

BaSRAG response to GCC Sharpness Review of Transport report

The submitted report puts into significant doubt the deliverability and viability of the proposed rail link from Sharpness to the main line. This is in line with our various submissions and by many other more informed bodies.

This needs to be considered alongside the other transport options discussed during the examination: Stagecoach, Gloucestershire County Council and others have expressed in the strongest terms how it would not be possible to provide viable bus and coach services to the proposed site; and National Highways and other experts have expressed significant concerns about the effect the site would have on the strategic road network. This is despite the data provided by the council in successive reports on anticipated road usage changing in support of their arguments, which as we have pointed out in previous submissions amounts to post hoc rationalisation.

There is also significant disagreement about the likely costs of strategic highway improvements that would fall upon the development of the Sharpness Vale proposal. The combination of all these factors makes it quite clear that from a transport point of view alone the PS36 Sharpness site is not deliverable and demonstrates it remains unsustainable.

Despite whatever they say now, the council, and Paul Fong on their behalf, since the inception of this proposal have constantly placed the restored rail link at the heart of the proposals of PS36. We have pointed out previously how they have even (disingenuously in our view) shown the rail link in various maps and diagrams and not marked as proposed or similar, but rather that it is a given.

In the full council meeting of 29 April 2021, BaSRAG asked two public questions about the rail link (minutes attached). In their answer, the council stated 'The delivery of a new railway station and the introduction of passenger services is an exciting part of the sustainable transport strategy for Sharpness new settlement. It is a **requirement** (our emphasis) of the site set out in the draft local plan and the deliverability of the proposals will be subject to scrutiny at the Local Plan examination'.

BaSRAG maintain their view, reinforced by the expert evidence presented at this Examination, that the rail link cannot be delivered in the lifetime of this Local Plan. Together with the expert evidence on other transport matters it helps to demonstrate that the proposed Sharpness Vale proposal PS36 is not viable.