

# LEEDS PARISH COUNCIL

Mrs Sherrie Babington - Parish Clerk  
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Leader MBC: Cllr F Wilson  
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Your REF: FW/CAM

26<sup>th</sup> November 2015

Dear Cllr Fran Wilson

## **Response to your reply to John Govett, Leeds Parish Council re proposed Leeds-Langley By-Pass**

In your response letter to me, as the Chairman of Leeds Parish Council, I must pick up a number of factual inaccuracies and share with you my profound disappointment that on such a vital issue to our own local community, Willington Street residents and those also living in the Parishes of South Maidstone, that your MBC Officers have so clearly, poorly briefed you and let you write such an inaccurate response dated 18<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

Let me correct those inaccuracies in your letter as we only wish to press on and support MBC and KCC re building a Leeds-Langley road to support all our Communities in the area, see below:

A/ I note your letter was dated the 18<sup>th</sup> November 2015 where you refer that no evidence was available to MBC to make such a decision on a Leeds-Langley relief road:

1. Regarding the agenda as shown on your own MBC website for the Joint Transportation Board (JTB) that both your MBC Officers and those of KCC attended on the 4<sup>th</sup> November (pre your letter to me).
  - a. At that JTB meeting a “do nothing” option and 4 other options were considered. 3 of the 4 options discussed (other than do-nothing) included a Leeds-Langley link road and I note at this meeting Amey formally reported on their findings regarding the vehicle movements modelling.
  - b. I am told by a Member of MBC and others that attended the JTB on 4<sup>th</sup> November that it was agreed that option 4a (with the Leeds-Langley relief road) should be adopted. As you must know, only option 4a included the 18,500 homes option, as shown in your draft Local Plan.
    - i. I would request that you refer to the draft minutes of this meeting, of which are now in the public domain, and ask you to review why you were not informed of this matter re the evidence, given what you said in your letter.
  - c. At the JTB meeting the evidence to support a Leeds-Langley link road was evidentially produced in the form of a formal report produced by Amey (and I am told it was co-commissioned jointly by MBC and KCC). More importantly your own MBC Officers knew the contents before you wrote to me on the 18<sup>th</sup> Nov. I note the key facts below:
    - i. Amey report states with NO Leeds-Langley link road (“Do-Minimum” option) means:

- A 69% increase in vehicles by 2031
- ii. Amey report states with a “Do-Something Without the Leeds-Langley link road” means:
  - A 45% increase in vehicles by 2031
- iii. Amey report states with a “Do-Something With the Leeds-Langley link road” means:
  - A 22% increase in vehicles by 2031

Borough Councils are also responsible for the local economy and I trust you agree a 69% increase in vehicle movements will materially affect the travel times into and out of South East Maidstone for residents trying to get to work and businesses using the highways both in South East Maidstone, accessing the Weald of Kent and the access to the Motorway network both via J7 and J8 of the M20, and so impact on economic growth too.

Therefore your MBC Officers fully knew of the facts and statistics from the external professional report conducted by Amey (and reported to the JPG on 4<sup>th</sup> Nov) that proves the severe nature of the growth of vehicles if there is no link road, negating one of your fundamental points that you state in your letter to me that you don't have the data to model congestion caused by motorists when travelling along the A274 etc.

May I ask again why were you not aware of this such an important issue, particularly given the conclusion in your response letter was to delay any further discussions on the relief road until after 2020?

B/ I trust you saw the Downsmail articles last week? We were delighted to see two articles appear that I raise below in-turn with you (if you are not supplied with this information by your team, you can find it on our own Parish website under the... We need a by-pass... button):

1. “WHO DECIDES HOW SEVERE IS SEVERE?” In this article it makes it clear that although there is no current clarity for what is the definition of “severe”... it is ripe for a legal challenge.
  - a. My question to you is please formally define MBC's position on SEVERE, if as a result of your Councils actions it means 18,500 new homes driving up vehicle movements in South East Maidstone by 69% (or even 45%) without a Leeds-Langley by-pass if this is not severe, then what is your formal definition of Severe please? A 69% increase on a base of 35,500 vehicle trips in 2014 is severe in our view.
  - b. The article also states “Amey informed Cllr P Carter of the KCC that Maidstone was the worst case they had ever seen on this issue, when taken on a national scale.” That too seems an endorsement of severe to me by any definition.
2. “DEVELOPERS TO HELP FUND BYPASS”: I note in your letter to me you state re S106 monies that this is an unlikely option. Then I have two questions I would ask you to please also answer:
  - a. Why is it that in the press article KCC are able to get major property developers like; Taylor Wimpy, Redrow and Bellway to allocate funds to S106 for a Leeds-Langley relief road and yet MBC do not use this opportunity to do the same to help cover what appears to be an estimated cost of £50m for the relief road? (as stated at the JTB in the papers on the 4<sup>th</sup> Nov in the Amey report regarding a Leeds-Langley relief road.)
  - b. Why at a time of public sector cuts does MBC reject the need for a relief road and also infer no funding when a more proactive approach on S106 from private sector property developers would go a material way to closing the funding gap? Therefore to help answer your own point to me, what are MBC doing to work with KCC to explain how the funding will be in place for the Inspectors?

In your letter to me you stated 3 legal tests were needed for S106 and I feel they are met and I need to understand why you feel they are not:

- Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms:
  - Response: MBC is asking for 18,500 new homes in Maidstone and without a relief road there will be a 69% increase in volume of traffic movements.
  
- Directly related to the development:
  - Response: MBC are in danger of trying to make the relief road disconnected with the 18,500 new homes by kicking it back to 2020, when it's clearly intrinsically part of the 18,500 related housing developments infrastructure. It is therefore directly related in our view.
  
- Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development:
  - Response: A relief road is a fair and reasonable response to a 69% increase in vehicles when the size of the base figure in 2014 is already at 35,500 vehicle trips in Amey's professional independent view and going up to 41,500 vehicle trips under a "Do Minimum" option. Amey again say this is the worst National case they have seen as a do nothing option.

C/ How is it that the Chancellor (Rt Hon G Osbourne MP) is able to release a £250m budget allocation this week for Operation Stack given the mess that it causes when this occurs on an infrequent basis resulting in the roads in Kent being blocked. Yet our own MBC cannot see the need for agreeing the need for a South East Maidstone by-pass (Leeds-Langley) when the statistics show we are in danger of having our very own mini Operation stack... on a daily basis... given a 69% increase on vehicle movements as a result of 18,500 new homes that you are proposing.

So I politely request Cllr Wilson, as the Leader of Maidstone Borough Council, can I call on you please to get much more closely involved in this issue and focus your teams resources on urgently working with KCC, the Govt./LEP's etc and your local Parishes to find a way of making a Leeds-Langley relief road a reality, now! Your public mandate is based on local politics and we fear you are bending to Central Politics re the draft MBC Local Housing Plan and in doing so I sense that you do not have agreement on an Integrated Regional Transport plan with KCC either to support your Local Housing plan. What we require is joined up thinking.

I would be delighted to come and meet with you but do please formally respond to me urgently, given your Local Plan timeline for Govt. in January 2016.

I think I should also inform you that with only a few weeks of trying, we have already reached over 850 petition signatures (across web and paper) and we shall have many more by the time we enter the New Year and you have your Local Plan decision to make.

Yours sincerely

For and on behalf of the Chairman of Leeds Parish Council (John Govett)

*S Babington*

pp... Mrs S Babington  
Parish Clerk  
Leeds Parish Council

Cc:  
Cllr P Carter KCC  
Cllr G Cooke KCC  
Cllr G Fort Leeds PC & MBC  
C McWethy KM reporter