

Julia Lopez MP's representations to Lower Thames Crossing

Sent via email

Dear Matt,

I am writing today, further to my earlier submission to the Local Refinement Consultation, to highlight my own and my constituents concerns at the proposed relocation of the M25 compound and the manner in which this change has been communicated with residents.

Throughout the project's history, and particularly under your leadership, my team and I have always found National Highways to be very communicative and open in our interactions and when responding to constituent concerns that we have highlighted. It was therefore particularly disappointing to discover that the location of the M25 compound was to be relocated so as to be closer to my constituents in Church Lane and that this change had been determined to be too minor to feature within the Local Refinement Consultation and therefore referenced only in passing and not within the main consultation documents.

My team have discussed this with the MP Engagement Team, the Construction Manager and a Consultation Specialist, however I wanted to take this opportunity to further clarify my concerns and to provide feedback from the community most affected by this change, the residents of Church Lane.

It has been outlined that this change has been initiated as Havering Council indicated at an earlier consultation that the previous compound location would impact upon a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) of metropolitan importance and it has also been stated that a benefit of relocating the compound is that it would allow a further portion of land (between the M25 and Pea Lane), that would have been required permanently for environmental mitigation, to be removed from the Order Limits. Given the scale of surveys already conducted within the plan, involving on-site surveys in this specific location accessed via Church Lane, it seems inconceivable that National Highways could not have already been aware of the initial site's classification when it was first proposed. The prompt removal of nearby environmental mitigations as soon as the relocation of the compound is proposed further indicates that project had long been aware of the site's classification and had an established plan to mitigate against its impact. I would therefore welcome any clarification you may offer regarding National Highways' engagement with Havering Council on this matter and whether the Council's concerns regarding the initial compound location can be appropriately mitigated as per the original proposals which had previously progressed to DCO submission without concern.

As outlined at the start of this correspondence, my constituents and I would also like to emphasise our significant concern in the manner in which this change had been communicated and its absence from the changes formally consulted upon in the Local Refinement Consultation. It has been communicated to constituents that the change was too minor for inclusion however I am afraid that I cannot see how the relocating of a major construction compound, for a project scheduled to be under construction for over five years, closer to residential properties could be considered as too insignificant to warrant consultation whereas very minor changes to overhead powerlines, which reduce their impact, were highlighted for consultation. I am concerned that the relocating of the compound to the proposed site would significantly increase the noise, light, dust and sound pollution encountered by residents of Church Lane. In his enclosed comments, Mr [REDACTED] has highlighted that there is a colony of bats in the hamlet of converted barns at the end of Church Lane (closest to the newly proposed compound site) which may therefore be disturbed by the

compound's relocation. Additionally, Mr [REDACTED] has outlined that residents of Church Lane were adversely impacted by ground-borne vibrations caused by the earlier site survey works conducted at the previously proposed compound site and it is therefore reasonable to expect that these may be exacerbated by the compound being brought closer to residents. Mr [REDACTED] goes further in stating that within the grounds of his garden are the listed walls of the North Ockendon manor and that he has received advice from Heritage England that vibrations caused by National Highways activity in the area could negatively impact upon them.

In the enclosed comments from Mr [REDACTED], he has outlined concerns that the mitigations outlined in previous responses to my office on this issue are being relegated to the responsibility of the contractor and not under National Highways control and has referenced previous bad experiences encountered by Church Lane residents during site survey works. When I recently visited the site last week, another resident also referenced this experience and that he found some of the contractors to be confrontational. Mr [REDACTED] has sought specific assurances that Church Lane will not be utilised for access to the M25 compound, in any location, and I would welcome confirmation of this.

Finally, both Mr [REDACTED] and Mr [REDACTED] have highlighted concerns at the height of the highway, cuttings and bunding in the vicinity of St. Mary Magdalene Church. It would be greatly appreciated if you would be able to clarify further these changes and advice whether any further mitigations to limit the potential impact of the highway in this location may be applied.

I would welcome your urgent comment on the above concerns and confirmation that the above comments, as well as those provided by my constituents, will be formally considered within the Local Refinement Consultation process and more widely. I would also welcome that consideration be given to the hosting of an on-site meeting to discuss the community's concerns and appropriate mitigations.

With best wishes,

Julia

Julia Lopez MP

Hornchurch & Upminster

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