



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Cllr Philip Whitehead – Leader of the Council  
Wiltshire Council  
County Hall  
Bythesea Road  
Trowbridge  
Wiltshire  
BA14 8JN

BY EMAIL

Date: 12 January 2021  
Reference: MD16385

Dear Philip,

Following on from the meeting of the Melksham Area Board on 4<sup>th</sup> November and our subsequent meeting, I am writing to you regarding the proposed Melksham Bypass. I am pleased that you have extended the consultation which I and others called for, but I do request that you consider extending this to the end of the month given the circumstances. I appreciate that the consultation was planned a while ago and has had one short extension, however I do believe this topic may not have been at the forefront of residents' minds given it has spanned a period of national restrictions and now a national lockdown.

It is imperative that local people get the time and chance to have their say especially given the scale of this infrastructure project and how different each of the proposed routes are. This is not to mention the significant investment of taxpayer money from central government funding. I note the consultation is not a statutory requirement, however it is also my understanding that without a robust consultation it increases the risk of judicial review. In addition, I would like to request more promotion of the consultation and how local people can input into it - I am very concerned that this is not cutting through at this time and am keen to know the level of comments so far.

I fully recognise the congestion and traffic issues in and around Melksham and the need to alleviate these to support our community and businesses. This is the view which is overwhelmingly represented to me by my constituents. However, when inputting into the consultation, it is imperative that my constituents have as much information as possible to make informed commentary especially regarding the likely ramifications of each route. As I stated at the Melksham Area Board the larger routes both to the East and West of Melksham i.e. routes 8 a & b and 10 b, c & d will mean that over time Melksham doubles if not triples in size. This will become inevitable as the new road will act as a boundary for infill construction and also highlighted by the recent council meeting on this topic where land was reviewed – <https://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/documents/s183513/Appendix%202%20Melksham%20Settlement%20Statement.pdf> This has not been spoken about publicly in connection to the bypass – however I do think my constituents should be presented with an assessment of the likely impact of the different routes and the council's long-term vision.

I already receive a great deal of correspondence from constituents living in Melksham and the surrounding villages regarding pressure on the doctors surgeries, access to dentists, schools and the town centre so I am sure several constituents would raise some very valid questions regarding a plan to double or triple Melksham over time.

I must stress again I am supportive of a bypass but think it is crucial that my constituents get a say on this and have the full picture before commenting. Likewise, I am supportive of the development planned in Chippenham including a new ring road and I look forward to meeting to discuss the road options and again I shall look to support options which do encroach unnecessarily into the countryside. The Chippenham development plan is of course very different because the plan includes the houses so my constituents will be able contribute to the consolation aware of this.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michelle Donelan'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Michelle Donelan MP  
Member of Parliament for the Chippenham Constituency