

# M40 barriers could cut noise and generate electricity

7:00am Tuesday 2nd October 2012 in [CountywideBy Oliver Evans](#), covering Banbury. Call me on 01865 425271



Tony Giddy alongside the

existing M40 noise reduction panels

HIGHWAYS chiefs are looking at an innovative plan to cut M40 noise using sound barriers with built-in solar panels.

An action group has won cash to develop a project to help the 20,000 residents who live near to the M40 between junctions three and eight.

They would form a co-operative to raise capital to pay for the barriers with a view to making money back from the solar power they generate.

Individuals and organisations would also be able to buy shares to reap dividends from the barriers, which are common in Europe.

About six miles of motorway could get the barriers by 2016, including the stretch near Milton Common, Tetsworth, Postcombe and Lewknor.

The M40 Chiltern Environmental Group has won £10,000 to kickstart the plan from a Co-operative Group bid to find green projects.

The Highways Agency – responsible for motorways – is involved in discussions on the scheme.

Milton Common resident and group member Tony Giddy said the move was vital to provide a better quality of life for villagers.

He said: “At night you can’t open your window, it is too noisy.

“It can be absolutely horrendous – this is going to really help people that live close to the motorway. It will be a massive benefit.”

The group – which is planning 10km of barriers – believes each kilometre could generate £1m to £2m from selling electricity over 26 years.

[South Oxfordshire District Council](#) spokesman Gavin Walton said the authority “recognises that there are noise issues on the M40 in our area and we are interested in the feasibility of the project”.

He said: “We are now working in partnership with Wycombe District Council to develop a business case and will then consider how, if at all, we might take the project forward.”

Highways Agency chief engineer Ginny Clarke said: “The M40 Chiltern Environmental Group has produced a concept that shows real promise.

“We take our environmental responsibilities seriously at the Highways Agency, and a solution that combines noise mitigation with the production of green energy certainly merits a closer look. By working together in this way, I hope we can help to give this idea its best chance of success.”