

Our ref: HA9/42/65  
Your ref: JM/164.07

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Dear Mrs Morris

### M5 JUNCTION , CULLOMPTON

Thank you for letter dated 25 September 2007 addressed to Adrian Beaumont which has been passed to me for reply as the Highways Agency's Regional Manager with responsibility for strategic issues concerning this section of the M5 motorway.

The primary purpose of the Country's Strategic Road Network (SRN), of which the M5 is part, is to facilitate the movement of long distance traffic, particularly freight.

This important role is recognised by the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) which promotes transport polices stating the Agency will manage the SRN so that it performs its strategic function. Measures seek to maintain safe, efficient operation and reliability of journey times into and out of the region. Further details can be found at section 5.3.5 of the draft RSS at [www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/media/SWRA/RSS%20Documents/Final%20Draft/section\\_5.pdf](http://www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/media/SWRA/RSS%20Documents/Final%20Draft/section_5.pdf).

The current policy document published by the Department for Transport earlier this year - Circular 02/2007 *Planning and the Strategic Road Network* – makes a general presumption that no additional accesses to motorways and other routes of strategic national importance will be permitted. This is because junctions generally add to the risk of accidents, reduce capacity and journey time reliability for strategic traffic. In particular the SRN must not be regarded as a convenient means of dealing with local problems by proposing additional junctions simply in order to relieve traffic pressures within the local area. You can find Circular 02/2007 at [www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/strategy/policy/circular207planningandstrategic](http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/strategy/policy/circular207planningandstrategic).

Accordingly, while the transport difficulties through Cullompton are well understood, I'm afraid an additional motorway junction would be contrary to both national and emerging regional polices for the reasons stated above and as such cannot be supported.

Nonetheless, the Agency is concerned about the existing motorway junction which operates at capacity at peak times with queuing on the slip roads sometimes reaching the motorway running carriageway. This is obviously a safety issue which will worsen with the emerging development proposals and one that will need addressing as part of the infrastructure requirements necessary to support the growth aspirations.

To help inform the process the Agency has commissioned a limited study to identify a junction 28 improvement acceptable to both the Agency and Devon County Council (DCC) as the local highway authority. Initial ideas have been shared with DCC and Mid Devon District Council (MDCC) and we are planning to meet again later this year following the completion of some further traffic modeling work.

All infrastructure improvement or other mitigation measures on the SRN, required to support development and a junction 28 improvement would need to be funded by the developer(s).

I am sorry this is not the response you were hoping for but I can assure you that the Highways Agency is working closely with all interested stakeholders to identify affordable junction improvements which will facilitate the growth aspirations emerging within MDDC's Local Development Framework Documents for Cullompton.

Yours sincerely

*Steve Helles*

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