

**25<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

**SUBMISSION BY CLIVE JONES ON BEHALF OF WOKINGHAM LIBERAL DEMOCRATS**

**(Please refer to my previous representations - reference no. 175)**

**Dear Mrs Burden, Mrs Miller and Mr Ebert,**

First of all, I would like to thank you all for the courtesies that you extended to the interested parties and those who spoke at the public meetings and thank the staff and advisors of Highways England for the professional and courteous way that they dealt with our questions.

The following summarises the comments that I made to the open Meeting in Reading on the 16<sup>th</sup> November and comments made at the issue specific hearings at the Radison Blu hotel in Hayes on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> November.

Some comments also relate to the accompanied site visits on 10<sup>th</sup> November when we visited 10 different sites between junctions 10 and 11.

In summary, we do not agree that Highways England noise mitigation, air quality or road safety plans as they currently are, go far enough for the stretch of motorway between junctions 10 and 11.

The small measures proposed by Highways England will only help a few hundred residents in Emmbrook, Winnersh, Sindlesham, Lower Earley and Shinfield.

This is very disappointing because there are over 10,000 houses in the Lower Earley area alone and possibly nearly 30,000 people living here. When you add the residents of Winnersh, Emmbrook, Shinfield, Sindlesham and Three Mile Cross this number will move towards 12,000 houses and 35,000 residents. These residents get little or nothing from the proposals by Highways England.

My detailed comments are set out below:

### **1. ACCOMPANIED SITE VISITS**

I was pleased that Highways England added some sites to the visit that I suggested you looked at in my earlier representation.

During the accompanied site visits on the 10<sup>th</sup> November we visited 10 different sites. As we drove between the sites I was able to point out to you where earth bunding and acoustic fencing could go.

Highways England have asserted that there will also be some noise from local feeder roads such as Lower Earley Way and Rushey Way and that this contributes to the noise and air quality levels. However on the site visits that we undertook we could distinctly hear the sound of motorway noise.

## 2. NOISE

### 2.1 EARTH BUNDING AND ACOUSTIC FENCING

#### 2.1.1 LOWER EARLEY

For Earth bunding there is generally land south of Lower Earley Way where the bunds can go. There is also enough space for Lorries delivering the earth to turn around without clogging up Lower Earley Way. The bunds will be able to start at Eden Way in Winnersh and continue alongside the M4 until a few hundred metres before Beeston Way. At the end of the bund and Acoustic fence could be erected by the side of the M4 up to the roundabouts at Beeston Way.

From here acoustic fencing can continue alongside the north side of the M4 continuing to the Black Boy roundabout.

Along the bunding we would like to see extensive planting of tree and bushes to help improve the air quality. This would greatly improve the visual impact from both sides of the bunds.

The above bunding and acoustic fencing will be a major benefit to the 30,000 people who live in Lower Earley.

According to the drawing below (Highways England, Environment Statement) the scheme currently shows only a small improvement in noise levels in Lower Earley in 2022.

Fig 12.4 – Key : [http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/TR010019/2.%20Post-Submission/Application%20Documents/Environmental%20Statement/6-2-ES-Figures\\_12-4-Noise\\_Cover-and-Keyplan.pdf](http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/TR010019/2.%20Post-Submission/Application%20Documents/Environmental%20Statement/6-2-ES-Figures_12-4-Noise_Cover-and-Keyplan.pdf)

Fig 12.4 – Drawings : [http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/TR010019/2.%20Post-Submission/Application%20Documents/Environmental%20Statement/6-2-ES-Figures\\_12-4-Noise\\_Sht01-06.pdf](http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/TR010019/2.%20Post-Submission/Application%20Documents/Environmental%20Statement/6-2-ES-Figures_12-4-Noise_Sht01-06.pdf)

The drawing below shows virtually no change by the time we get to 2037.

Fig 12.5 – Key : [http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/TR010019/2.%20Post-Submission/Application%20Documents/Environmental%20Statement/6-2-ES-Figures\\_12-6-Noise\\_Cover-and-Keyplan.pdf](http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/TR010019/2.%20Post-Submission/Application%20Documents/Environmental%20Statement/6-2-ES-Figures_12-6-Noise_Cover-and-Keyplan.pdf)

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It is our contention that the noise and air quality levels should be returned to the levels of the 1980's and 90's when most of the houses in this area were built. By Highways England's own admission traffic levels have increased by 2.7 times since 1985. (Traffic levels across the whole country that is) It might be fair to say that the increase has been greater in the Thames Valley area than the average.

Producing a scheme that has zero effect on the current noise and air quality levels is not acceptable to the many thousands of people who live along this stretch of the M4.

### **2.1.2 ROADS THAT SUFFER PARTICULARLY BADLY FROM NOISE NUISANCE IN LOWER EARLEY**

You asked me to let you know which roads were badly affected by noise in Lower Earley. I have detailed below those that are the worst affected. Generally most of the 10,000 houses in Lower Earley will hear the traffic from the M4 and it has only got worse since the houses were built in the 1980's and 90's.

**In Hillside ward**, Uffcott Close, Chippenham Close, Dove Close, Catcliffe Way, Beighton Close, Beauchief Close, Goldthorpe Gardens,, Worrall Way, Tickhill Close, Notton Way, Maltby Way, Tinsley Close, Felthorpe Close, Heacham Close, Anston Close, Finbeck Way, Tilney Way, Lutton Close, Thurnscoe Close, Fakenham Close, Hillmanton, Wickford Way Tiptree Close and Steeple Walk.

Other roads in the area of Rosemary Avenue and roads off Chalfont Way will also suffer badly when the wind is in the wrong direction!

**In Hawkedon ward**, Bradmore Way, Rainworth Close, Farnsfield Close, Pavenham Close, Selsey Way, Cutbush Lane, Cutbush Close, Redhouse Close, Colmworth Close, Odell Close, Chatton Close, Bosham Close, Faygate Way, Warnsham Close, Sharpethorpe Close, Berstead Close, Watersfield Close, Rustington Close, Moorhen Drive, Privet Close, Jay Close, Conygree Close, Chatteris Way, Turnbridge Close, Pasture Close, Ebborn Square, Irvine Way, Stonea Close, Wimblington Drive, Manea Close, Bottisham Close, Wild Close, Harlton Close, Gregory Close Bassett Close, Merrified Close, Witcham Close, Littlington Close, Porter Close Soham Close, Waring Close, Ledran Close, Firmstone Close, Kensington Close, Lidstone Close Bourne Close, Doddington Close, Fordham Way, Chittering Close, Burwell Close, Adwell Drive, Finstock Close, Fringford Close, Woodbine Close, Paddock drive, Chesterment Way, Barncroft drive, Wyatt Crescent, Gabriels Square, Simmonds Crescent, Broadmead, Kitwood Drive, Yoreham Close, Hambledon Close, Weild Court, Wickham Road, Barholm Close, Edenham Close, Swanmore Close, Easington Drive, Forndon Close, Hollym Close, Skeffling Close, Settrington Close, Flamborough path and Close, Burniston Close, Mill Lane, welwick Close, Thistleton Way, Kelton Close, Ridlington Close.

Other roads in the area of Hawkedon Way, Measham Way, Cannock Way, Bridport Close, Chilcombe Way, Maiden Place, Sweptstone Close will also suffer when the wind is in the wrong direction.

**In Maiden Erlegh ward**, Bythorn Close, Tinwall Close, Sawtry Close, Huntington Close, Thorney Close, Stilton Close, Ramsey Close, Whitestone Close, Northam Close, Ilfracombe Way, Holsworthy Close, Plymton Close, Toseland Way, Formby Close, Rhodes Close.

Other roads in the area such as those off Skelmerdale Way, Markby Way and Sellafeld Way will also suffer badly when the wind is in the wrong direction!

### **2.1.3 READINGS FROM OUR OWN NOISE METRE.**

We hired a noise metre to check some measurements ourselves. Attached is a table showing the measured noise levels (LAeq) at 40 specified locations over 3 days in Lower Earley. Not calculated values, but a snapshot of the reality experienced by residents in a particular location on a particular day at a particular time.

We have plotted dB values at each specified location onto a road map of the area, using average values where readings were taken on different days at the same location. We will forward to you under separate cover.

### **2.1.4 SHINFIELD & THREE MILE CROSS**

On the South side of the M4 there should be Acoustic fencing in the area of Minosa Way, Chrysanthemum Drive and Monarch Way. Protecting residents from Shinfield. Further westwards nearer to Junction 11 there should be acoustic fencing on the south side of the M4 extending 200 metres past the junction towards junction 12. This will protect the residents of Three Mile Cross.

### **2.1.5 EMMBROOK & WINNERSH**

In Winnersh there is space for earth bunding on the South side of the M4 from Reading Road eastwards to junction 10. There is also space for acoustic fencing to go on the north side of the M4 from Woodward close to junction 10 and from King Street to Reading Road.

### **2.1.6 SINDLESHAM**

In Sindlesham acoustic fencing can go on the south side of the M4 behind St Marys Road, Mayfield and St Catherines Close.

We have generally suggested that we would like acoustic fences which were 3m in height. However it was drawn to our attention by the representative from Slough Borough Council that there was evidence from Holland that fences that are 6m in height are significantly more effective in terms of reducing noise and improving air quality. If this evidence proves to be correct could we have 6m high acoustic fences in our area?

## **2.2 COSTS OF EARTH BUNDING & ACOUSTIC FENCING**

These measures to build earth bunds and acoustic fences between junctions 10 and 11 could be considered expensive. In the hearing I suggested that the fencing could cost in the region of £3m and the bunding perhaps the same or more. This was not challenged by Highways England. The difference that it could make to the lives of 35,000 could be immense.

## **2.3 LOW NOISE SURFACES**

We are really pleased that Highways England has decided to put "low noise" tarmac on all four lanes of each carriageway. They have asserted that this will give an average noise reduction of about 3 decibels across the entire stretch of motorway over the first ten years of the scheme. It will be greater at the beginning, perhaps by as much as 4-6 decibels. If the surface was not replaced for 15 years would all the benefit of the "low noise" tarmac disappear?

These values might impress the Minister, but will be utterly meaningless to local residents who want to know what will happen in their own locations.

### **3. FLOOD RISK**

Along parts of the motorway there are drainage ditches. We would like clarification of whether new drainage ditches will be built between junctions 10-11. If they are we assume they will build to the correct depths to take all surface water away quickly. Could there be confirmation from Highways England that any ditches will be maintained correctly by them following the completion of the scheme.

### **4. SPEED RESTRICTIONS**

We have been told that if traffic travels at 55mph or thereabouts. The noise levels are lower and the air quality levels are better. With this in mind I would ask Highways England if there could be a speed reduction to 55 mph permanently between junctions 10 and 11 where there is dense housing.

The answer again from Highways England may be that they don't have to do this. However if you were to recommend this, it would be a huge benefit for the residents alongside the M4 between junctions 10-11. It could create a precedent to be followed in other densely populated areas near motorways.

### **5. ROAD SAFETY**

We note that Highways England does not want road safety to be any worse than it currently is and that they expect an 8% improvement from the scheme. We note also that at the moment 21% of all traffic is on motorways and only 5% of fatal injuries and 5% of injuries happen on the motorway network. Highways England stated they expect that 50% of breakdowns will be able to get to a recovery area. These are being placed every 1.85 miles. I would like to know what evidence they have for saying this.

I was pleased to hear that there would be 130 CCTV cameras on the motorway and that they were infra-red so would be used at night. However I was very concerned to find when I questioned Highways England that some of CCTV screens may not be looked at for possibly up to two minutes. During this time there could be a breakdown which may turn into a pile up which may not be noticed by the CCTV operator for some time.

I would like to see a system for monitoring which meant that each CCTV screen/camera was looked at every 30 seconds and if it wasn't a series of flashing lights would alert the operator. I am sure there is technology available to do this. It would need 12 operators 24/7 to do this so probably 50 operators in total. If I remember correctly the response from Highways England was it would cost a great deal to have enough operators to be able to do this. I don't agree with this assertion from Highways England. The cost would be £2m to £3m a year and would make the motorway significantly safer than it is planned at the moment.

When traffic flow is light and fast would it be possible to close the left hand lane to traffic, restoring the hard shoulder for a period of a few hours until traffic flows increased. This could be particularly beneficial during the night when the motorway is dark.

We look forward to seeing the enhanced noise mitigation strategy from Highways England, hopefully in the next three or four weeks.

**Clive Jones**

**Wokingham Liberal Democrats.**

**Noise measurements in Lower Earley - Optimus Green HK171B**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Av. Reading (dB) (LAeq)</b>	<b>Address</b>
06/11/2015	12:58	17 Paddick Drive	63.4	17 Paddick Drive
	13:02	16 Chesterman Way	57.3	59 Paddick Drive
	13:05	59 Paddick Drive	64.3	16 Chesterman Way
	13:16	3 Barn Croft Drive	69.6	3 Barn Croft Drive
	13:27	14 Heacham Close	64.7	3 Barn Croft Drive
	13:30	10 Heacham Close	67.0	10 Heacham Close
	13:33	11 Tinley Way	71.9	14 Heacham Close
	13:38	14 Tickhill Close	70.9	11 Tinsley Close
	13:35	22 Wilsford Close	63.6	2 Tilney Way
	13:53	6 Red House Close	68.1	23 Tilney Way
	13:58	6 Conygree Close	61.2	14 Tickhill Close
	17:27	35 Bridport Close	55.7	19 Tickhill Close
	17:46	16 Hambledon Close	56.2	22 Wilsford Close
	17:51	3 Barn Croft Drive	64.1	6 Red House Close
	07/11/2015	14:32	28 Notton Way	64.7
14:58		47 Notton Way	69.1	35 Bridport Close
15:02		19 Tickhill Close	63.5	16 Hambledon Close
15:04		14 Tickhill Close	71.1	3 Notton Way
15:09		7 Melksham Close	59.0	28 Notton Way
15:13		2 Tilney Way	65.6	47 Notton Way
15:17		10 Heacham Close	67.4	7 Melksham Close
15:21		146 Hillmanton	54.0	146 Hillmanton
15:23		40 Hillmanton	59.3	40 Hillmanton
15:31		75 Colmsworth Close	62.3	75 Colmsworth Close
15:54		3 Swanland Close	60.0	3 Swanland Close
16:01		3 Barn Croft Drive	62.7	21 Turnbridge Close
16:08		21 Turnbridge Close	60.3	8 Bottisham Close
16:13		8 Bottisham Close	67.8	2 Bassett Close
16:18		2 Bassett Close	70.9	8 Wycham Close
16:21		8 Wycham Close	63.8	4 Wycham Close
16:24		4 Wycham Close	65.0	8 Lidstone Close
16:36		8 Lidstone Close	61.7	11 Tinsley Close
16:42		35 Bridport Close	54.2	23 Fordham Way
09/11/2015	15:24	2 Tilney Way	67.7	2 Bourne Close
	15:30	10 Heacham Close	65.9	74 Cannock Way
	15:35	11 Tinsley Close	64.7	43 Meadon Way
	15:38	23 Tilney Way	63.7	4 Elderberry Way
	15:44	3 Notton Way	64.0	154 Fleetham Gardens
	15:50	28 Fordham Way	63.4	5 Gregory Close
	15:53	2 Bourne Close	61.3	35 Favenham Close
	15:56	8 Lidstone Close	65.1	
	16:01	74 Cannock Way	57.5	
	16:04	43 Meadon Way	56.3	
	16:11	4 Elderberry Way	58.1	
	16:23	17 Paddick Drive	62.9	
17:24	154 Fleetham Gardens	57.0		

17:32	35	Bridport Close	64.2
17:47	5	Gregory Close	69.5
17:51	8	Bottisham Close	69.0
17:57	36	Favenham Close	66.9



- J C N Russell

06/11/2015	07/11/2015	08/11/2015	Averages
63.4		62.9	63.2
64.3			64.3
57.3			57.3
69.6	62.7		66.1
64.1			64.1
67.0	67.4	65.9	66.8
64.7			64.7
		64.7	64.7
	65.6	67.7	66.7
		63.7	63.7
70.9	71.1		71.0
	63.5		63.5
63.6			63.6
68.1			68.1
61.2			61.2
55.7	54.2	64.2	58.0
56.2			56.2
		64.0	64.0
	64.7		64.7
	69.1		69.1
	59.0		59.1
	54.0		54.0
	59.3		59.3
	62.3		62.3
	60.0		60.0
	60.3		60.3
	67.8	69.0	68.4
	70.9		70.9
	63.8		63.8
	65.0		65.0
	61.7	65.1	63.4
		64.7	64.7
		63.4	63.4
		61.3	61.3
		57.5	57.5
		56.3	56.3
		58.1	58.1
		57.0	57
		59.5	59.5
		66.9	66.9