

Notes for Open Floor Hearing 1 – Wednesday 11th September 2024.

A Plea for Wildlife Preservation: Opposing the Motorway Expansion between junction 17 and junction 18.

The proposed expansion of the motorway between junction 17 and junction 18 adjacent to our property on Warwick Avenue presents a grave threat to the delicate ecosystems that have evolved within the surrounding environment. The plan to widen the carriageway by adding a fifth lane in both directions, accompanied by a reduction in the embankment size and the removal or reduction of trees and shrubs, will have a devastating impact on the protected species that call this area home: bats and hedgehogs.

Bats, nocturnal creatures that play a vital role in pest control and pollination, rely heavily on trees and shrubs for roosting and foraging. The loss of these habitats will significantly disrupt their daily lives, leading to reduced food availability, increased competition for limited resources, and potential disturbances to breeding colonies. Moreover, the construction process itself may disturb roosting bats, causing them to abandon their young or experience stress-related health issues.

Hedgehogs, another protected species, are also at risk from the proposed expansion. These solitary creatures rely on a diverse range of habitats, including hedgerows, scrubland, and grasslands, for foraging, breeding, and shelter. The reduction in the embankment size and the removal of trees and shrubs will diminish the availability of these critical habitats, leaving hedgehogs vulnerable to predation, habitat fragmentation, and road traffic accidents.

The European Protected Species Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981 provides legal protection to both bats and hedgehogs, recognizing their importance to the ecosystem and the need to conserve their populations. The proposed expansion of the motorway would directly contravene the provisions of this act, as it would result in the destruction and disturbance of the habitats of these protected species.

I implore the planning inspectors to carefully consider the potential consequences of the proposed motorway expansion on bats and hedgehogs who live on the embankment of the motorway. The loss of these species would have a significant negative impact on the biodiversity of the area and could have long-term ecological consequences. I urge the inspectors to reject the expansion plan and to explore alternative solutions that prioritize the preservation of wildlife and the protection of our natural heritage.

In conclusion, the proposed expansion of the motorway poses a serious threat to the survival of bats and hedgehogs in the local area. By taking into account the provisions of the European Protected Species Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981, the planning

inspectors can help to ensure that the expansion does not proceed at the expense of these valuable species. I urge the inspectors to reject the proposed plan and to seek alternative solutions that prioritize the conservation of wildlife and the protection of our environment.

Thank you

Theresa Dolan

Also speaking on behalf of Tracy Candlin residing at the same address on Warwick Avenue.