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Dear Michael

Summary of meeting

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me on 13 January. My colleagues and I were grateful for the opportunity to highlight our work in and around your constituency. I am writing to provide you with a brief overview of our discussion with some additional information, as requested.

M3 junction 3 signalling

To ensure that this part of our network operates as efficiently as possible, we will be carrying out traffic signal validation work. Our current programme is to carry out the validation exercise week commencing 21 February until 11 March. Following this, any optimisation work is scheduled to begin on 25 April 2022 and we would be pleased to update you on this work as it progresses.

M3 junctions 2 and 4a landscape planting

As part of the M3 junctions 2 and 4a smart motorway scheme, landscape planting was undertaken, with heavy standard trees planted to provide screening for visual receptors and landscape integration for the newly constructed highway verge. Unfortunately, at four sites more than 50 per cent of the trees failed to establish and we are looking into the reasons for this. Re-planting is expected to begin within the next 2 to 4 weeks and will be completed over a total of 10 shifts. The amount of time at each location includes:

- Site 1 - Days off network – Access required from field – 3 days
- Site 2 - Days off network – Access required from field – 1 day
- Site 3 - Days off network – Access required from field – 5 days
- Site 1 - Nights on network – Traffic Management required – 1 night

Traffic Management will be required for one of the four sites. To minimise the impact on drivers using the M3, we will utilise traffic management already in place for another scheme at this location.

The planting will consist of species of plants that are considered to be suitable for the soil conditions and surrounding landscape and will provide climate change resilience for future generations.

M3 junctions 2 to 4a noise

Detailed modelling of noise effects using traffic data was undertaken as part of the Environmental Assessment Report. Existing noise barriers were retained with alterations, and low noise surfacing and noise barriers were installed to mitigate noise affecting the communities living near the route. We can provide detail of location of these if this is helpful.

The post opening evaluation of the scheme, published in March 2021, considered the predicted noise impacts described in the Environmental Appraisal and Assessment and compared them against predicted and observed traffic flows. Noise monitoring suggests that, in the first 12 months, daytime noise levels were lower than pre-construction levels.

M3 junctions 2 to 4a air quality

Detailed modelling of air quality using traffic data has been undertaken and confirmed that overall, local operational air quality effects from the scheme are considered to be 'not significant'.

A post opening evaluation of the air quality outcomes of the scheme has been undertaken one year after the smart motorway opened. This has considered the predicted impacts described in the Environmental Appraisal and the Environmental Assessment Report (including the 2015 update with addendum) and compared them against available monitoring data and observed traffic flows along the scheme extent.

Air quality monitoring data from both Surrey Heath Borough Council and National Highways, has been considered. For 2018, none of the monitoring locations, including those within the Surrey Heath air quality management areas, exceed the annual average nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) objective. This suggests that despite the increase in heavy duty vehicle flows, no significant effects have arisen, one year after opening, due to the implementation of the scheme. This was as expected by the Environmental Assessment Report addendum.

I hope this additional information is helpful. Should your office require any further information please contact our Public Affairs Manager, Thomas Barlow, who will be pleased to assist. Thomas can be contacted by email at thomas.barlow@highwaysengland.co.uk or by telephone on 07922381260.

Yours sincerely



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