

**(6) MEMBER QUESTIONS - ADDENDUM**

Set out below is the response to the question provided by Councillor Cheung:-

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**(2) From Councillor Tatyán Cheung to Councillor Lynden Stowe, Leader of the Council**

'Please could the Leader give an update as to progress with respect to my motion at the September Council meeting regarding the Spine Road through the Cotswold Water Park?'

**Response from Councillor Stowe**

Before writing formal letters, the Cotswold Environmental Services Partnership Board was asked to consider the issue in conjunction with our environmental services company, Ubico, and our Cabinet Member. The response received highlighted issues around (i) the fact that the Spine Road featured predominantly soft verges with no hard kerbs against which a sweeper could clean; (ii) mud being dragged onto the road by vehicles servicing the construction site opposite the Four Pillars and from the HGV Gravel lorries; (iii) the need for a lane closure should Ubico be asked to carry out street cleansing on a high speed road; and (iv) while there might be some improvement from street cleansing, it was likely that the construction traffic would cause a repeat problem within a very short space of time. In summary, it was considered that the matter was best dealt with by the Highways Authority.

This response was able to be included within our subsequent formal letters, and reinforced the need for a more permanent solution to be secured.

Formal letters were then sent to the relevant Lead Cabinet Members at Gloucestershire County Council and Wiltshire County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire, and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Wiltshire and Swindon; and copies were also sent to the relevant officers of those organisations. Distribution was co-ordinated by relevant Officers of the two councils.

The letter provided some background context and more detail in respect of the three key issues that had been identified by the Council - road conditions, speed limits, and aggregate traffic. The various bodies/individuals were asked to support and/or assist this Council in its attempts to secure a comprehensive and joined-up solution to the various issues, with key actions and desired outcomes being set out. In addition, given the response from the Cotswold Environmental Services Partnership, the letter also referred to concerns at the highway and health and safety risks that existed due to the muddy road conditions, particularly in the winter season, and sought any assistance that might be available through the Local Highways Team to ensure that the local road network, and associated verges and gutters, was kept clean and safe for use.

By way of responses received to date:-

- The Wiltshire Police and Crime Commissioner agreed to take up the issues with officers from Wiltshire Council, as it was that Council's Highways Department that had the responsibility for the condition of the highways and the alteration of speed limits. However, we have yet to be advised of any formal outcome.

- The Gloucestershire Police and Crime Commissioner responded by confirming that he believed that the matter would be best dealt with by referral to the Road Safety Hub, which dealt with all roads issues for the county and would be best placed to provide a co-ordinated and cohesive response given its greater insight and knowledge of roads issues all over the county.
- It is understood that the matter has recently been discussed by the Gloucestershire County Council Lead Cabinet Members and Shadows, and that there is an agreed stance on the issues. It is also understood that the Road Safety Hub contributed towards those discussions.

A formal response has now been received from Gloucestershire County Council - and a copy is attached. It has obviously not been possible to review the contents as yet, but would suggest that this is done by Officers in conjunction with relevant Members, including those that put forward the Motion and the relevant Ward Member(s).

(END)

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Please ask for: Scott Tompkins – Lead  
Commissioner Highways

Phone:

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> February 2017

Dear Sirs

### **Spine Road East, Cotswold Water Park**

With reference to the recent Cotswold District Council motion that raised various concerns and issues relating to the Spine Road East in the Cotswold Water Park.

In response to the 3 key issues raised:

#### **(i) Road Conditions**

The letter states that the Gloucestershire section of the Spine Road East is in a poor state of maintenance, whilst the Wiltshire section is mainly clean and tidy. Wiltshire has confirmed that they recently undertook channel sweeping over the length and jetted the drainage system. The letter acknowledges that the impression is in part due to kerbing and gullies being in place on the Wiltshire section, whilst in Gloucestershire the edge of carriageway is primarily grass verge. Whilst the installation of kerbing along the whole length would be one potential solution, at an approximate cost of £180k, it would be preferable to think about a wider solution which addresses some of the other issues in the area, such as walking and cycling provision as well.

The Local Highways Manager has investigated the highlighted issue of mud on the highway from the servicing of the construction site opposite Four Pillars hotel and confirmed that this is in fact a site operating responsibly with very little evidence of debris being pulled onto the highway on the occasion that he visited, and no reports to our call centre reporting problems here. We will, of course, respond to any highway safety issues which we are made aware of and are happy to work with Ubico to facilitate a lane closure to assist their operations if requested.

#### **(ii) Speed Limits**

It is helpful to see that the District Council supports the proposal for the speed limit changes which are currently being actioned. The extent of this particular scheme, which constitutes reducing the current 50mph on the first kilometre of Spine Road East to 40mph, plus introducing a 40mph to replace the national speed limit on Station Road, has been carefully considered following detailed consultation with the Police who have indicated their support for the proposals over this limited length. It was originally identified through our annual collision analysis and is being progressed along with some physical measures, such as pedestrian islands, to support it.

Whilst it is noted that the District Council would like consideration of the further sections of speed limit reduction shown on their plan, the remainder of the length of Spine Road East in Gloucestershire was assessed as part of the

collision analysis above but at the present time the proposals, as outlined, were unable to be justified. The remaining length of national speed limit in question (in Wiltshire) is relatively straight with little development or junctions along its length. It is of high quality construction, width and alignment with an adjacent wide footway/cycleway to accommodate non-motorised users. Taking this into account and using an assessment against the current guidance Wiltshire are content that the national speed limit remains appropriate.

It is fair comment that with the high leisure use in the area a better consideration of facilities for pedestrians and cyclists would be welcome. However, this would be best addressed through long term master planning of the area to achieve a long term vision for the regeneration of the area.

### (iii) Aggregate Traffic

Gloucestershire and Wiltshire will continue to work closely together on these issues.

Gloucestershire's Minerals Local Plan (existing and emerging) acknowledges the desire to see a number of improvements to the Eastern Spine Rd (Appendix G) and the matter is specifically picked up under policy DC6. This policy seeks to support the collection of developer contributions to contribute towards the improvements as a consequence of increased lorry traffic from minerals development.

However, whilst the policy remains 'saved' and therefore has some weight in decision making with future minerals development, its implementation is very much influenced by the rules governing developer contributions. These have changed somewhat since the existing MLP was adopted. Legislation now covers the circumstances around when developer contributions can be sought. Furthermore, national policy has also changed (i.e. introduction of the NPPF and PPG), particularly in the case of transport matters.

In the relatively recent past, a major minerals development (Manor Farm, Kempsford) was considered by CDC and was given a 'minded approval' subject to a section 106. However, this did not concern road improvements to the Eastern Spine Rd. The proposal was deemed insufficient in its anticipated impact on the highway network to justify such a contribution.

The emerging Minerals Local Plan, which recently underwent public consultation, includes the Manor Farm site (allocation 06) as a specific site. It also includes an Area of Search at Down Ampney (allocation 10). These are only two new sites that could have an influence on the ambitions for the Eastern Spine Rd. Based on the outcome with the recent Manor Farm application – there is no specific provision concerning improvements to the Eastern Spine Rd contained in the Detailed Site Schedule. For the Down Ampney site the Detailed Site Schedule acknowledges the need for a new access into the Eastern Spine Road and seeks more assessment work to be carried out to determine what might be required - although this is likely to be at the far western extent of the Eastern Spine Rd near to the A419 junction.

In terms of managing HGV traffic, the adopted Local Transport Plan (2015-2031) sets out the strategic view for transport across Gloucestershire. The Spine Road East is not identified as a strategically important link with the Link and Place hierarchy (classified as a Local Link limited to non-strategic trips) and it does not form part of our advisory HGV network. The LTP also contains policies which cover our working with Highways England and neighbouring authorities to manage any cross boundary freight issues and using the Freight Gateway platform and its lorry watch function where perceived freight issues can be reported; as well as the need Construction Management Plans to minimise the impact of construction traffic. This could also be applied to developments such as quarries which are dependant on freight traffic.

Two transport schemes remain within the Local Transport Plan – these are both elements of an historic Eastern Spine Road scheme and relate to a ghost island junction improvement on the A417 Whelford Road junction and Allotment corner scheme in Kempsford. Both were recently reviewed and retained by GCC as part of a wider review of historic transport schemes. It should however be noted that the identification of schemes within the LTP does not reflect a commitment by the county council for funding. We would therefore be reliant on third party contributions.

In considering Wiltshire's Aggregate Minerals Site Allocations Local Plan, the Inspector considered the Council's approach in terms of managing/ mitigating the potential impact of HGV minerals traffic in the area has been appropriately and soundly addressed. In considering the consultation responses and subsequent position statements on the various matters relating to the proposed site allocations, the Inspector concluded as follows:

*"Traffic*

*57. Traffic effects are of potential importance in all areas. However, there are particular concerns in the Upper Thames Valley and in the Calne area.*

*58. In the Upper Thames Valley, there would be heavy goods vehicle movements to and from various proposed extraction sites along C-class roads. However, I observed that such roads are of a reasonable width and alignment. Necessary improvements and alterations could be carried out as part of the development management process.*

*Bearing in mind the safeguards contained within the Plan and in the policies of the Minerals Core Strategy, I find that the provisions are soundly based."*

In summary, we agree that it is sensible to ensure co-ordinated planning across the Water Park, and there are some opportunities with Somerford Keynes, Lechlade and South Cerney now taking forward their neighbourhood plans. We fully recognize the competing demands in the area between tourism and sports activity sites with industrial business use including the aggregate industry. It is clear that the area would benefit from an overarching long term development plan. However, as identified by the District Council, this is a major regeneration site and there is a role for them to play in providing some co-ordinated leadership and long term planning for the water park.

Gloucestershire County Council has a part to play in this with the regulatory functions as the Highway Authority and Minerals Planning Authority, however, place shaping leadership is best done at the local level. We currently have some good examples in the County where District authorities are leading major place shaping projects such as Cotswold Canals, Littlecombe, Cinderford Northern Quarter, Kings Quarter / Blackfriars, Cheltenham Development Task Force / Town Centre, and at Ashchurch / A46. The County Council would be pleased to continue to engage with Cotswold District Council and assist CDC in any way we can to see a long term strategy developed for the Water Park.

Yours sincerely

Scott Tompkins  
Lead Commissioner – Highways Authority  
Gloucestershire County Council

