

Cllr Jackie Porter: Report to Parishes, September 2019

Contact Jackie.porter@hants.gov.uk

01962 791054

07973 696 085

August 27th was the deadline for responses to the **NSIP for M3 Junction 9 proposals**.

I have included my response as County Councillor at the end of this report, and as City Councillor, I 'signed off' the WCC response, which asked specific questions regarding the impact of the proposal on congestion in Winchester during construction, climate change, air quality and noise, and ecology. This response can be seen on the WCC website.

The County Council has been making a number of changes to school transport arrangements over the summer which has resulted in unnecessarily long journeys for children: we have challenged this, and HCC has made alternative arrangements. If this affects children in your council, please ask them to contact me.

A certain amount of road mending has gone on during the school holidays, making the most of the 'school bus' break, with more in the pipeline, but potholes should be reported as soon as you see them Go to hants.gov.uk, and click on the car icon.. We have reported the terrible holes outside The lavender Barn and the hole outside Ellingham, but the County response has been that they aren't serious enough yet. This will be challenged. There are more areas where it consistently floods and I will be going out with engineers later this month to check drain and gulley clearance. Please remind your parishioners of their Riparian responsibilities if their property adjoins a ditch. Thank you.

Flooding: Work has been undertaken on the flooding issues in the Worthys, but despite meeting with the HCC team in March for Sutton Scotney, no progress has been made. I have chased this up again. As a result of impending pipe repair work, resurfacing is put off again for a while.

Carers of Dementia sufferers can now apply for a Blue Badge.

Advice is online – go to the hants.gov.uk website, look for 'applying for a Blue Badge' to see details. It will require a 'DS1500' or a letter from your doctor. If you have any queries, please contact me.

For more details of the change (which was only implemented on 30th August) see this link:

<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/news/2019-08-30/blue-badge-scheme-extended-people-hidden-disabilities-including-people-dementia-30>

Cycle routes into Winchester. I have been working with other local councillors on this, but disappointingly, although the M3 proposes a route for NCN 23 through the new junction, the County Council has not yet managed to plan a complete cycle route scheme from the Alresford area to connect up with NCN right into Alresford. I'd be interested in your views on this.

West Street

Hopefully this is making progress. I am happy to be involved if you wish. HCC Funding should be secure, but it is up to you to decide how your NATC CIL can be spent. Will you be doing a Neighbourhood Plan?

Commission 2050 :There is a special County Council to review the findings of Commission 2050 on 23rd September, starting at Like all County council meetings, the report and debate will be televised on the day and be available for six months afterwards. You can see more about this at

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/haveyoursay/visionforhampshire2050>

Transition to 2021- the HCC budget cutting exercise. The County needs to cut £80m per year off expenditure by the 21/22 year, but it's getting harder, year by year. Again suggestions of increasingly stringent conditions for road changes, filling potholes, looking after adults, library hours and recycling centre opening hours are being considered. We await the precise proposals.

Response to Highways England Consultation on M3 Junction 9 proposals.

I am writing as the County Councillor for the Itchen Valley Division, which covers land in the SDNPA, WCC and incorporates the communities broadly to the north west, west, east and north of the junction and the City Councillor for The Worthys.

Each of the wards has specific concerns and this email relates to those concerns.

The proposal describes the strategic objectives of the scheme in para 2.2.2 of the PEIR.

The principal plan is to promote the free running from the M3 to the A34 at the junction, and secondly to improve opportunities for NMU.

Every week there are major hold ups (registering 'black' on the HE website) when the Highway network in this area is brought to a halt because of accidents between junction 9 and 12, or on the A34. The congestion at junction 9 will not be solved until accident rates are improved north and south of this junction. Local road systems (eg on Google maps) show the local roads at gridlock too.

You cite driver frustration being a consideration for improvement in public health. The opportunity for a driver to make a decision to come off the motorway network and use local roads instead of a gridlocked trunk road will not diminish, but the design of the new, smaller capacity junction will not have the capacity to cope with this. Winchester still risks gridlock if the motorway system is brought to a halt, resulting in local congestion and frustration for both M-Way and local users

I would like to suggest that the accident rates south and north occurring, partly because of high speeds compared to capacity, and difficulties of local traffic crossing lanes to reach the relevant lane for exit. It is important to reduce the speed through the junction (as has been done successfully on M3/M25 junction). There is no evidence that I can see in this paper that will reduce the number of vehicles passing through this section of the motorway, just potentially increase their speed.

The increased speeds through the junction puts local traffic at risk when travelling onto the A34/A33. There is a very small distance for local, slower traffic, to cross the faster main through traffic, much of which is lorries and many residents have expressed concern at going onto the motorway system to carry out a local journey. This means that Learners, smaller cc vehicles, less confident drivers etc would not be able to use this route.

To mitigate the shorter length to cross the system, I am requesting slower speeds through the junction using Average Speed Cameras -taking an average speed of 50 mph least from the end of the smart motorway system to the free flow of traffic on the A34.

The improved access from the Spitfire Link would be welcome if indeed, it will reduce congestion: sometimes queues are 1km long here, discouraging junction use. I would like clarification of the roundabout design to mitigate the greater capacity necessary for likely much increased use.

The additional lane on the M3 as it splits into two 2 lane sections will add capacity to the network at this point. I'd like clarification of the environmental impact of this in land take, noise, pollution and carbon footprint.

Noise

A number of receptors have been included in the PEIR. All of these are welcome considerations. The residents in Kings Worthy and Headbourne Worthy suffers from road noise as shown on the DEFRA 2015 map, and an increasing number of properties are being built within 400 metres of the A34 flyover across the Worthys ward, but it is discounted in the PEIR. Low readings are misleading. Residents living adjacent to the A34 and M3 (but not using them) often prefer the evenings and weekends, when the traffic noise stops as traffic is brought to a halt almost daily. I would like to add this area for noise mitigation through bounding or barrier. Tree cover (planted at the original build) is insufficient.

Environment

This subject of biodiversity is well covered by the local authorities. As the Cabinet Member for the Built

Environment at WCC, I concur with the host authorities' proposals, but wish to make additional comment on three aspects:-

1. Provision for Non Motorised users: this is improved compared to the current provision but it could be so much more encompassing on both sides of the junction. The PEIR cites increased use of cycling and walking. Electric bikes are another good alternative to car for local use, and are expected to grow in popularity for shorter local journeys, yet the path is just 3m wide (narrower than the current paths) and insufficient for greater use. I request 5m paths with potential to separate cyclists and pedestrians, and horse riders.

Lit NMU paths through the junction and away from it may need more consideration.

2. The links on the east side are good, but the proposals to the west side of the M3 are poorly linked for pedestrians and cyclists. This needs further consideration, including to the B3047 junction on the A33, as well as on the A34. Sound mitigation will be a consideration on both sides.

The PEIR states that cyclists prefer to use the non-trunk roads into Winchester. If the off road connections are improved within this scheme, this will negate the need for cyclists to opt for the currently less stressful non trunk road network.

3. The impact on residents living within short distances of the bridges and flyovers in the West of the M3, and the impact of the fourth lane creating greater noise. This is explored in the PEIR but will need further consideration when levels are clarified.

During construction

The likely increased traffic during construction will impact the city of Winchester and the A33.

To mitigate increased traffic because of diversions, I request that consideration be given to

1. Increased park and ride facilities to north, south and east of the site,

2. Upgrade of the A33/B3047 junction at the Cart and Horses junction at Kings Worthy. Site of accidents over the last few years, this junction will be under severe pressure during any road closures, being the easiest way from many part of Winchester to the A33, M3, A34 via non trunk roads and thus likely to be the focus of congestion. Upgrading to a roundabout or traffic lights, for example, will also mitigate the resultant non motorway traffic continuing to use this route after work is complete.

Carbon and the climate change emergency declared by WCC, HCC and Government.

I acknowledge that the data was collected (in the main) before these were declared, but the impact on WCC's carbon footprint must be a consideration in this scheme.

WCC is aiming towards a carbon neutral council by 2024, and district by 2030. I would like clarification and calculation of the impact of additional lanes and speed on the carbon footprint of Winchester and the SDNPA as well as HCC and the HE network as a whole, and would like to see this as part of the PPA with the host authorities.

I look forward to seeing how you will be addressing these points in the final scheme proposal.

Winchester City Councillors report July 2019

On street Parking. I am receiving many questions regarding on street parking and what we can do. The mini survey I used when this was first mooted showed that residents shared my concerns about the effect on every day shops. We have to accept that in the face of caps on Council Tax increases, inflation, a decline in central Government funding and increasing needs, Hampshire County Council needs to seek income from every asset they have. Highways are one of those assets, and an asset that is quite pricey to maintain. All District Council in Hampshire have been asked if they wish to take on the management of on street parking from early 2020 on the understanding that profits are to be made and shared with the County Council. We are intending that Winchester Council will do so, firstly because residents and visitors are the users of on street parking, and those of us that have experienced private parking companies would not want to inflict that on anybody; secondly because we have a better understanding of the very local difficulties for both residents and employers around parking, and the impact that can have on lives and incomes; thirdly, we have experienced enforcement teams that have to be in town anyway to manage off street parking, it makes sense to optimise their time by managing both on and off street parking. Due to the uncertainty regarding parking enforcement we have not been recruiting to this team recently and have suffered had a shortage of staff, as soon as the 2020 arrangements are in place Enforcement will be recruiting and we should see improvements in Enforcement.



As an aside, the lease on the Alresford Station Car Park expires at the end of 2019, negotiations are in hand to extend that lease.

We need agree the long-promised Parking strategy for Alresford that takes us forward for 20 years and will expect all needs to be represented. I see no prospect of public transport returning to the heydays of the 1950's so we find that working adults have immense difficulties without a car, let us accept that and move on, if proven wrong I shall be delighted. There are many issues to be resolved, and opportunities.

We would like short term free parking outside shops to be maintained with 100% enforcement to ensure turnover of spaces. In practice this will need both funding and possibly some investment in machinery. Historically there have been two significant objections to this – more, and ugly street furniture, and 'as soon as shoppers see a machine, they will drive on through to Sainsbury's or Tesco's'. On the first point, we have timed ticket machines in Winchester, although not quite Heritage, they are sympathetic; on the second, I'd love to see a better way of making Enforcement more efficient and cost effective, and the Parking team at Winchester are up to date on the technology available.

The requests for Resident parking permits have been continual ever since Enforcement became active. We see that blanket resident parking zones just move the problem further from the town centre. That would help nobody. As part of the strategy we will have to consider if small areas restricted to one car per household, and only for those with no prospect of providing one off street parking space could be set aside for resident parking.

This is an opportunity to allow more of us to run electric cars. Charging leads crossing pavements are not an acceptable method but if we can manage to turnover spaces for charging from the street light network it becomes possible for those with no off-street parking.

Winchester City Councillors report July 2019

Alresford Parking is not just an Alresford problem. The residents and businesses from villages all use Alresford as well, and are essential to the economic viability of the Town Centre. When we do start work on this please would all parishes engage with the process, and encourage residents to do so as well.

This is not 'another tax on motorists'. Hampshire need to make some money to pay for essential services, not only road maintenance but care of the vulnerable. The increases in Council tax have been below inflation for many years while costs and needs have increased, it all has to be paid for somehow. My priorities would be different from Hampshire's, but we have to what we can with where we are.

Junction 9 on M3 The feedback I am getting agrees that the new proposals are an enormous improvement in terms of road safety, air quality, and noise pollution but there are still concerns about the safety of those travelling from Winnall to the Itchen Valley. I spoke to the team on Saturday 3rd and the majority of objections have been on that matter. They have a variety of solutions they are considering including extending the crossover length to closer to 1 km, and reducing the speed limit to 50 mph with average speed cameras. Some ANPR around there may help with the rural crime as well.

However, there have been very few comments about the cycle path that stops. If we are to lever funding from other sources to provide a cycle network, we need cyclists to say if they need it

Green Waste Bags v. Green Waste bins. Following the windy weather several green bags have gone missing, and they can be a danger to traffic. I've been asked why we can't have bins instead. The trouble is that with the bags the lorries carry slave bins to empty the sacks into, so we would have to be all bins across Winchester. Given the size of modern gardens that would create a storage issue., and those areas that do use bins seem to have a chargeable green waste service. However, residents without gardens are subsidising those with gardens.



Hydration and Water Bottle refill. The water fountain has been installed in Abbey gardens in Winchester would we like something a little more modest?

Planned Roadworks are still coming as a surprise to some of us. Would parishes please consider adding a link <https://roadworks.org/> to their websites?

Next Councillor Surgery – Friday 6th September, 0930-1045, Alresford Community Centre, by kind permission of the trustees.