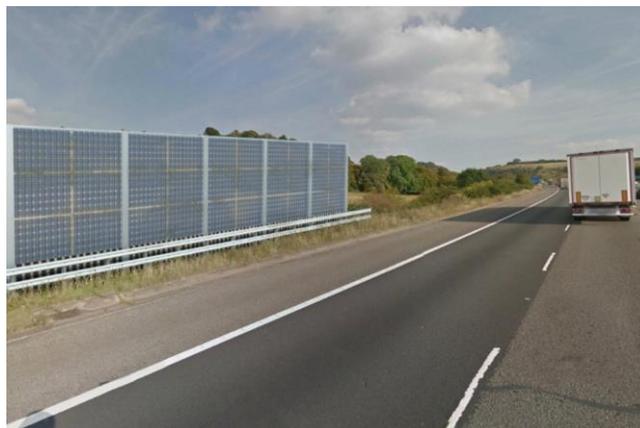


Design contract awarded for pioneering M40 noise barriers

A new milestone in a project to develop innovative ways of reducing noise along the M40 has been reached, as a design contract worth up to £2 million has been awarded.

The contract, awarded on 11 November, will see WSP Parsons Brinkerhoff review sites along the M40 between junction 3 (Loudwater) and junction 8 (Wheatley), which have been identified as areas where road noise is a particular issue and help decide where the barriers would be of benefit.



Caption: two examples what the noise reduction barriers might look like

Earlier this year, Highways England, working in partnership with the M40 Chiltern Environmental Group, (M40 CEG) Wycombe District Council and South Oxfordshire District Council, ran a competition to develop a range of cost-effective barriers to reduce noise.

Potential designs include using solar panels in the barriers to produce clean energy to help offset their installation and operating costs.

Six entries were shortlisted and WSP Parsons Brinkerhoff will now work with the designers of the shortlisted entries to trial these noise barriers at the identified sites on the M40. These designs may also be installed on other parts of England's strategic road network in the future.

Highways England project manager Mark Saunders said:

"We are working closely with the M40CEG, Wycombe District Council and South Oxfordshire District Council on this innovative project.

"Our objective is to develop cost effective noise barriers to improve community quality of life through reduced road traffic noise.

"After selecting six innovative ideas from the 18 competition entries we received, we have now awarded the design contract. This will help us decide which types of barriers will best suit the different sites on the M40 and start designing a solution for each of them."

HH the Lord Parmoor of the M40CEG added:

"When first discussed by our committee, the double environmental benefits of reducing noise pollution and generating clean energy made the concept of solar enabled barriers very appealing. We are grateful to the Co-op Group whose award helped to fund our contribution to the successful joint feasibility study that preceded the current programme.

“We are delighted to continue our involvement with Highways England and with Wycombe and South Oxfordshire District Councils. We believe that today’s announcement is an important step in the process that should result in barriers being installed. This will improve the lives of many thousands of local residents.”

Subject to the successful completion of the site review and development of design solutions for each site identified, Highways England will aim to start preparatory work for construction on site in winter 2016-17.

This trial is entirely funded by Highways England and the construction phase of the project is subject to funding. For more information about Highways England, visit