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TO SOWERBY BRIDGE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
C/O Rob Shipway

SBF&W'S RESPONSE TO CMBC HIGHWAYS' PROPOSALS FOR HOLLINS MILL LANE.

I have raised the issue of the lack of recognition by CMBC Highways that SBF&W is the council's Community Partner in the HSHAZ project and as such expected to play a significant role in the establishment of the brief for Hollins Mill Lane and in the oversight of any proposals resulting from this. In our opinion Highways utterly failed to rise to this and the resulting scheme fails to meet SBF&W's criteria on many significant levels.

In spite of requesting meetings with Highways throughout the 3 years or more since we successfully introduced the idea that Hollins Mill Lane should be added into the HSHAZ area, there has only been one such meeting (24th January 2023) at which it was agreed that, using Highways' survey information, I would adapt my original proposals and table them for further discussion. The only communication since then was a Teams meeting with Adrian Gill (1st June 2023) which he followed up on 14th June, in which he stated that there remained a number of concerns although the one positive was that they hoped to remove some of railings panels, but he could not support our scheme, to which my response was *"informing me what you can support is not the same as an actual discussion about the issues - that could only happen face to face with the designs on the table, but it seems that this is still being denied to Fire & Water"*.

Adrian then stated that he had asked Bona Matturi to share his latest plans with me but to date this has not happened.

I have now seen the 6 drawings attached to Rob Shipway's 18th July email and I comment as follows:

1. There is no reduction in the number of railing panels in spite of the earlier indication that this would be possible;
2. The layout of kerbs, raised platform and railings is to all intents and purposes the same as it is now, albeit with a different design of railings;
3. There are no concessions to the fact that HML is now a no-through road and therefore much less trafficked nor that the numbers of users of the F&W buildings will increase dramatically once the Courtyard and Pool venues come into operation;
4. The inclusion on the drawings of an articulated vehicle with its cab up against the railings is quite misleading seeing as the regular damage to the existing panels is caused by the tail-gates of these vehicles – not their cabs - and this will continue to happen irrespective. Pedestrian safety is not at all addressed by this scheme – manoeuvring vehicles will always represent a potential threat to pedestrians but as is regularly demonstrated, the continuance of the particular panels neither improves nor worsens the existing situation – this might be a justification, albeit a weak one, for retaining the end 2 panels but it doesn't justify the retention of the other 13.

F&W's aspiration was to get rid of the railings altogether, by raising the kerb levels and adjusting the cross-falls across the width of the street. We recognised that this was going to be difficult to achieve but we hoped that the new design would go some way towards achieving our aims.

We suggested that the kerb and platform wall could be replaced by a double step, parallel with the road. As the overall change in level shown on the Highways drawing is 337mm, the 2 steps would be approx. 168mm – well below any Building Regulations requirement that might apply should this have been covered by the Building Regulations. This solution would not interfere with the existing road levels in any way and the incorporation of 2 steps over such a change in level would not require any sort of continuous guardrail. We suggested using bollards to delineate the footway which would enable pedestrians to step through when required but it appears that Highways were not even prepared to discuss this.

What has been presented is a top-down scheme, created without deference to the instigators of this element of the HSHAZ and their aspirations, with no significant change to what we already have on site, other than improved materials.

F&W has tried to inspire a significant improvement to the streetscape in developing the town's cultural quarter in its SB Conservation Area setting but in our opinion the scheme as presented fails miserably in addressing this. Sowerby Bridge Fire & Water has expressed these concerns to Historic England.

To be plain: Sowerby Bridge Fire & Water strongly objects to this scheme in its current form and will not support it.

Yours sincerely,



Phil Hawdon,
on behalf of Sowerby Bridge Fire and Water Ltd.

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Sowerby Bridge FIRE AND WATER Ltd has successfully negotiated with the council over the future of the fire station, council offices and swimming baths on Hollins Mill Lane Sowerby Bridge HX6 2QA, to create a major community project for the town and act as Community Anchor. Join us!