impacts we might experience.
- A new roundabout junction to the west of Teddington Hands would prevent road and footpath severance with local businesses while reducing environmental concerns. The proximity of the new roundabout is obviously key as this will determine the impact on our villages from noise, pollution etc.
- If elected, Vernon will have a public mandate to pursue his intention to ensure this route proposal is included in the public consultation.

In the interests of maintaining political neutrality, we have contacted each of the other three candidates standing in the local parish election on May 6th. We have asked for their views on the new bypass and will share all responses we receive.

Finally, please do come back to us with any comments or suggestions on this latest news so we can gauge opinion.