

## **Arborfield and Newland Parish Council**

### **WRITTEN REPRESENTATION**

#### **HIGHWAYS ENGLAND'S RESPONSE**

- 1.1 *Response to the Examining Authority's second written questions (as issued on 11 December 2015).*
- 1.2 *Question 4.7.4 iii- Re the Arborfield and Newland Parish Council's issues concerning reflected noise from barriers on the opposite side of the M4, can the Parish Council please identify precisely the locations with which they are concerned? The use of a map would assist.*
- 1.3 *Response from Arborfield and Newland Parish Council*
- 1.3.1 *In our original submission, made in July 2015, we raised concerns regarding the possible impact, on properties in the Parish south of the M4, of noise that would be reflected from any new barriers erected on the north side of the M4 as part of the Smart Motorway scheme.*
- 1.3.2 *A plan is provided below with the area of concern overlain in red.*
- 1.3.3 *We noted that no such barriers were included in the scheme proposals, but were aware that a number of individuals and organisations were lobbying for the inclusion of new noise barriers in order to improve the noise environment in Lower Earley.*
- 1.3.4 *When Earley Town Council signed the Statement of Common Ground relating to impacts of the proposal, we noted that it had been accepted that noise impacts on Lower Earley would be negligible. However, given that others continued to lobby for additional barriers on the north side of the motorway, the Council wrote to Highways England, and to the Examiner, seeking to protect our position in the event that the scheme proposals were to change:*
- (a) *We sought to be assured by HE that no additional noise barriers were being proposed beyond those shown on the scheme proposal drawings.*
- (b) *From the Examiner, we sought to reserve a potential appearance at the hearing in the event that the position on proposed noise barriers changed.*
- 1.3.5 *We received a most helpful reply from Highways England, dated 4 December 2015, which confirmed that the only new noise barriers being proposed between Junctions 10 and 11 are either side of Mill Lane bridge, Sindlesham, about which the Council has no concerns.*
- 1.3.6 *However, we were also directed to paragraph 12.4.112 of the Environmental Statement, which notes that there is potential to improve the noise climate further within the scheme corridor, through a combination of additional noise barriers and the possible replacement of some existing barriers with higher noise barriers. Highways England have arranged to meet with representatives of the Council on*

*14th January 2016 in order to explain to us the additional work on noise mitigation and to confirm any new proposals associated with it.*

*1.3.7 The Council remains concerned about the reflected noise issue, principally now because we are not certain what may eventually be incorporated into the scheme proposals, either arising from the study of additional mitigation, or in response to proposals being made by others.*

*1.3.8 I trust this response and attached map clarify the area of concern.*

#### Highways England Comment

- 1.1 Highways England met Arborfield and Newland Parish Council on 14 January 2016. The Parish Council expressed its concern that the new noise barriers between junctions 10 and 11 (recommended by the enhanced mitigation study) may be reflective and that consequently, if the noise barriers being sought by the residents in Earley were provided, this might result in adverse changes for residents in the Carters Hill area of the parish.
- 1.2 Highways England noted that a response to the Parish Council's written representation was provided at Deadline V (REP5 -003). A copy of Highways England's Deadline V response was provided to the Parish Council at the meeting.
- 1.3 In addition, the Parish Council reviewed relevant drawings from the Enhanced Noise Mitigation Report. Highways England explained the proposals for new and replacement noise barriers between junction 10 and 11 of the Scheme to the Parish Council. Links to the response and to the Enhanced Noise Mitigation Strategy Report on the Planning Inspectorate's website were issued to the Parish Council in the minutes of the meeting on 22 January 2016.
- 1.4 At the meeting, Highways England reiterated the Deadline V response, and confirmed that the new barriers on the eastbound carriageway between junctions 10 and 11 would be absorptive barriers, rather than the standard reflective barriers, in order to mitigate the concerns of the residents in the parish in relation to reflected noise.
- 1.5 Highways England understands from comments made at the meeting that the matters discussed had addressed the Parish Council's primary concerns.