

Committee: FULL COUNCIL

Date: 2 November 2021

Title: Town Council Consultation on the proposed A358 Plans

Purpose of Report

For members to consider a response to the A358 Consultation.

Recommendation:

Members **RESOLVE** that Officers be delegated authority to formulate a response from council and submit it on behalf of Ilminster Town Council. The response will be circulated to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor so the accuracy can be confirmed ahead of submission in line with what was proposed at the meeting.

Report:

1. Since 2015 what was Highways England and is now National Highways have been working on delivering improvements to the A358 link road Between the M5 at Taunton and the A303 "Southfields" Roundabout at Ilminster.
2. In Highways England's words, this *"involves upgrading an approximately 8.5 mile (13.6km) section of the A358 between Southfields roundabout on the A303 and the M5 at Taunton, to a high-quality dual carriageway. Once upgraded, the route will reduce congestion, particularly at peak times, enhance user safety and improve connectivity both locally and to the wider South West region. This will benefit the local and regional economy and ensure communities are better connected."*
3. In order for the scheme to progress, they are required to make an application for a Development Consent order (DCO). This application will be made to the Planning Inspectorate ('the Inspectorate') who will examine the application on behalf of the Secretary of State, to get permission to construct and operate the scheme. It is intended that an application for a DCO will be made in summer 2022.
4. Ilminster Town Council has been identified as one of the primary consultees for the scheme as a result of Southfields Roundabout being within the town boundary. They are asking for all feedback to be with them by **23:59 on Monday 22 November 2021**.
5. As a result of this an email was sent to all members detailing the consultation process on the 30 September and this was followed up by a letter with further information on the 12 October (**Appendix 10A**). Attached to the 30

September email was a “Stakeholder Pack” pdf detailing additional information.

6. Alongside these documents and other recent documents there have been a series of meetings held which both Cllr Hamilton and Cllr James attended. It may be that they will be able to provide some answers to questions that you may have on this matter.
7. On the 13 October members were notified that a significant number of documents had been sent into the office by National Highways (NH) which were available for inspection either in the office or if members brought in laptops then the documents would be loaded onto them.
8. Whilst members have been provided over the past years with a significant amount of information on the scheme, they have yet to submit any opinions on the way that the design of the scheme will impact upon residents, the economy, the environment, transportation links and transitory traffic migration as a result of what is being proposed.
9. The purpose of this item is to allow members to formulate some thoughts for submission by officers on behalf of the council.
10. Local Parish Councils have already met to discuss this and their draft response has been appended to this report for members consideration (**Appendix 10B**). They are looking for Ilminster to help support the conclusions that they have so far reached in this matter.
11. The chairman from Broadway Parish Council is hoping to attend the meeting and will be happy to help members with any uncertainties they may have over the plans being put forward by National Highways.
12. Because of the large quantity of documents that are being submitted, members are being advised to familiarise themselves with the plans ahead of the meeting. This can be done through the emailed documentation that they have already been sent or through the files held in the council offices.
13. By looking at the comments contained within the Parish Council’s document, members will recognise that there are a number of concerns over the proposed design of the new layout. This includes in certain cases reverting to older layouts of the roundabout that were altered in order to stop accidents occurring.
14. Additional concerns are voiced over the authenticity of some of the modelling that has been carried out with some of the suggested figures being greeted with a great deal of scepticism.

15. Any proposed responses will be noted on the night. It will assist officers however if members have any written detailed responses that they send them to the office so that we can ensure that they are accurately reported.
16. It is proposed Members **RESOLVE** that Officers be delegated authority to formulate a response from council and submit it on behalf of Ilminster Town Council. The response will be circulated to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor so the accuracy can be confirmed ahead of submission in line with what was proposed at the meeting.
17. Members are free to choose their own resolutions should they so choose.

Mark Tredwin
Town clerk
October 2021