

From: Gary Cowan [REDACTED]
Sent: 29 January 2016 20:51
To: M4 Junction 3-12 Smart Motorway
Subject: Re: Environmental issues on M4 additional comment my ref 10031529

From Cllr Gary Cowan 10031529

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 previously National planning policy, including the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Networks National Policy Statement provide that promoters should seek opportunities, where possible, to contribute to improvements in the noise climate. This requirement underlies the additional noise mitigation measures now being proposed by Highways England as part of the M4 Smart Motorway scheme. These are most welcome, but they do not go far enough.

Properties to the south of the motorway, including those for example in the Caters Hill area of Arborfield and Newland, have been subject to increasing noise from the M4 motorway since it was opened in the early 1970s. Were the original scheme being brought forward for approval today, one would expect a considerably greater provision of noise mitigation measures. As it is, these are now being proposed retrospectively, using the scheme proposals as an opportunity to deliver greater and wider benefits to the affected communities.

People living in all affected properties should be availed of the same opportunity for noise mitigation. Their human rights should dictate this consideration. Individuals living in properties on the south side, and close to the motorway, have been affected by the nuisance of road noise from the M4 in just the same way as those living to the north, for example in Lower Earley.

In fact, their claim may be said to be greater because the properties in Lower Earley were built many years after the motorway was completed. An individual living to the south of the M4 is just as entitled as one living to the north to whatever relief may be available from the constant road traffic noise from the motorway.

For those affected, this is a once-in-a lifetime chance to have their environment improved, and government policy supports their expectation. The additional cost which would be small in the overall cost of the scheme should not be denied on a cost basis. Where additional noise barriers are now being proposed, some relief would be provided, and this is welcomed.

Those living alongside stretches of the M4 where no additional barriers are proposed will be, unfairly, left without the benefit that government policy seeks for them, and this needs to be tackled through the greater provision of mitigation measures.

I welcome low noise surfaces but they have a limited life and their life expectation must be factored into the programme with its renewal a condition of approval. A northerly wind direction and its noise impact does not seem to have considered the impact of noise South of the motorway. Can both of these concerns be addressed.

The M4 Smart Motorway impact on local feeder roads does not seem to have been addressed from Junctions 10/11. I recognise the scheme is designed to increase the capacity and flow of traffic on the M4 which is very welcome but fails to deal with local traffic entering/exiting the M4 from the local feeder roads Traffic using the A329/329M getting to/from Reading, Woodley, Winnersh, Earley and Bracknell and vice versa are subject to long queues/delays at the A329M at peak times. This leads to inconvenience and pollution and need to be addressed within the overall scheme.

Cllr Gary Cowan Member for Arborfield at Wokingham Borough Council

