



03 July 2020

Dear Sirs

M25 Junction 10/A3 Wisley Interchange Improvement Plan – Deadline 11 Compulsory Acquisition Hearing Summary of Oral Contribution, Post Hearing submission requested by the ExA

Further to previous correspondence, I write to provide the Guide Association Trust Corporation and Girlguiding Greater London West (“GGLW”) written submission of oral case at Compulsory Acquisition Hearing Session 2.

Written Submission of oral case

Without wishing to repeat our previous comments, we feel that it is necessary to reiterate our formal objection to the compulsory acquisition of our land, following the proposed route through plot 7/1 of our grounds in order to provide a means of access to Court Close Farm. This road would sever our site creating an island of ancient woodland surrounded by pollution and making 20% of our land inaccessible to our young people in the future.

This proposal will also require many changes to ensure the security of our camp site and safeguarding of young people, including the installation of gates and 800m of fencing at least 2 metres high. Our existing hard surfaced car parking will need to be provided elsewhere, our shop will require relocating, and access roads to our buildings will require amendment resulting in a further loss of green space and woodland, along the whole length of the proposed route through plot 7/1. Our warden’s cottage would no longer be readily accessible to our site visitors.

All these issues can be avoided if the alternative route adjacent to the A3, which we fully endorse is adopted. The small loss of woodland adjacent to the A3 would alleviate any changes to our existing grass and woodland, paths or roads and overall will result in loss of less trees on the whole project. This alternative access could also be used by National Power Networks, Highways England and other utilities to access their equipment without any impact on our site security.

No amended plan for the original route

At the issue specific hearing in January 2020, it was clarified that the access road did not need to be as wide as in the plans. Surrey County Council confirmed that a max of 3m width is required for a Private Means of Access with passing places. Therefore, the width of the land to be acquired could be reduced if the original route is followed. We have not seen any plan to reduce the land take should the alternative route not be approved.

Whichever route is approved

The gas pipe is to be re-routed under the existing track as has been stated or mentioned in all the various meetings since 8th October 2018.

When the alternative route was proposed, it was made clear that this will not change the route of the gas main along our track. The gas main we understand will be 60cm but requires a 6m easement.

There have been issues with accuracy of maps. The Veteran Sweet Chestnut tree (T165) is shown in the Tree Protection Plan Sheet 4 of the Appendix of AS-014 as outside of the DCO albeit the commentary within the same appendix says that it is within the DCO. In the more recent Rep 5-020 Deadline 5 Submission - 9.64 - Update on Discussions around the Girlguiding Greater London West Alternative Access (Response to ExA Question 2.12.8) p.13 the tree is also shown as outside of the DCO.

We asked HE for a site meeting to clarify the proposed route of the gas pipe. This happened last week (w/c 8 June 2020) and markers have now been placed where this pipe will go. None of the markers are along our existing track! The nearest any of them to our track is 3.5m, with the furthest being 9m from the track. All of them are in the woodland between the track and the main camping fields.

This woodland although not officially designated as ancient woodland, is consistent with that designated as ancient woodland on the other side of the track and we would be devastated if this were to be lost.

We ask that the minimum be that the gas pipe is re-routed to the existing track or as near as possible, as it is recognised that some deviation may be required as the track is not a straight line.

This would ensure that some of our woodland screen between the track and the camping fields is preserved and it may also be possible to save our Veteran Sweet Chestnut tree.

We have no objection to the compulsory acquisition of plots 7/2, 7/3 & 7/7

Applicant's response at the hearing

We noted that the applicant informed the hearing that it did not intend to take more land than required but that the red line boundary indicated the maximum land take and allowed for avoidance of trees where necessary. We noted that the applicant reported that it would produce a note if Surrey County Council allow a narrower road.

Activity Since the Compulsory Acquisition Hearing

In summary we have learned new information just yesterday (Thursday 2nd July 2020) that means that the true impact of the access route to our neighbours through our site is worse than we had been led to believe.

More recent surveys have taken place (23-26 June 2020) – arboricultural, topographical as well as markers being placed to clarify the actual route of the red line boundary of the DCO.

Now that the DCO markers are in place, the anomaly of the maps and location of the sweet chestnut tree has become clearer to us and Highways England. It has confirmed that the gas pipe is not going to be under the track at all! Some sections of the red line boundary to the south-east of the current track is completely within our woodland.

The proposed route of the gas pipe will decimate virtually all of the trees in this woodland area. As well as permanently destroying a haven of wildlife these trees currently provide a natural barrier between our current track and the areas where the majority of our young people spend time camping or in residential buildings leaving them far more vulnerable to passing traffic. We have also now learnt that it will not be permissible to plant any new trees within this corridor as only grass is allowed to grow to retain easy access to the pipeline and ensure roots of trees do not impact on it. Surely this loss of habitat and natural vegetation is not conducive to the aims of Natural England or indeed Girlguiding who actively promote the care and preservation of our environment.

Following the surveys and the actual boundary on site being identified, a meeting on site with the project manager from HE and client manager from BBA was held yesterday, Thursday 2nd July.

To avoid the sweet chestnut tree, there would need to be a local agreement for the gas pipe to be moved to north-west through the car park which is outside the DCO. This has significant implications for the campsite as a new area would need to be designated for car parking (previously mentioned in Rep 5-056, Rep 3-06 & Rep 2-30). We were informed at the meeting only yesterday that this would require planning permission which may not be granted as it is a registered park and garden. Particularly with no local easy access by public transport a car park is crucial for the running of our campsite – deliveries, young people to be safely dropped off and collected as well as parking for adults who need to be on site for leading the activities. In Rep 3-061, we made the point about the significant number of vehicles that use the site.

In the light of these very recent revelations, we urgently request that consideration is given to alternative plans to divert the gas pipe across the camping field which is grass and could be restored with less environmental impact. This would take the pipe outside of the red line boundary of the DCO. We understand this is possible but would have to be formally put forward by the Applicant. Our management committee would then be very likely to be in agreement. This route will cause more disruption for us in using the campsite during construction which we have been informed would be a minimum of three months. Although in the long-term, the impact would be less loss of woodland on the site between the track and camping field if this route were adopted. We have learnt that HE did consider this option earlier but it is extremely disappointing that it has not been shared with us until now, particularly as the gas pipe re-routing is so crucial to the project!

Book of Reference Query

The Examiners requested clarification of status of Girlguiding Greater London West as The Guide Association Trust Corporation is shown as the owners in the Book of reference Rep8-016. We have received a confirmation email that this has now been clarified and accepted by the Planning Inspectorate.

Yours sincerely

Christine Donovan

County Commissioner Greater London West