

Road Safety – The Real Cost.....

No one can deny these are times of austerity.

The new financial year will soon be upon us and Warwickshire County Council are under pressure to make yet more cost savings. There will, no doubt, be difficult decisions to make about where exactly the budgetary axe should fall.

Will it be community services, safer routes to school or, perhaps, a reduction in the transport budget?

Although we have insisted since the start that the Bermuda Connection Route is inappropriate and dangerous, our concerns have been largely ignored and dismissed.

You can't however deny the already spiralling costs.

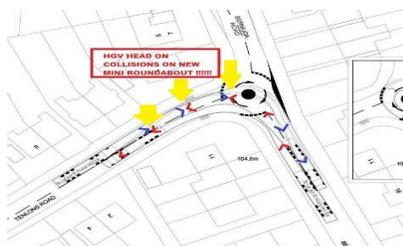
Currently, the projected costs for the project stand at just under £6million (it's worth remembering that this has nearly doubled from the original figure of £3.5 million, with topographical studies yet to be completed, so far, with much of the project still not finalized, there's an additional requirement for just under £3million which will need to be met by tax-payers' money *and* we would bet that this isn't the last budget increase that will happen if this project goes ahead.

ESTIMATE	WCC OCT 2014	BBAG OCT 2015	WCC NOV 2015	COMMENTS
Base Cost	£ 3.7M	£6.5M	£ 5.3M	Large Increase!
Estimating Uncertainty	44%	44%	12% !	40% would be typical for feasibility design
TOTAL	£ 5.3M	£ 9.3M	£ 5.9M	The Bridge is now costing the same as the full A444 Upgrade

You should also be seriously concerned as it has been reported to cabinet that applied estimating uncertainty levels should be as low as 8% (which would normally be reserved for Detail Design / Construction Tender stage) while the industry recommended value for feasibility design would be an estimating uncertainty range of 40% (The Growth Fund Business Case used 44%).

Has nothing been learned from the Rugby Relief Road cost issues?

This being said how can it can reasonably be justified to agree to sign off millions of pounds in additional funds to pump money into The Bermuda Connection Project.



- A scheme that it has been shown now has a massively reduced outlook.
- That will not bring prosperity.
- A scheme that will not ease congestion.
- One that will bring danger to residents doorsteps (well those of us that get to keep our doorsteps)!
- That channels increased volumes of traffic directly past several schools.
- That has not been designed to standards & has death trap junctions.
- That has already been called in for review by the design consultants.
- That so far has been shown it won't bring the benefits the grant fund application claimed it would.
- **A scheme that most consultation respondents DO NOT WANT**



The Bermuda Bridge Action Group has a far more cost effective suggestion: **Scrap the proposed plans for the Bermuda Connection.** Concentrate on the A444 upgrade programme of works which benefits a much wider area of Nuneaton & Bedworth for the same cost and that could also be grant funded.

We'd also particularly like to draw your attention towards the issue of road safety and accident prevention to indicate where the public's money could be better spent.

In the 2015/2016 Revenue Budget Resolution, WCC stated that it was: 'committed to developing and sustaining a society that looks after its most vulnerable people' (item 1.4).

1. Reductions:

The Revenue Budget Resolution indicated that cuts would need to be made in the following areas by 2017/2018:

- Special school transport (item LA-I and J) - reduction of £600,000
- Review of dangerous routes – reduction of £500,000
- Safety camera funded scheme allocation reduced to £0 under the previously agreed maintenance total.
- Casualty reduction schemes reduced to £0 under the previously agreed maintenance total.

Is the Bermuda Connection project *really*, the *best* use of public money? Especially when there is a better alternative, for which grant funding could be sought, in the A444 improvement Scheme.

Is WCC meeting its remit in protecting its most 'vulnerable people'?

2. What could £3million buy instead?

- The WCC Accident Reduction Fund currently has a yearly allocation of £300,000 - £3million would be enough to fund 10 years of accident prevention projects.
- The period of 2015/2016 saw 13 accidents at the Portobello Crossings on the Fosse Way A249 – 21 accidents over the last five years. £3million could pay for similar junctions and accident blackspots - across the County – to be mitigated against, avoiding the very real human and financial costs that such tragedies bring.
- 1 'Gatso' speed camera costs £20,000 to install; £3million could buy 150 cameras.
- A zebra crossing costs £15,000 - £25,000; £3million could buy 120 crossings.
- A puffin crossing costs £55,000 - £65,000 (including installation); £3million could buy 46 crossings.



The facts

- Speed is one of the main factors in fatal road accidents
- In 2013, 3,064 people were killed or seriously injured in crashes where speed was a factor
- The risk of death is approximately four times higher when a pedestrian is hit at 40mph than at 30mph
- Fatal accidents are four times as likely on rural "A" roads as urban "A" roads

Surely, the money allocated for the delivery of the Bermuda Connection proposals – if WCC are serious about reducing traffic accidents and creating 'safer' routes to school and work for pedestrians – would be better spent on the mitigation measures outlined above? Rather than on delivering an unworkable, unsafe and non-cost effective main road that re-routes the traffic from the A444 through a residential area.

www.bermudabridgeactiongroup.co.uk/