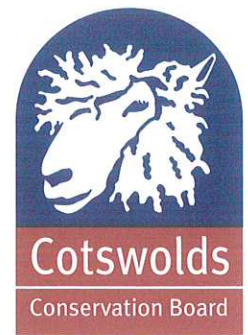


Mike Goddard,  
Highways England,  
Temple Quay House,  
2 The Square,  
Temple Quay,  
Bristol. BS1 6HA



31<sup>st</sup> May 2019

Dear Mike,

### **A417 Option 30: Birdlip Village & Cowley Junction**

As you know the Board has expressed significant concerns over the idea of providing a link road from Birdlip across to the proposed Shab Hill junction at meetings and in various written submissions. The recent technical working group meetings and the presentations of the analysis of traffic movements have shown that alternative schemes may offer opportunities.

Can we ask that Highways England investigates the option for a section of bypass for Birdlip, taking the traffic from the Stroud – Painswick direction to the south of Birdlip to join the A417 at the Cowley junction, as shown in the attached.

We believe that the relief road would be a single carriageway ordinary road that would fit the topography very well and could follow current ground level “at grade”. It would avoid the need to have link road to north end of Birdlip crossing the High Wold to Shab Hill, thereby avoiding the village. You will also see from the plan that we offer suggestions for how the Cowley junction arrangement might work with the Birdlip bypass to improve traffic movement and flow and deliver significant environmental net gain.

We consider such a scheme would offer a series of advantages over the current proposals:

- Traffic through the centre of Birdlip will be reduced significantly
- Noise and air pollution levels in Birdlip will be reduced
- Quality of life in Birdlip will be enhanced
- There will be a significant landscape and environmental gain in the wider landscape by not having the link route across to Shab Hill
- The Shab Hill junction arrangement will be simpler, freer flowing and delivered at a reduced cost
- Journey time will be the same or better than the current proposed route in Option 30 to Shab Hill

Our more detailed assessment is as follows:

#### ***Birdlip relief road for B 4070 to pass south of the village:***

- simple at grade single carriageway road built to match existing B road character in terms of verges and landscaping.
- flat crossroads and T junctions for minor roads (or mini roundabouts if essential).
- topsoil mounding to the north as noise barrier and limestone grassland and avoiding off site spoil disposal.
- minor planting in severed corners of fields.

#### ***Benefits***

- a. Traffic and economics overall benefit:
  - Although the route for south bound traffic is longer (4.6km rather than 2.85km) c.50% is 70mph dual carriageway compared with 100% c.40-50mph single carriageway with right-angled corners in village: if average speeds are 40mph for northern link as proposed and 45 and 60 for relief road via Cowley junction, journey times are very similar (around 4.2 to 4.4 minutes).

Conserving, enhancing, understanding and enjoying the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

- BUT as compared with a route coming from Cowley junction along present A417 to link road north of Birdlip, this option is significantly shorter (1.7km) for traffic heading towards Painswick etc. than more circuitous 2.6km north of Birdlip – around 1.6 minutes saved.
- b. The length of new build is c.860m compared to a 1km link past the radio station.
- c. Although an extra south bound 'off' slip overbridge is needed to reduce length of route at Cowley Junction, this can probably be combined with accommodation bridge otherwise needed; by linking at Cowley rather than Shab Hill the main A436 junction can be designed as more free-flowing, with no extra roundabouts.
- d. It would remove most through traffic from Birdlip village with air quality and noise benefits, leaving only traffic to and from Birdlip itself or wanting to go to and from Cowley or Great Witcome using Birdlip Hill; and they too could be sent round to the south.
- e. It would reduce traffic impacting on the school in Birdlip.
- f. Significant additional benefits for Birdlip (heritage, visual and townscape).
- g. Large benefits in achieving more than currently proposed for reclamation of A417 – noting knock-on benefits for disposal of surplus materials, habitat creation and returning land to agriculture.
- h. Removes all through traffic north of Birdlip: facilitating replacement Barrow Wake car park and its use as a starting point for walks at southern end of Birdlip to Crickley Escarpment Enhancement Area.
- i. Creates opportunities for further enhancement e.g. more open access land west of old road to Barrow Wake etc.

## 2. Cowley Junction

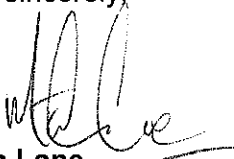
- Split between north element at crossing of Cowley Lane (to provide northern half of link to Birdlip) and South element at Cowley underpass (to provide southern half of Birdlip link and roads to Cowley and Brimpsfield).
- North element incorporates diversion of Cowley lane access.
- Vertical alignment of north element; whether the B4070 south bound slip road to Birdlip goes over or under the A417 needs detailed consideration to ensure safety and minimise landscape harm; A417 aligned under B4070 south bound slip road may be better on both counts at expense of additional surplus material.
- The south element reuses redundant and existing slip roads and linkroads.
- Between the two elements the junction incorporates restoration of former quarry (following use as construction site) habitat enhancement (possibly mixed woodland scrub grassland).

### Benefits

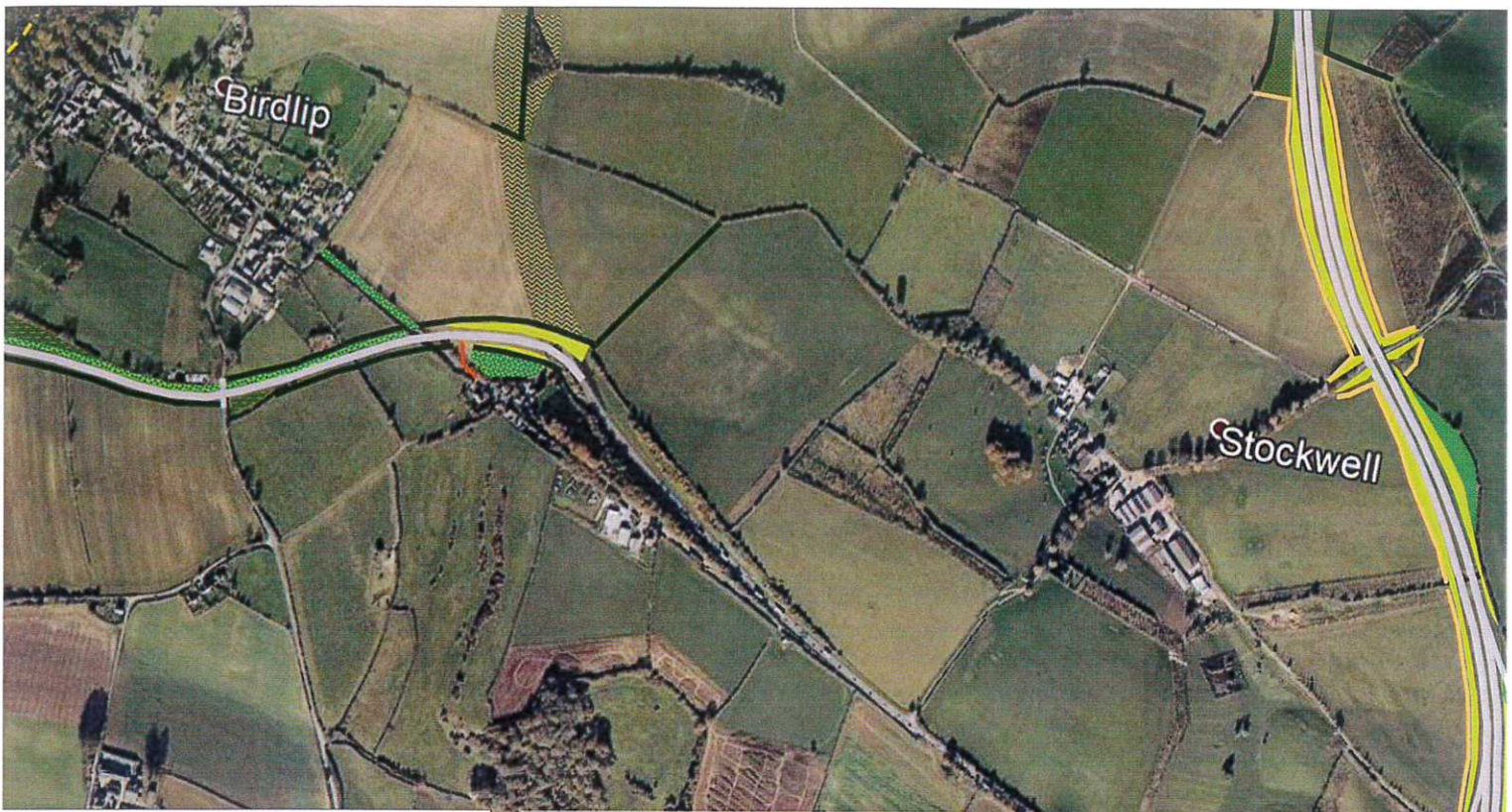
- a. Significantly less circuitous route for users of B4070 via Birdlip travelling from or towards the north (see above).
- b. Consequential extensive benefits in conjunction with Birdlip relief road – as above.
- c. Somewhat less circuitous route for traffic to and from Cowley, Brimpsfield etc.
- d. Greater use made of existing and redundant slip roads, diversions etc.
- e. Depending on detailed vertical alignment of A417, minimises (possibly avoids) harm to significant Roman settlement found in construction of Cowley Roundabout.
- f. Creates significant area for landscape enhancement / habitat creation.

I trust you find these suggestions helpful and welcome your response.

Yours sincerely,



**Martin Lane**  
Director



**WOLDS AONB: A417 LANDSCAPE  
SENT AREA COWLEY TO CRICKLEY HILL**

**Birdlip and Cowley Junction**

500m

**Works**

and slip roads and bridges

s

ly & Gloucestershire Way

ting

grassland cutting

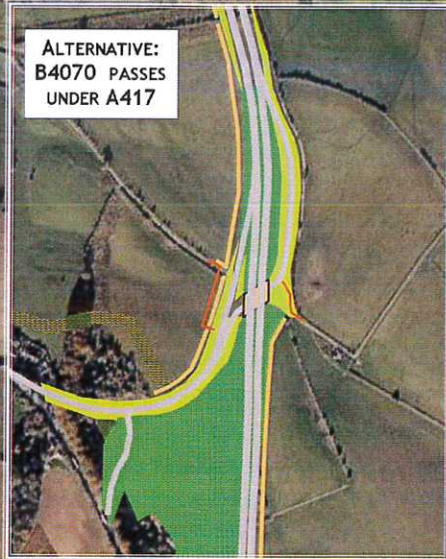
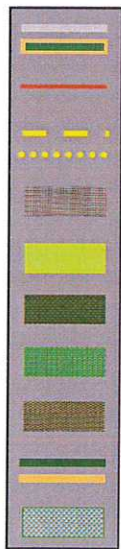
planting incl. embankments

sub surplus fill/embankment

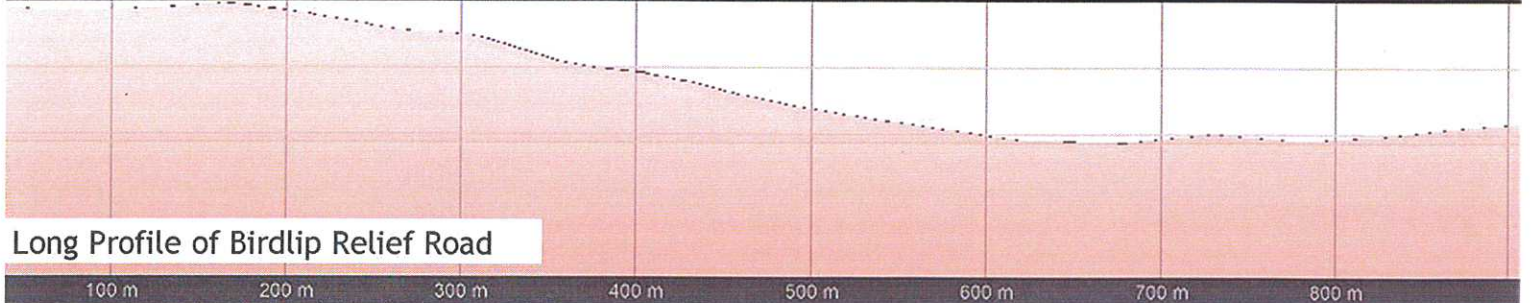
and return to agriculture

hedged hedges & walls

arrow Wake car park



Min. Avg. Max Elevation: 279, 284, 290 m  
 Range Totals: Distance: 952 m Elev Gain/Loss: 3.92 m, -12.5 m Max Slope: 2.0%, -4.6% Avg Slope: 0.9%, -1.9%



**Long Profile of Birdlip Relief Road**

