

COUNCIL – 11 SEPTEMBER 2018

QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR A C SAFFELL TO COUNCILLOR T J PENDLETON

Traffic Problems in the Castle Donington Area

“NWLDC are responsible for making sure that the East Midlands Gateway Planning Permission is carried out satisfactorily in conjunction with the Highway Authority. There is quite obviously something disastrously wrong with the way this is being implemented. Please see the attached shot taken from Google Maps Traffic at 16.50 on a typical weekday, you will see that most of the roads are coloured red meaning that either the traffic is stationary or moving very slowly i.e. walking pace. This situation applies most of the daylight hours and is even worse at peak times. This is having a serious impact on local businesses for a number of reasons including staff unable to get to work, deliveries not arriving and sales stock unable to be delivered. This all massively increases costs for local businesses to the point of strangulation. We are therefore generating jobs for the region at the expense of local jobs.

The area is being strangled by all the traffic chaos. There have also been many "accidents" caused by frustrated drivers taking risks. Not to mention all the pollution caused by so much congestion. Our AQMA (Bondgate) must by now be way over the European safety limits and is where many of our school children have to walk daily on their way to and from school.

Someone must take responsibility for this disaster.

I ask the portfolio holder, is the development order being implemented correctly, and if not, are there problems with the development order.”

RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR T J PENDLETON

“Officers have discussed the traffic problems raised with Leicestershire County Council (responsible for the highway network) and updates from the County are included within my response.

In summary, the significant infrastructure projects near to Castle Donington and ongoing Smart motorways project being delivered by Highways England have both contributed to increased pressure on local roads. The County has been engaging with Highways England although has limited ability to influence their works and the resulting traffic through Castle Donington, which is seeking to avoid incidents and delays on the trunk road network.

I fully appreciate the impact of development on the residents for Castle Donington and both the District and County Council will continue to use their influence to mitigate as best as possible the overwhelming impacts for the last year and the road network, which at times has not coped. A summary of the key issues raised and the current situation which is improving is set out below.

Bondgate Traffic Signals and Castle Donington Village

Changes have been made to Bondgate traffic signals following consultation with Castle Donington Parish Council and other local representatives. One of the main issues raised by all parties was the blocking back through the junction and the safety of the pedestrians especially the school children. It was made clear by the Highway Authority that the proposals would have a slightly detrimental effect on the side road. This was a compromise to ensure the safety of the pedestrians. The County Council can adjust the times on the main road to the detriment of the side roads and vice versa or revert back to the previous

staging but as previously advised there is too much traffic trying to traverse through this junction and at this point.

I can also confirm from discussions with the County Council that whilst there have been four personal injury accidents recorded on Bond Gate within the past five years, none of these accidents have been attributable to HGV's, which is a good indication that drivers are aware of the prevailing conditions and are driving accordingly.

The traffic management arrangements in place have also caused some difficulties with satellite navigation systems erroneously guiding drivers through Castle Donington. The Police are aware of this matter and where resources permit have tasked officers to pay additional attention to drivers violating the existing weight restrictions. The contractors delivering the highway schemes have also agreed to provide additional signage advising of the satellite navigation error and re-enforcing the message regarding 'No HGV access through Castle Donington'.

M1 Smart Motorway

The M1 smart motorway works are due to finish at the end of 2018, so there are approximately 4 months left to go. Delays have reduced considerably north bound since the opening of the A453/A50 J24 dedicated slip road and the new M1 southbound slip road opened at the end of July ending the long delays that traffic has experienced on the A50 and diverting through Castle Donington. However, if a vehicle breaks down or there is an accident delays still occur, but on the whole the situation is much better now.

Castle Donington Relief Road

Work on the new relief road has now started and the Developer has confirmed that this will be completed within 12 months. A draft project plan has been prepared and the Contractor has confirmed a willingness to keep the Parish Council and Ward Members updated on the work.

Air Quality

The exceedance of the Nitrogen Dioxide level (primarily from vehicle emissions) means that this area has already been declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA Bondgate). As a result of the declaration a management plan is in place to ensure a reduction in these levels is achieved.

Therefore as this is a declared AQMA, ongoing monitoring continues by the District Council to ascertain the annual levels. The European legislation is also clear that changes as a result of temporary road works have to be discounted even when the construction works are of a substantive nature. It also provides definitions for the annual mean Air Quality Order which sets out that short term exposure whilst walking to work or school cannot be considered.

The Castle Donington relief road described above is a key initiative for Castle Donington, which in turn should encourage non village traffic onto the relief road to improve the air quality. The District Council will continue to monitor the air quality levels and review the need for the AQMA based on the data recorded.

Development Order

The responsibility of ensuring that the off-site highway works approved as part of the East Midlands Gateway Strategic Rail Freight Interchange lies with both Highways England for the M1, A50 and A453 and Leicestershire County Council for the A6 and Kegworth by pass. Officers have contacted both organisations to seek clarification that they are satisfied that the works approved as part of this National Strategic Infrastructure Project are being carried out in accordance with the approved details so that the impacts on the local highway network will be acceptable once the development is completed. A further update will be provided to you once this is received".