



SCHEDULE 17 APPLICATION PL/25/1383/HS2 - RESPONSE

The Leather Lane Conservation Group has engaged extensively with the Align design team since they took over the Leather Lane crossing in early 2024. We are a charity, formed to preserve the environment and wildlife in the vicinity of Leather Lane, and one of our objectives is to create a conservation area to achieve this.

We very much welcome the provision of a green bridge at Leather Lane, as was requested by the Conservation Board at the select committee hearings in October 2015¹. The proposed design provides much improved mitigation when compared with that specified in the hybrid bill, and the applicant has gone to considerable trouble to preserve the trees lining the lane, and the nearby 'Lone Oak'. It is unfortunate that the previous contractor (EKFB) spent two years in denial regarding the existence of the bats, working on a design unfit for purpose. This delay has compromised the new design to some extent, and lead to an extended closure of the Lane.

While we approve of the overall concept, there are some details which are not clear from the application –

3.4 Construction method

The ordering and overlap of the construction phases is unclear; a Gantt chart would be helpful. Also, the location of various temporary structures (for example the ramps in phase 2) has not been specified – do these have any adverse impacts? Drawings showing the intermediate phases would clarify this.

There is no undertaking that Leather Lane would remain open until Rocky Lane was reopened; to close both would be a further inconvenience to local residents.

3.6.4 states that "*Artificial flight/commute corridors will be installed during flying season*". It was unclear how this could be

¹ http://www.hs2amersham.org.uk/Resources/Petitions/CFA8-10/13Oct2015_LandscapeMitigation.pdf (slide 24)

achieved during the 14 month closure of the lane, and we now understand that the 'flightline' will actually be located at an adjacent bridge (Havenfields access), around 420m away from the current crossing. Will this prove adequate ?

Other concerns

- Will the area around the Lone Oak (3.3.15) or the Maintenance Access Strips (3.2.44) be accessible ?
- Could the Lane replacement surface (3.2.27-29) be more suitable for walkers, to facilitate access to the historic Holloway ?
- Current users of the lane (4.2.1) include cyclists and pedestrians (despite the risks involved). Their needs do not appear to have been specifically considered.
- Much of the understory beneath the retained trees has been cleared; will this be recreated ? (4.2.15)

The points raised above might be considered when assessing the application. We will raise other minor matters directly with the applicant.

The Leather Lane Conservation Group