

Public Questions and Statements for the Cabinet Meeting on 6 December 2017

Agenda Item 8 - Options for the Routing of HGVs on the A350 and C13 between Shaftesbury and Blandford

Question

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Question

1. Question from Trevor Clements, or a representative Counsel on Compton Abbas Parish Council's behalf, to the Cabinet Member for Natural and Built Environment in relation to the Equalities Impact Assessment in respect of Agenda Item 8

Question

In relation to the report on the 'Options for Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV) routing between Blandford Forum and Shaftesbury on the A350 & C13 and decide on the option to be taken forward by Dorset Highways' I would like to question the legislative compliance of the Equalities Impact Assessment within the report which states:

'An Equalities Impact Assessment screening exercise was carried out. At this stage the recommendation is not considered to have any negative impact on groups with protected characteristics.'

Answer

The Equality Act 2010 requires that organisations including Local Authorities must, in the exercise of their functions as service providers and employers, be proactive and give due consideration to the General Duties to; eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance opportunity and foster good relations, between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not. Dorset County Council fulfils part of these duties by conducting Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA) prior to implementing external or internal policy or service changes, with a view to ascertaining its potential impact on equality.

The EQIA process ensures that we pay due regard to the impact of change on each of the protected characteristics and aim to mitigate any negative impacts. Dorset County Council have established a process for making this assessment which ensures that it is based on sound evidence. Once prepared, a draft EqIA is independently assessed by a panel comprising the Diversity Working Group to ensure that it is compliant with the requirements of the Act.

In this particular case a draft EqIA was prepared. However this remains a live document and before it had gone through the independent Panel the author made amendments following ongoing work on the scheme and consultations identifying that for two of the options proposed, there could potentially be an impact on younger people in one of the communities. The EqIA was therefore revised to identify this impact and the mitigation that would be possible. This current EqIA still remains a live document in draft form and will be independently assessed at the next meeting of the Diversity Working Group scheduled to take place on 14 December.

Statements

2. Statement from Robin East, A350 Community Group, to the Cabinet Member for Natural and Built Environment in relation to Agenda Item 8 - Options for the Routing of HGVs on the A350 and C13 between Shaftesbury and Blandford

We speak for 7 villages on the A350 between Shaftesbury and Blandford and unanimously call for Option 1 in the DCC Cabinet paper. We have serious concerns on the implications of either option 5 or 6 for the existing A350.

The reality is that neither the A350 nor the C13 are suitable or safe for the existing levels of traffic or the type of vehicles that travel along them.

DCC already recognises that the A350 has the worst accident record of all A roads in Dorset, it is therefore a real concern that a wrong decision by the Cabinet, would inevitably add to the already unacceptable level of risk on this road.

We are also concerned that neither the existing nor the future risks have been adequately assessed by DCC Highways.

The A350 CG operates with the following mandate from the Parishes of Compton Abbas: Fontmell Magna: Sutton Waldron: Iwerne Minster: Shroton: Stourpaine & Durweston;
“To speak for the residents and businesses on or near the A350 and C13 between Shaftesbury and Blandford Forum in lobbying for improvements to the transport links, road infrastructure and safety in the north/south transport corridors of North Dorset, and report back to Parish Councils as appropriate.”

3. Statement from Roger Thomas on behalf of Fontmell Magna Parish Council,
to the Cabinet Member for Natural and Built Environment in relation to Agenda Item 8 -
Options for the Routing of HGVs on the A350 and C13 between Shaftesbury and Blandford

The options aroused great passion in Fontmell and triggered such a debate that the Fontmell PC called a special meeting to obtain the views of residents. About 50 people turned up and all but three voted in favour of Option 1.

One fear was that if we agreed any of these options the temptation would be to say “problem solved” and everything else would be shelved. But the biggest fear was that a seemingly innocent sign on the C13 would bring all HGVs on to the A350. This was greeted with anger and outrage at our PC meeting. The reaction could not have been stronger - Option 1 is the only one acceptable.

4. Statement from William Kenealy, Chairman, Melbury Abbas & Cann Group Parish Council, to the Cabinet Member for Natural and Built Environment in relation to Agenda Item 8 - Options for the Routing of HGVs on the A350 and C13 between Shaftesbury and Blandford

VILLAGE OF THE JAMMED

THE ONE WAY SYSTEM DOES NOT WORK

CURRENT SITUATION

- One way system signs installed in April 2016
- Large lorries travelling south were directed through Melbury Abbas
 - Jams increased to over 50+ a week along with more damage to the village and road banks
 - The 4.8 meter wide road is not suitable for large vehicles
- Our Parish Council requested a weight restriction from Dorset County Council in November 2012. It was formally accepted but never acted upon.

AN HGV AND A CAR CAN'T PASS



HGVs AND 7.5 TONNES CAN'T EITHER



LIVES ARE AT RISK



PROPERTY DAMAGED



EVERYONE IS AFFECTED – EVEN DCC!



STATISTICS

- Jams recorded since September 2016: **1,263**
- Average duration: **24 minutes**
- Lost time for motorists: **505 hours**

CONCLUSIONS

- Melbury Abbas & Cann Group Parish council is against the one-way system in any shape or form
- It has been proven over the trial period that it simply does not work
- No degree of expensive traffic management can make it work, or change the physical reality of a road that is too narrow for a lorry and car to pass one another
- It is imperative that DCC take decisive measures immediately to divert vehicles above 7.5 tonnes away from the C13 through Melbury Abbas

5. Statement from John Porter, Melbury Abbas St Thomas' Church, to the Cabinet Member for Natural and Built Environment in relation to Agenda Item 8 - Options for the Routing of HGVs on the A350 and C13 between Shaftesbury and Blandford

I am a resident of Melbury Abbas and a member of the Parochial Church Council – former churchwarden.

The church owns most of the wooded bank between School Lane and West Lane. This roadside has been significantly eroded by HGVs. A rock fall necessitated the erection of a safety barrier. Bank failure beneath the church could have catastrophic results.

The church owns a graveyard opposite School Lane. “Cut in” by the rear axles of articulated vehicles negotiating the corner has heavily eroded the boundary bank. Failure of the bank would spill human remains onto the road.

I urge adoption of Option 6.

6. Statement from Peter Mole, resident of Fontmell Magna, to the Cabinet Member for Natural and Built Environment in relation to Agenda Item 8 - Options for the Routing of HGVs on the A350 and C13 between Shaftesbury and Blandford

I am asking you not to make any changes to the broad arrangements until a solution is implemented to the existing urgent and extremely dangerous situation for pedestrians in Fontmell Magna.

You both know that pedestrians have to walk on the A350 though the South Street bends at a point where vehicles come round corners with negligible visibility and at high speed such that it is impossible to make safe judgements about negotiating pedestrians in the road and where a vertical wall on one side and a near vertical nettle clad bank on the other preclude safe refuge for the pedestrian. Other parts of the village require pedestrians to use the carriageway in dangerous circumstances.

The danger here is getting worse as modern wider vehicles seem able to tightly negotiate the bends at faster speeds. A few weeks ago I was struck a glancing blow by a van at the point where visibility was at it's maximum and with no oncoming vehicle to inhibit the driver taking avoiding action. You would not entertain vehicles of all types being allowed to drive at 30mph round blind corners on the pavements in Dorset towns yet this is effectively what you permit to continuously take place here. While I do not wish myself or anyone else to be killed or seriously injured while walking to the post box I live in fear of being called to attend to someone who has been struck by a vehicle and is in need of urgent medical assistance.

I think you know that plans earlier this year to improve the A350 were not adequately advertised in Fontmell and most people did not know about the exhibitions or Dorsetfor you initiative. When follow on results did not seem to reflect the views I hear expressed by residents here I undertook a local survey, using similar questions to try and gain an objective representative view.

I have previously sent you the results of this survey which was completed by users of the road who are well educated and sensible members of the community who deserve to be listened to.

They know, and you know, that the day to day risk to pedestrians in South Street has reached a level which is unacceptable and needs urgent attention. Although it is incidental I am not sure that this underling severe situation has been properly reflected and scored in the risk assessment in the cabinet paper you are about to consider.

A proper evaluation of the risks should take place and appropriate mitigation measures should be evaluated and discussed with the intention of introducing arrangements which reduce risks to as low as reasonably practicable.

When I reflect on issues such as Hillsborough and Grenfell Tower I feel I must speak out when I know how dangerous the situation is today regardless of the HGV issues.

My survey demonstrates overwhelming support for safe pedestrian access, adequate advice to motorists and safe traffic speeds. None of these currently exist as you know.

Please deal with this matter before making any wider decisions about the A350 and C13.

The risks are real, extreme and unnecessary today and I would also ask that you introduce a temporary speed limit in the area of South Street while the matter is being properly addressed.

7. Statement from Simon Higgins, Area Manager, Road Haulage Association Ltd, to the Cabinet Member for Natural and Built Environment in relation to Agenda Item 8 - Options for the Routing of HGVs on the A350 and C13 between Shaftesbury and Blandford

(Mr Trevor Green will present the statement of the Road Haulage Association)

Dorset Highway Officers attended the Road Haulage Association Dorset Sub-Regional meeting on the 7th September 2017 to discuss the issue of HGV's using the voluntary one-way system namely the A350/C13 corridor as an alternative to using the A350 for north and south bound HGV traffic which that road has struggled to cope with.

The officers informed the meeting that £2.4 million pounds of funding had been provided in March to be invested over the year to provide consistency, structural maintenance and surfacing.

At that meeting, the one-way system was unanimously supported by the RHA members i.e. the advisory option 1 as the only viable option although members felt that this option should remain voluntary.

There was also support for a requirement towards mitigating measures through working collaboratively with and for both the benefit of the haulage industry and village residents along the A350/C13 route and these mitigating measures should include:

- Improved signage both ends
- Removing or redesigning high kerbs in MA and widening certain areas in MA and on the A350
- Upgrading light system in MA (Traffic lights were mentioned)
- Tree canopy height and overhanging branches need attention on both the A350 and the C13, particularly MA
- One-way southbound to end at Gore Clump leaving option to use the C13 Northbound, turning right into the airport road and onto the A30 at Ludwell
- Grip surface to Spreadeagle Hill'
- Regular reviews

8. Statement from Trevor Green to the Cabinet Member for Natural and Built Environment in relation to Agenda Item 8 - Options for the Routing of HGVs on the A350 and C13 between Shaftesbury and Blandford

Wyvern Cargo Ltd are arguably the largest transport logistics company in Dorset with over 100 employees in Poole and another 30 at our depot in Wellingborough.

The North/South route into and out of the county (particularly between Blandford and Shaftesbury) has for many years, by design, hindered our growth prospects and client base in North Dorset. Nevertheless, a client base exists and needs servicing. The A350 in particular costs us more in damage, fuel and time than any other road in Dorset. These economic points, together with environmental factors in this area, play heavily on our minds. To deviate from a route even slightly can make the difference between profit and loss on a job and, by proportion, increase CO2 emissions.

The above points are the reason why we fully support Option 1 with the mitigations as mentioned by the Road Haulage Association in their recent position email to yourself.

To clarify the economic and environmental issues we, in a joint exercise with officers of DCC, took telemetry readings from one of our vehicles on the route specified in Option 1. The vehicle used was a Scania G450 LA with a Euro 6 engine and the trailer was a 45' Curtain Sider. The combination has road-friendly suspension and is plated at 44 tonnes. On this occasion the trailer was empty. The distances taken were Northbound: Blandford Sunrise roundabout to Shaftesbury at The Royal Chase roundabout and Southbound: Shaftesbury A30 turning onto B3081 to Blandford's Sunrise roundabout.

The exercise took place on the 10th March 2017 and the results are as follows:

A350 Northbound leg	B3081 / C13 Southbound
Duration 24 minutes	16 minutes
Distance 11.02 miles / 17.74 kms	8.25 miles / 13.28 kms
Fuel used 1.32 gallons / 6 litres	0.88 gallons / 4 litres
MPG / L/100kms 8.35 / 33.83	9.38 / 30.12
CO2 15.9 K5	10.6 Kg
Running costs £34.28 net	£22.85 net
Harsh acceleration/deceleration events 15	8

It is clear these figures are significant, with some differences around 50% more when using the A350. These go in no small way towards why we support Option 1.

9. Statement from Peter and Caroline Jones to the Cabinet Member for Natural and Built Environment in relation to Agenda Item 8 - Options for the Routing of HGVs on the A350 and C13 between Shaftesbury and Blandford

We are strongly in favour of keeping the current voluntary routing of HGVs northbound via the A350 and southbound on the C13. Although it is imperfect in many ways and not a long term solution, it has gone some way to balancing the traffic load between the two roads. We have concerns about the alternative options, in particular the C13 HGV advisory unsuitable or HGV ban as follows:

1. We live on the pinch point coming into Stourpaine from Blandford where there is no pavement for pedestrians, where two HGVs cannot pass. Since the current arrangement started traffic has flowed better than before. If the A350 has to accommodate all HGVs this and the many other pinch points on the A350 will create a whole set of stoppages with the risks entailed.
2. The report talks of 'a (potential) increase in HGVs/collisions' but omits to point out the actual chaos that this entails.
3. Although the report is mainly looking at road use please don't forget the number of villages and inhabitants along the A350 and the effect of increased traffic and noise.
4. The report highlights some of the costs in upgrading both roads. Increased HGVs will increase the edge erosion which is already evident along many stretches, in particular from Durweston traffic lights into Stourpaine.

Please would you take these concerns into account when decisions are made.

10. Statement from Mike Warren to the Cabinet Member for Natural and Built Environment in relation to Agenda Item 8 - Options for the Routing of HGVs on the A350 and C13 between Shaftesbury and Blandford

My interest in this subject is as a member of the blighted portion of the population of this beautiful county of ours which lives within earshot of the A350 and has to use the A350 (the only access from my house in Stourpaine onto the national road network).

It is my impression that most stakeholders in this debate recognise that neither the A350 nor the C13 are suitable for use as a through route for HGV traffic for a number of reasons. These include specific narrow points on the two routes, the proximity of village environments and communities, steep hills and bends. I recognise that Dinah's Hollow and the village of Melbury Abbas provide ample ammunition for the argument to reduce/curb HGV traffic on the C13 but it does seem to me that insufficient account is taken in the paper of the rather more numerous narrows and villages on the A350.

Fontmell Magna is but one A350 village and rightly should have its proposed footpath. Other narrows that rarely get a mention are the "Stepleton" bends and the slope leading up towards Stourpaine from Durweston bridge traffic lights. Both these narrows are often blocked whilst HGVs travelling in opposite directions attempt to pass - a similar situation to that described when the ambulance was trapped on the C13. Verges in both these places also suffer. Forcing 2-way HGV traffic onto the A350 by restricting vehicle weight through Melbury Abbas just exacerbates the situation.

In conclusion, I realise that we, the blighted population of the A350, have to grit our teeth and be prepared to carry on whilst a better strategic plan is worked out for a north-south HGV route, but I do hope that DCC cabinet is fully cognisant of the impact on the A350 villages of HGV traffic, particularly 2-way traffic.

11. Statement from Derek Gardiner to the Cabinet Member for Natural and Built Environment in relation to Agenda Item 8 - Options for the Routing of HGVs on the A350 and C13 between Shaftesbury and Blandford

I have just been made aware of the contents of the consultation paper regarding the movement of traffic on the A350 and C13 which is to be discussed at the DCC Cabinet meeting this coming Wednesday. The paper contains a large amount of data and commentary and given the small amount of time available to comment, I am only in the position to voice my opinions without being able to study the paper in more detail.

What struck me as a resident of Stourpaine and the person who chaired the update to the Stourpaine Parish Plan 2013 which contained a number of recommendations about improving road safety on the A350 through Stourpaine, is that Option 1 offers the lowest risk score (taking into account road safety as well as a number of other factors) and Option 6 achieves the highest risk score. Examination of the HGV road traffic collision data (point 3.4) shows that the worst faring route regarding collisions involving injury was along the A350 and the lowest was on the C13. Selecting Option 6 would therefore contribute to an inevitable increase in collisions on the A350. Also, given that the A357 will be closed for repairs to the bridge at Durweston early next year, the volume of HGVs passing along the A350 will be even higher during that period and especially if a ban on HGVs is introduced on the C13.

In subsection 2.9 it states that an area wide study is needed to understand drivers' route patterns. Surely this study should be undertaken before any final decision is reached regarding which of the six options is agreed?

The consultation paper mentioned in Section 5 was as I recall more about discussing what improvements would be made to the A350 and C13 and did not open up the subject of how HGV traffic flow should be managed along these two roads. The consultation results do little to show that this subject was part of the consultation.

I am concerned that a decision may be taken on Wednesday 6th December 2017 which will impact heavily on road safety issues for all users of the A350 and all six villages along this road without proper consultation with residents who would be affected by the outcome of the decision. It is stated that the situation would be reviewed within six months but as is often the case, once something has been decided upon it requires a lot of effort to move away from that decision, especially if money has been spent to follow that decision through.

I strongly recommend that a decision as to which option is selected is deferred until residents living in the villages along the A350 and C13 are properly consulted about these options i.e Option 1 should be agreed upon now and the status quo kept for the time being. We are the ones that will have to put up with any adverse impacts and the inevitable impact on road safety.

12. Statement from Dave Crowhurst to the Cabinet Member for Natural and Built Environment in relation to Agenda Item 8 - Options for the Routing of HGVs on the A350 and C13 between Shaftesbury and Blandford

Melbury Abbas, Ancient village, listed property, AONB, Our Home. Is being eroded by HGV's.

Large HGV's cannot navigate any corner without crossing into opposing traffic, relying on any oncoming traffic to take avoiding action.. it's dangerous and intimidating. daily jams, non injury accidents are frequent but not data recorded.

I am categorically against a reversal of route, this would place my home and family in extreme danger at the foot of spread eagle hill. Option 6 is the optimal solution here, No distinction has been made between A and C classification Roads. End the Madness, consider Boundary Rd.'

13. Statement from Joanna Gardiner to the Cabinet Member for Natural and Built Environment in relation to Agenda Item 8 - Options for the Routing of HGVs on the A350 and C13 between Shaftesbury and Blandford

The problem of pinch points / road narrowing applies equally to the A350 and the C13, but it must be recognised that the A350 suffers from a far higher number of pinch points than the C13. As leader of the Stourpaine Community Speedwatch team I witness on a regular basis (as do the other members of my team) the impact of the pinch point at the top of the hill as traffic enters our village from the direction of Blandford. When two large vehicles approach the pin point from opposite directions, the vehicles can only pass with extreme difficulty and are often damaged or have their mirrors dislodged as a result – indeed a resident who lives beside the pinch point removes vehicle mirrors from the road on a regular basis.

The traffic flow data shown at 2.2 makes for interesting reading, but the figures for the two roads cannot be used for purposes of comparison. The figures quoted for the A350 were measured on two different dates at two sites, whereas the figures relating to the C13 were measured on the same day and at three sites.

If there is a real wish to improve road safety on the A350, it makes no sense to recommend Option 6, since this option achieves the lowest risk score of the options under consideration. If one examines the HGV collision data, it is clear that the highest rate of collisions involving injury was recorded for the A350 and the lowest for the C13. It therefore follows that selecting Option 6 would, in all likelihood, result in an increase in collisions on the A350 and a decrease in road safety. On top of that, I understand that the A357 is to be closed for repairs to Durweston bridge in the early part of 2018 so this will contribute to an even heavier volume of traffic on the A350, including HGVs, at a time when the proposed ban on HGVs would come into force on the C13.

In my opinion, any decision as to which of the six options be adopted, should be delayed until the residents living along the A350 and C13 have been consulted.

14. Statement from Melbury Abbas and Caan Group Parish Councillor Brian Hughes to the Cabinet Member for Natural and Built Environment in relation to Agenda Item 8 - Options for the Routing of HGVs on the A350 and C13 between Shaftesbury and Blandford

I am aware of the input from our Chairman William Kenealy and merely wish to express concern that once again the basis of the two routes under discussion have not been fully explained. At previous meetings a very misleading description has been placed on the 'Higher Route'.

It has been said that the Lower Route (A350) passes through 7 villages and is a winding road. The 'Higher Route' referred to as the C13 was said to be a vastly better road only passing through 1 village.

Of the two routes to Shaftesbury the 'Higher Route' takes the overwhelming majority of the through traffic. It is the route which was estimated to be close to capacity (North and North East Transport Study, 2010, cost to Dorset tax payers £97,000). The A350 by comparison is under-utilised.

Travelling from Blandford to Shaftesbury on the Higher Route does not only include the C13 but also the B3081 and a busy section of dual carriageway forming part of the A30 to rejoin the A350 North.

Both roads are winding, twisty roads. However the A350 is the better of the two with a higher flow capacity taking into account HGVs, it is also the wider of the two routes.(North and North East Transport Study,2010)

Conflicts occur when the through traffic mixes with local domestic traffic which can be in the villages or other industrial and recreational areas. I have produced below a comparison of these areas on both routes.

A350.	C13/B3081/A30
Stourpaine.	Sunrise Business Park (Includes Ambulance Station)
Iwerne Minster.	Iwerne Minster(Tower Hill)
Fontmell Magna.	Compton Abbas Airfield
Compton Abbas.	National Trust Car Park(Spreadeagle Hill)
Cann.	Melbury Abbas
Sutton Waldron (Few houses).	Cann Common
	Shaftesbury (junction of B3081/A30)

There are more houses, and a Nursing Home, in the area of the B3081/A30 'T' junction than on the A350 at Compton Abbas. There are also more homes at the top of Tower Hill on the C13 than on the A350 at Sutton Waldron.

The 7th. Village on the A350 is Shroton the residents of which use the A350 to travel to Blandford and Shaftesbury. By comparison the village of Ashmore lies between the C13 and the B3081 and its residents utilise both of these roads to reach Blandford and Shaftesbury. Neither village has any actual presence on the routes.

The A350 is not a good road but by comparison it is the better route for HGVs. It is now important that efforts are made to secure funding to improve it. I wholeheartedly support the safety measures being carried out along the A350. The Government this year launched a fund to improve 'smaller 'A' class roads', the A350 fits this description.

After 80 plus years of failure to by-pass Melbury Abbas, a costly venture in these times of financial restraint, it is time to return to schemes which will improve what is the Primary Network Route-the A350. The old by-pass Route is now obstructed by a £1 million travellers site and although it was said at the time it could be moved if money was available for the

road this would be a waste of valuable funds. Also there is now a solar farm on the Eastern by-pass route for Shaftesbury.

The dream of upgrading the C13 and by-passing Melbury Abbas then Shaftesbury is an unachievable aspiration that will not happen in another 80 plus years. It is time to be realistic and seek Government support to upgrade the A350 in a way that will protect the villages.

I would urge the cabinet to approve option 6 as per the application of Melbury Abbas and Cann Parish Council in 2012.

15. Statement from Councillor Colin McHenry, Chairman of Compton Abbas Parish Council to the Cabinet Member for Natural and Built Environment in relation to Agenda Item 8 - Options for the Routing of HGVs on the A350 and C13 between Shaftesbury and Blandford

Risk Statement Concerning the Diversion of all HV traffic via the A350

Compton Abbas Parish Council do not believe that the risk analysis associated with a change in current HGV traffic flows on the A350 have been adequately assessed. Specifically:

- Compton Abbas is reliant solely on the A350 for emergency services – when both roads are closed this is a particular concern for residents (such as 12th & 13th April this year when a crane caught on fire in Cann, and the C13 had an incident on Spreadeagle Hill..... or when a motorcyclist was killed on A350 north of the 3 village junctions and the road was closed by police at Royal Chase roundabout through to Fontmell Magna.
- Option 5&6 will put Additional HGV traffic on a road described by DCC Highways as having the highest accident rate on Dorset's rural A roads will slow the road for emergency vehicles response.
- the response rates of the emergency services to those reliant purely on the A350 such as Compton Abbas and the increased risk to life this represents to the residents. N.B within the report to the cabinet, the ambulance service states that it takes an additional 10 – 15 minutes using the A350. If the HGV's were all moved to the A350 this response time would go well beyond those 10-15 extra minutes.