

From: Norman [REDACTED]
Sent: 28 January 2016 10:08
To: M4 Junction 3-12 Smart Motorway
Subject: RE: M4 Junctions 3 to 12 Smart Motorway

Dear Richard

I wish to make the following submission to deadline VI in response to the answers given by Highways England at deadline V to the Examining Authority's second written questions and to the submissions I made at deadline IV.

1. Further Noise Protection for Earley and Lower Earley

Thank you for your response to the representations I made at deadline IV requesting further noise protection for the properties in Earley and Lower Earley. I am pleased to note that as a result of the Enhanced Noise Mitigation Study there is now a proposal to erect 2.5m high and approximately 2km long high performance absorptive barriers in the vicinity of Lower Earley closest to the M4 designated EM8. While I very much welcome this proposed addition to the scheme, I wonder why it is proposed to erect only a 2.5 metre high barrier when the proposal is to erect 3.5m high barriers at Sindlesham, Winnersh and Emmbrook? Also why is it proposed to stop the barrier before passing all houses in Lower Earley in the Adwell Drive, Paddick Drive and Barn Croft Drive estates. It would appear to make sense to extend the barrier by a few hundred metres Eastwards. It is also good that this barrier is to be absorptive so that noise is not reflected toward Arborfield and Newlands.

2. Further Noise Protection for Sindlesham and Winnersh

In the response to my submission regarding Sindlesham I am pleased to note that it is proposed to erect 3.5m (2m on the bridges) barriers at Sindlesham and Winnersh at EM9 and EM10.

3. Further Noise Protection for Emmbrook

In the response to my submission of streets identified by the Councillor for Emmbrook Ward, UllaKarin Clark, as being most adversely affected by noise I am pleased that Emmbrook was added to the Enhanced Noise Mitigation Study and that it is proposed to erect a 3.5m high barrier at EM11. It is also good that it is proposed that the barrier on the Winnersh side of the M4 is to be absorptive so that noise is not reflected towards Wokingham. Councillor UllaKarin Clark requests that you give further consideration to extending the Emmbrook barrier EM11 by several hundred metres Eastwards to give protection to further properties within your 600m zone including Old Forest Road and the roads off it (eg Lowther Road, Toutley Close, Commons Road, Beckford Close, Bredon Road, Elmley Close, Ashton Road, Defford Close, Overbury Avenue, Toutley Road, Summerfield Close and Emmbrook Vale). The North Wokingham Strategic Development location planned for this area will result in many hundred more houses being built. Also, the M4 is elevated at this point so noise carries further than in some other locations.

4. Road Safety

On reading about the plans for the scheme, a number of residents have contacted me to raise concerns about the potential for serious accidents between vehicles travelling at 70mph and vehicles that have broken down in lane 1 at times of light traffic. As currently planned it will require either a call from someone who has broken down, a patrol happening

to pass the scene or a control room person happening to notice a breakdown using the CCTV cameras to initiate the switching on of warning signs to alert other drivers to the danger. Even accepting the 2 minute forecast for action (and it could be much longer), this seems to introduce a risk that could be avoided. Is it not possible to have software scanning the CCTV images to detect stationary vehicles at quiet traffic times and to bring that image onto screen and alert the control room operators? An alternative would be to close lane 1 when the traffic volumes can readily be accommodated by lanes 2 to 4 (say from 10pm to 5am). I appreciate this could confuse drivers as indicated by Highways England, however most frequent motorway users are now used to lane closed/open instructions on overhead gantries on for example the M42. Please will you set-out the assessment of relative risk for these options?

5. Feeder Roads and Junctions

At the Open Floor Hearing in Reading on 16 November I raised concerns about the effect of the M4 Smart Motorway scheme on junctions and local roads that feed the M4. I support increasing the capacity and flow of traffic on the M4 but there is little point in doing the work if the M4 is a car park at peak times or if junctions and feeder roads are stationary. Over this Winter such an issue has arisen in Wokingham Borough. Highways England has modified Junction 10 between the A329M and the M4 giving greater priority to traffic joining from the M4. While this has probably helped traffic joining from the M4 it has had a very adverse impact on traffic using the A329M to get from Reading, Woodley, Winnersh and Earley towards Bracknell and vice versa. There are now long queues on the A329M at peak times and local residents are greatly inconvenienced by the new traffic jams. There has also been a number of accidents as people got used to the new road layout and because the new layout now encourages lane jumping. Our MP John Redwood, Borough Councillor Pauline Jorgensen and many local residents have contacted Highways England regarding this, asking for a resolution. What are the plans to sort this specific issue and more widely for significant improvement of traffic flows on major local routes feeding the M4 at Junctions 10 and 11?

Best wishes

Dr Norman Jorgensen
Councillor for Hillside Ward, Earley