

## WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

### WRITTEN REPRESENTATION

#### HIGHWAYS ENGLAND'S RESPONSE

1. *Further to my letters of 10<sup>th</sup> December and 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2016. I wish to take the opportunity to submit the following additional comments as an elected member of the Council and on behalf of my constituents.*
2. *It has come to my attention that there would be a significant gap in the 3.5m high noise barrier which is proposed within Emmbrook (EM9). This would fail to provide adequate noise protection measures for the future Hatch Farm development of 400 new homes (as permitted under Outline planning permission O/2006/8687) which would be sited directly north of the M4 at this point. A copy of the latest reserved matters (152359) Site Layout plan is appended for your information.*

#### Highways England Response

- 2.1 As detailed in Highways England's email to WBC dated 22 February 2016, the planning authority and the developer of the Hatch Farm development will have considered the noise environment of the site prior to the grant of the planning consent. The existing motorway will have formed part of that assessment. Indeed, Highways England understands that a noise assessment for the proposed residential development was submitted in support of the planning application in 2006 and informed the outline permission, which was subsequently granted.
- 2.2 The original noise assessment for the M4 J3-12 Smart Motorway Scheme in the Environmental Statement (ES) and enhanced noise mitigation study have been carried out in accordance with paragraph A1.21 of DMRB Volume 11, Section 3, Part 7 HD213/11 Revision 1 Noise and Vibration (November 2011) which states:
  3. *Although noise calculations are based on future traffic flows, the impact of the changes can only be recorded for people living and using facilities in the affected area in the year the assessment is undertaken. Where planning permission for a residential development or any other sensitive receptor has been granted but for which construction has not started, the potential impacts on these locations should be estimated and reported separately.*
    - 3.1 The site on which the development will be constructed (to the west of Winnersh) was considered in the ES and the enhanced noise mitigation study, to the extent that the noise decreases across this site, as a result of the implementation of the Scheme, are shown on Sheet 5 of Drawing 12.4 and Drawing 12.5 in the ES, and on Sheet 5 of Drawing 3 in the Enhanced Noise Mitigation Study Report.
    - 3.2 The proposed work by Highways England improves the general noise climate in this area and the proposals which form part of the Enhanced Noise Mitigation Study further improves that position. Examination of Sheet 5 of Drawing 3 of the Enhanced Noise Mitigation Study Report shows the noise changes across this site resulting from the operation of the M4 Scheme and the minor / moderate noise decreases that are expected to result (compared to the situation in 2022 without the Scheme). Consequently, the Scheme will contribute to noise mitigation of the site, which is for the developer of the Hatch Farm development to assess and to ensure that appropriate

mitigation is specified to provide acceptable external and internal noise levels within the development.

3.3 Highways England met the developer's representative on the 24th February 2016 and exchanged information. The minutes of this meeting are included as Appendix A to this response. The developer was pleased to note the forecast improvement to the general noise climate as a result of the Scheme. Highways England and its contractor will continue to engage with the developer of the future Hatch Farm Development to discuss and coordinate the interfaces between the two schemes.

4. *In terms of traffic issues and following consultation with the Council's Highway team, the traffic modelling information provided by Highways England is considered insufficient to determine the impact or not, on the borough's network taking into account future planning housing growth, and particularly those links that feed the M4*

#### Highways England Response

4.1 In an email received from Wokingham Borough Council on the 6 October 2015 the Council made the following request for information:

*"As stated in paragraph 3.5 of the SoCG, it was agreed that WBC would benefit from having traffic data for the local highway network to understand better the impact of the Scheme on the local highway network. To date only traffic flows for the 2022 DM and DS scenarios have been provided. Traffic flow information gives incomplete information about the likely impact of the scheme on Wokingham roads and therefore additional information is required from the M3M4 transport model including:*

- *Average delays and delay differences*
- *Volume over Capacity values and their differences between DM and DS scenarios*
- *Network statistics for the links falling within Wokingham borough*
- *Differences in journey times along a selection of routes in the borough*

*The model outputs should be provided both for the 2022 (opening year) and 2037 (design year)."*

4.2 Highways England subsequently provided the additional information to WBC and included it as an appendix to the Statement of Common Ground. Subsequently, in December 2015, WBC requested that Highways England include the Borough's planned infrastructure schemes in the M4 traffic model.

4.3 Despite Highways England noting that these schemes had not met the criteria set out in table A2 of Transport Appraisal Guidance Unit M4 and, therefore had not been included in the work to date (see paragraph 4.4 of the Statement of Common Ground), it was agreed to carry out additional modelling to satisfy WBC. Following receipt of the final details from the Borough on the 6 January 2016, the M4 traffic model was updated to include the WBC highway schemes. A set of outputs from the traffic model were duly provided to WBC on the 28 January 2016. Highways England has requested WBC to advise it of any requirements for additional information, but no response has been received to date.