

Grindleton Parish Council response to United Utilities' planning applications 3/2021/0660 and 3/2021/0661

The existing plans are complex and still at an early stage and seem to be very much a 'wish list' for United Utilities, with onus placed on the contractors to complete the specifics for final approval. Therefore, without the specifics only generalisations on proposals within the plans are possible.

Haulage route option 1 has two routes.

Route two for large and tall vehicles that cannot get under the railway bridge at (Waddington) leave Waddington via West Bradford, Grindleton Bridge, Chatburn Road and Pimlico link road to the A59. Vehicles using route 2 would be carrying components of tunnel boring machines (TBMs) and cranes.

We welcome the marshalling area for HGVs and booked delivery system as proposed within Ribblesdale Cement Works. However, the number of HGVs and AILs suggested is far too excessive to be acceptable in the environs of Grindleton Parish Council.

The use of escorted convoys proposed for large vehicles will be needed for 79 weeks of the project averaging 4 convoys per day with a maximum of 16 convoys per day.

The traffic volume is spelled out in the transport planning document. Along the West Bradford Road, it states an additional 167 vehicle movements per day including 141 HGVs – this is 262% increase in HGV movements. This is a very considerable volume of heavy traffic vehicles at peak times. The transport statements say the effect will be slight to moderate, however this depends on perception of course. For those living in the properties along the route, it will be unacceptable!

In the plans it is stated that noise reduction barriers will be installed at Waddington primary school, this demonstrates UU accept that the noise will be detrimental, yet we have residents all the way down from the center of Chatburn through Grindleton to West Bradford where the vehicles will be passing within 3m of the front door and no talk of noise reduction or vibration impact on these properties. This is unacceptable in the rural setting of narrow lanes.

It is concerning that existing large vehicle have not been factored in to the equation i.e., tractors, farm deliveries, caravan deliveries, buses plus others, as these can cause traffic jams on normal day to day journeys.

Will there be an independent analysis of usage/vehicles? It is stated that changes could be made following on-going monitoring if necessary. There does not appear to be an alternative if this route is chosen.

Parking restrictions on the route via Ribble Lane and East View will be strewn with difficulties, in part due to parked vehicles. There is no alternative for the residents that would be practicable and be safe due to a lack of pavements and virtually no street lighting in the area for the duration of the project.

The report suggests the reduction of the speed limit to 30 mph; this speed will not be safe for other road users who encounter such large vehicles, especially pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. There is a fear that HARP drivers may become complacent as they become familiar with the roads and increase speed.

The report suggests additional road and vehicle signage: two-way traffic control on Grindleton bridge, three-way control Grindleton Road /East view and several more two-way traffic controls at passing place along West Bradford Road. Whilst it would be necessary for safety reasons IF this route is chosen; traffic lights will considerably slow and inconvenience the local population

- emergency vehicles could be seriously delayed by the traffic controls and even more so by any potential, but very likely traffic jams. The route from Chatburn to Grindleton is the designated route for all emergency vehicles.

- it will be difficult to work around the school buses as they have a very varied routine.

- local buses are an integral part of rural life for those without cars, who need to access services such as medical appointments and shopping.

- They are also used by tourists to allow them access to walking routes.

- Tourism is a key part of RVBC's core strategy commitment.

Considering all the traffic lights and vehicle movement increases, we can predict that the local traffic will be displaced and be forced to go through Grindleton to Sawley. This will take excess traffic passed Grindleton Primary School and Bowland High School and on to the A59 which is already an accident black spot.

The report suggests, ... *“Establish a sustainable and proportionate approach to help ensure that the character and distinctiveness of the AONB is retained as far as is reasonably practicable”*. What is reasonably practicable? What happens in the event of not being reasonably practicable? Following vegetation clearance how long will it take to replace vegetation to its present state?

It is stated that road widening will be carried out on narrow sections of road and tight bends. i.e., Grindleton Bridge, East View junction and areas of Grindleton Road to West Bradford. We require guarantees that all road widening be removed immediately after the project ceases. The narrow lanes are a feature of our locality and make it distinct from the urbanisation of Clitheroe. We would also insist that walls and railings be rebuilt with original materials as our residents choose to live here to enjoy its appearance and appreciate its history as in the stone walls which have been in situ since C19. We ask you make reinstatement to “original as found” a condition of any works undertaken. The attributes of our village are indicative of the rural environs of the Forest of Bowland AONB.

There is concern that possible damage to houses and roads (including culverts) along this route has not been addressed.

Who will pay for other required improvements? i.e., upgrade of Chatburn - Grindleton permissive path to allow at least one safe space for pedestrians?

Grindleton Road is classed as a “rural single carriageway with two lanes.” In many parts it is not 2 lanes wide and passing places that have been created by vehicles running off the road are used. These are not designated passing places.

We see in the planning that road widening onto and off Grindleton bridge is to be made if route 1 is used. We need to bring to everyone’s attention that the river floods at this point a couple of times a year at least. Any structure built will need to be very substantial to withstand being damaged and swept away. This leads us to then having concerns about the increased flood risk of houses on East view and The Spinney as the natural flood route for the river will be obstructed.

The questions this raises are: Will residents need to inform their insurance companies of this work and would they then end up with increased insurance

premiums? Can they claim from UU or RVBC as approving the plans if their houses are subsequently flood over the 6-10yrs of this project? What compensation will they be entitled to?

We want to bring it to your attention that in the last couple of years otters have established themselves at Grindleton bridge. If the ramp work onto the bridge goes ahead this will be right alongside if not on top of the otters' holt.

It is an offence under section 9 and 11 of the wildlife Act 1981 to "kill, disturb or injure" please write back to us directly and to the Ribble Rivers Trust to explain how you intend to carry out this work without contravening this act.

OPTION 2 -RIBBLE CROSSING is a new temporary road from the Clitheroe side of the West Bradford Bridge, over a temporary bridge to cross the River Ribble, through farmland and out onto Waddington Road just west of the Waddington & West Bradford school.

This option would avoid all the above works (option 1) in Chatburn, Grindleton and West Bradford.

Noise at Waddington school is recognised as an issue during the construction phases – but if route 2 were used then traffic noise would equally be an issue and pupil safety be a consideration if the excessive number and large vehicles pass the school. The Ribble crossing would reduce traffic flow directly in front of the school, as it links with the roadway to the east of the school

The effects of the route 2 proposal through Chatburn, have not been assessed in as much detail as the river crossing. This implies an unfair bias toward the Chatburn route, whereas the river crossing route has a number of negative comments.

The government's vision is to be environmentally aware and give consideration to carbon emissions and environmental impact. The route 1 option has so many impacts which do not tie in with the governments vision i.e., twice as many miles to go via Chatburn/Grindleton route as the Ribble Crossing route to get to the same point. So therefore, greater carbon emissions from vehicles, noise impact on more residents as the traffic is displaced. Impact on wildlife and vegetation will be equally impacted. The thought that The Ribble Crossing route has a greater impact on the river Ribble is very misplaced as on the Chatburn/Grindleton route the wagons will cross the Ribble in other places and lots of tributaries that feed the Ribble.

Loss of verge habitats & degradation of wildlife habitats due to changes in groundwater conditions at Bradford Fell, Easington Fell & Harrop Fell Biological Heritage site could affect designation. They state protection measures “would be identified”but no detail is given in relation to locally significant permanent losses of trees and woodland. What would these protection measures be and can we be sure they would be put in place?

They state “arboriculture statements & landscape reinstatement plans are anticipated.” We require more detail on reinstatement plans following all off site highway works. Mitigation is proposed to leave no lasting effects. How can we be sure of this?

An increase in FLOOD RISK upstream means there could be significant impact on Grindleton. A detailed assessment has not yet been done. This could be critical for our community and appears to be lacking in detail in this current plan. This is a concern as the properties at the bottom of Grindleton Brow are considered for insurance purposes to be in a flood risk area and insurance premiums are already high due to this considered status.

The proposed crossing goes over a high pressure ethylene¹ pipeline that runs along the Ribble Valley- they say this will need a “safe design solution”not yet done and it is urgently needed as it is an accident hazard. This is something that happens all over the country on a regular basis and the method will be well documented, so it is bewildering that they have not completed this task.

The final comment in 9.4 states “the (environmental) impacts are largely temporary & acceptable” Based on their own surveys and reports the impacts are significant, will last the best part of a decade and some permanently, so we strongly disagree that these are “acceptable” environmental impacts, especially in a designated AONB.

Noise and vibration: It is suggested that there is not expected to be any uplift in road traffic volumes or changes in vehicle composition or speed following construction. This seems a rather disingenuous statement given the need for the works should Haulage Route 2 go ahead. Clearly there will be a ‘negative’ change in ‘vehicle composition’ otherwise why the need for the works?

No reference is being made to potential issues around gas and water pipes which could be affected by heavy construction vehicles. Has this been assessed in terms of location/depth etc?

If this project goes ahead as proposed, whatever access route is chosen, it will inevitably alter the beauty of our current local landscape and significantly affect the biodiverse and important wildlife of Bowland for years – if not decades - to come.

Despite all our grave concerns with regard to the HARP project, we recognise that water improvement is necessary. Our preferred route is the River Ribble crossing as this creates the least impact on the villages of Chatburn, Grindleton and West Bradford.