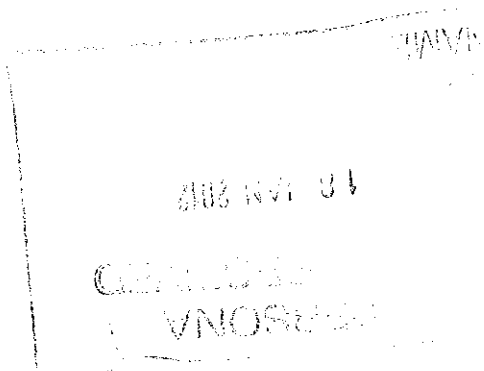


**A5 – M1 LINK (DUNSTABLE NORTHERN BYPASS)
PUBLIC INQUIRY**

PROOF OF EVIDENCE

**HERTFORDSHIRE CC
(OBJ/43)**



**Transport Policies and Strategies Unit
Hertfordshire County Council**

Benyam Kenbata

Yours faithfully

I hope that you find these comments useful in conducting the public inquiry. Should you have any questions in relation to the points raised then please do not hesitate to contact me.

The attached representation is submitted on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council in relation to its holding objection (registered as Objection 43) to the draft De-trunking order for the above scheme and supersedes in full the representation of 8 June 2010.

A5 - M1 Link Road, Dunstable Northern Bypass

Dear Sir

17 January 2012

Mr Benyam Kenbata
Hertfordshire County Council
Highways House
41-45 Broadwater Road
Welwyn Garden City AL7 3AX
Tel: 01707356234
Email: Benyam.Kenbata@
Hertsighways.org.uk

Inspector for A5 to M1 Link Road Public Inquiry
C/o Mr Graham Groom
Persona Associates
2nd Floor (East Suite)
Barclays House
51 Bishopric
Horsham
West Sussex RH12 1QJ



3. On 15 March 2010 a meeting was held between the Highways Agency and other authorities including Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC). It was agreed that HCC and CBC should meet to discuss and clarify their position on the issues related to De-trunking in advance of a further meeting with the Highways Agency. A meeting took place between officers of HCC and CBC on 28 April 2010 at which discussion included the future road hierarchy in the area post implementation of the proposed bypass scheme, approaches to re-numbering roads in the area, issues identified by members and the implication of future planning proposals for the Dunstable area.
2. The Highways Agency responded to the on 12 March 2010. In particular, information was provided in response to the additional point made at the panel meeting on 9 February 2010. Traffic forecasts for the effects of the proposed scheme on the section of the A5 within Hertfordshire were provided together with information on the predicted reduction in traffic flow on the A4146 at Water End in Hertfordshire.
- A copy of the full report to the Highways and Transport Panel and the above resolutions was submitted by e-mail to the Highways Agency on 12 February 2010.

- f) Information on what impact the scheme will have on the section of A4146 between Leighton Buzzard and Hemel Hempstead, particularly at Water End.
- e) Whether measures will be put into place to minimise the use of the bypassed section of the A5 for through heavy goods vehicle movements.
- d) Difficulties of access from the local side roads onto the A5 from Flamsted and whether the Highways Agency have any schemes to improve the situation.

In addition, Members raised the following local matters:-

- c) The County Council should submit a holding objection and reserve the right not to agree the proposed draft De-trunking Order until discussions have taken place with the Highways Agency on the terms of the transfer of the asset and discussions have taken place with Central Bedfordshire Council on the future status of the A5.
- b) The County Council cannot consider the principle of de-trunking the section of A5 in Hertfordshire until sufficient information is provided by the Highways Agency.
- a) The County Council supports the scheme in principle and does not wish to comment on the draft Compulsory Purchase or Side Road Orders.
1. The Council's Highways and Transportation Panel met on 9 February 2010 and advised that in response to the consultation on the draft scheme orders for the proposed A5-M1 Link Road, the Highways Agency should be advised of the following matters:-

Representation from Hertfordshire County Council



4. On 28 May 2010 the County Council wrote to the Highways Agency and provided an update on the discussions that had been held between HCC and CBC.

5. The County Council made representations on Alternative Route Proposals (AR1 and AR2) by way of a letter to the Highways Agency on 28 May 2010.

6. Following the commencement of the statutory process, the Highways Agency responded to the issues discussed in our letter of 28 May 2010 and the subsequently submitted Proof of Evidence to the Public Inquiry inspector dated 8 June 2010. The minutes of the meeting of 15 March 2010, between the Highways Agency and other authorities including HCC and CBC to discuss De-trunking issues, were attached to this letter.

7. On 3 November 2011 a copy of the Highways Agency's Outline Statement of Case was received. Unfortunately this did not provide any additional information on the issues relevant to De-trunking and on 1 December 2011 a copy of the Highways Agency's Full Statement of Case and Proofs of Evidence was received. The proofs of evidence of Karen Green (HA/101/2), David Elliott (HA/105/2) and Roman Finch (HA/102/02) included responses to the objection submitted by HCC but did not add anything to the information provided to date.

8. The principle argument by the Highways Agency for De-trunking the section of A5 from south of the proposed link road, through Dunstable to the M1 at Junction 9 is that the new link road between the A5 and the M1 at the new Junction 11A will become the Trunk Road connection to Dunstable. The County Council accepts that this is a sensible approach and the provision of information on the predicted reduction in traffic flow on the A5 in Hertfordshire demonstrates the likely effect of the scheme.

9. A key issue, however, is the future status of the bypassed section of the A5 south of the new link road. The minutes of the meeting of 15 March 2010 indicate that it was agreed a change to the signing system associated with the existing A5 would be needed as the A5-M1 Link will be signed as the A5 upon completion. In their response letter of 27 October 2011 the Highways Agency confirm that they accept the need for signing and other works which will be necessary should the road be reclassified and confirm that the costs associated with these works will not be met by the Published Scheme. Whilst the Highways Agency has requested that the funding mechanisms for these activities are discussed in future planned meeting, no such meeting has taken place to date. The County Council considers that these signage changes should be part of the Published Scheme and be fully funded by the Highways Agency.

10. In respect of the difficulties of access from the local road network onto the A5 at Flamsted the Highways Agency are predicting that the Published Scheme will reduce traffic flows on the section of A5 in Hertfordshire by about 9%. Whilst this reduction is welcome, any improvements to the performance of the existing junctions are likely to be short-lived, as the anticipated growth in traffic in the area will soon outweigh the reductions generated by the effect of the link road. It is therefore essential that the case for any alterations to the junction be considered in De-trunking discussions between the County Council and the Highways Agency. In their response letter of 12 March 2010 the Highways Agency has indicated that they have no plans for junction alterations in this area but would envisage such issue to be discussed at future meetings.

11. Allied to the issue of access from side roads are the long standing concerns poor road safety records and high volumes of traffic on the A5. Information provided in the Traffic Proof of Evidence (HA105/2) and the supporting deposited documents emphasise severity of these problems and the need for the scheme to deliver the anticipated reductions in traffic flows and personal injury collisions on the section of the A5 south of the proposed A5-M1 Link road. It follows that in order to derive the anticipated scheme benefits, discussions on the package of improvements required for De-trunking should give due consideration to the need to bring forward measures to improve the safety of junctions where existing safety issues have been identified.

12. In relation to the control of HGV movement on the section of the A5 south of the proposed scheme, the Highways Agency considers that the proportion of HGVs will remain constant once the Published Scheme is operational. It has been confirmed that the 2031 AADT on the A4146 is forecast to fall from approximately 17900 vehicles per day without the A5-M1 Link to approximately 17200 vehicles per day with the A5-M1 link completed. This is disappointing as the volume of traffic, particularly HGVs, on the A5 and A4146 is a matter of concern and it was hoped that the provision of the new link road would reduce this problem. The County Councils position remains that measures to manage traffic volumes and HGV movements on these section of road should have been an integral part of the Published Scheme given the importance of this issues in relation to the objectives discussed in the Transport Economic Assessment for the Scheme and the opportunities it presents to further enhance the schemes anticipated present value benefits.

13. The Do-Minimum discussions in the Engineering Proof of Evidence (HA/102/2) refer to a significant amount of maintenance work which needs to be undertaken on the existing A5. However, no additional information has been provided on the current condition of the highway, structures and its installations or their anticipated condition upon transfer. As De-trunking is not likely to be required until 2016 there should be adequate time available to resolve matters. Whilst it is acknowledged that detailed discussions on the condition of the road to be handed over can continue over this period the County Council require that the Highways Agency provide greater certainty, at this stage, on their position on the key issues identified above in order that a satisfactory solution can be reached.