

NEW NOTICE OF MOTION: TO OPPOSE THE OXFORD-CAMBRIDGE EXPRESSWAY

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To consider the Notice of Motion set out below.

2 Supporting information

- 2.1 The following Notice of Motion has been submitted by **Councillor Lyons** and seconded by **Councillor Stuchbury**:-

Background

Council notes that the UK Government, in tandem with the National Infrastructure Commission, has proposed the construction of a motorway-style **expressway between Oxford and Cambridge**. This new road will have significant adverse impacts on Aylesbury Vale.

Depending on the eventual route, the Expressway could destroy farmland and **habitats**, including an SSSI. Construction projects should result in biodiversity net gains. However the “gained” biodiversity may not be the same as that which has been lost. Some, such as ancient woodland, is irreplaceable. Infrastructure providers will offer to offset the negative impact in one place by protecting or replacing biodiversity elsewhere, which is of little benefit to local residents or wildlife.

The Council does not support the construction of another motorway such as the Expressway at a time of **climate emergency**. Transport accounts for 1/3 of all carbon emissions in the UK and the figure has only dropped by 3.2% since 1990. The expressway will increase CO2 emissions, which is incompatible with the government’s declared target of reducing emissions to net zero by 2050, and will bring more traffic onto the county’s existing roads.

The Council believes that the Expressway will cause major harm to the **quality of life of Vale residents** as it passes through the district. The additional noise from the expressway will be significant as well as increased air pollution from NOx, hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide and particulate matter.

The Council was right not to sign a non-disclosure agreement with Highways England.

Highways England’s own analysis of the Expressway shows a **low benefit-cost ratio (BCR) in the range of 1.1 – 1.3**.

This Council fully supports the East-West rail route, with full electrification and use of the rail line for freight as part of the strategic rail network, offering direct connections to the West Coast Main Line, Midland Main Line, and East Coast Main Line.

Council therefore resolves to:

- Oppose the Expressway project and support the electrification of the East West Rail route for passenger and freight traffic as part of the strategic rail network. We should encourage these intermodal connections to East West rail to discourage long distance freight by road.
- Support better East West public transport and active travel solutions.
- Adopt this position on the Expressway in the future consultation on the route options from Highways England.
- Continue to support environmental partnership working, particularly the work of the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership, and continue to promote these elements as vital mitigation if the Expressway does progress.

2.2 The Chairman has consented to this Motion being dealt with at this meeting, and the procedure will be as follows:

- Councillor Lyons will be invited to propose the Motion and explain the rationale (**Maximum of 5 minutes**).
- Councillor Stuchbury will then be invited to second the Motion. Councillor Stuchbury may speak at that point or reserve his speech until later during the debate. In either case, Councillor Stuchbury will have a **Maximum of 5 minutes**.
- The Motion will then be open for debate.
- The Chairman of the Council will ask Members who wishes to speak.
- Councillor Lyons will have a right of reply at the end of the debate.
- A vote will then be taken.

NOTE: Councillor Mrs Paternoster is the relevant Cabinet Member.

Contact Officer
Background Documents

- Bill Ashton (01296) 585040 (Re. the process)
1. Sloman L, Hopkinson L and Taylor I (2017), The Impact of Road Projects in England Report for CPRE
 2. Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy 2018, UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions, provisional figures.
 3. The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019