

H. Harrop,

Pucklechurch,

22 September 2017.

Freepost RTXL-YHGY-GSYS,
South Gloucestershire Council,
Council Offices,
Badminton Road,
Yate,
Bristol,
BS37 5AF.

Dear Sirs,

Re: Proposed M4 Junction 18A.

I wish to register my objection in the strongest possible terms to the Eastern "A" and "B" Link Road proposals.

I purchased "Ivy" Cottage in 1969 from the farmer, Farnham Drury which hadn't been lived in for over 15 years and was subject to a Closing Order and due for demolition. There was a massive amount of work required to bring the property up to required living standards and my decision to buy it was driven by the fact that the site was next to a lovely village surrounded by Designated and Protected Green Belt pasture land. I submitted my plans to the Planning Office which were approved along with a Discretionary Home Improvement Grant.

A brief schedule of the necessary work all of which was carried out by myself between February 1969 and July 1974 is as follows:-

1. Demolition of one third of the stone structure.
2. The existing roof was taken down and a new tiled and felted roof constructed.
3. All rebuilding was done in 2ft thick stone walls. There was no original water main as the Farmer used a hosepipe from Park Farm so I carried all the water for mixing sand and cement from the stream on my land. Later I installed a new 1in water main 0.2 mile long from Parkfield Rank.
4. Dug out all floors and cast concrete floor slabs and screed with DPC.
5. Replaced all rotten timber lintels with cast in situ reinforced concrete lintels.
6. Fitted new first floor joists and T&G floorboards.

I didn't invest all this time and effort to suddenly find that the Council, virtually without warning cross out their promised Green Belt Protective undertakings literally, at a stroke. The South Gloucestershire local plan core strategy document-Vision For 2006 to 2027 is reproduced here as follows:-

“4.20 To support the Strategy for Development objectives, there will also be transport infrastructure improvements with a new bus rapid transport link to Emersons Green from Bristol City Centre and the North Fringe of Bristol, Park and Ride at Emersons Green East, and links into the Greater Bristol cycling network. This investment and delivery is planned to take place over the next 10 years. For the local area strategy for the East Fringe of Bristol to be successful it is paramount that resources are focussed on these priorities.

4.21 The designated Green Belt in this area will remain. This area is not considered to be suitable for development because of major constraints, specifically the importance of the open countryside, hillside and ridgelines that establish the setting and help define the extent of the urban area, the current limited employment opportunities, the lack of potential for integrating new development and the extreme difficulty of delivering essential transport improvements.”

I repeat “THE DESIGNATED GREEN BELT IN THIS AREA WILL REMAIN. THIS AREA IS NOT CONSIDERED TO BE SUITABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT BECAUSE OF MAJOR CONSTRAINTS, SPECIFICALLY THE IMPORTANCE OF THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE, HILLSIDE AND RIDGE LINES”.

Several recent planning applications have been refused on the grounds that the above Council strategy would be violated.

The minor impact of these applications pales into insignificance when compared to the Council’s betrayal of the Residents of Pucklechurch, Syston and Shortwood to even propose the Eastern Options “A” and “B” which they should have ensured was not permitted to see the light of day. I am astounded to learn that £500,000 has been paid for this crass feasibility study. Why did the South Gloucestershire Council not instruct the appointed Consultancy to take on board paragraphs “4.20” and “4.21” of their Core Strategy document? Had the Council performed their duty of care to the Residents for which purpose they are appointed, this unparalleled fiasco would never have arisen.

I have attended the Public Parish Council meetings and know of a surety the numbers of Residents who are sick with worry, ill and suffering sleepless nights as they contemplate the loss of their country habitats. All of us have put decades of work and investment into our country homes thinking that our Council would keep the promise made in paragraphs “4.20” and “4.21” of their Strategy Document. Unfortunately, already properties have been devalued and I know of at least one property on Parkfield Rank where the sale fell through due to the mortgage company refusing funding directly due to the proposed Eastern option.

I am deeply concerned about the covert way in which the plans were produced. All properties should have been clearly shown so that proximity to both proposed routes could be identified at a glance. This has not been done, just a little “Ghosting” of buildings here and there. Omissions of this kind usually indicates that a hidden agenda is in place. Perhaps this is to plunder our Green Belt and open it up with a link road for even greater development misuse such as a massive housing estate or worse in the future.

The Eastern options would bring much more light, noise and air pollution to us as Residents. The damage to wild life, flora and fauna will be immense. One farm which has been in the family for generations will be unworkable if this link road proposal were to go ahead which will put an end to family generation continuity.

The original plan was to construct M4 Junction 18A at Lyde Green. The postulation that this is more expensive than the Eastern options does not take into account the long term loss of valuable Green Belt land, the country life style of the Residents along with the devaluation of the properties generally. No motorway junction is worth ruining the living environment of the hard working village families.

The study carried out by the Parish Council shows that the Eastern Option will give a driving time advantage of a mere 72 seconds. This raises the question as to whether or not a new junction is even necessary. A much better plan would be to improve the roads and transport we already have. After all, if we can afford to squander £500,000 on a design that destroys the Green Belt and wrecks Pucklechurch, Syston and Shortwood we can afford to ensure the continued protection of the Council's core strategy document "4.20" and "4.21" for generations to come. The fair treatment of current Residents comes first, all else is secondary. I have studied the documentation closely in the hope that I could find evidence that the welfare of the Residents had received consideration. Unfortunately my search was in vain.

I reiterate my firm, uncompromising objection to both Eastern link road options.

Yours faithfully,

H. Harrop.

CC : Pucklechurch Parish Council : Luke Hall MP., : Alistair Rice : Ben McGee : SGC
Steve Evans SGC.

