

JAMES HEAPPEY MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rectory, Pilton
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Dear Resident,

I have received correspondence from a significant number of residents in your community relating to plans publicised by Mendip District Council in August 2019 for a series of possible routes for bypassing the traffic pinch point in Pilton. I have subsequently been able to discuss the genesis of these plans with the leader of Somerset County Council and the Secretary of State for Transport.

There are currently two road improvement schemes that both the district and county councils recognise as advantageous to our local economy. These are a bypass for the villages of Ashcott and Walton to improve access to Mendip from the M5 and then further possible improvements around Glastonbury. The Ashcott/Walton scheme has been proposed as a bid to the Government's 'Large Local Majors' (LLM) fund, plans are well developed, and I have lobbied the Department of Transport hard to secure the necessary funding. I will continue to promote this scheme as my top road infrastructure priority, and it is the County Council's focus for our area also.

The Glastonbury scheme has been under discussion for three years but no detailed work has been undertaken to establish the feasibility of any possible route for getting traffic beyond the town. Whilst I have been working with Glastonbury Town Council's A361 Working Group to promote the concept of road improvements around the town, I have had no involvement in the development of any plans relating to Pilton.

Nonetheless, in July 2019 our district and county councils needed to confirm bids for the Government's 'Major Road Network' (MRN) fund and the Glastonbury/Pilton scheme – even in its current embryonic form with multiple options for Glastonbury and Pilton - was put forward as the fifth priority, out of six proposals, from Cornwall, Devon and Somerset. When compared to the other very well-developed proposals from our region, the Glastonbury/Pilton proposal is conspicuous in being completely undercooked.

As I've been focussing on the Ashcott/Walton scheme in my engagement with ministers, I've not discussed the Glastonbury/Pilton proposals at all before this weekend. Having now discussed them with the Secretary of State, it is clear that the Government would not consider supporting the scheme whilst it is nothing more than a series of lines on maps showing multiple options for each phase.

There are, however, serious issues that arise from this as the publishing of the vague Glastonbury/Pilton plans have caused anxiety for many in the community. Both the Ashcott/Walton and Glastonbury/Pilton plans originate from work commissioned by Mendip District Council and have been included in the LLM and

Member of Parliament for the Wells Constituency

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