

Bypass costs may reach £315 million

Press release by Save Swallow's Wood

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Revised figures, published last week by the Department for Transport [2], now estimate the A628 Mottram Tintwistle bypass to cost between £223 and £315 million, a 20% to 71% increase on the £184 million estimate published in March 2007 [3]. The scheme first entered the Government's Targeted Programme of Improvements (TPI) in 2001 at an estimated £90 million. If the scheme is to go ahead, additional funding to cover the cost increases will have to be found via the North West's regional funding allocation, which is already considerably over budget. This comes on top of a recent review of local road schemes, which revealed a 54% increase in the cost of the Glossop Spur to over £11 million [4]. The costs were revised as part of a wider review of road scheme costs by the DfT in response to criticisms raised in the Nichols Report last year [3].

The DfT report attributed the cost increases to the actual road construction inflation, which has exceeded the figures on which the earlier estimates were based, and "changes in the scope and design of schemes, and the introduction of more prudent project and programme risk allowances."

In response, Emma Lawrence from Save Swallow's Wood said:

"If this scheme goes ahead we can have no doubt this Government are committed to business-as-usual while the reality of climate change and an ever-rising oil price beat down the door. The inquiry has so far been a shambles and a total waste of tax payers money [5]. These new figures show what we already know: that road building is not a magic bullet to solve local transport problems but a rod for the Government's back. Hopefully someone in Government will see these new figures and finally have the good sense to scrap plan for a bypass and invest instead in sustainable transport alternatives.

Notes for Editors:

[1] Save Swallow's Wood and Alternative Proposals for Transport are two local groups campaigning against the Mottram-Tintwistle bypass. For more information, visit <http://www.saveswallowswood.org.uk>

[2] *Highways Agency Major Roads Programme: Updated Scheme Cost Estimates*, 16 July 2008
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roads/introtoroads/roadcongestion/costestimates.pdf>

[3] *Review of Highways Agency's Major Roads Programme*, July 2007
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roads/nicholsreport/nicholsreport>

[4] <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/ltp/major/majorscheme.pdf>

[5] *Bypass has cost £13.7 million already*, Glossop Advertiser, January 2008
http://www.glossopadvertiser.co.uk/news/s/1031408_bypass_has_cost_137m_already