

**From:** Carrie Darby [mailto: ]  
**Sent:** 01 October 2015 19:49  
**To:** M4 Junction 3-12 Smart Motorway  
**Subject:** M4 SMART MOTORWAY WORKS – MYRKE ALLOTMENT TENANTS

**ATTN: Richard Price, Case Manager**

**YOUR REFERENCE: TR010019**

**MY UNIQUE REF NO: M4312-S57045**

### **M4 SMART MOTORWAY WORKS – MYRKE ALLOTMENT TENANTS**

I am writing as Chairman of the Slough Allotment Federation and as a representative of Myrke Allotment tenants to raise potential issues affecting tenants of Slough Borough Council's Myrke Allotment site.

Firstly I would like to say that The Highways Agency have been very helpful in trying to resolve the issues we have raised, however there is need for confirmation on a number of matters.

**ACCESS TO THE SITE DURING THE WORKS:** The Highways Agency have stated (9<sup>th</sup> Sept '15) that the contractor carrying out the works "*will be required to maintain access to the Allotment site*" apart from "*a number of temporary short duration closures*". This is welcomed news but we need to confirm that the access will allow for heavy goods vehicles which sometimes need access to the site (for delivery of manure etc) and that the temporary closures would not prevent access to the site during the peak growing season other than overnight.

**PERMANENT FENCING:** We have a small section of noise fencing at the far end of the site. The Highways Agency have stated (9<sup>th</sup> Sept '15) that this will be replaced with low-noise fencing but the majority of the M4 boundary will be safety fencing not low-noise fencing. We understand that new low-noise surfacing of the M4 will help reduce noise however our view is that with the hard shoulder (which directly borders plots) becoming a fast moving lane of traffic, tenants will suffer a significant increase in noise disturbance. For many tenants their allotment is a way of life and some spend many hours every day on their plot. We would ask that consideration be given to erect a taller noise reducing boundary. This would also potentially improve air quality on the site.

**TEMPORARY ACQUISITION OF PLOTS:** The original plan indicated that a large section of the site (Plots 20 -33) would need to be temporarily acquired for Thames Water works to the main culvert. The Highways Agency (3<sup>rd</sup> June '15) said that they were looking at *“alternative proposals to either reduce the extent of the works required or remove the need for the works entirely”* and that a decision was expected mid-July '15. Given this, it was disappointing to have to wait until 25<sup>th</sup> September for an updated plan which does indicate a much smaller area will be acquired. (Revised plan attached, the redline indicates the original area identified for acquisition). This plan however has still not been formally agreed with Thames Water and does not confirm which plots will be acquired. The Highways Agency state (25<sup>th</sup> Sept '15) that *“it appears to align with allotment plots 25 to 29 but I must stress that this should not be taken as definitive”*. Whilst we welcome this apparent reduction in the number of plots to be acquired the fact that it is not confirmed does extend the uncertainty of acquisition and put tenants of these and adjacent plots in a difficult position as to whether they should appeal or not.

Allotment tenants take great care in the management of their topsoil. Even temporary acquisition will destroy years of work. Due to the uncertainty, we have already seen a decline in cultivation standards of some plots in the area originally indicated. We need the Highways Agency to confirm which plots will be acquired as a matter of urgency to allow us to work with Slough Borough Council to minimise the impact on these tenants.

We also requested that The Highways Agency investigate if it necessary to take over the full length of plots (28m). The Highways Agency (9<sup>th</sup> Sept '15) confirmed the full length of the plot will be used. Looking at the current plan we do not see why this is necessary. Allowing tenants to keep part of their plot might allow them to move and store structures and topsoil. We would ask that this is given further consideration.

The Highways Agency have stated (18<sup>th</sup> August '15) that *“Thames Water have indicated that their preference is for the works to be accessed from the M4 rather than through the Allotment Site. We seek confirmation of this, any access through the site and/or use of the concrete road within the site boundary would have significant impact on all tenants.*

**SITE INSPECTION 11th November:** I wish to attend the accompanied site inspection.

**HEARINGS 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> November:** I am unable to attend in person but will ensure a Slough Allotment Federation Committee Member attends to represent tenants at The Myrke at any hearing you decide appropriate.

Thank you for your help with this matter.

**Carrie Darby**

**Chairman**

**Slough Allotment Federation**

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**Carrie Darby**

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Allotment Gardens

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