

Question from Cllr Jane Somper, Beacon Ward

QUESTION FOR AGENDA ITEM 8 CABINET MEETING 9th JULY, 2024

Should Cabinet give approval for the works at Dinah's Hollow, Melbury Abbas in the Beacon Ward as outlined in the report, the shift in all vehicles using the A350 while the C13 is closed will be serious and will require some important mitigations along the A350, a road classified as a strategic route that runs through the Beacon Ward and several villages. This will need addressing before the works begin at Melbury Abbas. The surrounding road network will also need careful consideration in any diversions as well.

There is an advisory one way system for HGV's along the C13 and A350, and in places along the A350 the road is narrow with sharp bends and unsuitable for HGV two way traffic. There are several particular pinch points along the route on the A350 where I request to meet with highways officers and the Cabinet member on site to ensure that measures are put in place, such as temporary traffic lights and/or other highway reliefs to prevent collisions and unnecessary jams where if two HGV's meet they cannot pass. Cllr Andrews witnessed such a potential collision on his recent visit to my ward.

I also request that funding is ringfenced for repairs to the A350 that may well be required due to the significant increase in vehicle usage once the works at Dinah's Hollow are completed and that a schedule of these works is published and prioritised. Along with this we know that local residents will use their own know diversion routes but there is also likelihood of HGV's and lighter vehicles using these 'side roads and back routes' which will also need some mitigation to prevent blockages and may also need repairs carried out once the works are completed.

These roads are Tower Hill in Iwerne Minster, Sutton Hill in Sutton Waldron, Mill Street in Fontmell Magna. It may also be necessary to consider Foots Hill at Cann, and I request that officers assess the other possible routes that may be used by local residents.

Also important is a requirement to confirm that all signage, including the weight activated sign at Cann is in full working order and that large signage at Blandford roundabout and in Shaftesbury have very clear messages on the routes and diversions.

It will be essential to me as the ward member to have regular updates from the highways team in order to keep residents and parishes up-to-date with a single point of contact within the highways team to deal with any problems that arise from the closures and diversions. As the impact of any road closures over a long period of time will clearly have a disruptive impact on the wider area of my ward, I request a public meeting in order for residents to have their questions answered from expert highways officers.

Due to the serious disruption to the area and all the villages that sit along the A350 it is my responsibility as Beacon Ward member to ensure that everything is done to allow free flow of traffic so residents can continue to go about their lives safely on this road and that the requests I have made today are secured and confirmed.

Response from the Leader of the Council and Cabinet member for Governance, Performance, Communications, Environment, Climate Change and Safeguarding on behalf of the Cabinet member for Place Commissioned Services

I have a response drafted by officers which I'll read out and then some extra I've added.

The Project Team will be liaising with Key Stakeholders to develop both a Temporary Traffic Management Plan and Communications Plan before the scheme's Construction commencement phase. These will be carefully monitored during construction and amended as necessary.

Dorset Council is aware of the impact closing the C13, back in 2014 by Dorset County Council, had on local communities. The uproar was so great that it reopened less than a year later despite the safety concerns. The remediation works detailed later in the agenda are necessary and will undoubtedly cause disruption. I'd like to thank Cllr Somper for finding the time to meet with me yesterday and commit to working with her to minimise, to the maximum practicable extent possible, the impact on residents arising from the C13 temporary closure.