

M.S.A. SPACING

Paragraph 55 of the Department for Transport Circular 1/2008, which lays down all the requirements that have to be met if a new core MSA is proposed, states that "any new application for a core MSA should therefore be considered on the basis of a 28 mile (45 km) distance, or 30 minutes travelling time, from the previous core MSA, whichever is the lesser." This means only that the Highways Agency will give consideration to the possibility of a new MSA between Michaelwood and Strensham. It does not mean that there is, de facto, a definite requirement. All other requirements of the Transport Circular have to be met, and all objections from whatever source, have to be overcome before there is any possibility of an MSA being approved.

Current Department of Transport figures show that, on average through the year, 42,035 vehicles travel North and 39,137 travel South daily between Junctions 11a and 12. Of this total, 68,531 are Light Vehicles and 12,641 Heavy Goods Vehicles. HGVs therefore, comprise only 15.5% of the total traffic. The Proposer's own figures for distance between the two existing MSAs show 33.80 miles going North and 33.02 miles going South. Thus the 84.5% of the total traffic which is allowed to travel at 70 mph, will cover the distance in under the 30 minute time laid down in Circular 1/2008.

It cannot be deemed to be of vital importance to spend over £30 million, to despoil 66 acres of agricultural land which lies within a designated Special Landscape Area and adjoins an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, for just over 15% of the traffic, much of which will turn off the M5 anyway to obtain cheaper diesel prices. Confirming this point, a Director of Eddie Stobart, perhaps the largest transport firm in the Country, says that all their lorries only use 'Fastfuel' sites of which there are 469 throughout the country, and it is significant that only 5 of these are on Motorways. Eric Vick, MD of the local transport company, confirms this, saying that his drivers are instructed never to fill up at an MSA.

Other facilities are available:-

-)= Between the two MSAs, there are no less than three Service Stations that offer 24 hour services. They are all within 2-3 minutes of the M5.
-)= At Junction 9, on the A46 towards Ashchurch, 6 miles from the MSA at Strensham, there is the BP Express Shopping complex. This has all normal facilities, including a Little Chef, a 24 hour café and HGV lanes.
-)= At Junction 12, on the A38 at Cross Keys Roundabout, 16 miles from Junction 9, there is a MacDonalds open from 5am to 11pm Sunday to Thursdays, and 24 hours on Fridays and Saturdays. There is also a Filling Station with HGV lanes open from 6am to 9.45pm Monday to Saturday and 7am to 9.45pm on Sundays. We are told that about 60% of their turnover is in diesel for HGVs which come off the M5. In view of this, the Owner already has already obtained planning approval for considerable expansion, putting in four additional HGV lanes.
-)= At Junction 13 on the A419 Westend Roundabout, 3 miles from Junction 12, there is a Little Chef, HGV lanes and a Travel Lodge Hotel. The MSA at Michael Wood is a further 8 miles.

There is evidently no compelling need for another MSA, when there are also three Service Stations with excellent facilities available in between the two existing core MSAs ?

The requirements laid down in Paragraph 55 of the Department for Transport's 1/2008 Circular are clear, but, as can be seen from the above arguments, this is very much a borderline case.