

This response is provided on behalf of M40Chilterns Environmental Group, which represents the interest of 13 communities with a total population in excess of 20K people along the oldest unimproved stretch of the M40 motorway (Jn 3 Loudwater – Jn8 Wheatley). We have been working for 10 years to reduce the impact of traffic noise from vehicles on this busy highway. Three years ago, we won an award from the Co-operative Group for development of the concept of solar enabled noise barriers. We undertook a joint study with the Highways Agency and our local Authorities to understand the feasibility of our proposal for (partially) self-financing noise barriers – that is, barriers that incorporate solar arrays, whose generated power could be sold either to large users or the grid to offset their cost. Highways England is now leading a joint procurement of barriers to be trialled at selected communities in our area, prior, it is hoped, to deployment elsewhere on the road network. Through a noise mapping programme, we have quantified improvement ie noise intensities achievable, that might be expected from the combined use of effective noise barriers and modern quiet surfaces. We have developed a very constructive continuing engagement with the Highways Agency and look forward to its continuing with Highways England.

The knowledge and expertise gained through this extensive collaboration suggest to us a number of ways in which the new road monitoring activity could lead to greater environmental benefit, increased community engagement and focus on stewardship of assets.

Dr Ken Edwards

Chairman M40CEG