

Sustainable Communities Act 2007

In July 2009, 300 submissions were made by over 100 local authorities under the Act.

At year end, the Local Government Association (LGA) published its initial study accepting approx 175 submissions for further consideration with the request that as many as possible should be resolved before the election. To our knowledge 17 have now been resolved. The LGA website www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pageId=561616 provides regular updates on progress. LGA facilitated a first meeting between M40 CEG and DfT on March 29th. We have requested that DEFRA should be directly involved in the process. Further meetings are being scheduled.

The submission of 'M40 Motorway Noise J3 – J8' requested the following actions:
o the Minister for Transport changes the current policies so that action can be taken to permanently reduce road noise, improve sound barriers and implement speed and night time restrictions along the M40 from Junction 3 to Junction 8; and
o the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Rural Affairs work together to reassess the formula for calculating noise level policies and priorities which is biased in favour of large and urban communities, so that the impact of motorway noise on rural communities and nationally recognised and designated landscapes is given greater importance.

It identified five areas where specific action is needed to mitigate noise locally:

- 1. reduce traffic noise to promote sustainable development in protected landscapes*
- 2. use quietest available road surface at sensitive locations*
- 3. reduce traffic noise affecting land otherwise available for housing (esp affordable housing)*
- 4. require noise fencing to be maintained and upgraded to reduce noise to acceptable levels*
- 5. reduce noise during unsociable hours of evenings, night-time and weekends.*

A copy of the submission is available [here](#)

Since the submission was made, WHO has released Guidance for Europe on Safe Levels of Noise at Night www.euro.who.int/en/what-we-do/health-topics/environmental-health/noise/publications/2009/night-noise-guidelines-for-europe The interim level of 55dB(A) is the same as that chosen by M40 CEG for its evidence in support of the Submission.

M40CEG prepared 3 documents on 'Living with Traffic Noise in the Chilterns and South Oxfordshire' in evidence to support the submission.

['Part 1: M40 Noise Survey June 2009'](#) analysed the results of a study of the impacts of traffic noise on over 900 households affected by noise. It showed that 76% of those who responded suffered 'frequently' or 'almost always' from M40 traffic noise. ['Part 2: A Programme for Noise Reduction M40 J3 – J8'](#) set realistic noise reduction targets for the various communities along the M40, based on measurements of noise to which they are exposed. It developed a programme, including outline costs, for progressive reduction on noise through introduction of quiet surfaces, speed management and improvements to noise barriers. This study showed that, under adverse conditions, restriction on travel by heavy goods vehicles would also be required.

'Part 3: Application of Noise Reduction to Milton Common' is a worked example, showing the potential for noise reduction at Milton Common. This location was chosen because consistent noise measurements have been made recently by

consultants for M40 CEG and consultants for the M40 Route Operator, acting for the HA.