

**Save Swallow's Wood
& Alternative Proposals on Transport**

**A57/A628 Mottram-Tintwistle Bypass and
A628/A616 Route Restraint Measures**

Volume 1: Summary Proof

Presented on behalf of Alternative Proposals on Transport
and Save Swallow's Wood

by

Emma Lawrence

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. My name is Emma Lawrence. I am a resident of Hollingworth and work as a Senior Technical Writer in the semiconductor industry. I have an honours degree in Philosophy. I am here today to represent a local campaign group called Save Swallow's Wood, which evolved from the original "anti-bypass" group, Alternative Proposals on Transport (APT), founded by Pat Ellison. My evidence, and that given by Pat Ellison, Dr. Alena Vencovska, and several other witnesses, is presented on behalf of both campaigns.
- 1.2. We regard the traffic problems in the villages of Mottram, Hollingworth, and Tintwistle as unexceptional, in that traffic levels have increased across the United Kingdom; they are a fact of life in modern Britain, and largely a consequence of increased car ownership combined with disproportionate increases in the cost of public transport, and ever decreasing services.
- 1.3. We are concerned about the loss of amenity. In other parts of the country where it is not possible to build a bypass, alternatives to road building are the only option. We object to our countryside being devastated for an outdated approach to tackling traffic problems. As Tony Blair acknowledged in the preface to the Government's "Future of Transport" white paper¹, "*...we cannot simply build our way out of the problems we face. It would be environmentally irresponsible – and would not work. So we must make our existing transport networks work more efficiently and in more environmentally friendly ways*"; road building does not reduce traffic. We consider this is adequately demonstrated by the Highways Agency's own assessment of the scheme.

¹ *The Future of Transport*, Department of Transport, July 2004

- 1.4. Further, this white paper states that, "*new capacity where it is needed, assuming that any environmental and social costs are justified.*" We do not consider the environmental and social costs for this scheme are justified, given the alternatives that could, if they existed, be implemented instead.
- 1.5. We disagree with the claims made by Tameside MBC Councillors and the Promoters that this is a popular scheme and that 90% of local people support it. In our evidence we demonstrate that figures used to arrive at this 90% are out-of-date, exaggerated, or based on biased methods of consultation (i.e., not valid consultation at all).
- 1.6. Of particular concern are the forecast increases in traffic throughout the local and wider areas. These increases would create difficulties on other local roads and offset, in our view, any benefits experienced in the bypassed areas. Given that traffic on local roads is forecast to increase (overall) by 21.5% (2015) and 23.6% (2030), we do not consider this a "solution" to the traffic problem. The majority of the traffic (approximately two thirds) is local traffic: the levels of local traffic would remain high and remain a source of consternation for local commuters.
- 1.7. Versus the Do Minimum scenario (2015) there would still be 36,000 vpd on Mottram Moor. Traffic would increase on the A57 North of the Glossop Spur (which is from Brookfield to the Gun Inn junction), the A6016 Glossop, New Road, Tintwistle, the A57 South of Glossop Spur (which is from Brookfield to Dinting), the A6018 Back Moor, and the B1074 Stalybridge Road.
- 1.8. We consider that the increases on surrounding local roads would actually discourage walking and cycling and make it more difficult to improve public transport in the local area.

- 1.9. We are concerned about safety. The majority of the accidents that occur today are beyond the boundary of the villages (where the accident rate is below average for the type of road). The increases in traffic on the unsuitable Woodhead Pass will lead to more accidents on this already dangerous road, and we do not consider any increase in accidents on the A628 as acceptable.
- 1.10. We disagree with the assertion that the bypass would bring economic benefits to the area and suggest that the local economy would be better served by improving access to existing jobs, through improving public transport access for non-roads users (i.e., those without access private transport).
- 1.11. We are also concerned about the loss of amenity. Local farmland and woodland would be destroyed. The landscape and wildlife that is today enjoyed by locals and others from further afield would no longer be available to us.
- 1.12. We do not consider that the scheme can be justified given the threat posed by climate change. The Government has begun to take a strong policy stance in this area, recently supporting the Climate Change Bill, which requires a 60% reduction in climate changing emissions by 2050. A scheme such as this, which increases climate changing emissions, is contrary to this policy. In light of this changing policy, alternative, low-carbon alternatives must be pursued and thoroughly investigated and given precedence over carbon-generating schemes.
- 1.13. The Highways Agency proposed route restraint is untested and, if it does not work, the traffic forecast and associated environmental impacts (air quality, etc.) will be worse than currently predicted. Further, there is no guarantee that the method of enforcement could not be removed at any time in the future.
- 1.14. We consider that the delay to funding provides an opportunity for low-carbon, non-road building alternatives to be fully tested, implemented and evaluated. These

measures should include route-restraint, a park-wide weight restriction, a concerted effort by local authorities to encourage modal shift by improving public transport combined with “soft measures” – promoting walking and cycling (e.g., safe routes to school, work travel plans) – and a detailed and independent assessment of proposals to reopen the Woodhead line to rail-freight and passenger services. With some of these measures in place, their impact on the villages could be properly evaluated and the case for the bypass re-evaluated, taking into account latest Government thinking on climate change.