

February 2018

working locally and nationally to  
protect and enhance a beautiful,  
thriving countryside for everyone to  
value and enjoy

Dear Clerks & Councillors

**RE: OXFORD-CAMBRIDGE EXPRESSWAY & GROWTH CORRIDOR**  
**Please support CPRE's call for a Public Inquiry**

The new Expressway through rural Oxfordshire, intended to create more development, is to be announced as soon as July by Highways England who intend to decide its route behind closed doors without public consultation or a Public Inquiry. We ask you to write to your MP and Local Councillors to support us in saying this is wrong, and to demand the public consultation and Public Inquiry that is our right before our rural County is changed beyond recognition.

The Government has endorsed the National Infrastructure Commissions proposal that there should be a new Expressway (a Motorway in all but name) connecting the M4 South of Oxford to the M11 near Cambridge.

The road is linked to the proposal to build another million houses along the route by 2050, 300,000 of which could be inflicted on Oxfordshire, virtually doubling our existing population. That means that wherever you live in the County, the impacts will be transformational.

From Milton Keynes to Cambridge, the Expressway would take the form of upgrading existing roads. From the M4 to Milton Keynes, Highways England is looking at two alternatives, although it is keeping details secret.

One is to upgrade the existing A34/M40/A421 roads to expressway standard. The other is to build a completely new Expressway leaving the A34 and heading East, somewhere between Didcot and Kennington, before turning towards Thame and Aylesbury. This would be a totally new road through open countryside that is largely Green Belt.

We shouldn't tolerate that such important decisions are taken without full public consultation: we should be told what is in store for us and be seriously involved in the decision as to which land to build major roads across.

If the road is imposed on us - and CPRE has ample evidence that new road building creates more traffic problems than it solves<sup>1</sup> - then in principle upgrading existing roads will inevitably be less harmful to the countryside than building an entirely new one across green fields.

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<sup>1</sup> 'The end of the road? Challenging the road-building consensus' National CPRE report, March 2017

See: <http://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/transport/roads/item/4543-the-end-of-the-road-challenging-the-road-building-consensus?highlight=WyJyb2FkIiwjJ3JvYWQixQ==>

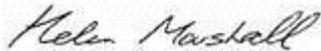
There is a tried and tested way to find out public opinion in the most open way and that is through a public inquiry. In this way, it is difficult to hide evidence and gives the public its full chance to let its opinion be known and examined. Given the intention to accelerate delivery of the East West railway, linking Oxford and Cambridge, we want to know whether an Expressway is needed and if so which route it should take and further, just what is the justification of such an aspirational idea as the whole Growth Corridor.

We are pleased that Oxfordshire County Council has already backed CPRE Oxfordshire's call for a Public Inquiry but we need to ensure the Secretary of State hears the message from as many people as possible.

The dangers are clear: one of the most valued countrysides in England could become in great part a commuter suburb of London. We should not just stand by and watch Highways England ride roughshod over our pleasant land.

We therefore ask you to support CPRE Oxfordshire's call for a Public Inquiry into the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway and Growth Corridor by writing to your local councillors and MP, and directly to the Secretary of State for Transport.

With thanks,



Helen Marshall  
Director, CPRE Oxfordshire

You can see more information, including contact details for letters, on our website: <http://www.cpreoxon.org.uk/news/current-news/item/2648-public-inquiry-ox-cam-expressway>

If your Parish Council is not currently a member of CPRE Oxfordshire, please do consider joining and adding your voice to our work protecting the Oxfordshire countryside and fighting for the right development in the right place: <http://www.cpreoxon.org.uk/join-us>