

The Right Honourable Chris Grayling MP,
Secretary of State for Transport,
Department for Transport,
Great Minster House,
33 Horseferry Road,
London SW1P 4DR

Councillor David Kay
17, Poplar Road,
Botley,
Oxford
OX2 9LA

9 April 2018

Dear Secretary of State,

Public consultation on the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway

I am writing on behalf of the North Hinksey Parish Council with reference to the proposed Oxford-Cambridge Expressway and the current lack of public consultation relating to the scheme. A copy of this letter has also been sent to our local MP, Layla Moran.

Our concern is that decisions on the choice of corridor due to be made this summer will take place without sufficient local input from residents, and bodies such as Parish Councils located along potential routes, even though they represent the people who would be most heavily affected by such a scheme. As it stands currently the process does not appear to recognise such individuals and bodies as local stakeholders. With many people questioning the actual need for an Oxford-Cambridge Expressway and the negative impact on carbon reduction targets, the Green Belt and the environment in general, let alone the most appropriate route for it to take, it can only be in the interests of the Government to engage with local communities, whether supportive or not, at the earliest possible stage. We therefore support the calls for widespread public consultation, including the possibility of a Public Inquiry, which we are aware have already been made by many other organisations, including local authorities within Oxfordshire.

As a Parish located on the west side of Oxford, with the A34 running directly through it, we also have specific concerns about potential impacts on our own community. Widening the A34 to three lanes has previously been mentioned as a possibility, and although some of the issues surrounding that have been identified in the Stage 3 Report (e.g. the Air Quality Management Area in Botley) we have seen no indication in writing that it has been totally discounted as an option. If it were to be implemented then the impact on our Parish would be no less than catastrophic. I have attached a brief summary indicating the main impacts on our local infrastructure and facilities, which you will note would be extremely wide-ranging. We currently have no way of knowing whether these factors have been taken into consideration in the process of choosing a corridor for the Expressway, or not.

I would ask you to require Highways England to fully engage the wider public in the whole decision-making process relating to the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway, and not just bodies deemed by them to be sufficiently important local stakeholders, to ensure that all local impacts have been considered and that reasons behind decisions are being made openly and publicly.

Yours sincerely,

David Kay,
Chairman, North Hinksey Parish Council.