



17<sup>th</sup> October 2016

Dear Penelope

## Re Princes Risborough Town Plan – Road Infrastructure

Further to my previous letter of 6<sup>th</sup> October 2016 on behalf of the RARA I would like to elaborate on some of our main concerns with regard to your road infrastructure proposals.

As with the draft town plan generally we can see similar shortcomings with regard to road infrastructure and the lack of strategic alignment with the wider district, council and national plans. Any new transportation proposals for Princes Risborough must be aligned with Highways England, Bucks County Council and Network Rails plans. This doesn't appear to be the case at present.

Q) We understand Highways England's strategy is running slightly behind Wycombe District Council (WDC) planning. Would it not be advisable to defer any decisions on road infrastructure until this can be aligned with the wider district, council and national plans?

Road options that have been tabled to date have lacked technical detail and hence little in the way of detailed costing. We are surprised at the lack of focus on carbon emissions associated with the options tabled. This should be a key element of any proposal from a public sector client. The Chiltern Conservation Board's Environmental Guidelines for the Management of Highways in the Chilterns points out that 'proposals that require less energy and have a smaller carbon footprint should be favoured.' The Government's Green Construction Board has demonstrated that saving carbon saves cost with infrastructure investment. This applies to both embodied carbon and operational carbon emissions.

Q) Why has carbon foot printing not been a key part of the road optioneering process?

Q) Why have the principles of PAS (Publicly Available Specification) 2080:2016 not been applied to any options being considered?

Building on historical data we believe that minor amendments to the existing road system and traffic controls in the town would relieve any current rush hour congestion. More innovative thinking is required for any longer term growth scenarios. We note that the Department of Transport is encouraging a 'smart' approach to solving traffic congestion. Intelligent transportation systems now exist enabling users to be better informed and make safer, more coordinated and 'smarter' use of transport networks.

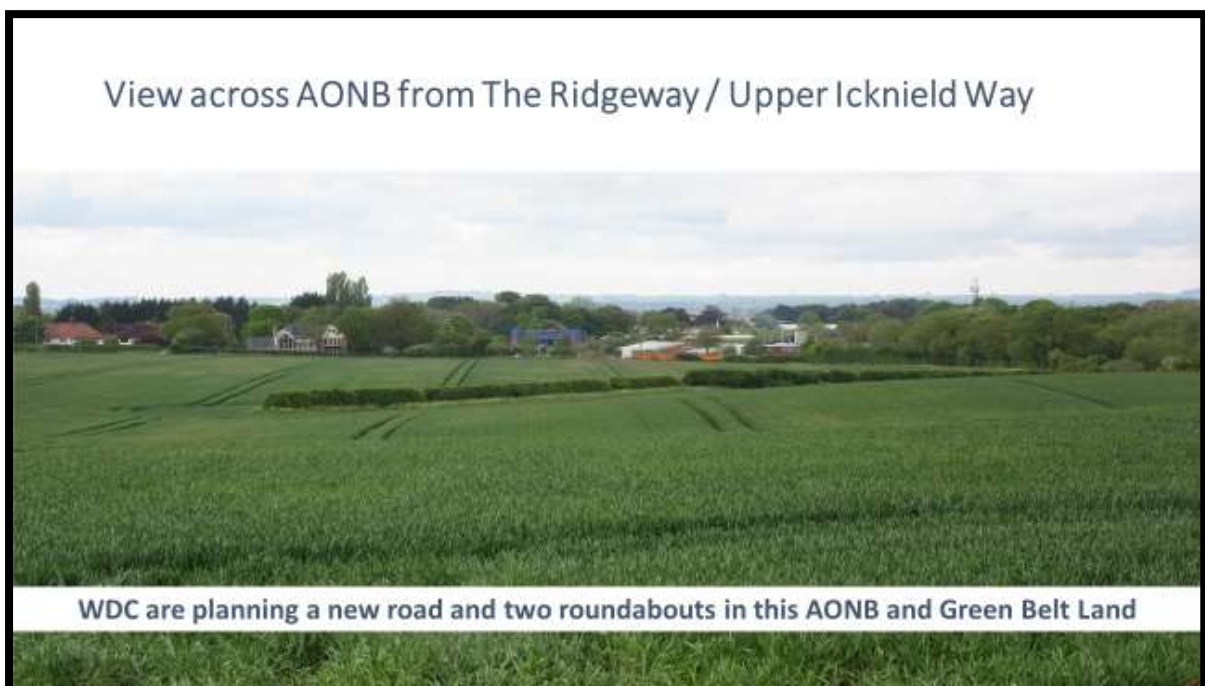
Q) What options have been considered to enhance the existing road system and traffic controls within the town, without the need for a relief road?

Q) Why has a 'smart' option not been considered, to make better use of the existing wider transport network?

A new relief road option that WDC is promoting involves driving a relief road and two roundabouts through land which is both in Green Belt and within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). This was not one of the options shortlisted by your consultant (Jacobs), was not part of the due process in the preparation of the plan, and we continue to disagree with your relief road proposals.

Q) Why are you now promoting what is apparently a just single new option?

Q) Why was this single new option not part of the due consultation process in the preparation of the town plan?



The proposal for a relief road has been an extremely contentious issue in the community. There is little support for it and WDC has caused major distress and concern by tabling various options that have not been properly assessed from a strategic, technical, environmental or economic perspective. This latest proposal is no exception and we do not see how you can justify this nor how you can consider meeting the requirements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), let alone the Government's commitment to protect AONB's. This latest proposal will have a detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities.

Q) How do you justify this latest proposal with regard to the NPPF, other relevant legislation, the Government's commitment to protect the AONB, and your own commitment to 'cherish the AONB'?

We would urge you to stop and have a complete rethink with regard to your road proposals. We believe that you need to understand the wider strategic issues and then develop at least 3 options, including a 'smart' no new road solution, with detailed technical, environmental and cost comparisons, that can be clearly appraised and supported by the community. Going forward now with a proposal that you will almost certainly have to change at a later date will cause unnecessary distress within our community and the blighting of areas of our town.

Q) When can you provide us with transparent and detailed technical, environmental and cost comparisons for at least 3 options including a 'smart' option?

Q) Why are you determined to promote a new single option for the relief road that the local community has had no sight of, has seen no detailed technical, environmental and cost appraisal, and has not formed part of the consultation exercise to date?

We are concerned that WDC appears to be investing a lot in consultant's reports and then ignoring many of the findings e.g. the Princes Risborough Transport Study by Jacobs (2014 and 2016) and the Sustainability Appraisal by Lepus (2016). This does not appear to us an appropriate investment of tax payer's money?

Q) Why have you ignored some of the key recommendations in the findings of these consultants' reports?

Q) Given the above, we have concerns on the value for money from the consultancy expenditure. How much tax payer's money has been spent to date on the consultant's reports referred to above?

There is no investment proposed in pedestrian and cycle links outwards to the wider countryside, including links to the Phoenix Trail and AONB walks and cycle rides? The relief road option being considered is planning to run across Picts Lane which is a major recreational area. Walkers, cyclists, joggers and horse riders including visitors from London, Oxford, Thame, Chesham, Amersham, Aylesbury and High Wycombe have all voiced their concern to you in a petition, regarding a new relief road along or across Picts lane and through our AONB. Bridal paths and busy road junctions are not compatible. Instead of destroying we should be investing in the tourist potential of this AONB setting, our 'Gateway to the Chilterns'.

Q) Why are you ignoring the recreational potential of our lanes and not seeking to protect these?



We would appreciate acknowledgement of your receipt of this letter and look forward to an early response to the concerns and questions we have raised above.

On behalf of the RARA committee and membership

With best regards

Linda

Linda Cannon Clegg

**Chairman RARA**

**Copied to:**

**Rt. Hon. John Bercow** Member of Parliament

**Rt. Hon. David Liddington** Member of Parliament

**Karen Satterford** Chief Executive WDC

**David Johncock** Cabinet Member for Planning WDC

**Alan Turner** District Councillor The Risboroughs and Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning WDC

**David Knights** District Councillor The Risboroughs

**Bill Bendyshe-Brown** County Councillor

**Carl Etholen** County Councillor

**Graham Peart** District Councillor Lacey Green, Speen and The Hampdens

**Matthew Walsh** Town Mayor & Chairman **Princes** Risborough Town Council

**Gary Hall** District and Town Councillor Princes Risborough

**Rosie Brake** Principle Planning Officer WDC

**Ian Manktelow** Team Leader for Planning Policy WDC