

Kirkby Ireleth Parish Council

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KIRKBY IRELETH PARISH COUNCIL'S REPOSE TO THE A595 GRIZEBECK IMPROVEMENT PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Preamble

Although the A595 is the main strategic connection between Furness and West Cumbria there is no doubt that from Askam-in-Furness to Grizebeck it is not fit for purpose in these days of mass movement of goods and services by road.

It is substandard for the 5 miles from Askam-in-Furness to Grizebeck due to its alignment vertically, horizontally and especially with regard to width.

The problems with access for emergency vehicles and the fact that many areas need attention and not just at Grizebeck is highlighted by the Council.

Where it passes through the hamlet of Grizebeck and particularly at Dove Ford two vehicles are unable to pass without one moving into the side. If two heavy goods vehicles are involved the road can be closed for some time to allow manoeuvring to take place. Walls are damaged and farm animals escape adding further problems. At ten separate points along this stretch the total road width is less than the single standard lane width of 3.65 metres. There is no pedestrian access despite a Community Hall being situated here.

But this is not the only place such events happen.

There are at least six places that are so narrow it is only wide enough for safe single file traffic.

These being:

- a) The bend at the top of the hill leaving Paradise.
- b) The junction with the minor road at 'Mere Beck Farm'.
- c) The bends at 'Muirlands'.
- d) The 50 yard stretch from north of 'Gargreave Farm' to 'Longhead Bridge'
- e) The 100 yard stretch from 'Longhead Bridge' to Soutergate.

And of course

- f) The ½ mile stretch of very substandard road passing from the farm buildings at Dove Ford through to Grizebeck village.

The result of all of this is congestion, frustration and a risk of accidents.

Many parts of the road are being continually eroded by the heavy goods vehicles travelling along.

The number of these vehicles is set to rise due to the proposed new nuclear site at Moorside and its necessary infrastructure, the continued development taking place in Barrow-in-Furness and the stone being taken from Scar Gyll Quarry near Millom and Burlington Slate Quarry. A number of houses abutting the road are already suffering from the shake of heavy vehicles passing by. This is particularly noticeable in Soutergate and Four Lane Ends.

The Council recognises the importance of good communications between developing areas and the need for safe and efficient roads. It is pertinent to note that an agreed improved road structure might promote a positive Moorside nuclear development outcome and support future west coast development.

The Consultation Process

As soon as the announcement was made that improvements to the road were to be financed options

were suggested, discarded and approved by officers of the authority and in reality only one “choice” was put forward. There appears to have been great haste in organising the consultation process with booklets printed and decisions taken. This was before any communication with local land owners, businesses or the community. Leaked information to the press was reported.

It is our view that the local community should have been consulted and ideas gathered before any documents were compiled and decisions made.

Responding by post was easy but assurances were required that the return address of ***FREEPOST, Cumbria County Council*** would actually arrive at the correct destination. A number of people were somewhat doubtful.

The response form at <http://cumbria.gov.uk/a595grizebeck> did not give the option of stating that one had no preference or indeed did not want either of them. This in our view was a serious mistake and curtailed the ability to respond correctly. Only one response was allowed per email address thus restricting views from other people who use the same web address.

The venue, dates and times of the consultation have proved satisfactory with many people able to attend. However, members of the community found the “expert” representatives present somewhat evasive in their replies to the questions asked or they were not prepared to answer them. This is not really consultation.

The Options

Option 1 the Red Route

Why this was suggested and put forward as a workable solution to the problem is not clear.

For the following reasons the Council would not endorse it:

- The construction would be very difficult with the present road having to be closed for considerable lengths of time. The road is used in an emergency if there is a serious incident closing the A590. If this occurred the Furness Peninsular would effectively be cut off from the rest of the network. Emergency services would be severely hampered.
- Barns and a house would have to be taken down.
- It would have a detrimental effect upon a working farm. Livestock and farm vehicle movements would be interrupted.
- The carriageway would be right next to the farm house bringing all of the associated noises and disturbances of a major highway.
- Access to the community facilities during this time would be very difficult.
- It would divide the community and prove difficult if not dangerous in accessing the local amenities.
- Both the junctions would be dangerous unless very careful restrictions were put in place.

Option 2 the Blue Route

For the following reasons the Council would not endorse it without further consultation:

- The community of Grizebeck would be divided by a highway.
- The cottages at Dove Bank would have a highway behind and above them.
- It would have a detrimental effect upon a working farm.
- The farm land would be divided and either a bridge or a tunnel would be needed for the farmer to move his animals from one field to another.
- The construction would be very complicated due to the nature of the substrata.
- Water courses would be altered with a risk of creating flooding elsewhere.
- The junction at Chapels would mean traffic coming down the new road at excessive speed onto an area that has three roads joining it.
- Both the junctions would be dangerous unless very careful restrictions were put in place.

General observations

Whilst the Council welcomes the proposed road improvements members are of the opinion that not

enough thought has been given to the local community and the effect it will have upon their lives. It has been reported that a number of businesses will be greatly affected by both of the options as well as the problems caused by close proximity to a new highway. The junctions are of great concern due to the increase in traffic. This is especially so for vehicles entering onto the A5092 when the "Mouse Trap" is closed for through traffic. At the present time all of this traffic, except HGV's, use this short cut when going in the direction of Broughton.

If either of the options were chosen by Cumbria County Council then we would look to have:

- assurances that the local community views would be taken into consideration regarding the exact route
- roundabouts at both junctions
- a sensible speed limit
- pedestrian walkways
- safe provisions for cyclists
- assurances that the working farm would have suitable provisions put in place to allow it to continue successfully
- assurances that local businesses affected would have some form of mitigation
- suitable noise prevention provisions due to the proximity of houses

Conclusions

Kirkby Ireleth Parish Council urges Cumbria County Council to reconsider and cost the other options that are obviously available with special reference to those to the east and west of Grizebeck. However, whichever route is chosen, the Parish Council would welcome the opportunity of working closely with Cumbria County Council on the ongoing Grizebeck improvement scheme to improve traffic flow and secure a safe route for motorists and pedestrians to the satisfaction of all including the local community.

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