



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
CHESHIRE

Victoria Buildings
Lewin Street
Middlewich
Cheshire CW10 9AT

Tel/fax: 01606 835046
Email: info@cprecheshire.org.uk
Website: www.cprecheshire.org.uk

President
Lady Baker-Wilbraham

Patron
H.M. The Queen

Registered Charity no. 248304

For immediate release

Monday December 5th, 2005

CPRE ENCOURAGES ATTENDANCE AT HIGHWAYS AGENCY EVENT ON M6 EXPRESSWAY

The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)¹ Cheshire Branch are encouraging as many representatives of organisations as possible to seek invitations to a special stakeholder event which the Highways Agency has announced it is holding on the M6 Expressway in the New Year.

The consultation event is part of the Highways Agency's feasibility study into a new 'express' tolled motorway running roughly parallel to the M6 through the counties of Cheshire and Staffordshire². It is due to take place at the Chimney House Hotel, Sandbach at 2 p.m. on Friday, January 13th, 2006.

Lillian Burns, Vice Chairman of CPRE Cheshire Branch, Chairman of its Transport Campaign Group and transport spokesperson for CPRE North West Regional Group, said: "It is important people think about the environmental implications of this land-hungry proposal and take advantage of every opportunity to have their say about it.

"The main government-advanced arguments in favour of it appear to be that the costs would fall on the private sector, it could be built with far less disruption to traffic flows than widening the M6 and it would provide a fast alternative route. But the builder-operator could charge what they believe is a fair price to use the road and the fact is that there are still huge costs which fall on the public purse - even with privately-built roads. And, whilst the point about disruption during construction is true, it does not represent a case for creating massive permanent environmental degradation elsewhere. Also, because the Expressway would encourage vast new numbers of new traffic movements, it would only ever be a short-term solution, as with all new road building, and the DfT and the Highways Agency are trying to avoid sticky questions about landscape impacts, the loss of wildlife habitats, of ancient woodlands and tranquility and the effects on air quality and climate change of all the induced traffic".

continued ...

CPRE encourages attendance at Highways Agency event on M6 Expressway

She warned: “Also, people need to be aware that the goal posts appear to be changing with this proposal and the environmental consequences are already being talked down. At a recent Highways Agency presentation to a transport forum, the only physical constraints mentioned were two service stations in the West Midlands and a point at which the M6 is on a viaduct over the River Cresswell, again in the West Midlands.

The presentation made no mention of the Sandbach and Knutsford services which have to be circumnavigated. Nor was there any mention of the fact that the M6 is on a viaduct where it crosses Madeley Heath at the three counties point of Cheshire, Staffordshire and Shropshire. Either a new viaduct would have to be built there or the Expressway would have to sweep out into the countryside. There was, however, a reference to there being ‘only a few access points’ whereas at the time the proposal was being consulted upon in 2004 it was being said there would only be one interim access point. Don’t forget that every access point will involve acres of land for toll booths and sweeping slip roads”.

Footnote

Anyone wanting an invitation to the consultation event should contact Nick Curwin at the Highways Agency. E-mail: nick.curwin@highways.gsi.gov.uk.

¹ CPRE – Campaign to Protect Rural England – is a charity which exists to promote the beauty, tranquillity and diversity of rural England by encouraging the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country.

² Minister for Transport, Dr. Stephen Ladyman M.P., announced on July 19th, 2005 that the government were commissioning a feasibility study into the building of a tolled motorway to run from the northern end of the M6 Toll to North Cheshire. The study is expected to report in summer 2006.

- ENDS -

Notes for Editors

For more information, contact: Lillian Burns on 01625 829492