



*Clerk: Mrs. L Rampton
Parish Council Office,
Winscombe Community Centre,
11 Sandford Road, Winscombe,
North Somerset BS25 1JA*

Tel: 01934 844257

Planning Department
North Somerset Council

By email:

23rd August 2022

**Winscombe & Sandford Parish Council response to
The Banwell Bypass and wider mitigation planning application proposals submitted
under planning application 22/P/1768/R3EIA**

OBJECT

The Parish Council has previously agreed that whilst the ideal bypass would bypass Winscombe, Sandford & Churchill as well, it is accepted that there is no funding pot big enough for this task at this time. Therefore, Winscombe and Sandford Parish Council support the need for a Banwell Bypass but only if appropriate and adequate mitigation measures for our parish are included as part of the total scheme and that all mitigation measures are in place before the bypass is opened to traffic. This application currently falls woefully short on adequate mitigation and this matter should be addressed in advance of the application being considered for approval.

NSC has been open to the fact that the creation of a Banwell Bypass will increase traffic flow through the surrounding villages, not only from vehicles previously avoiding the 'Banwell bottleneck,' but also from future housing development. Throughout the entire public consultation period, the parish council repeatedly requested projected modelling data for a 20-year growth period along with any other information that was used by NSC to form its decisions. This included population growth figures for the area to enable a true assessment to be made of the traffic impact on the parish. It had been hoped that this information would be received during the consultation process, and in advance of a full planning submission to enable the parish council time to submit a carefully considered response regarding wider mitigation proposals for the scheme. Although NSC held this data, these requests were refused for over a 12-month period meaning that the parish council and its residents only have a window of 30-days to interpret and apply the results of the modelling data to the proposed mitigation proposals and assess the true impact of the bypass on this parish. As you will appreciate, as there are numerous, complex documents now available to examine, 30-days is very little time to work with data that has been held by NSC for over a year. This course of action by NSC can only be seen as obstructive and has not allowed a truly 'open and transparent' consultation with the parishes most affected by the bypass. We therefore advise that additional comment may be submitted by the parish council after the close of the official consultation period and would hope that these will be taken into consideration.

Having considered the modelling data, initial comments are as follows:

- There are errors in the data presented which need to be corrected in order for the PC to be able to adequately understand the proposed scheme. Some tables imply that traffic will

peak in 2024 and then decrease by 2039 which seems improbable. Understanding the likely future levels of traffic in the parish is clearly crucial to our ability to grasp the likely impact of the scheme.

- There is discussion in the Transport Assessment of disbenefits for the area surrounding Banwell which appears to show a significant modelled decrease in road safety on the A368 through Banwell as a result of the scheme. The assessment provides very little information and our understanding on this point may be flawed, but if this is the case then surely further mitigation is needed as it is not acceptable to make the centre of Sandford less safe for pedestrians and cyclists.
- More information is needed about journey times in 2039. There is an indication in the report that journeys E-W from Banwell through Sandford will increase by 5 minutes on the current journey times and that journeys E-W from Banwell through Winscombe will increase by 4 minutes on the current journey times which suggests that there will be significant additional congestion along those routes. The implication is that by 2039 we will see all the current delays plus extra congestion through Sandford and Churchill and through Winscombe. However, there is no data presented regarding these scenarios and the impacts on journey times are only described by one or two sentences in the text which makes assessment difficult. We would like to be told what the modelled journey times through our parish will be in all scenarios and in 2024 and 2039 and if it is correct that there will be significant additional congestion in the villages we ask that mitigation be developed for this including further work to improve junctions on the A38 in Winscombe and Churchill, as well as a review of pinch points through Sandford.
- There appears to be an increase in vehicle numbers passing through Sandford of 180% (i.e., to 280% of current levels) and an increase in vehicle numbers passing through Winscombe of 150% (i.e., to 250% of current levels). We feel that the proposed mitigation falls short of addressing the significant traffic which will pass through the parish.
- The model suggests that traffic on Hill Road/South Croft/Sandford Road will increase by 50%. This road already sees considerable speeding and the PC has requested that it be included in the mitigation design, but nothing has been provided. We ask that this is re-considered.
- The model also appears to under-estimate current vehicle numbers on Hill Road/South Croft/Sandford Road as the numbers quoted in the transport assessment do not match our records of vehicle numbers and so we feel that this section of the model and the report needs to be reviewed.
- If we are likely to see traffic queueing time in the villages increase by 3 to 5 minutes as suggested by the transport assessment we feel that further mitigation is essential to manage the increases in vehicle numbers and congestion and that the scheme should not go ahead until adequate mitigation has been put in place.

The bypass scheme has proposed the removal of a number of parking spaces in the centre of Winscombe. These spaces are critical to the operation of our local shops and businesses and while we welcome the desire to provide safe road crossings we object strongly to the removal of the touch-down parking spaces. The shops and businesses are central to the character of the village and feedback from the local shopkeepers is that losing the parking is likely to put businesses at risk. The PC has previously asked the bypass team to provide crossings elsewhere on Sandford Road and Hill Road, a request which was not granted, we ask that crossings are provided here instead.

It is clear from the NSC documents submitted for wider mitigation, that little notice has been taken on-board from local communities through the consultation process. It is those living and travelling in this area on a daily basis that know how increased traffic flow through the villages will impact on different aspects of life in a semi-rural community, and how some of the proposals will without doubt cause congestion and queuing traffic. Rather than creating pinch-points where they do not exist, mitigation proposals should ease congestion caused by additional traffic as well as focusing on safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and all road users. The Parish Council would always choose safety over congestion when considering plans, and

some of the proposals are not considered to be safe, therefore alternative suggestions should be considered and a number have been **appended to this response**. It is questioned if some proposed mitigation measures have actually passed a safety audit test and could potentially be withdrawn from the plan at a later date? The parish council would strongly recommend that the matter of wider mitigation is re-visited before this planning application is decided.

Whilst the loss of land in the AONB is regrettable, the Southern Link Road is considered an essential part of the bypass plans and must be included if the bypass is to proceed so that all traffic is not forced out through Sandford & Churchill, or onto roads that are not suitable for this increased load. To ensure the correct distribution of traffic through each village, a correctly signed roundabout should be considered rather than a junction where the southern link meets the bypass. A roundabout would serve to ease traffic flow from the bypass onto the link road and also slow traffic from the bypass before it reaches Sandford Village and enters a '20 mph' zone. Whatever type of junction is finally agreed, signage will be crucial at this point to forewarn vehicles of height and weight restrictions in Winscombe and to prevent HGVs incorrectly using the southern link road and being forced to use Church Road when they cannot pass under the old Railway Bridge.

Traffic travelling on the bypass and link road will have a consistent speed limit of either 40 mph or 30 mph – until they reach the end of the link and join the A371 Castle Hill/Banwell Road into Winscombe. Here they will be faced with 5 different speed limit changes along a 1 mile stretch of road. With numerous other speed limit changes proposed as part of the bypass and mitigation proposals, the parish council would request that a consistent 40mph speed limit be applied to the A371 into the parish. This would not only make this an easier junction to negotiate for those using the local garden centre, but also more likely that traffic will slow to 30 mph and then 20mph when entering Winscombe.

It is to be commended that the bypass proposals encourage the use of sustainable travel to discourage car use, but consideration should be given to lack of public transport available in this and surrounding parishes which forces local residents into their cars. From October 2022 the parish will be served by only one bus service running every two hours Monday to Saturday. There is no evening bus operation on this route and no service on a Sunday or bank holiday. It is noted that bus services do not fall 'within the scope of scheme' but has the loss of yet another bus service for the area been taken into consideration in recent modelling projections? If NSC is to reach carbon-neutrality, and part of the bypass proposals are to encourage the use of walking, cycling and public transport, serious consideration should be given to enhancing existing public transport as well as adding new frequently served routes to encourage better use.

In conclusion the parish council objects to this planning application in light of the impacts on the parish of Winscombe and Sandford and its parishioners

Yours faithfully

Lynne Rampton

Lynne Rampton
Clerk to Winscombe & Sandford Parish Council

Annex 1

It is acknowledged that highway engineers were engaged to produce mitigation proposals following the opening of the Banwell Bypass for surrounding villages and have designed a desk-based plan. It is however those that have lived and worked in the villages for many years that know the type of traffic using our roads and the problems encountered, especially for agricultural vehicles and holiday traffic.

After consulting with local residents over many months and considering the plans in detail there has been a mixed reaction from residents towards the proposals. Whilst most would agree that Banwell needs, and deserves a bypass there was concern for the effects of this on local roads. The parish council welcomes the introduction of 20 mph zones in the parish and considers these could be highlighted through different coloured road surfaces but offers the following observations that should be addressed as part of mitigation proposals and would welcome further discussion on these with NSC:

Wider network mitigation – general arrangement plans

Sheet 2

- 2.1 Mead Lane. Further thought should be given to this junction to improve driver visibility, especially with the addition of a dedicated cycle/footway crossing the junction whilst drivers are trying to pull out onto a busy A368 Station Road.
- 2.2 With the A368 being a national trunk road, and heavily used by HGVs, ***the narrowing of roads in all areas of this plan and creation of pinch-points was not favoured.***
- 2.3 It was noted that the new section of footway to the front of Thatchers Cider was to be completed by NSC independent of the BB project. In the interest of pedestrian safety, completion of this should be a condition of the BB approval.
- 2.4 Hill Road/Nye Road crossroads with A368. The proposals for a box junction marking, and close by pedestrian crossing point are unsafe and totally unacceptable. Drivers should not have to rely on some-one activating the pedestrian crossing to exit the junction. The exit from Hill Road onto the A368 is already a junction with limited visibility and the addition of extra traffic onto the A368 will only serve to increase drivers' reluctance to use this junction without additional measures being put into place. Without improvement, drivers from Winscombe will use Somerville Road instead as the exit through this housing development has better visibility for oncoming traffic in both directions. A smart traffic-controlled junction (incorporating pedestrians) should be included in place of the pedestrian crossing point at the Hill Road junction.
- 2.5 It was disagreed that there will be little traffic impact from the bypass on Hill Road, South Croft, Sandford Road, and Somerville Road. These roads should also be included in mitigation plans for 20 mph speed restrictions and include an upgrade to continuous and improved footways as well as pedestrian crossing points.
- 2.6 The A368 Greenhill Road is a road bordered on both sides by residential dwellings. The quieter road surface applied on the section of the A368 between the Sandford Retirement Village and Hill Road junction should be extended along Greenhill Road to mitigate noise for residents from increased vehicle movements.

Sheet 3

- 3.1 The removal of bus-laybys outside and opposite the primary school is very strongly opposed. Whilst there is little in the way of public transport in the parish, the laybys are used on a continual basis by school buses serving Churchill Academy as well as the primary school. Buses collecting pupils for trips and swim lessons can often be parked for some considerable time and removal of these is considered unnecessary and will only serve to add to congestion, queuing traffic and an increase in air pollution outside the primary school.

- 3.2 It was appreciated that air quality testing was now being undertaken in a number of vulnerable areas in the parish where idling traffic will be likely to occur as well as other areas where 'pinch-points' cause queuing traffic, such as outside the primary school on the A368. It should be a condition of any approval notice that this is continued until effects of the bypass on this parish were known and further mitigation measures taken to address issues caused by this.
- 3.3 Again, the narrowing of the carriageway by building out the existing pedestrian crossing is considered unnecessary. Traffic passing the school, especially at school drop-off/collection times is already restricted by parked vehicles.
- 3.4 The proposed upgrade for a walking/cycling route between A368 and Churchill Green is again considered inadequate as it will still involve pupils passing through agricultural fields containing livestock.

Sheet 4

- 4.1 Both Winscombe and Sandford Parish Council as well as Churchill Parish Council have previously requested a pedestrian crossing point on Dinghurst Road, close to the school bus stop by Hilliers Lane. This is to ensure the safety of pupils leaving Churchill Academy and catching the school bus home.

Sheet 6

- 6.1 Although outside our parish, observations are also made regarding the inadequate upgrade to the Churchill traffic lights with the A38. Could the addition of a feeder lane be considered for Bristol bound traffic from the A368?

Sheet 7

- 7.1 Are the speed limit changes accurately reflected on plans? It would appear that on exiting Winscombe A371 20 mph zone, that this increases to national speed limit of 60 mph whilst it is a 30-mph limit in the opposite direction?
- 7.2 Church Road/Woodborough Road triangle. It is still considered that a roundabout at this junction would be the best measure to control speed into the parish, especially if the A371 has an un-restricted 60mph limit close to entry into the parish. The PC would like to see a consistent 40mph speed limit from the Southern Link Road continued along the A371 Banwell road until the Winscombe gateway.
- 7.3 Church Road/Woodborough Road triangle. Should a roundabout not be agreed, priority for the traffic at the junction should be reversed rather than 'stopping this up' for vehicular traffic. Currently, large agricultural vehicles find the T-junction difficult to manoeuvre without encroaching on the opposite carriageway. A reversed priority for the Triangle as well as small island at this junction in the centre of the A371 would slow traffic and stop traffic from Banwell 'cutting the corner'. The parish council strongly opposes the blocking of one side of the triangle.
- 7.4 A new zebra crossing point close to the 20-mph speed change into the parish was considered to be unsafe. A vehicle activated speed sign should be considered instead.
- 7.5 A proposed 'build-out' to accommodate a new pedestrian crossing point in the vicinity of the village bakery was not favoured as this would lead to loss of on-street parking as well as causing more traffic congestion for vehicles passing under the single carriageway road beneath the railway bridge. An alternate location for the crossing point should be considered.
- 7.6 The proposed pedestrian crossing point very close to the junction of the A371 and Sandford Road (Brown's Corner) was not considered to be a safe location. Loss of on-street parking was not favoured and an alternative location on Sandford Road away from the junction should be considered.
- 7.7 It was appreciated that air quality testing was now being undertaken in a number of locations in the parish. It should be a condition of any approval notice that this is continued until effects of the bypass on this parish were known and further mitigation measures taken to address issues caused by this especially in areas where queuing traffic occurs.

Sheet 8

- 8.1 A new pedestrian crossing point on Sidcot Lane was welcomed.
- 8.2 There are no 'existing 'slow road' markings' on Sidcot Lane. New road markings were welcomed.
- 8.3 An upgrade of the Sidcot A38 traffic light junction should be included as part of the proposals. Lengthy queues exiting the village would be encountered without the addition of 'smart' traffic lights.
- 8.4 A VAS should be included as part of mitigation proposals for traffic entering the parish from the Sidcot traffic lights.

Sheet 9

- 9.1 A local resident action group considered that physically engineered solutions were required to reduce speed on Winscombe Hill & Church Road.

Sheet 10

- 10.1 Clear and improved signage for height and weight restrictions should be included not only at parish entry points, but also before entry onto the Southern Link Road giving HGVs the opportunity to take the correct route to the A38 via the A368. The current 7.5t weight restriction sign for Winscombe Hill is located on entry into the parish rather than at the junction with the A38. Could this be relocated to the main junction (although this is in Somerset) to forewarn HGVs before turning into Winscombe Hill?