

WARDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

2 THE OLD VICARAGE
WARDINGTON
OXFORDSHIRE
OX17 1SA

Date: 14/06/2017

Richard Warren,

Strategic Manager – Project Delivery

Oxfordshire County Council

Dear Richard,

HS2 proposed mitigation measures on A361 affecting Wardington

The Parish Council have considered HS2's latest mitigation proposals enclosed with Lydia Smith's e-mail of 26 May 2017. We are disappointed that many of our concerns, in particular those as to safety, have not been properly addressed. Indeed, a number of items on OCC's Risk Register remain unmitigated. HS2's two main proposals (the widening of the road in three places, and the cutting back of vegetation) will simply increase vehicle speed, and with it the risk of accident to other vehicles and pedestrians. This is not acceptable to the Parish Council, nor to the residents of Wardington.

We highlight some of our gravest concerns:

1. Road crossings

OCC's Risk Register, LR 02, identifies the risk that that there is no supported pedestrian crossing near the entrance to Wardington House Nursing Home and Tuthill Park. It notes the very high likelihood of a major accident, and a direct risk to pedestrians. It notes that HS2 propose no measures. That remains the case even after HS2's latest proposals. It will simply be too dangerous for pedestrians to cross the road at this point. There are houses which abut the road from which residents need to cross the road safely. There are also visitors to and from the Nursing Home and Tuthill Park.

We demand that measures be taken to ensure that there is a safe road crossing at the entrance to the Nursing Home, and at the bus stop, and that such measures comply with Road Safety Audits. If that is not possible, the A361 through Wardington should not be used as a HS2 construction route.

2. Speed control

The Risk Register, LR 13, identifies increased speeds, if widening is not delivered as part of a holistic scheme, as a risk with a very high likelihood, which is unmitigated. It notes that the Parish has requested speed restriction to 20 mph and speed cameras. You were made aware of our desire to see effective speed control measures put in place.

However, there are no proposals to reduce the speed limit to 20 mph, nor to install speed enforcement cameras. These are the only effective measures which would reduce the risk of

accident for pedestrians and for vehicles accessing and exiting properties. Reduced speed would also mitigate the impact of increased noise and vibration (all of which are identified as risks). You have proposed a Vehicle Activated Sign in respect of a 30 mph speed limit. This will not be effective to enforce compliance with a speed limit of 30 mph, still less a 20 mph limit. The effect of widening the road will be to increase vehicle speeds. Yet HS2 are, it seems, unwilling to countenance any measures which would control speed so as to protect vehicles and pedestrians from injury. There seems to be little or no recognition on HS2's part that exceptional circumstances call for exceptional measures. The addition of up 1,000 HGVs per day, through a residential and conservation area, is exceptional and potentially dangerous. We do not, therefore, understand the reluctance to put in place speed enforcement cameras. There are speed enforcement cameras in other villages on the A361, such as Chipping Warden and Byfield.

We propose that there should be a 20 mph speed limit, monitored by cameras at both ends of the village measuring average speed.

3. Accessing and exiting properties

The combination of road widening with ineffective measures to control vehicle speeds is of particular concern to residents who wish to access and exit their properties adjoining the A361. It will be dangerous to exit if there is a quick succession of HGVs. The Risk Register identifies this risk. We have made the point that the use of mirrors does not address our safety concerns.

We are particularly concerned about the corner at the entrance to the Old Vicarage. Not only will the width of the footpath be reduced by 0.5m (from 1.75m to 1.25m) but also the road widening will encourage increases in traffic speeds, which will make what is a blind exit even more dangerous.

This supports our demand that there be a 20 mph speed limit, and effective speed enforcement.

4. Impaired air quality and increased noise and vibration

OCC's Risk Register refers to the potential for contractors to surpass environmental minimum requirements. We have previously sought confirmation that approval will not be given for the use of the A361 for HS2 construction traffic if air pollution exceeds prescribed limits. That confirmation has not been given. Indeed, there have been no environmental assessment of as to impairment of air quality on Wardington residents by reason the use of the A361 by of over 1,000 HGVs a day. As you are aware, we were keen to pursue Oliver Spratley's suggestion that HS2 vehicles should be fueled by biodiesel. However, there is no reference to this in HS2's proposals.

Increased noise and additional vibration were identified as significant risks in your Risk Register. However, no environmental assessments have been carried out to assess the impact of increased noise and vibration.

We, therefore, propose that environmental impact assessments be carried out as to impaired air quality, noise and vibration. Pollution limits should not be exceeded. The use of biodiesel should be actively considered. A scheme should be in place to compensate for damage caused by vibration. Effective systems should be implemented to monitor noise and vibration levels.

5. Use of side roads

We are, as you know, concerned about the use of side roads through Wardington, Williamscot, Chacombe and Cropredy, by vehicles seeking to escape congestion on the A361. This was identified as a risk on the Risk Register (LR 23). However, no mitigation measures have been proposed.

We propose that speed reduction measures, such as chicanes, should be explored. There should, if there is not already, be weight restrictions preventing HGVs from using these side roads.

6. Haul road

We would also ask you to push HS2 for more details of the progress of the extended haul road across the A34. This is a measure which, we hope, will do a great deal to reduce HS2 traffic on the A361. Counsel for HS2 told the House of Lords HS2 Select Committee that HS2 expected to have a much clearer picture as to the feasibility of the extended haul road before the Committee produced their Report. The Report was produced about 6 months ago. We are none the wiser.

7. One direction two way shuttle

The Risk status that you produced following the meeting of 14 February 2017 states that the only option may be for a 2 way shuttle as the only means for OCC to approve the lorry route in terms of safety and ensuring a robust estimate of traffic flow maintained. There is then a flow chart indicating that if there is no controlled crossing or refuge to mitigate the risk for pedestrians (which is not proposed) and if there is no speed limit reduction or speed cameras (which are not proposed) there should be a one direction 2 way shuttle.

Have OCC abandoned this position and, if so, why?

We do need OCC to be proactive in protecting the safety and well-being of Wardington residents. Please give us a considered and detailed response within 14 days. Copies of this letter is being sent to other interested parties including Lydia Smith of HS2.

Yours sincerely,

p.p. Nigel Bankes on behalf of Wardington Parish Council.

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