

Dear Sir

I am writing in response to the Secretary of State's letter of 20th January 2021 requesting comments on the proposed reduction in Replacement Land as part of the proposed M25 J10 improvements.

My interest is that I am a local resident who very regularly takes exercise and nature walks around the location with family and friends, especially on what we call "The "Junction 10 walk". It can begin in any of the four quadrants, but most often starts at [REDACTED] in the NW Quadrant. It encounters a number of fascinating habitats, even the walk SE along Pointers Road in the NE Quadrant has good woodland, roadside botany and excellent views east.

The walk utilises the underpass footpath going W to E under the A3 and then the three bridges closest to the interchange. It takes in Chatley Wood, Ockham, Wisley and Foxwarren Commons.

I absolutely welcome the improvements to the Junction, they are much needed - even if I have reservations about whether the current death trap of the Cobham Junction for leaving N off the A3 and joining the A3 going S is going to be much improved. Somewhat off topic, a simple 50mph speed limit at all times would go a long way to help here as well as some more visible (or any) traffic police presence.

On topic, although I agree with the Secretary of State on the quality of the land being lost is of relatively little environmental value, it is of relatively little environmental value **because** of the presence of the M25 and A3. If these roads were not there the land would be of good value to the environment. It is disingenuous to state otherwise. There is perhaps one neglected area of high environmental, perhaps missed in some surveys due to the seasonal nature of the flowers. At area 11/28 and 11/31 there is a large expanse of wild Snowdrops (*Galanthus Nivalis*) that are unusual for the whole area and would be tragic to be lost. [See attachments for photos from 2020 and 2021] Not so many people notice them because they are only a few metres from the road, a good example of how closeness to the road blights enjoyment of the nature close to the road.

I would also like to add that there are three user communities of the area who are also probably being neglected and who illustrate both the variety of activities around J10 and the intensity of the population pressure trying to find areas to engage their interests. The activities may not be everyone's taste but so what, live and let live as long as it is legal.

- There is an active outdoor group [REDACTED] between Curries Clump and Sandpit Hill in the SE Quadrant. I have never met any of them as it is not one of my interests but they are very active judging by the very noticeable litter that a minority leave behind - that thus discourages use of a fairly wide strip of woodland alongside the A3 up to the M25. Fair do's to them though, as they need an area to use.
- There is also a large group of extremely keen motocross and cross country biking enthusiasts who clearly enjoy the privacy of parts of the area in the NE Quadrant around Red Hill. I have never met any but again their active use of the area is very evident in the dirt tracks and clubhouse they have built. They also discourage many walkers like us from using "their" area. Again, fair do's to them as they also need an area to use.
- Thirdly there are the large numbers of people with dogs who so regularly exercise in the NW Quadrant, giving their dogs a chance to run free in the relative absence of many non-dog walkers. All three groups like to keep away from more conventional exercisers and users of the environment, each for their own reasons. They will lose quite large parts of their areas of activity and be pushed into conflict with more conventional users of the J10 area. That is

why it is so essential to gain more land than just what is physically lost, or there will be no gain at all for the wider variety of users.

By expanding further the M25 and A3 networks the next layer of land close to the roads will also become of little environmental value likewise. So, the shrinkage of high quality environments will continue. That is why the ratio of land gained needs to be more than the land lost, as actual land is lost and much less affected land is turned marginal and effectively lost because of the additional noise and pollution. The noise levels are a particular concern, and I would advise the Secretary of State or members of the Department to take "The J10 Walk" and see and in particular hear for themselves. The officials might also notice the appallingly outdated, worn out and noisy road surface on that particular section of the M25, as even a drive along it will make abundantly clear. I currently highly value the land around and close to J10 and will value it less as a result of these changes - where it still exists as accessible land.

I very much agree that the land in the NW quadrant near Byfleet is a very good gain and it will be a most welcome addition to the existing green spaces and woodland, although the reduction proposed is still wrong and wilfully misunderstands the need to maximise the gains to offset the two types of loss referred to above. The land in the NE Quadrant that is now being rejected could easily be turned into something better with a bit of work, even if now it is somewhat neglected. The views from Painshill Park include some of it and those areas and the others could be turned into an integrated whole in the SE quadrant

The Junction 10 Walk could then become a new magnet for the whole community and not just the somewhat piecemeal Ockham Common vs Wisley Common vs Foxwarren vs Painshill Park areas they are now. It could reverse some of the initial damage to the area created by the original building of the M25 (and A3 Esher and Cobham bypasses).

The world has changed a lot since the 1970s and actual gains and improvements to the environment are very much what people want rather than just the zero sum Replacement Land ideology on which the Secretary of State now seems to be falling back.

One final point is that there was a very considerable effort by the Highways Authority to consult with the general public over the improvement plans. One very important reason that the plans won pretty widespread support, including my own was precisely because of the gains in open space and accessible countryside. The removal of these gains with hardly any public consultations is unfair and seems almost deceitful, making something of a mockery of the original consultations.

Yours faithfully

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

