

Evans, Rebecca

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 07 November 2023 00:15
To: A12chelmsfordA120
Cc: Rosie
Subject: Comments from 'interested parties' following the Secretary of State's consultation

Categories: SoS Consultation Response

Dear Sir / Madam,

We are writing to you once more regarding the proposed location of the Gershwin Boulevard Bridge given the Prime Minister's decision to move the sale of diesel and petrol cars out to 2035. As residents at the east end of Halfacres, ours, and our immediate neighbour's properties sit within a 'noise important area' (*) as defined in DEFRA documentation. We already experience a significant volume of road noise at our properties (65 to 70 db) and the only barrier between ourselves and the 75+ db noise of the A12, is a thick line of trees (ranging between approx. 30m to 45m deep). The proposed widening of the carriageway will already serve to thin this barrier which is cause for concern in itself, but the applicant has also seen fit to compound this issue and propose that a bridge be built which will necessitate the removal of all of the trees between residents and the A12 where the bridge is to be built.

The applicant's lazy planning process has meant that the location for the proposed bridge directly follows the route of an existing (although essentially unusable) public right of way that was severed approx. 60 years ago when the A12 was built, even though the proposal is blatantly unsuitable in many ways. Residents have suggested an alternative nearby location for the bridge that alleviates a number of problems, but so far the applicant has steadfastly resisted the temptation to do what is right in favour of doing what is easy. In its current proposed location, the footings of the Gershwin Boulevard Bridge (and by extension the point at which all trees would be removed affording direct access to the A12 and the pollution that comes with it) would be approx. 50 meters from resident's properties, at first floor level and in direct line of sight from the front of houses. By moving the proposed bridge approx. 150 meters west, the bridge's footings (and by extension the point at which all trees would be removed affording direct access to the A12 and the pollution that comes with it) would be approx. 100 meters from the nearest resident's property, at ground floor level and perpendicular to the nearest properties (the nearest property which would have direct line of sight from the front of their house would be approx. 170 meters away.) In addition to this, moving the location of the bridge 150 metres to the west would put it on the other side of an existing line of trees which runs southwards from the bottom of Howbridge Hall Road to the A12, and in so doing help shield the aforementioned 'noise important area' in Halfacres from the excessive tree removal caused by the bridge.

In answer to resident's concerns, and in an attempt to justify their poor decision making, the applicant produced a document in June 2023 titled '9.66 Gershwin Boulevard Issue Summary Note'. The applicant summarised their conclusions in 7.1.6 with just 3 points as to why they should not move the bridge approx. 150 metres to the west:

"In summary, the Applicant does not believe the alternative proposal should be taken forward because:

- *it does not create a route to the proposed Replacement Land south of the A12 and the wider rights of way network;*
- *the land required to deliver the bridge in the alternative location is outside of the current permanent land take required and would change the Special Category Land and Replacement Land proposed;*
- and
- *it further increases the diversion of the public right of way in the range of 550m to 600m by relocating the crossing approximately 300m west of its current position"*

In their line of work, the applicant routinely cuts tunnels and build bridges, and yet apparently concludes that in this instance, creating a footpath, buying a parcel of land and rerouting a public right of way is too daunting to tackle, even though everything points to it being the right thing to do. It should also be noted that the applicant was told on more than one occasion that they didn't have to move the bridge as much as 300m, but they have not corrected that presumably because it would reduce the amount of public right of way they claim they would have to reroute, and weaken an already weak case further.

It's bad enough that residents in a noise important area will be exposed to increased noise pollution as a result of the widening scheme, even worse that the proposed bridge will exacerbate it further. Delaying the ban on the sale of petrol and diesel vehicles will only serve to prolong the issue more. Having lived in Halfacres for almost 7 years now, we can confirm that there is a huge difference between the noise we hear during winter when the trees are bare, and in summer when they are in leaf - the trees really do make a massive difference to our quality of life and we cannot afford to lose them to this bridge.

Yours faithfully,

Martin & Rosie Woodgate

(*) DEFRA's 'Noise Action Plan: Roads - Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2005 - 2 July 2019' advises that: "Important Areas with respect to noise from major roads outside agglomerations are where the 1% of the population that are affected by the highest noise levels from major roads are located according to the results of the strategic noise mapping. This approach has been taken because the population at these locations is likely to be at the greatest risk of experiencing a significant adverse impact to health and quality of life as a result of their exposure to road traffic noise." (It should be noted that the text is the same for within agglomerations too.) In light of this, surely the residents in this situation should be afforded more protection from road pollution, not less.