

## **Report on Public Event re Barrier Programme - Friday 30th June, Handy Cross Leisure Centre**

Event was organised by WSP working for Highways England using facilities provided by WDC. Publicity was shared between HE, WDC and M40CEG. HE, WSP and M40CEG personnel were available for discussions throughout the event – from approx. 100am to 8pm.

Support material consisted of panels illustrating the noise reduction likely to be perceived by people living behind each of 8 proposed barriers, together with chart and laptop presentations. Gramm Ltd provided a representative section of 4m high barrier. In addition, Tilon brought short sections of barrier which they propose to supply.

The location was a very good choice – easy to find and with good parking, prestigious and spacious. High background noise levels were compensated by the opportunity for people passing to look at the exhibits. The panels were very clear and informative. Staff expertise, numbers and quality of engagement were excellent. A very large number of people spent time at the event – local people cannot realistically complain that they have been left out of the consultation process.

A number of Councillors attended and were generally very positive. Local MP, Steve Baker, spent some time with various people and expressed his congratulations to M40CEG.

Since the most interesting discussions tended to be with people who found fault with what was proposed, the notes below, based on feedback from M40CEG staff at the event, are not a balanced view. Much positive comment was received of which the following is typical:- *'Most interesting displays and had a good chat with the engineer. Also the barrier men'*.

Despite the clear intent of the programme and the provision of dates, some attendees expressed their disbelief that the programme would happen.

The Gramm barrier section was very useful in helping people appreciate the height of the barrier and in stimulating discussion about colours. The pale green/ blue chosen attracted both favourable comment and the opposite. Adverse reaction to its height was unexpectedly small, but vociferous.

Dark green seemed to be most popular colour also could vegetation be grown up the barriers such as ivy to soften visual impact – maybe an opportunity for Woodland Trust to support ?

Many comments related to places where reduced noise is not expected, either because barriers are too short, or not provided within the scheme. Most people, understandably, were very focused on the effect at their home and in their local community and gave little credit for the scale of the programme or its impacts in total.

People from Wheeler End were anxious to confirm that the Lane End barriers would be absorptive (not reflective) in order that nearby Wheeler End residents' noise nuisance was not made worse by the barriers. People from Bolter End and others from Wheeler End were dissatisfied that they were excluded from the programme - it was suggested they write to MP Steve Baker.

A Stokenchurch attendee was very concerned about barrier height and impact of foundations on her property. It was explained that if sufficient people at a location didn't want a 4m barrier (or one at all) their wishes would be respected. She has followed up to MP David Lidington. Most visitors from Stokenchurch are supportive and want to congratulate and thank M40CEG for all the work over 12/13 years. The majority have now come out just as vociferously in favour and even suggest they are selfish to object as it benefits the whole village.

Some Daws Lea Residents Association attendees were critical about the limited extent of the barrier in the direction of Handy Cross, since traffic noise is a major concern for residents of Fair Ridge and The Spinney. Others were very supportive of the scheme.

Residents at Wooburn Moor north were similarly concerned that the barrier was too short to protect them.

Residents of Beaconsfield have approached M40CEG with a request to extend our remit to include Beaconsfield. (The committee feels strongly that we have much to do and must retain our focus. However, we will willingly share our experience and co-operate where there is common interest).

Chairman was asked (twice) about a Phase 2 programme to address locations excluded from the barrier programme. Three elements were listed: 1) pressure for Quiet Surface from J4 to the far side of J6, 2) when necessary, existing barriers (2m) at Bolter End and Wheeler End should be replaced with 4m high sections, similar to the designs shown at the event, 3) consideration of tree planting in depth at locations where it is feasible to do so.

HE stated to be keen to undertake trials to understand the effectiveness of tree planting as a barrier alternative and would welcome a proposal from M40CEG

**Ken Edwards**

**Chairman M40 CEG**

With additional input from Peter Jennings, Seddon Parmoor, Ian and Sylvia Chadwick, Mike Jennings and Wendy Kingon.