

Chideock Bypass Working Group

Submission to

Public Consultation

for

Highways England

Road Investment Strategy 2

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1. Introduction

This document is being submitted under the terms of Highways England's (HE) Public Consultation period before their development of the Road Investment Strategy 2 (RIS2) detailing budgetary allocations for road improvements in the period 2020 to 2025. Our proposal has been designed around the HE format given in the consultation documents and guidance given in the Webinars we have participated in.

It is being submitted by the Chideock Bypass Working Group (CBWG) making the case for HE to invest in a bypass for the village of Chideock which is situated on the A35 in West Dorset.

The CBWG is a group of registered electors in the Parish of Chideock. It was formed in November 2016 at the instigation of the constituency MP Sir Oliver Letwin (OL) and at that time with the support of the Chideock Parish Council (CPC). Its main purpose then was to initiate a village survey to test village opinion for a bypass. It should be noted at this point that a Chideock bypass had been approved in the 1990s following a Public Enquiry held in 1994 (See Appendix 1 - Inspectors Report), although this approval was withdrawn in 1997 and a "Revocation Order" was issued in 1998.

A Chideock Only Bypass could be described as small, but a pinch point nevertheless, when seen in the context of a much larger upgrade of the A35 between Dorchester and Honiton. Within West Dorset Dorchester needs better traffic flow perhaps by upgrading its southern bypass to dual carriageway or by creating a northern bypass. Bridport requires a proper bypass perhaps using the earlier proposed route through Bothenhampton before joining the route around Chideock partially as defined in the 1993 proposal.

The A35 through Chideock was designed for the horse and cart, and today nobody would consider building such a road through a village main street closely lined with homes where the only access is via hills of 12% and 15% gradients. Yet this is precisely the current status of Chideock except that road no longer carries horse and cart but now carries over 16,000 vehicles per day (Average Annual Daily Traffic flow (AADT) in 2016) amounting to 5.8 million vehicles a year. Of this, between 4% and 10% are 44 tonnes trucks and this number is growing due to the increase in container activity between Southampton, Poole and Plymouth. All trucks on this route travel through Chideock and some struggle to climb those steep hills going west and east.

This section of the A35 has suffered from years of underinvestment despite it being designated as a "Strategic Highway". It has been downgraded to low priority, with money only being spent when absolutely necessary. Yet for the southwest peninsula it is a lifeline both commercially by connecting the ports of southern England, and economically by servicing tourism the major industry in West Dorset and with visitor numbers steadily growing. The A35 also acts as a relief road for the M5, A30 and A303. Yet for all this it is a road blighted almost incessantly with disruption due to roadworks, incidents and accidents. As a result of this it is not possible to carry out roadworks during the day at any time of year without causing large traffic delays. Part of this problem is that there are no alternative routes in the area suitable to take **A Road** traffic (See Appendix 3 - Report on Low Emission Zones which explains this problem in detail). As traffic growth continues so will the problem of maintenance and road closures and their ensuing costs. A Chideock bypass would provide a relief

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valve to this section providing safer and more reliable journey times; enabling all of the Emergency Services far better access and removing the need to direct traffic via the A303. As for traffic diverting from and migrating to the A303 of their own volition The Inspector suggested that only 7% would migrate, which he confirmed was insignificant.

Without doubt the traffic is the major cause of all the other problems faced by Chideock Residents. Remove the traffic and all the other problems go away. HE's "Road to Growth" shows that the AADT flow for the A35 Honiton to Ringwood exceeds 20,000 vehicles, the same as parts of the A27, A14 and A303. It also records 50K to 100K hours of delay for the A35 Bridport to Honiton, the same as A303, A31, A27 and M20. These areas already have bypasses and dual carriageways so surely Chideock should also be considered for similar improvements. But even on a new bypass we have to make sure that the traffic behaves in the way we expect it to and that the road fulfils its design. This could mean initial installation of average speed cameras and pollution monitoring to confirm that the behaviour of drivers is correct and that the speed limit is appropriate for this road, and to confirm that pollution is down to acceptable levels of 12u/m3, both for the bypass and for Chideock.

The next few years are likely to see a major development of houses on the outskirts of Bridport called Vearse Farm. The development will comprise 750 new homes, potentially adding some 1500 vehicles and associated services onto local roads. Much of this traffic will use the A35 adding yet more regular local traffic travelling through Chideock.

Our arguments for a Chideock bypass will be laid out firstly considering the Historical Case for a bypass and secondly with our case for meeting the criteria suggested by HE in their Strategic Road Network Initial Report (SRNIR) as being necessary for a bypass to be included with the RIS2 budget for works to be carried out between 2020 and 2025. We shall then present our assessments of Value for Money for the bypass, and benefits that we believe would be derived.



BROADMEAD, CHIDEOCK

ANOTHER DAY

AND

ANOTHER INCIDENT

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2. The Historical Case

The 1994 Public Enquiry

The case for a Chideock bypass was thoroughly discussed and investigated through a local Public Inquiry headed by John Moore MBE between 12 April and 20 September 1994 (A full copy of the Inspectors Report is incorporated as Appendix 1).

The Inspector described the condition of the A35 between Chideock and Morecombelake as not fit for purpose and in the past 24 years no upgrades have been made, leaving this section in a condition of 24 years older and even less fit for purpose.

Concerning the A35 road the Inspector commented (108.2):

- it is the only trunk road running east-west through the length of Dorset
- it acts as a spine road linking the county with southern England and the south west peninsula
- it forms the major east-west link for the southern half of the county, where most of the population reside

NOTHING HAS CHANGED EXCEPT THE VOLUME OF TRAFFIC HAS INCREASED BY 41.79% AND NO2 POLLUTION BY OVER 70%

Some 24 alternative routes were proposed at the inquiry and each one was evaluated by the Highways Agency and the Inspector who concluded that the chosen route was the only one that was within the A35 corridor and that it would not disturb the tranquillity and richness of farmland and landscapes that had never been the subject of any construction work. The Environmental Statement Volume I May 1993 (See Appendix 2) explains that provisions would have been made to ensure that the bypass would have blended into the existing landscapes enhancing the ecosystem of the area and allowing greater movement of wildlife and greater diversity than before the bypass. The Inspector concluded that the chosen route was better value for money and would create the least disturbance to the surrounding landscapes and Grade 2 listed properties and adjoining parkland. The bypass was a sufficient distance from the ruined Chideock Castle and any potential areas of remains.

We believe that now with a minor adjustment of that route, slightly further away from the Castle remains, there would be no demolition of properties, and that reducing the height of the bridge into cutting, and increasing the height of North Road to run over the bypass it would further blend into the landscape. Indeed we believe with these minor amendments, at little cost to the project there is a great opportunity to enhance the local environment, and deliver the scheme to satisfy most residents. Although as the Inspector confirmed there will always be people that do not want bypasses or anything to change, but in a democratic society the good of the majority outweighs the good of the few.

The following extracts from **Part VIII – Findings of Fact and Conclusions** are particularly relevant to our case now bearing in mind that nothing about this section of the A35 has changed or improved in the intervening 24 years whilst traffic **HAS INCREASED BY over 40% AND NO2 POLLUTION BY OVER 70%**

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Concerning the assessment of adequacy the Inspector commented:

- I am in no doubt that all sections of the road are seriously substandard and inadequate. (108.4)
- In particular, I take the view that the road does not offer pedestrians, motorists or other road users the level of safety or facility which they may reasonably expect. I consider that the situation would deteriorate with increased levels of traffic. (108.5)
- A matter for special concern is the substantial number of side roads and accesses in both villages which have wholly inadequate visibility splays. (108.6)
- The combination of parked vehicles, local traffic, through trunk road traffic and pedestrians is manifestly unsatisfactory. (108.7)
- A further significant problem in the tourist season is that vehicles waiting to turn right cause delays until a gap is found in the oncoming traffic. (108.10)
- I am sure that these deficiencies and problems need to be addressed and resolved. (108.11)

NOTHING HAS CHANGED EXCEPT IT HAS GOT WORSE – with average traffic flows having increased significantly. From the Inspectors report the Miles Cross automatic traffic count in 1991 established that the AADT flow was 11,176 vehicles. In 2016 the AADT at the London Inn was recorded as 16,408 (David Peacock for Dorset CPRE) an increase of 46.8%.

Concerning the important factors which favour a bypass the Inspector included (126.10):

- the need for a safer road, with a reduction in the human cost of deaths and injuries
- relief from heavy and continuous traffic for those living in the villages, and a consequent significant improvement in the environment of most local residents
- improved employment prospects and economic benefits resulting from the encouragement of local investment and the development of tourism potential

NOTHING HAS CHANGED AND THESE FACTORS ARE AS RELEVANT NOW AS THEY WERE IN 1994 – There are 52 Grade II and 1 Grade I listed buildings in Chideock with 35 fronting directly onto the A35 all suffering badly from traffic vibration.

On the strength of the Public Inquiry a Chideock bypass was approved, but unfortunately very shortly afterwards it was cancelled and a Revocation Order was issued in 1998. The precise reasons for the Government to cancel this project have now become unclear although there was major opposition from the National Trust to the Morcombelake section of the works, and little or no consideration appeared to have been given to a “Chideock only” bypass. It also appears that John Major’s Government did not have a large enough majority to force the necessary Bill through Parliament. The cost to the UK Taxpayer of this aborted effort was approximately £7.2M on Consultant, Planning, Survey and Inquiry fees, although the land (which had been purchased) was not sold until 2015. It is possible that some of this design and planning approval may still be valid offering a potential saving should HE decide to include a Chideock bypass into RIS2.

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Within the village the subject of a bypass remains a constant topic of discussion with the CBWG being the third attempt since 1998 to persuade the Government to invest in a bypass.

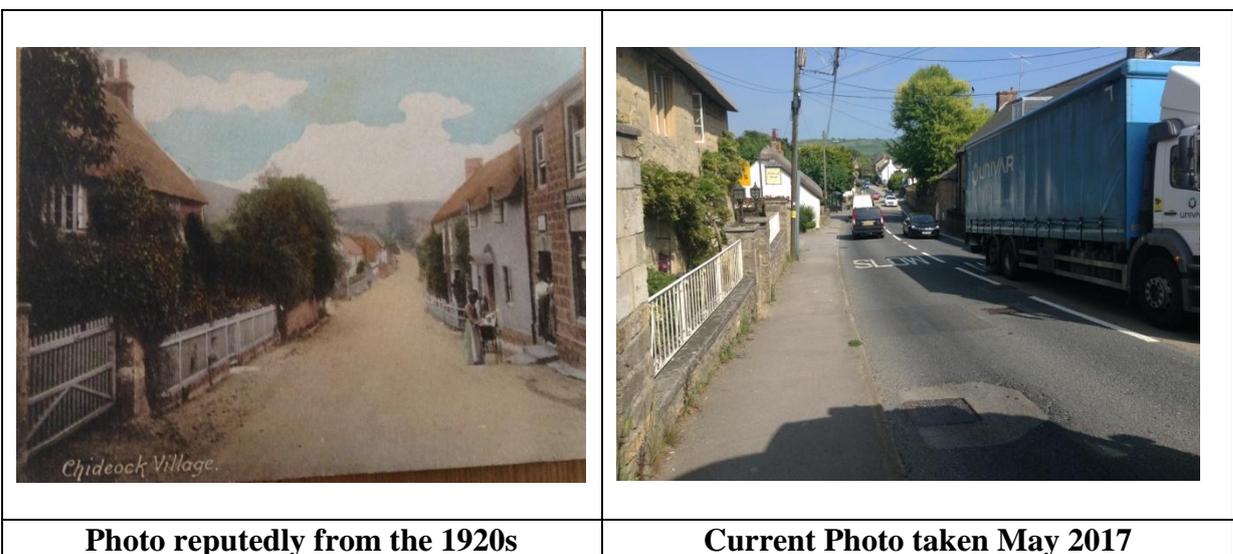
Public Opinion

As for public opinion there have been several Village surveys and polls over the years attempting to determine the support amongst the village residents for a bypass. Some are listed below:

- 1978 Village Appraisal – 320 participated. 81% thought a bypass desirable
- 1987 10th-13th October MOT Exhibition in Village Hall – 599 participated. 74% preferred the northern route.
- 1991 Parish Council Ballot - 435 participated. 94% Yes (for a bypass)
- 1997 Questionnaire by Oliver Letwin MP – Yes (for a bypass) 173; No 80
- 2017 March Chideock Bypass Working Group full village survey – 223 participated. 80% supported a bypass
- 2017 17th August Chideock Parish Poll – 199 participated. 155 supported a bypass.

They have been conducted in good faith, although sometimes with retrospective comment about the wording of the questions. Nevertheless they are valuable indicators of the village opinion and in every survey or poll held there have always been a significant proportion of those that participated voting **IN FAVOUR** of a bypass.

Over the years there have also been simple petitions set up by some of the village B&B providers and these have attracted over 1,700 signatures in favour of a bypass from visitors and guests. There have also been several attempts to bring the plight of the village to the public's attention with one of the most notable campaigns being to continually use the traffic light controlled pedestrian crossing on Main Street. This was carried out by a number of villagers once a week at a time published in advance to minimise inconvenience. Such is the fragility of the traffic flow within the village that on every occasion this quickly resulted in long tail backs of traffic.



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3. The Case within RIS2

RIS1 was put together (including the legislation) in a period of 17 months. This was commendably fast but inevitably certain projects were included without knowing whether they represented 'best value'. Indeed certain projects due to start 2019-2020 will cause significant disruption on the network placing increased pressure on already stretched resources. RIS2 therefore can contain an element for smaller schemes to address safety; congestion; environment and value for money enabling that part of the network to operate more efficiently with more journeys and more safety, all vital to a healthy economy. Businesses rely on this to access suppliers, customers and markets. The SRN moves more freight than all other transport modes combined impacting on production and competitiveness and future investment. Indeed 75% of businesses, when asked, report that tackling congestion is vital and critical to profit and employment.

Predictions for the south west, assuming traffic growth continues as predicted in 2015, show a major drop in average speed by 2030 from 63 mph to 59 mph with a considerably larger drop predicted for freight vehicles. Road users expect their journeys to be most importantly safe not just feeling safe. Frustration about slow, unpredictable journey times and stop start congestion are therefore a prime concern. In the case of Chideock the Strategic Highway runs along the village Main Street which is totally unsuitable for such volumes of traffic. Just one scheduled bus stopping at any one of the eight village stops brings everything to a halt developing into an instant tailback. Tourists and locals alike feel the frustrations of this but for businesses, especially road freight, it is a commercial nightmare. Road freight operates on a tight timeframe with delivery slots, deadlines and financial penalties such as demurrage for late arrivals especially within the container industry. HE is aware of this and readily acknowledges that reliable journey times assist companies to manage logistics efficiently.

HE already states that it has a responsibility to the 12.7 million residents who live within 1 mile of a Strategic Road. Chideock Residents live, in most cases along Main Street, within 3 metres of a highway NOT 1 mile. That is just 3metres from a fully loaded LGV 1 travelling at 30mph on a highway with total vehicle movements in excess of 16,000 per day. Chideock also has over 50 listed properties within that 1mile, which is far more than Bath or Salisbury or Dorchester, and effectively negates any possibility of widening or straightening the existing A35 through the village since to do so would be impossible without the demolition of some listed buildings.

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**MAIN STREET,
CHIDEOCK**

**JUST 1 OF THE 640
TO 1,600 HGVS
THAT PASS WITHIN
3 METRES OF
PEOPLE'S HOMES
EVERY DAY OF THE
YEAR**

In the Foreword of the Overview of the SRNIR you state two of your aspirations over the next road period are to **Deliver a Balanced Programme** by ensuring sufficient funding for medium-sized schemes and to **Renew Focus on Small Schemes** by ensuring dedicated funding for small, regional schemes to address safety and congestion hotspots. Chideock has already been identified in earlier SRN Reports for both safety and congestion issues.

We believe that HE would agree that the A35 strategic highway from Dorchester through to Honiton has suffered for many years now as a consequence of gross underinvestment. Your map defines this section as an “All purpose” trunk road, we believe that, at least through Chideock, it is a “Not fit for purpose” trunk road.

Under SRNIR Section 2. “Our Progress in Road Period 1” we note that England’s SRN is currently one of the safest in the world, and that with your efforts the accident frequency rates have been significantly reduced. We believe that by building a Chideock bypass the reduction in accidents, fatalities and serious injuries on this stretch of the A35 could be reduced to an even greater extent. In 1993 the measurement of safety (PIA/MVKM) for Chideock was an average of 0.40, and the forecast for a dual carriageway bypass was 0.10 (compared to a national average of 0.29). In terms of numbers over a 30 year period (1993 to 2023) the forecast for the existing road is 300 to 350 accidents compared to 115 to 125 for the bypass which is a reduction of around 60%. (Source: Document PE2 Travel and Economics Statement to the Public Local Inquiry April 1994).

Pollution

In this same section you rightly draw attention to your focus on the environment. Your first and third bullet points (concerning air quality and noise pollution) resonate deeply with our situation in Chideock an historic village with an electoral roll of 532. Described by the Inquiry Inspector as a unique English Country Village and as being of special consideration for the number of buildings of architectural and / or historic importance, it has the most thatched houses on one street of any village in Dorset as

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well as over 50 listed buildings (many dating from 17th/18thC some even earlier). It has no industrial sites, has a designated Outstanding Conservation Area, and with the Jurassic Coast just one mile away it is classified as an area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB). Yet it has an Air Quality problem comparable to both Bath and Salisbury city centres.

We have been declared as an air quality management area (AQMA) since May 2007 with air sampling diffusers along the A35 in the village. Road traffic emissions have continually been causing the nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective, set by the Government for the protection of health, to be exceeded at homes along this trunk road. In fact the nitrogen dioxide level continues to rise because of traffic pollution. In 2000 the reading was 39.1 microgrammes per cubic metre of air rising to 66.83 in 2017. An increase of approximately 70%.and yet nothing has been done to alleviate this in 17 years. The results are published on Dorset Council's website at www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/airquality/chideock then following the link to low resolution diffusion tube survey and the pollution levels in the village regularly reach levels recorded in urban areas including London. Neither carbon pollution nor levels of PM10 and PM2.5 have been measured but with the high volumes of traffic these could all be expected to exceed WHO and EU standards.

The air quality is poor because of high levels of traffic. The AADT flow in 2016 was 16,408 vehicles, and this expected to rise to over 17,000 in 2017/18. At weekends, Bank Holidays and holiday periods this figure can increase by approximately 57% to around 25,760 vehicles per day.

The village has 68 openings onto the A35 including a junction with the road to the Seatown and large holiday parks. Traffic inevitably is slowed to a standstill and the energy required to re-start (especially for HGV's on the steep hills) causes excess fuel to be expended, resulting in continuing NO2 being produced. The more vehicles that travel through the village each year; the more the pollution. The highest levels of pollution are recorded westbound on Chideock Hill which is a 15% gradient, but the pollution in other parts of the village still exceeds 19.5 (ecosystem breakdown) and 24 (affecting human health). The gradients at both ends of Chideock cause all vehicles to brake continually even in low gear and often the brake dust (PM2.5) is evident, with face masks being advisable for some.

We understand that HE are planning a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) for 2020 as required by UK Government. We refer you to our report on the suitability of a LEZ for Chideock (Appendix 3) which we consider proves that this proposal does not resolve the problem of pollution or produce a solution to the growing traffic increases due by 2030, 2040 and 2046. Neither will it solve the problems of noise, vibration or safety.

There is no equivalent noise (or vibration) monitoring in place, but unofficial recordings in the early 2000s indicated noise levels of 77 and 79 decibels. The WHO guidance suggests that noise above 65 decibels can be dangerous to health. Suffice to say that both noise and vibration arising from the traffic level through the village are unacceptable and should not have to be tolerated especially by the residents living directly on the A35. This aspect in particular has worsened recently by the habit of HGVs driving through the village at less congested times of the day resulting in a significant increase in their numbers travelling at or above the speed limit between the hours of 5:00am and 8:00am.

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These ancient houses have no foundations and are literally shaken by the HGV traffic. The noise level is well above that which the residents should have a right to expect, now interfering with “normal family life” in many homes. Indeed with the ever increasing LGV freight so close to dwellings many are now showing evidence of structural damage and defects.

In SRNIR Section 3.1 “**Listening to our customers and stakeholders**” you highlight Transport Focus’ nine road users’ priorities. We submit that your investment in a Chideock bypass would directly comply with most of these priorities:

1. **Enhanced safety** – the existing A35 through the village is simply an unsafe road for many reasons. It lacks any pedestrian pavement for long stretches and in part has houses opening directly onto the carriageway. Much of the pedestrian pavement which does exist has an adverse camber making it dangerous for wheelchair users. It has over 60 turnings where traffic can turn right or left / left or right. It had an AADT flow of 16,408 vehicles in 2016 rising to a peak of approximately 25,000 in the summer season. There are no bicycle lanes and no pull-ins for the local buses. There are no suitable alternative routes which leads to “local gridlock” whenever there is disruption to the traffic flow on the A35 between Bridport and Axminster.
2. **Improving journey times** – The current A35 through Chideock offers no reliability on journey times for many months of the year. The average speed dropping to less than 10mph at peak times and as a result of accidents, incidents, stationary vehicles and roadworks etc. These times would be improved as an immediate consequence of constructing a bypass and enabling traffic to flow at more efficient speeds which in turn would reduce emissions on the east and west hills
3. **Improved surface quality** – Current road surface is just not good enough for the nature and volume of traffic and needs regular localised repairs, especially at manholes. Current HE budgets do not allocate sufficient funds for the essential repairs required. A bypass would provide a modern road base and surface fit for the HGVs and would relieve the continual maintenance currently required.
7. **Meeting the needs of bus and coach operators and their passengers** – There are no bus pull-ins currently in the village (there is no room for them) leading to traffic congestion and delays every time one of the local buses stops in the village (currently 2 bus services generally scheduled once each per hour in each direction). With 8 bus stops in the village this is regular chaos, especially in the summer, and every Wednesday during refuse collection. All the associated problems would be eliminated with a bypass.
8. **Improved provision for cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians** – Frankly the current situation is very dangerous for cyclists and totally impractical for pedestrians and equestrians. This is especially true for the hill eastwards out of the village where the road is not sufficiently wide for two large vehicles to pass and where a cyclist, pedestrian or equestrian would bring the traffic to a stop until they had climbed or descended this approach.

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Your SW Peninsula Route Strategy (March 2017) refers to research you commissioned with Transport Focus. Table 1.1 shows 41% of SW Peninsula road users experienced problems with the route, with congestion and then roadworks cited as the two main causes. It is interesting to compare these stakeholder responses to those from other regions leading to the conclusion that the SW Peninsula has very similar or worse congestion than all except three of the 18 routes listed. The specific problem for Chideock is considerably worse than this when one considers that predicted traffic flows from 2015-2040 will rise by 5,000 to 10,000 vehicles per day (AADT). At current estimates that for the A35 through Chideock becomes 20,000 vehicles per day with an estimate of 50-100 hours lost per mile.



**CHIDEOCK MAIN STREET
SHOWING ONE OF THE AREAS
OF NO PEDESTRIAN PAVEMENT
ADJACENT TO HOMES
FRONTING THE A35
ESPECIALLY UNSUITABLE FOR
WHEELCHAIR USERS**

In SRNIR Section 3.2 “Understanding our infrastructure and performance” you state that your understanding of the SRN has incorporated assessments of infrastructure condition and performance. You say that common themes across the Route Strategies include a safe and serviceable network where safety remains paramount, and a more free-flowing network. Two of the four predominant challenges you identify are on or around areas with congestion and short distances between junctions. These two are also challenges we face with the A35 through our village. With an AADT flow of 16,408 vehicles in 2016 congestion is never far away, and with seasonal increases and disruption through accidents or blockages our village becomes “gridlocked”. In “Road to Growth” HE acknowledges that there are no alternative routes apart from country lanes which themselves soon grind to a standstill. Journey times for the few miles between Bridport and Charmouth can extend to several hours, and for accident victims airlifting is often the only feasible means of getting to a hospital. As for distance between junctions our village has 68 turnings for a road length of approximately 1.5km!!

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Traffic and Congestion

You say that congestion is most prevalent where demand outweighs capacity (for example single carriageways with no overtaking provision). The entire length of the A35 from Dorchester to Axminster has only a handful of very short sections of dual carriageway. On Chideock east hill there are pinch points where two large loads cannot pass. As for demand this SRN is the main east-west route across the south coast and carries a vast amount of HGV traffic between the expanded port of Southampton, the extended harbour at Poole and the docks at Plymouth. Chideock has been accorded “World Heritage Site Status” through the nearby Jurassic Coast but the road access is abysmal and detracts from the huge tourist potential offered by this prestigious award.



Severance

You refer to a more accessible and integrated network where you have identified the need to support cyclists and other non-motorised road users and reduce severance issues. With a bypass you would resolve all these issues. As demonstrated above the A35 through Chideock is extremely dangerous for all non-motorised road users. In addition the A35 currently passes through the heart of the village literally severing it in two with approximately 195 residencies to the south of the road and approximately 129 residencies to the north of the road. Had the bypass been built on the 1990's route there would have been 322 residencies south of that road and just 2 residencies north of that road that would have been within the immediate vicinity of the proposed route. Severance issue solved.

Tourism and Economic Growth

You also refer to supporting economic growth. One of the major industry employers and wealth generators in this area is tourism (to which the Jurassic Coast is promising to add many visitors). In 2007 Dorset County Council (DCC) estimated the value of

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tourism to the Dorset economy to be £500m annually, creating employment for 20,000 people. Currently “Road to Growth” states that West Dorset and South Devon expect employment growth to be greater than 18% between 2015 and 2030 which would be the highest growth rate in the UK. The standard of the roads to and through West Dorset do absolutely nothing to assist the ease of access and mobility for the thousands of tourists who pour into this area every year. It is impossible to put a number to those that are deterred by the seasonal congestion and inadequacy of the roads in SRN area for the South West Peninsula. It is also difficult to put a price on the inefficiency suffered by many local businesses and work forces in the hours they lose as a result of congestion and traffic incidents on the section of the A35 between Bridport and Axminster and especially through Chideock. All of which would be greatly alleviated by the construction of a short length of road which would be the Chideock bypass.

Environment

Finally in this section you refer to an improved environment, citing air quality and noise as two key environmental issues. Here again the construction of a Chideock bypass would greatly help both issues. Your south west peninsula reviews have already highlighted the air quality problems which are exacerbated by slow moving congested traffic and by engines under strain attempting to pull (especially heavy) loads up the steep hills on both approaches to Chideock. The faster flowing traffic on a bypass and the gentler gradients possible for the hills would greatly reduce this pollution. Also moving the traffic even a small distance out of the village would virtually eliminate the noise and vibration problems.

Building a Chideock bypass would improve the air quality of NO₂, PM₁₀, PM_{2.5} and CO₂. The NO₂ pollution has increased by 70% between 2000 (when pollution monitoring began in Chideock) and 2017. In this same period the increase in the AADT flow has only been 20.9% (from 13,572 to 16,408 vehicles). This disparity in the percentage increases is alarming. If this trend continues then at DfT SC1 (low) data traffic flow over the next 30 years is due to increase by 35.82 % (6000 vehicles) and NO₂ by 71.39% to 100. This equates closely with our Graph (Appendix 4) prediction that if nothing is done by 2046 Chideock's air pollution of NO₂ will be 108 microgrammes per cubic metre of air. This is coincidentally almost the exact figure of the most polluted area in London in 2017. In 1993 it was predicted that a Chideock bypass would remove 90% of the traffic from Main Street which would reduce the pollution to acceptable levels, which we believe to be in the region of an average mean of 11 to 12 microgrammes of NO₂ per cubic metre of air.

Similarly we believe that it would reduce the levels of CO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} to levels that are not harmful to the Ecosystem or to human health and reduce the noise level by 14 decibels to around 65 decibels.

The environmental status of the proposed bypass is similar to that noted in the **Environmental Statement Volume I May 1993** (See Appendix 2). This document also goes on to explain in great detail the amount of protection that would have been given to the landscape, with additional parcels of land being purchased to provide more tree and hedge planting to ensure the bypass blended into the existing landscapes, enhanced the ecosystem population of the area and allowed a greater movement of wildlife and greater diversity than before the bypass. Where it was deemed necessary mature trees were to be planted to immediately hide any possible

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bare areas of landscape viewed from prominent positions.

The Environmental Statement also required considerable drainage to be provided, such as land drains and slotted drains to capture rainwater from embankments and slopes to prevent any possible landslips. The original 1993 scheme included for such drainage and its treatment along with a considerable contingency for any geological extra treatment required

In SRNIR section 3.3 “**Considering the priorities of our shareholder**” you summarise the Government’s five broad aims all of which would be addressed by a Chideock bypass:

- **Economy** – Improving productivity and building a stronger economy
 - A Chideock bypass would cut journey times for the local workforce; reduce the frustrations of heavy traffic congestion and encourage more tourism
 - A Chideock bypass would potentially open up land for communal use
- **Network Capability** – Meeting future needs and supporting growth for the long term
 - A Chideock bypass would allow for future traffic growth and encourage tourism
- **Safety** – Reducing deaths and injuries on our nation’s roads
 - A Chideock bypass would offer a far safer road for through traffic as well as a far safer village road for all non-motorised road users
- **Connectivity** – Linking with other transport hubs and local road networks
 - A Chideock bypass would provide an upgraded section of the east west south coast route linking many larger cities and especially the major ports of Portsmouth; Southampton; Poole and Plymouth. It would also improve integration of the south coast seaside resorts with those of Dorset, South Devon and the Cornish peninsula.
- **Environment** – Driving the transition to a decarbonised network that is environmentally and locally sensitive
 - A Chideock bypass may have little to do with the transition to a decarbonised network but it would vastly improve an area of known air quality concern

From the SRN maps shown in your section 3.4 “**Looking to the future**” it is apparent that over the medium term there is little intention to dramatically upgrade the south west peninsula route, particularly the A35 section which remains classified as an All Purpose Trunk Road (APTR). This being the case surely it is all the more important that relatively low cost improvements offering high value for money (such as the Chideock bypass) should be invested in at any opportunity. We believe that a bypass for our village would (relatively) cheaply address many of the core issues identified within SRNIR and would certainly improve the driving experience of all those using this particular APTR.

In SRNIR Section 4. “**Key challenges**” you identify a number of challenges in informing future investment. Here again we believe that the construction of a Chideock bypass would address most of these:

Increasing Safety – Safer new road and safer through the village

Providing better journeys every day – Improvement for tourists; residents and workers alike

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Supporting economic growth – Encouraging tourism and making easier journeys for HGV traffic along the south coast highway

Making roads work for everyone – Improvements for motorists and non-motor users alike

Working more harmoniously with our environment – improvements to air quality and elimination of noise and vibration problems within the village

Future Traffic

We would expect any new bypass for Chideock to recognise the massive changes expected in motor transport over the next 30 years with safer cars now being developed plus the likelihood that electric and driverless vehicles will start to take over. Chideock bypass would be designed to suit the terrain, flattening out steep gradients to no more than 6%, built in safety requirements; tree and hedge planting together with wall bunds using surplus material from cuttings. Lower gradients and continuously moving traffic will naturally reduce pollution and noise to acceptable levels for the Ecosystem and Human wellbeing for the whole area, not just removing the problem from Main Street. We would expect a footpath and cycle / equestrian path along the two mile length of the bypass joining up with paths already in existence or incorporated in addition, so that cyclists, horse riders and pedestrians will no longer experience the current danger riding up and down Chideock's two hills of 12% and 15% gradients and without footpaths all of which currently slows down traffic movement on the hills. At the pinch points on Quarr Hill (east of the village) the road is barely wide enough to allow a bus or HGV to pass, and if pedestrians or riders are using the hill then traffic is disrupted whilst vehicles have to slow down and pull out and pass.

In SRNIR Section 5.1 “Operating the SRN” you have identified a series of key areas for investment. One of these is “More reliable journeys” and we agree when you say that journey time reliability is a key issue for your customers. The section of the existing A35 from Bridport to Axminster and especially through Chideock offers anything but reliability to users. Any road incident from a delivery lorry stopping in the village to a road traffic incident immediately causes a traffic jam; in summer this impact can take hours to clear. At Easter 2015 one of the village pubs, The Clock, caught fire and the roof and interior were destroyed. The blaze took hours to get under control and the road was shut to through traffic for approximately 3 days. Many motorists and villagers spent up to 5 hours in the surrounding lanes either attempting to get to their own homes in the village or to make the simple east-west journey through the village. This was a very extreme example but regular hold-ups of several hours are now commonplace on this section of the road. You say that diversion routes are also key to reliability and that in the next period you wish to identify appropriate diversion routes and bring them up to the agreed standard. Around Chideock there are **NO** suitable diversion routes, just small country lanes totally unusable for HGVs with many not even providing safe two way driving for domestic cars. A Chideock bypass would solve all of this problem immediately.

In SRNIR Section 5.3 “Enhancing our network” you discuss your proposed priority areas for investment. A Chideock bypass would seem to fulfil three of these areas. Firstly it is a new smaller and medium sized scheme which would offer congestion relief; together with safety, development and environmental benefits. Secondly you

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talk of small schemes at a regional level targeting local safety or congestion blackspots, which are exactly the current problems in Chideock. Thirdly you discuss integrating the SRN with other infrastructure developments. In the case of the A35 this would particularly benefit the development of dock and port facilities at Portsmouth; Southampton and Poole Harbour all of which have major connections along the south coast with Plymouth. There has already been a huge increase in container lorries using the A35 due to the expansion of Southampton Docks. It can safely be assumed that the expansion of Poole Harbour in 2018 will see another significant increase in container lorries as the port will be able to accept up to 60 extra cargo ships a year (up from 150). These ships will be much larger and heavier and modern container ships can carry up to 21,000 containers, which will inevitably lead to much more HGV traffic on the A35, a proportion of which will inevitably travel through Chideock.

In SRNIR Section 5.4 “Focusing on designated funds” you identify five key areas. One of these is wellbeing and environment which you say covers human wellbeing and the natural and built environments. A Chideock bypass would immediately resolve the unacceptable conditions being imposed on both residents and ancient buildings alongside the existing A35 through the village. Residents are forced to live in conditions of noise and pollution that are totally unacceptable by today’s standards and Grade I and Grade II listed buildings are being shaken by the constant passing of ever larger HGVs. We should be proudly preserving our built heritage NOT allowing it to be destroyed by traffic damage. Secondly you identify connecting communities where you wish to create more, safer and better links for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. All of this would be immediately achieved by diverting the traffic out of Chideock village and onto a Chideock bypass. We agree entirely with your environmental ambition of

“A strategic road network working more harmoniously with its surroundings to deliver an improved environment”

We believe that these approaches to operating the SRN; enhancing the network and focusing on designated funds all provide value for money for the investment in a Chideock bypass. However by considering the estimated costs and benefits we can see a very tangible value for money.



MAIN STREET, CHIDEOCK

ANOTHER DAY

AND

ANOTHER INCIDENT

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4. Value for Money (VFM)

Before considering the cost benefits of a Chideock bypass we should understand some of the expenditure required for essential works to the current dysfunctional arrangement. There are regular and ongoing repairs required just to maintain this deteriorating asset. Millions of pounds need to be spent on drainage, subsidence, a basic re-build of the sub-grade foundations and surfacing. Considerable work is needed to reinforce landslip areas with expensive geotechnical solutions such as specialist piling. All this could be off-set against the costs of a new road.

But consider that none of this expenditure would actually address the key challenges that your own strategy highlights, such as improving safety, providing better journeys, supporting economic growth, making roads work for everyone and working more harmoniously with the environment by improving air quality and eliminating noise and vibration problems within the village.

Whereas a Chideock bypass would address all of these:

Cost Estimate of a Chideock Bypass – Based on approximate 1993 route

We estimate that the Chideock bypass construction costs at 2016 rates would be approximately £34M for a single carriageway bypass or £45M for a dual carriageway bypass.

Comparison between the benefits of Single Carriageway and Dual Carriageway:

Benefits of Single carriageway at 60mph - 183,656 Vehicle hours per year (VHY) saved.

Over 30years using DfT SC1 6.495M Vehicle hours (VH) saved

Over 30 years using DfT SC5 6.826M VH saved

Benefits of Single carriageway at 50mph - 160,703 VHY saved

Over 30 years using DfT SC1 5.683M VH saved

Over 30 years using DfT SC5 5.973M VH saved

Benefits of Dual carriageway at 70mph - 269,501 Vehicle hours per year (VHY) saved.

Over 30years using DfT SC1 9.404M Vehicle hours (VH) saved

Over 30 years using DfT SC5 9.882M VH saved

Benefits of Dual carriageway at 60mph - 232,570 VHY saved

Over 30 years using DfT SC1 7.526M VH saved

Over 30 years using DfT SC5 7.909M VH saved

Conclusion: Benefits of dual carriageways at 70mph or 60mph give exceptional value for money AND **are much safer**. In addition to this the design criteria for a dual carriageway is 18,000 vehicles (AADT) which Chideock is forecast to reach by 2021 (during the period of RIS2). We therefore believe that it would be prudent to construct a dual carriageway which gives the best VFM and considerably reduces accidents.

NOTE: For calculation purposes we have taken speeds on the existing A35 as 40mph on all hills, except where there is a 30mph limit on Main Street where we have taken

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25mph.

HGV's on all single carriageways are limited to 40mph.

At peak periods Main Street in Chideock has speeds of 0 to 10mph, or at a standstill.

Traffic on the slopes will often be below 40mph if following HGV's.

Any data used is from HE or DfT

Benefits of Dual Carriageway

Reduction in Accidents over 30years if bypass built Fatal 11, Serious114, Slight, 274(High), Fatal 10, Serious 98, Slight 236 (low).

Saving on Accidents over the period 30 years £30.92M (High), £21.012M (low)

Accident rates forecast to be 0.10 PIA/MVKM

(Source: Figures are taken from the 1993 Environmental Statement and the Inspector's Report).

Beneficial Outcome

Easy and less risk to deliver than any alternatives

Increasing Safety

Reduce substantially road accidents, injuries and fatalities

Reduce accidents to pedestrians and ensure their safety from injury

Provide faster access to emergency services

Easier incident clearance

Better user benefit for safety and comfortable driving

Clear sight lines to overtake safely

Providing better journeys every day

Reduce incident delays

Increase customer satisfaction

Shorten journey times by an average of 27 minutes in peak weekend traffic

Improve journey quality

An alternative relief valve for incidents on A303, A30 and M5

Reduce delays and improve certainty of journey completion

Greater availability to road users and maintenance staff

No road closures for roadworks or maintenance

Increase reliability

An alternative route for road closure

Will ease traffic on the surrounding roads and area

Supporting economic growth

Achieves the HE guideline of a 3 to 1 ratio of benefits to investment

Small bypass with lower maintenance

Measurable increase in visitor numbers and through traffic to South and East Devon and Cornwall

Will take the migration from new roads and upgrade construction of other roads in the Region

Major good impact on all groups, old, young, business along Main Street Chideock

Release unproductive land for the benefit of the local community

A real increase in employment in the local area

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Aid to businesses, local, regional and national
Allow increased productivity

Making roads work for everyone

New asset condition, little, repairs and maintenance for some years and under warranty

Allow unobstructed access for Military vehicles from along the South Coast of England

Provide safe access for non-motor users

Working more harmoniously with our environment

Reduce traffic by 90%

Benefit local, regional and national traffic of all kinds

Reduce vibration on 15th Century Houses with no modern foundations

Reduce pollution by 566% from 80 to 12 by 2030 within the first year of opening the bypass

Each vehicle will save on wear and tear and fuel

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5. Conclusion

Gateways

The A35 uniquely provides the vital freight link from south coast ports into the SW Peninsula as well as additional links to M5, M27 and M4 motorways. It plays a major role in supporting the economy of the south west from Bournemouth/Poole to Plymouth. It links business and communities such as those major sources of employment at Exeter and the Bournemouth/Poole conurbation. From March to November it is a gateway to many popular holiday destinations including World Heritage Sites significantly increasing traffic volumes in the summer season.

The Challenges

There does exist a concentration of safety issues particular to the Chideock stretch of the A35 which include not only the passage of vehicles so close to dwellings but also the lack of footpaths. Junctions within the village fail the criteria of free flowing traffic, vehicles crossing or joining interrupt traffic flow leading to driver frustration and compromising safety. Frequent traffic incidents highlighted recently by 3 serious accidents in mid-December 2017 all within 1 mile of the centre of Chideock, and all leading to disruptive road closures. Dorset Police cannot allow diversions of LGV1 freight onto the local country lanes. Again in the December 2017 incidents all freight movement was halted, and as a result deadlines were missed, drivers hours were compromised and financial penalties were no doubt incurred.

There are carriageway “pinch points” where two LGV1 vehicles cannot pass, and scheduled bus stops with the same problem. There are serious gradient changes with instances of LGV type vehicles brought to a standstill then unable to continue further. There is major pollution potentially most dangerous from brake and clutch dust exacerbated by the placement of safety cameras at the bottom of both gradients to reduce speed limits from 40 mph to 30 mph. Severance is a major drawback in Chideock with the village literally being “cut in two” by the A35 Trunk Road.

The Chideock section of the A35 is out of date for forming a part of the SRN and is totally unfit for this purpose.

In SRNIR Section 3.1 “Listening to our customers and stakeholders” you say that in order to deliver a fit-for-purpose network you need to listen to, and understand, the needs of your customers and stakeholders. We applaud your approach and hope that our contribution to your public consultation will be seriously considered, and that whilst our village represents only a small part of the overall road network for which you are responsible you find our case one that warrants inclusion into your budget for 2020 to 2025. We believe that a Chideock bypass would fulfil your Customer Service Strategy on all levels by providing a less congested safer stretch of road for the tens of thousands of vehicles that use the A35 every day of the year as well as for the well-being of the residents of this beautiful and ancient village whose quality of life is currently being adversely affected by the presence of a trunk road through its very heart.

A large part of your SRNIR appears directed towards the Smart Motorways; Motorways and Expressways where you are rightly focusing on the highest demands; connecting the most economically powerful towns and industrial hubs and attempting

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to meet the opportunities arising from new technology such as smart motorways, electric, connected and autonomous vehicles and providing 5G connectivity on motorways, All these are major challenges for you, but please do not forget those less developed parts of our country which still need a good road system. Relatively small investments (for example a Chideock bypass) are easy to engineer and construct and would provide good benefits and economic returns on that investment.

The Solution

HE correctly identifies the need to invest in Strategic Roads against a backdrop of increased demand. In a time of mass demand a transport network needs to use its tools to improve the efficiency, robustness and design of the network. Benefits can then be used to prioritise investment schemes, business opportunities, housing and recreation. Which can then influence urban planning by addressing bottlenecks and developing an efficient network from what otherwise would be inherently inefficient.

If we consider the minimum aims of RIS2 then the key challenges identified by HE are:

1. To establish a safe and serviceable network
2. To improve environmental issues
3. Free flowing network links (including to Ports; Airports and M3/M4/M5/M27 Motorways)
4. To support economic growth
5. Accessibility and integration

We consider that currently Chideock fails every one of these aims and challenges. It has become an “embolism in the artery” of the SRN of the south west Peninsula. Chideock needs its Bypass which it was historically given and which has been overlooked in every strategy since then.

RIS 2 must rectify this mistake and ensure a bypass goes ahead or must face the consequences. Planned growth from Bournemouth/Poole and Weymouth to Honiton and beyond will all be restricted due to the A35’s inability to cope. HE states that *“single carriageway stretches will inevitably lead to congestion and delays, all issues unsustainable”*.

We consider that no other project thus far included would yield better value for money relative to every key issue by which projects are judged.

Delivery

We have no doubt that a Chideock bypass will deliver value for money. With the outline design, consultation and approval all complete from the previous bypass there is little that has changed since then, except that the traffic has increased by over 40%. We believe that the passage of 24 years and the confirmation of greater traffic and even greater pollution has determined that a dual carriage option is the best solution and also the greatest value for money.

We believe that the Budget and contingencies are both robust enough to see the project finish on time and on budget. The ground and geological conditions for the main part are reasonable and generally known.

The project is mainly stand alone, with the only interfaces being the two tie-ins to the

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A35 and the North Road crossing. In all three cases temporary road diversions will be put in place, when and only when necessary. During Earthworks there will be temporary traffic lights on North road. All of these are standard practice and carried out on all these types of works and motorway projects. There is unlikely to be any disruption of the existing A35 or to North Road and there will be close liaison with farmers and land owners in the take over and subsequent handing back of land.

We believe the bypass will have a positive impact to the economy and become a lasting legacy for the community and environment.

We hope that you will seriously consider our input into your consultation period and that you do decide that our case does meet your criteria and that a Chideock bypass will be incorporated into your programme for Road Period 2.

Sources:

- Data in general has been taken from the 1993 Environmental proposal and Enquiry statement by the Inspector.
- Traffic data and forecasts have been taken from HE, DfT or David Peacock.
- Pollution data has been taken from WDDC.
- Heritage data has been taken from “A Wander Through Chideock by Kate Geraghty and Antony Broad.
- Inflation calculations for construction and accident values – A combination of nationwide house price movements (as they produced higher numbers than RPI) relative to current prices existing in the Civil Engineering industry. The Civil Engineering indices were also low reflecting the bare years since the Banking Crash in 2008 which continued until 2015, reflecting also in traffic numbers to the southwest.
- The rest is in the Public domain

Appendices:

1. Inspectors Report following the Public Inquiry into a Chideock bypass held April – September 1994.
2. The Environmental Statement Volume I May 1993
3. Proposed Low Emission Zone for Chideock – Research Paper and Conclusions November 2017
4. Traffic Pollution Forecast 2017 - 2046

APPENDIX 1

**Inspectors Report following the Public
Inquiry into a Chideock bypass held
April – September 1994.**

APPENDIX 2

**The Environmental Statement Volume I
May 1993**

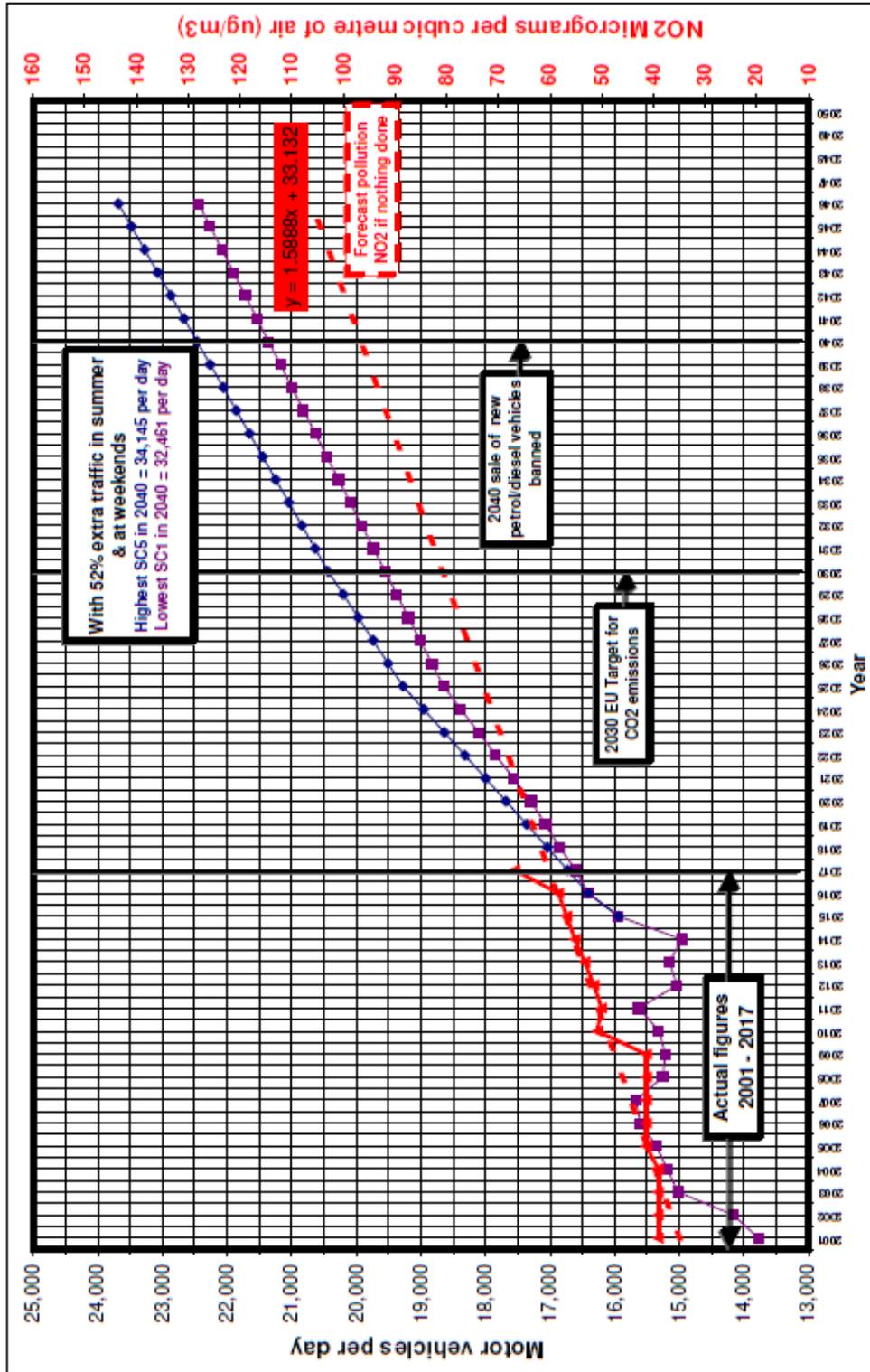
APPENDIX 3

**Proposed Low Emission Zone for Chideock
Research Paper and Conclusions
November 2017**

APPENDIX 4

Traffic Pollution Forecast 2017 - 2046

Traffic Pollution Forecast 2017-2046



Scenario = SC

Table TRA 9905

Department for Transport