



Department
for Transport

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Our Ref: 315857

18 November 2020

Miss Sal Robinson
By email: chideock@dorset-aptc.gov.uk

Dear Miss Robinson,

Thank you for your letter of 22 October 2020, addressed to the Secretary of State, detailing Chideock Parish Council's (CPC)'s response to the Department's previous letter of 26 August 2020, regarding the second Road Investment Strategy (RIS2) and the A35 in Chideock. Your enquiry has been passed to the Correspondence Team, Strategic Roads division for a response.

Upon receiving your follow-up letter, Department officials raised your concerns directly with Highways England in connection to RIS2. As you may be aware, RIS2 was published alongside the budget in March 2020, following significant engagement and consultation. RIS2 recognises the challenges of balancing economic needs and the movement of people and goods, alongside the health of communities impacted by trunk roads, including Chideock and other villages on the A35. Accordingly, RIS2 provides 'Designated Funds' for smaller schemes which seek to mitigate the impacts on communities impacted by trunk roads.

Following the production of its Route Strategies in 2017 (which several issues of concern to CPC:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/416750/South_West_Peninsula.pdf), Highways England is using Designated Funds to address several issues, and exploring the feasibility of making improvements to safety for road users and limiting the environmental impact of the A35 in surrounding communities, including Chideock.

In connection to the temporary speed limit trial implemented by Highways England, it is satisfied that it has done so properly and that it has never given an indication that it would implement speed enforcement measures, as the trial was undertaken for environmental rather than safety reasons. Additionally, Highways England included activated speed signs in the first few months of the trial to encourage compliance with the Police parking their

enforcement van in the trial area to support this (without enforcing when doing so).

Turning to the CPC's air quality concerns, Highways England is actively performing its duty to assist Dorset Council in the delivery of its legal responsibilities for local air quality management, despite not being legally obligated to do so. It also explored potential air quality mitigation measures prior to the speed limit trial, which were deemed to be ineffective.

Regarding CPC's desire for a cycle and public footpath between the village of Chideock and Bridport, Highways England has not yet been approached by Dorset Council or another body with a proposal for an off-line cycle or foot path. It has included the idea in its regional list of potential cycle/pedestrian/bridleway improvement schemes, with the intention of assessing any proposal on an equal basis with other schemes across the region.

Going forward, Highways England will be commencing the preparation of the next phase of Route Strategies later in 2021. Both the Department and Highways England would encourage the Council to engage with Dorset Council about its aspirations for the A35. This will enable Dorset Council to be clear about the issues important to CPC, for consideration when it seeks to communication Dorset's priorities for the future of the Strategic Road Network. The Route Strategies will form part of the consultation and evidence base that informs the content of RIS3.

Thank you for your active engagement with this issue on behalf of the Council.

Yours sincerely,

Correspondence Team, Strategic Roads, Economics and Statistics