

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Transport Decision

Decision to be taken on or after 19/02/2019

Decision can normally be implemented at least
3 working days after decision has been signed.

Cabinet Member Report No. T03.19

Title: Noise reduction for Wendover

Date: 11/02/2019

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Contact officer: Ulrika Diallo, Lead Officer

Local members affected: Cllr Steve Bowles (Wendover, Halton and Stoke Mandeville)

For press enquiries concerning this report, please contact the media office on 01296 382444

There is a confidential appendix to this report, which is exempt by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Summary

In 2016 Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) was offered an assurance of £1.51m by HS2 Ltd to erect noise barriers along the A413 and London Road in Wendover. The assurance had not been requested by BCC but was offered in response to representation from local residents who wished HS2 to extend the proposed Chiltern tunnel. This was part of a wider mitigation package proposed by HS2.

BCC did not accept the noise barrier proposal but an assurance was nevertheless provided by HS2 for funding barriers. (Please see letter attached from Roger Hargreaves, dated 29th Oct 2015, appendix A)

Since receipt of the assurance there has been significant community representation to BCC Cabinet Members including the Leader of the Council. Some local Resident groups have expressed concerns about the effectiveness and visual impact of noise barriers. Therefore, further work was undertaken to model other potential options. This culminated in a consultation with four different options to choose from. BCC committed to installing the option chosen by the majority, putting the decision firmly in the hands of local residents.

It is important to remember that Wendover bypass is a noisy road. Currently residents living in close proximity to the bypass experience noise levels of 60-80 dB. Even vLNS will not take this noise away, but is modelled to be the most effective mitigation over all.

The consultation, that this report is based on, was open for a period of five weeks and closed on the 4th January 2019.

Of the 750 responses to the consultation the breakdown was as follows;

- 1.47% (11 residents) selected Do Nothing.
- 6.67% (50 residents) selected Noise Barriers, and
- 13.33% (100 residents) selected Low noise Surfacing (LNS)
- 78.53% (589 residents) selected Very Low Noise Surfacing (vLNS)

The results overwhelmingly illustrate that Very Low Noise Surfacing is the preferred option.

With vLNS being the preferred option, a formal request needs to be submitted to the HS2 Ltd Undertakings and Assurances Committee to amend Assurance 1861 “Wendover – roadside noise barriers” to very Low Noise Surfacing in order to implement the result from the consultation.

Recommendation:

The Cabinet Member is invited to

Write to HS2 Ltd Undertakings and Assurances Committee seeking to amend Assurance 1861 “Wendover – roadside noise barriers” to very Low Noise Surfacing (Option 4).

Authorise Ian McGowan, Head of Infrastructure Projects to undertake appropriate site and materials investigation and design work to enable prompt implementation of an appropriate vLNS surfacing material, following HS2 agreement.

Subject to receipt of approval for a change in Assurance 1861 from HS2 Ltd, authorise Ian McGowan, Head of Infrastructure Projects to progress the

implementation of appropriate vLNS with details of the material to be used and temporary traffic management arrangements delegated to the Head of Highways Infrastructure Projects and Head of Highways (Client).

A. Narrative setting out the reasons for the decision

This decision is the result of a public consultation in Wendover. The result overwhelmingly shows that local people prefer vLNS over any other option (as set out in section B).

A1. Public consultation 30 Nov 2018 – 4 Jan 2019

The consultation opened on 30th November 2018. Two exhibition events were held at Wendover library; on the afternoon of the 30 November and in the morning of the 1 December 2018.

Around 200 people attended the public exhibitions over the two days. They were able to ask questions to BCC's noise consultants, Jacobs and to BCC officers.

A2. Pre consultation community briefing meetings

Two meetings were held with community organisations and locally affected groups prior to the consultation; these included the Wendover Society, Wendover Parish Council, Wendover Stop HS2, St Mary's Church and the Chiltern Academy. Two representatives per organisation attended the meetings around proposed options, consultation materials and consultation method.

A3. Consultation materials

A display panel per option was produced to summarise the pros and con of each option.

BCC's noise consultants Jacobs produced a detailed noise-modelling report which was available on display at the consultation events and downloadable from the BCC website (www.buckscc.gov.uk/wendovernoise) throughout the consultation.

There were also visual examples (photomontage) and a leaflet from a barrier-manufacturer available at the consultation events, illustrating what the noise barrier option might look like.

A4. Consultation method

The consultation asked respondents to simply state their one preference by ticking the most preferred option of the four options that were consulted on. And to state any other comments in the free text box available. A questionnaire was available for people to fill in at the events and then available in paper format at the library throughout the consultation period. An identical questionnaire was available online at the project website.

A5. Consultation advertising

The exhibition was advertised via a press release, issued two weeks in advance of the consultation start. Local news outlets such as the [Everything Wendover FaceBook page](#), [Wendover News](#), [Mix96 radio station](#) and [Bucks Herald](#) ran stories.

Approximately 4,000 letters were posted to households in Wendover Parish.

A6. Results

766 people took part in the consultation. But only 750 were valid this was due to the following reasons.

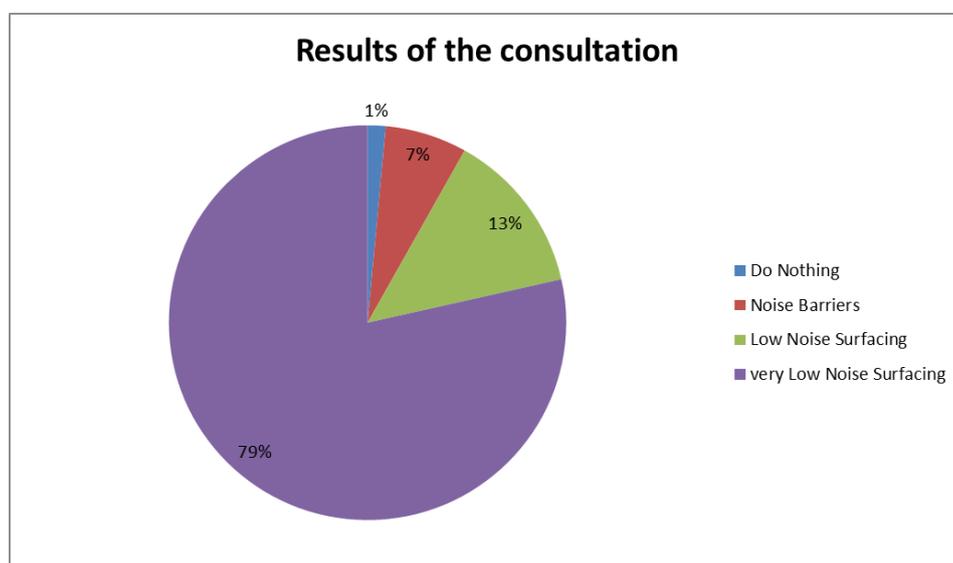
- 10 responses had not listed an option at all
- 6 responses were duplicates

Of the 750 valid responses the breakdown was as follows;

- 150 people responded via the paper questionnaire
- 600 people responded online

Percentages in bullets and in a pie chart below;

- 1.47% (11 residents) selected Do Nothing.
- 6.67% (50 residents) selected Noise Barriers, and
- 13.33% (100 residents) selected Low noise Surfacing (LNS)
- 78.53% (589 residents) selected Very Low Noise Surfacing (vLNS)



B. Other options available, and their pros and cons

Noise modelling based on traffic volumes was used to test the performance of different noise mitigation options for Wendover. The detailed noise modelling report is attached for further information (see appendix B).

Six options were originally looked at. Two were discounted; a) noise bunds, because they take up too much space and b) speed reduction on the Wendover bypass favoured by some local stakeholders, but very difficult to enforce.

Four options were taken through to consultation;

Option 1. Do nothing

This option would take no action and return the funding to HS2 Ltd. The logic for this is that despite forecast increased road traffic, both light vehicles and HGVs, on the A413 to the south of Wendover during HS2 construction, modelling suggests that the noise impact from HS2 construction traffic is negligible. The average noise change caused by HS2 construction traffic per sensitive property within 600m of the A413 is +0.3dB, which is a very slight and barely perceptible increase.

Option 2. Noise Barriers

This option would install three noise barriers at different locations along the A413 and on London Road. The barriers on the A413 would be 4m high and the barrier on London Road would be 2m high, all would have a visual impact on the community. This option offers the greatest noise reductions for residents and properties closest to the barriers. Benefits are still seen further away, but to a far lesser extent than with for example the LNS and vLNS

Option 3. Low Noise Surface (LNS)

This option would replace the current road surface with a LNS on a 1.92km stretch of A413 adjacent to Wendover. See appendix E. With this option noise reductions would be seen over a wider area than with noise barriers. The greatest noise benefits are not as good as seen for the barriers option, but more properties benefit overall. This material has been used previously in Buckinghamshire.

Option 4. Very Low noise surfacing (vLNS)

This option would replace the current road surface with a vLNS on a 1.92km stretch of A413 adjacent to Wendover (see appendix C). With this option noise reductions are seen over an even wider area than LNS. It offers the greatest noise benefits overall, but is still not as good as seen for the small number of properties closest to the barriers. More properties would benefit overall and vLNS offers greater noise reductions compared to the low noise surfacing option.

BCC has never before used the vLNS material on its highways. The key reason for this is that it is a relatively new material/technology. Examples exist elsewhere in the UK (eg. A14 in Cambridgeshire) where noise mitigation in the short term has been effective on a brand new road, but limited information is known about durability and its performance long term when installed on an existing bypass.

It is not BCC highway maintenance policy to install LNS/vLNS, and it is only being provided due to the funding available from HS2. This material is more expensive than would usually be used, and may not perform as well long term or be as durable as the Hot Rolled Asphalt (HRA) material that is typically used on Buckinghamshire's highways and then surface dressed approximately 10 years after installation as a cost effective maintenance solution.

C. Resource implications

The budget for this project is £1.51m; this funding is finite and has to cover noise-modelling, officer time, consultation, installation as well as maintenance of the noise mitigation. At the time of writing, options modelling suggests that BCC has sufficient funding to install appropriate vLNS surfacing twice. However, BCC officers will now undertake appropriate design and other further work to ascertain the actual work required to enable prompt implementation of appropriate vLNS material, following HS2 agreement and what impact this may have on the available budget.

A detailed confidential finance spreadsheet is available in Appendix 2.

Maintenance

The Wendover bypass is a strategic route that BCC has an obligation to maintain and therefore the project team has worked closely with TfB colleagues to ensure we get best value for money from the funding pot (assurance) provided by HS2 Ltd.

There has been close liaison with colleagues in TfB with respect to this project and they have input to this report. Due to the fact that the bypass is an existing asset (unlike e.g. new noise barriers) a maintenance regime for the highway network is already in place, utilising tried and tested asset management practices. The highways maintenance team has stated that vLNS is not normally considered as part of that existing maintenance cycle. The funding from HS2 Ltd will therefore be ring fenced to install and maintain a very low noise surface course, specifically to reduce vehicle noise during the HS2 construction period.

Insofar as ongoing maintenance is concerned, it is not practicable to undertake small patching using VLNS material. It is suitable to be laid only as a larger resurfacing project.

There is little existing examples or evidence of the long term durability of the VLNs material. Transport for Buckinghamshire are therefore unable to advise as to the lifespan of the proposed works, although it should be noted that it would be normal practice to undertake surface treatment works typically within 7 to 10 years of a new resurfacing. BCC had provisionally planned to undertake maintenance of the Wendover bypass in approximately 2024 but the actual date would be dependent on the prevailing condition of the road.

Further work will be carried out to establish the existing condition of the bypass. Following this a decision will be taken as to the specific work required to enable the installation of vLNS and whether we need to do any further more extensive work so that the material is laid on a solid foundation.

Because vLNS is untested in Buckinghamshire, it is not possible to set exact timescales for the subsequent vLNS installation, it may fail after a few years or it could last up to ten years before the second surface is required to be installed.

Once the HS2 funding has been expended, subsequent maintenance requirements will revert to conventional materials used as part of normally accepted maintenance/asset management practices.

D. Value for Money (VfM) Self-Assessment

BCC has no prior experience of vLNS and limited positive experience of using LNS see cabinet report No T21.18, entitled A4146 Stoke Hammond and Linslade Western Bypass – surfacing material. This report sets out the rationale for not recommending the application of LNS (see appendix E).

These reasons include; that it is less durable, that noise mitigation deteriorates over time, and that the perception of local people affected by noise from the bypass is that the noise reduction is not as effective as expected, resulting in local complaints.

However, as new technologies and methods develop, materials become better and more durable. Consultation with registered suppliers of vLNS material in the UK has indicated that the life span of vLNS is dependent on the properties and condition of the binder course and thickness that is installed;

- Approximately 8-10 years life span for a 40mm inlay, so long as the current binder course is in a sound condition
- A minimum 10-12 years surface course on top of new binder, and
- Approximately 15-20 years for the new binder course

If the noise barriers had been selected as the preferred option of mitigation the Council would have incurred additional maintenance costs for a new asset, this additional cost is now avoided as the bypass is an existing asset with an existing maintenance regime in place.

E. Legal implications

Any legal implications to this decision are incorporated into the report.

F. Property implications

There are no known property implications to this decision. All works are proposed within the existing highway.

G. Other implications/issues

The assurance dictates that implementation of the assurance must not interfere with the HS2 construction schedule.

Installation of vLNS is weather dependent and has to be installed in the spring/summer during the driest possible period. Officers are currently looking into the best method for installing the surfacing with respect to cost, duration of works, temporary traffic management arrangements, impact on the network and further information will be circulated in due course.

H. Feedback from consultation, Local Area Forums and Local Member views

Members were fully informed of the consultation throughout and requested the consultation to steer them with respect to seeking a change of assurance from HS2.

There is only one ward affected by this key decision.

Local Member (Wendover, Halton and Stoke Mandeville) Cllr Steve Bowles has been briefed about the project and read the draft report. He said; - *I have no further comments to make thanks.*

I. Communication issues

A report setting out the results of the consultation will be circulated to approximately 300 local residents who signed up for e-bulletins as part of the consultation process.

J. Progress Monitoring

Implementation of the project will be monitored by the HS2 Programme Board which is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Transportation.

The road will continue to be inspected as per the normal programme of Transport for Buckinghamshire works.

K. Review

The policy forming part of this decision (highway maintenance) will be reviewed continuously as with all other highways in the County.

Background Papers

Appendix A

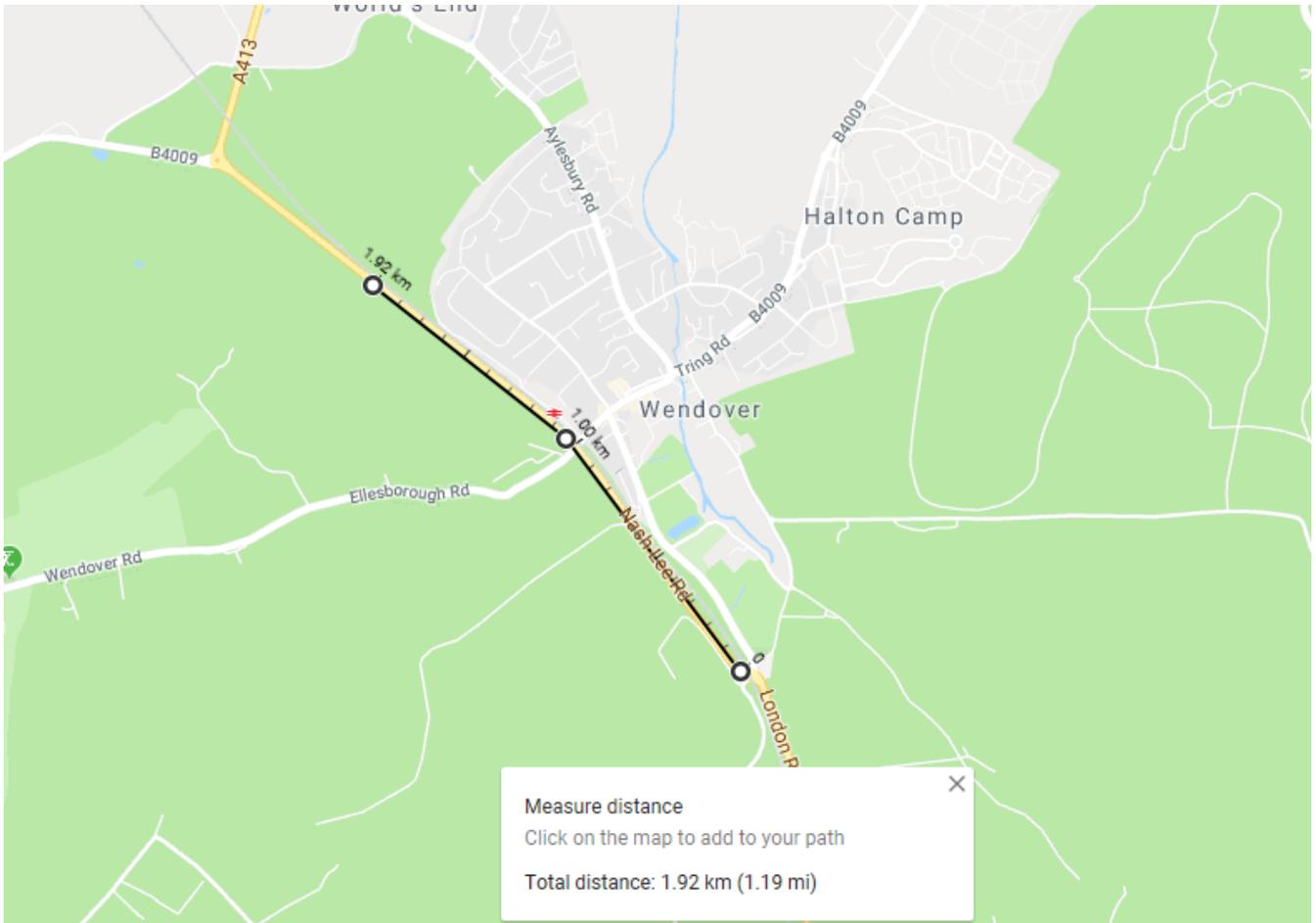
Letter from Roger Hargreaves, HS2 Ltd (attached)

Appendix B

Jacobs Wendover Mitigation Study, Road Noise Mitigation Summary Report
BRJ10110/EV/REP/001 | R7 (<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/media/4512496/181120-wendover-road-noise-mitigation-summary-report-r7-cost-options.pdf>)

Appendix C

Resurfacing plan



Appendix D

Finance Spreadsheet (confidential)

Appendix E

Cabinet member report No. T21. 18 - A4046 Stoke Hammond and Linslade Western Bypass – Surfacing Material (<https://democracy.buckscc.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=9092>)

Your questions and views

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this paper please get in touch with the Contact Officer whose telephone number is given at the head of the paper.

If you have any views on this paper that you would like the Cabinet Member to consider, or if you wish to object to the proposed decision, please inform the Democratic Services Team by 5.00pm on 18/02/2019. This can be done by telephone (to 01296 382343), or e-mail to democracy@buckscc.gov.uk