White Horse Reservoir Targeted Consultation – 09/09/2026 - 07/10/2026

Cllr Sarah James, Hendreds Ward, Vale of White Horse District Council

I am responding in my capacity as the elected representative for Hendreds Ward. Hendreds Ward includes the villages of Milton Heights, Milton Hill, the west part of Rowstock, East Hendred, West Hendred, Ginge, Betterton, Ardington and Lockinge. It includes part of the Grove Park Drive including all dwellings along that road. It includes Featherbed Lane and all dwellings accessed by that road. It includes parts of Harwell Campus including housing.

My response raises concerns that: this consultation is inadequate and will not hear from most people who are affected by the construction access points; there has been no assessment of the cumulative effect of construction traffic and that the impact of this will be very substantial for villages served solely by the A417 or the A4130; that new access points at Featherbed Lane, Woods Farm Road, Ardington Wick Lane and Grove Park Drive are unsuitable and unsafe for the increased traffic proposed, or for any HGV access.

Thames Water describes this as a targeted consultation but are only contacting landowners whose land is directly impacted. This is a bare legal minimum requirement and does not form a targeted consultation. A targeted consultation would be open to residents and stakeholders that might reasonably be expected to be affected the matter consulted upon. In my ward almost all residents live in villages that can only be accessed by roads that will be used by White Horse Reservoir traffic for access to the newly identified access points, and so should have been invited to respond.

The documents provided show 17 access points for works related to the delivery of the White Horse Reservoir. Of these A10, A9 and A12 must be accessed via the A417. The villages of East Hendred, West Hendred, Ginge, Betterton, Ardington and Lockinge can also only be accessed by the A417. There are no other roads to these villages. A11 must be accessed via the A4130 and A5 is likely to be accessed via the A4130. Milton Heights and Milton Hill can only be accessed by the A4130. Rowstock is accessed only by the A4130 and the A417.

Some or all of the access points on the A338 (A20, A2, A15 and A4) may also be accessed via the A417 and the A4130 as this is the most direct connection to the A34 major road. These are forecast to have much higher construction traffic loads, measured in the thousands of movements per month, rather than in the hundreds, and heavier vehicles. For example, A2 peaks at 51 HGV movements per hour and A20 at 7 HGV movements per hour with overlapping peaks in 2031.

The documents provide indicative forecast traffic data for each access point but no data at all on the cumulative forecast traffic data on key public roads such as the A417

and the A4130 despite at least 5 and up to 9 access points using these roads. A2 and A20 are highly likely to be accessed via the A417 which will mean up to 1 HGV movement per minute through our villages for just 2 of these access points.

It is not clear if the forecast traffic includes the traffic impact from building work to upgrade farm tracks to be able to take HGVs and LGVs, or any roadworks to improve junction visibility.

A9 – Ardington Wick Lane

As well as the general concerns raised above, I raise the following specific concerns about this access.

- The traffic forecast presents a very significant increase over existing use as Ardington Wick Lane is a dead-end road which serves only 8 properties.
- Safe access for these 8 properties must be maintained. The road is single-track with some poor visibility at corners.
- Ardington and Ardington Wick's only bus stops are either side of the A417 very close to access A9. These bus stops are already hazardous to use, with limited refuge space and challenging access for people with mobility aids or pushchairs. There is no pedestrian crossing to help people access the stops on the unlit, 50mph A-road. If WHR commits to providing a crossing here that would help to mitigate the additional risks of more and heavier traffic using the junction.
- This is a long, largely unsurfaced track. Considerable surface material will need to be provided to make this fit for HGV and LGV traffic.
- Ardington Wick Lane is public bridleway so safe access for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders must be ensured.

A10 – Woods Farm Road

- The traffic forecast presents a very significant increase over existing us as Woods Farm Road is a dead-end road with no public access which serves only 7 properties.
- Safe access for these properties must be maintained. The road is single-track with some poor visibility in places.
- The surface is very poor and the road is steep in one section so it will likely need surface work to be used as forecast.
- The junction with the A417 has very poor visibility especially looking west along the A417.

A11 – Featherbed Lane

- The proposed access is a field gate used annually for access for Truck Festival. During that period, it is only used one-way, as is Featherbed Lane itself. One-way

traffic management is not proposed for this usage and is not likely to be practical for any extended period.

- The proposed route onward from Featherbed Lane is not surfaced and is steep so will likely need surface work.
- During a brief period when a gas leak closed the A417 in Rowstock, Featherbed Lane was used by local buses and by some HGVs that ignored the A-road diversion route. Accidents did occur including one where the top deck windows of a local bus were smashed in, narrowly missing passengers. Featherbed Lane is not safe for HGV traffic.
- There is an alternative route to the same farm tracks, also used by Truck Festival to form the return loop of their one-way system. This joins the road network at the A4130 just north of Featherbed Lane. This may be a safer alternative.

A12 – Grove Park Drive to Pinmarsh Farm track

- Unlike the other access points in Hendreds Ward, Grove Park Drive is a public road. It is not suitable for HGVs. It is busy at peak times, but heavy vehicles are minimal. There are already safety issues around speeding and poor visibility for residents living on this road.
- The intention of this access is unclear. It draws a route part way along a public road and stops at a track that is a private drive to a single, domestic residence. There is no access here to land ear-marked for biodiversity.
- The map label describes it as showing the indicative route from the public highway into the site, but this is a route on a public highway. This map of Oxfordshire County Council Publicly Maintained Highway may be useful - https://oxfordshiremaps.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=6c415c7f9eb94aea802cc1cc51b71a15
- There are safety issues at the junction of Grove Park Drive and the A417 with at least 2 crashes there this summer to my knowledge.