

**Stratton Audley Parish Council response to the consultation event on East West Rail which was held at Launton, 19<sup>th</sup> January 2018**

Stratton Audley Parish Council, having read the consultation document and attended the consultation event on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2018, held a public meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> January at which 25 residents registered strong objections to the proposed increased traffic flows in and around the village and as a result submit the following comments on the proposals as published:

- 1. Whilst the Parish Council fully supports the proposal to extend rail services from Bicester to Milton Keynes, Bedford and Cambridge, and recognises that construction traffic will increase congestion in the area, it totally rejects the notion that any construction traffic needs to be directed through the village when another route using main roads is available;**
2. The Parish Council strongly objects to proposals to route Heavy Goods Vehicles, and other construction traffic (up to 200 a day) through the village to access the Launton and Poundon construction compounds. The Parish Council notes that EWR have now concluded that it is not suitable to route HGVs through the village, however the Council would wish to maintain its objection until this change has been confirmed to the Council in writing;
- 3. The Parish Council notes that, while proposals to route HGVs through Stratton Audley to the Launton Compound may have been superseded, there remains a proposal to route a substantial number of HGV's as well as LGV's and other staff vehicles to the Charndon Compound off the A4421 along the road to Poundon. This junction is located at the top of a hill at an accident black spot, and proposals to make it safe, both for turning traffic and other road users will need to be a priority. These will need to include works to the junction, traffic light control of the junction and /or a 30mph speed limit reduction on the A4421 leading up to the turn and along the road to Poundon;**
4. Linked to point 3 above, given the greatly increased traffic levels on the A4421 and the dangers that lorries present particularly on a single highway where there is no room for vehicles to manoeuvre without crossing the white lines, the Parish Council will be seeking the installation of a cycle path along a 150m length of the A4421 where the road meets with the Bicester Road leading in and out of Stratton Audley.
- 5. The Parish Council has noted that it is being proposed that an additional (up to 200 vehicles, non HGV construction traffic) will be routed through the village along the Stoke Lyne Road, into Church Street and then along the Launton Road. This is unacceptable and will be robustly opposed. We understand that this route is for staff/supplier vehicles which will include small trucks, and will likely be condensed into the hours of 6.00-8.00 am and 4.00-8.00pm, at a time when other commuting traffic into and out of the village is also at its peak.**
6. Furthermore at the Consultation Event, Mr Oliver advised some residents that at least 60 of the non HGV traffic travelling through the village to and from the Launton compound would probably be LGVs, with up to 7.5 tonnes load weight limit. One LGV passing potentially

through Stratton Audley at peak time every few minutes on average, is completely unacceptable in this rural location and furthermore will cause considerable damage to local roads. Two vehicles of this size will be unable to pass safely in a number of pinch points.

7. A traffic survey carried out in the village in 2013 indicated traffic volumes along these roads in the region of 500 movements a day on each of the entry and exit roads, with a bottleneck being created in Church Street where all the roads converge. Much of this traffic was and is commuter traffic travelling to and from other places at peak morning and evening times. Traffic regularly builds up at this point, sometimes causing vehicles to divert down the narrow residential roads of Cherry Street and Cavendish Place;
8. We draw your attention to the following specific issues so far as Stratton Audley is concerned:-
  - a. The 90 degree bend in Launton road will prove difficult for 2 vehicles to pass, as will the narrow stretch on the Launton Road;
  - b. There are no footpaths along the Launton Road, or in Mill Road at the top of the Village. Furthermore car parking is only in private driveways, and events held in the Church, visitors to the Playbus and to the Red Lion Public House, mean that there is a considerable amount of parking on the Village roads, at all times both day and night. This parking can narrow the road to such an extent that only single file traffic is possible.
  - c. Additional traffic will be driving through the Village, which is a designated Conservation area, past the Church (grade 1 listed) Manor House (part of which was built in 1545) and the remains of a medieval castle;
  - d. The village has no street lighting, therefore heavier volumes of traffic in the early morning and evening when it may be dark will present further safety issues, particularly for pedestrians;
  - e. There is a retail outlet along the Launton Road, with cars turning into and out of it, and a number of livery stables from which horses are exercised on local roads. There was a serious accident in 2017 when passing traffic frightened a horse and its rider was thrown, sustaining serious injuries;
  - f. Stratton Audley houses the Bicester Hunt, which regularly exercises horses and hounds along the roads in and surrounding the village;
  - g. It is a popular route for cyclists and regularly used by individuals and cycle clubs;
  - h. The children's playground in Cherry Street not only fronts straight onto the road, but also adjoins Stoke Lyne Road, and other old houses front straight onto the street;
9. **In view of these comments Stratton Audley Parish Council request that the proposal to route non HGV traffic through the village be abandoned and instead ask that this traffic is routed in the same manner as for HGV vehicles, around Bicester and off the by-pass, into the Launton compound and then down the new road that we understand is to be built alongside the rail track to the Charndon compound;**
10. We are aware that despite the best efforts on behalf of EWR some additional traffic is likely, particularly along Mill Road and Stoke Lyne road and therefore the Parish Council will wish

to discuss mitigation measures to reduce the effect of any additional traffic through the village, including:

- a) The introduction of 50mph speed limits on currently unrestricted roads into the village
- b) Consideration given to placing a temporary 20mph speed limit on traffic within the village
- c) Traffic calming measures (e.g. signs) on entry points into the village
- d) Furthermore, specific signs such as 'No EWR Construction Traffic'
- e) Vehicle activated speed signs at entry points ( as agreed with the Parish Council)
- f) Works to increase the safety of the turning off and onto the A4421 as suggested above.
- g) Increased signage warning drivers entering the village of pedestrians/dogs/horses in the road.
- h) Confirmation that residents will be fully indemnified from the cost of any impact or vibration damage, particularly to old properties in the village, together with full details of claims procedures should such damage occur.