

**WEMBDON PARISH COUNCIL
Hinkley Point C
Proposed Nuclear Development
Pre Application Consultation**

**Update on Proposals – July 2011
Response to EDF Energy
by
Wembdon Parish Council
July 2011**

INTRODUCTION

Wembdon Parish Council have been actively involved with EDF and their planning process for the past two years and submitted a response at every stage.

Wembdon Parish Council reviewed the July 2011 consultation proposals in detail and our response to this consultation has been submitted to EDF and also is in the public domain.

The Stage 2 consultation proposals have a more detrimental effect on the village of Wembdon than the Stage 1, as this has moved a large proportion of the construction worker accommodation into Bridgwater and in so doing significantly increases the amount of traffic using the A39 and the Bridgwater Northern Distributor Road (BNDR).

The current updated consultation proposals continue to fail to address in any meaningful way any of the issues raised by ourselves in earlier consultations.

Response to the updated proposal relative to the Parish of Wembdon:

In all previous responses Wembdon Parish Council have highlighted their concerns regarding the impact of the increase in traffic along the A39 and the detrimental effect that this would have on the village of Wembdon and its community.

Our principal concern is that once the A39 becomes congested, as now occurs on a regular basis, traffic will divert from the A39 along the B3339 through the village of Wembdon as an opportunistic rat run.

Road conditions and environment within Wembdon Parish.

The increased traffic through Wembdon, Perry Green and Chilton Trinity will put the safety of our residents at significantly increased risk especially the older members of the community and our children. Whilst the country lanes are unsuitable for additional traffic, the pavements in Wembdon are either very narrow or nonexistent and barely accommodate mobility scooters, double buggies and so forth necessitating a degree of pedestrian usage directly on the road. Notably there is no safe or controlled road crossing point anywhere along the B3339. This, combined with inadequate off-road parking throughout the village for residents accessing their homes and essential local amenities, results in any additional traffic and unsuitable vehicles posing a significant safety hazard to all residents. Particular attention is drawn to the facts that Wembdon has an infant / junior school which the majority of children access from the B3339; a busy shop and post office accessed directly off the B3339 with no allocated parking; an active church, community rooms, play group, and children's playing fields - all of which the majority of the village access either from the B3339 or the BNDR.

A vehemently expressed concern of local residents as a consequence of additional traffic is a marked increase in noise and environmental pollution which this council perceives as detrimental to rural village life. Whilst we note EDF's intention to schedule their traffic outside the recognised normal rush hours, it is our view that this only serves to broaden the hours of traffic noise and creates noise pollution at unsociable hours, which is not conducive to rural village life, thus adversely impacting on our quality of life.

Modifications proposed to Whitegates / Quantock Roundabout.

The proposal still remains that all construction traffic coming through Bridgwater from either of the M5 junctions along any route, or from any point in Bridgwater, is eventually funnelled onto the roundabout at the A39/BNDR junction (Whitegates Roundabout; referred to as Quantock Roundabout in this EDF proposal) and then tracks the A39 to Sandford Corner and Cannington on route to Hinkley Point. The impact of holiday traffic already utilising the A39 / BNDR to access West Somerset should not be under-estimated with the A39 being a major route to all areas west of Bridgwater.

At this stage in the consultation process the council is required to comment on proposals not yet disclosed to us.

This Parish Council's concerns reflect the assumption that these alterations (reference point D) will allow a greater volume of traffic at this roundabout and accommodate an increased number of HGV's.

This is detrimental to our community and disregards the safety of pedestrians and cyclists; and significantly the children having to negotiate this roundabout and feeder roads in order to access their school placements - Haygrove, St. Mary's Primary, St Joseph's Primary - and the play facilities located on Alfoxton Road. A public footpath provides a route for residents in Old Wembdon to this area, for access into the Durleigh district and facilities.

With no safe pedestrian facility proposed this is extremely hazardous. We propose a safe crossing facility for all residents to access; appropriate for use by pedestrians, school children, cyclists, mobility scooters, pushchairs and wheelchairs, as the only reliably safe option in the face of additional traffic flow and size / tonnage of vehicle. Furthermore, if alterations at this point were to infringe on our open green spaces either side of the BNDR, this would be a significant loss to the residents and families accessing these vital (and ever diminishing) recreational areas, affecting residents life style and well being within the community.

Modifications proposed to Sandford Corner.

Whilst this Council recognises that there is a roundabout proposed for the Sandford Corner (reference point O), with the intention of reducing traffic speed; a roundabout at this point will facilitate traffic diverting through Wembdon in an attempt to avoid the inevitable congestion at the A39/BNDR roundabout.

We note the earlier comment that EDF will be able to control the routing of its transport fleet to prevent such a rat run diversion, but once the A39 becomes congested with EDF related traffic it will be the other traffic that takes this rat run - causing the previously considered and outlined issues for Wembdon.

Wembdon Parish Council is opposed to the formation of this roundabout.

We advocate further studies of this area; in particular the "Cannington Straight" which is a significant contributor to the accident black spot and is not addressed by the introduction of a roundabout on Sandford Corner. This council proposes re-aligning the carriageway to bypass the corner and introducing appropriate traffic calming along the entire section as more effective.

Modifications proposed to BNDR junctions.

A further problem for the residents of Wembdon village will be created by the additional congestion along the BNDR and A39, as all traffic from the village must exit on to one of these routes. Recent experience has shown us very clearly how a simple accident or set of road works can leave the village completely marooned, with traffic unable to exit the village and no access into the village, even for emergency vehicles.

With regard to alterations at the Wembdon Rise /BNDR junction (reference point G) it is necessary to highlight that again **the council is required to comment on proposals not yet disclosed to us.**

However, this Parish Council questions the viability and scope to alter this junction sufficiently to ease the inevitable traffic congestion without simply deferring the problem further along the BNDR, creating an impact at reference points D and L. As one of only two access points to the village, all residents of New Wembdon access all their village amenities and primary school via this route.

Furthermore, alterations to this junction will certainly facilitate traffic diverting through Wembdon in an attempt to avoid the inevitable congestion at the A39/BNDR roundabout. Again, we note the earlier comment that EDF will be able to control the routing of its transport fleet to prevent such a rat run diversion, but once the A39 becomes congested with EDF related traffic it will be the other traffic that takes this rat run - causing the previously considered and outlined issues for Wembdon.

Wembdon Parish Council also wishes to highlight concerns regarding proposed alterations at the BNDR / Chilton Street junction (reference point L).

However, once again, the council is required to comment on proposals not yet disclosed to us.

Of major impact to the local residents and Wembdon community are the following considerations:

This area and junction is already required to cope with the access for Chilton Trinity School, agricultural traffic accessing Chilton Trinity and surrounding farms, a high density residential area, and the communities recreational use of the only swimming pool facility in town for residents and visitors and holiday makers. Of note Chilton Street is already compromised by a lack of off-road parking and no filter option for residents at these traffic lights.

It is this council's view that this is a junction already over-burdened, with little scope to improve adequately to accommodate extra traffic and HGV's.

Additional matters.

Regarding other matters proposed in the consultation document, we still see the great majority of construction workers being housed in the Bridgwater area and we are concerned that this will also have a detrimental effect on the local community. Regardless of how the traffic flows are manipulated all of these workers will increase the amount of traffic on the BNDR/A39 roundabout and the A39 between Wembdon and Cannington.

Recent evidence in Japan has tragically highlighted worldwide that in the event of an unexpected catastrophe there is the need for the emergency services to access the Nuclear stations directly from a National Freight Route. Whilst being assured of contingency plans for such an eventuality, we strongly advocate with the advantage of local knowledge and experience, that the current transport strategy will be inadequate to deal cohesively with such events.

Conclusion

We do not believe that any of the mitigation measures proposed in this updated consultation have improved in any way the adversity residents will be required to cope with and only serve to negatively impact on our rural communities and village life. We deeply regret the apparent lack of consideration for local residents to this end and that any necessary improvements to the local infra-structure will not be completed prior to construction commencing at the Hinkley Point C site.

It is Wembdon Parish Council's position that all these issues must be obviated by providing either a direct link to the Power Station from Dunball roundabout, or a new road linking the A38 at Dunball to a point north of Cannington.

We re-iterate that proposed road alterations concerning Wembdon have not been fully declared to Wembdon Parish Council and we are asked to consult on matters we have not been adequately briefed on; this is disappointing.

Prepared in consultation with Wembdon community by the Highways Sub-committee, Wembdon Parish Council.

27th July 2011