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South Gloucester Council,  
E&CS M4J18a consultation,  
Council Offices,  
Badminton Road,  
Yate,  
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BS37 5AF

04<sup>th</sup> October 2017

Re: M4 Junction 18a Consultation

Dear Ms Deeks,

Please find below my response to the “M4 Junction 18a and link road” consultation.

I note from the Pucklechurch consultation on the 5<sup>th</sup> September that there are six objectives for the project and I detail my thoughts about each of these objectives separately below.

**Objective 1. Relieve congestion to M4 Junction 19 and M32 junction 1 and on the A4174 ring road.**

I believe that the addition of any junction 18a, including both the eastern options and western option, will have an adverse affect on the congestion on the A4174. There have been many studies that show that building new roads generates more traffic, e.g. CPRE’s report “The end of the road” March 2017. This report details findings from other road schemes across the country where the aftermath of the road construction was significantly more traffic than expected. The new road “induces” more traffic.

In this case, J18a will become the route for people travelling to and from areas south of Bristol, including western Bath suburbs creating more traffic on the A4174 rather than reducing traffic. Likewise from the north of the M4, it will draw traffic from surrounding areas changing traffic patterns through smaller villages such as Westerleigh and Henfield.

Many road users use sat-navs for journey planning these days. Almost immediately after the road is opened it will fill up requiring further upgrades and environmental destruction. In particular, the village of Westerleigh will become a rat-run for traffic wanting to join the M4 from Yate and Chipping Sodbury. Additional road changes will be required, including:

- The crossroads just outside Westerleigh where Shorthill Road meets Westerleigh Road and the B4465. This crossroads already suffers from congestion at peak times and the addition of J18a at either the eastern or western option will necessitate

further road infrastructure investment. Perhaps a new roundabout will be required here?

- People living in Westerleigh will find it difficult to cross the road due to traffic volumes and zebra/pelican crossings will be required.
- Hearses and funeral corteges trying to enter Westerleigh Crematorium from the Westerleigh direction will be stuck in congestion waiting for a gap in the streaming traffic from J18a should the eastern option be chosen.
- The route from Wick through Abson will become a rat-run increasing traffic through the centre of Pucklechurch should the eastern option be chosen.

In summary road building results in more road building and street furniture to cope with the consequences of the change in peoples' driving patterns.

**Objective 2. Improve safety by reducing congestion related collisions on M4 junction 19 and M32 junction 1 and on the A4174 ring road.**

If money is to be spent on M4 junctions, a far better solution would be to improve exit and entry ramps of M4 junction 19. This is currently a roundabout with a segment removed. A redesigned layout with separate lanes for A4174 drivers going west on the M4 and for westbound M4 drivers wanting to go east on the A4174 would improve this.

By adding junction 18a, I believe that this will highlight the inadequacies of the other roads in the area to deal with increased traffic. For example, if one of the eastern options is chosen, the B4465 north of the M4 will need to be upgraded in order to prevent congestion related collisions occurring in the Westerleigh Crematorium area. The cost of this is not included in the consultation costs. Likewise, the route from Wick along the Abson Road to and through Pucklechurch will become busier and increase the chances of collisions. The B4465 junction with the Abson Road in the centre of Pucklechurch is already a busy and difficult junction and the additional traffic is likely to cause congestion in our village.

This junction may result in more congestion related collisions occurring on more rural roads, increasing the likelihood of the collisions being between vehicles and pedestrians, rather than vehicles and other vehicles causing a net overall increase in fatalities.

**Objective 3. Unlock the economic potential in the northeast Bristol fringe particularly within science, technology and innovation sectors.**

How does the new junction achieve the above, when many studies show that new roads provide little economic benefit? Figures from a report "The end of the road? Challenging the road-building consensus" by CPRE show that 32% of schemes had no evidence of economic impact, 44% had weak evidence (either positive or negative). The remaining 24% had mixed evidence of uplift, but whether this was the result of the new road or due to improving general economic conditions could not be determined.

**Objective 4. Minimise the impact of traffic/infrastructure on the environment and, where possible, deliver opportunities for environmental enhancement.**

Surely it would be far better, rather than trying to reduce the damage caused by such a road scheme, to encourage the use of public transport via park and ride schemes and buses. The money would be far better spent in this way than covering more of our green and pleasant land with concrete and tarmac.

**Objective 5. Improve transport network resilience and journey time reliability.**

Some interesting statistics from the Bromley Heath viaduct road roads currently being undertaken shows that a reduction in usable road infrastructure hasn't caused the chaos expected and contrary to expectations has provided benefits: A 31% increase in cyclists using the route, a 16% reduction in westbound traffic and a 21% reduction in eastbound since the work started.

This adds to the evidence that road-building is not the solution.

With the money spent on this scheme, free buses could be provided for many years and this would be far more effective in improving transport network resilience and journey time reliability.

**Objective 6. Protect and enhance access for non-car modes.**

This objective in itself shows how damaging the scheme will be. This new road will be so disruptive to existing non-car modes of transport, that much effort is required to protect what is already there, let alone enhance it. Public footpaths, cycle paths and bridleways will all need to be rerouted.

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In summary, I believe that adding any junction 18a, eastern or western, will not achieve the project objectives. If junction 18a is to be built, and my personal preference is for it not to be, but if it is to be built, it should be built near the Bristol Science Park (the western option) where most of the protagonists expected it to be built.

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My thoughts on the eastern options plans possibly mirror many of my fellow residents of Pucklechurch and can be summarised as follows:

The noise from a dual carriageway within such close proximity would add to that already from the M4, reducing the quality of life for all the residents in the area.

The light from headlights and, perish the thought, a line of streetlights down the centre of the dual carriageway, would transform the village from a countryside haven to another suburb of a city.

The significant increase in traffic would cause deterioration of the air quality. With the recent emphasis on air quality problems following the VW diesel emissions scandal, the

proximity of the route to Pucklechurch Primary School and the increased traffic “cutting through the village” would cause increased amounts of harmful Nitrogen oxide and particulates.

Pucklechurch is in a green belt area and these green belts need to be protected, not just for the people that live within them, but in order to be the “lungs” of major built-up areas next to them.

The countryside around the village is beautiful and would be a crime to overrule aesthetic considerations for the sake of saving an average of 72 seconds of journey time.

If the link road is built, the green belt will have been violated and the council will consider this the green light to build housing all around Pucklechurch and our village will become another suburb of Bristol. One wealthy landowner, The Davison Family, has already drawn up plans and is already trying to influence the “Joint Spatial Plan” via IM Properties plc.

The green belt around Pucklechurch contributes significantly to the Green Belt Purpose despite the attempts of the many landowner-sponsored briefing papers to convince the planning authorities otherwise. Examples include those written by property agents such as “The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd” and “Colliers International”.

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I have reservations about how accurate and unprejudiced the consultation document is:

The costs for the options are not comparable. For the eastern options, as mentioned above, the B4465 north of the M4 will need enhancement and perhaps a roundabout added at the crossroads at the meeting point of Shorthill Road, Westerleigh Road and the B4465. Some of this additional road infrastructure may also be required for the western option.

I believe all of the options will result in higher costs than envisaged due to the follow-on effects of induced traffic in the villages affected.

No mention was made of a public transport and/or park and ride option.

No options were considered for entry only onto the M4. Most of the congestion problems occur during the morning rush with people wanting to join the M4. The evening congestion is not condensed into such a short time span and consequently is not as bad.

Previous studies into additional M4 junctions (e.g. from GBSTS West of England Partnership) have suggested that there would need to be an additional lane on the M4 through to junction 18. This need and cost has not been included.

There hasn't been full disclosure of any meetings, involvement or arrangements with property agents or other lobbyists.

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Lastly, and of most direct consequence to my family and I, is that option b will require the demolition of my home and a road built through it. I live on Edmund Court, named after Edmund I, one of the first Kings of England, who, according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, was murdered in Pucklechurch in 946 AD.

I trust that you will take every opportunity to oppose this plan and ensure that common sense prevails.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Leigh Melvin