

1st floor, James House
Mere Park
Dedmere Road
Marlow
Bucks
SL7 1FJ

Stephen Hall
Asset Manager M25 DBFO North West
4A
Federated House
London Road
Dorking RH4 1SZ

Direct Line: 01306 878 243
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For the attention of Mr S Birkett

Dear Mr Birkett

M4 BUS LANE REVOCATION

Thank you for attending the meeting with my colleagues on 18 September 2012. At that meeting, the Agency undertook to do two things. Firstly, to carry out a statutory assessment of the environmental impacts of the proposal following Agency guidance (Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Volume 11). Secondly, to carry out further research into the options that might be available for mitigating the impact of the proposal.

The results of this work are now available in the attached Environmental Assessment Report: The report advises that:

- The impact of removing the bus lane has concluded not to have a significant in terms of air quality. 75% of receptors modelled indicated an increase in NO₂ less than 0.4 µg/m³. The remaining 25% of receptors indicated increases in NO₂ of up to 1.1 µg/m³. In addition, concentrations at all sites are predicted to return to pre-scheme levels within two years based on long term trends in NO₂ reported by Defra in their April 2012 note and incorporated into Highways Agency guidance through Interim Advice Note 170/12 (Please see Chapter 4 of the Environmental Assessment Report for more information).
- The impact of removing the bus lane is not significant in terms of noise. The greatest increase was indicated to be 0.9 dB(A); a change in road traffic noise of 1 dB(A) or more is the smallest that is considered perceptible. Please see Chapter 5.
- There are few options for mitigating the proposal. The only feasible measure would be to reduce the speed limit at this location. But such a measure would reverse some of the journey time savings experienced since this bus lane was suspended and would rely on the Police to enforce. Most importantly, even if a lower speed limit was fully implemented and respected by the public, our modelling predicts that it would only partially offset the increase in NO₂. Please see Appendix F.

Please let me know if you would like to meet to discuss the information in the Environmental Assessment Report.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SH', is positioned above the printed name.

Stephen Hall
NDD Asset Manager M25 DBFO North West
Email: stephen.hall@highways.gsi.gov.uk