The new Oxford to Cambridge Expressway, between the A34 south of Oxford and Milton Keynes.

As you will be aware, the Government is proposing a new road, the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway, between the A34 south of Oxford and Milton Keynes. Three different route corridors are being considered for the road. Highways England intends to announce the preferred route by July. Statements from the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) indicate that at least one new town will be built along the preferred route.

The Wildlife Trusts have major concerns about all of the proposed routes and about the lack of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). **If you share our concerns we would ask you to raise this matter with your constituency MP as a matter of urgency,**

The Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) and the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire have participated in a closed consultation about the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway Strategic Study and Corridor. The response created by the two Trusts was submitted on their behalf by Dr Sue Young, Head of Land Use Planning and Ecological Networks, The Wildlife Trusts (England) to Highways England on 12 April 2018. You can read and download the Executive Summary of the response from the Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust or download the Full Response document on our website at[www.bbowt.org.uk/expressway](http://www.bbowt.org.uk/expressway)

**We have major areas of concern for all the corridor routes**. Our most serious concerns are for the complex of designated sites and nature reserves in the areas of Cothill Fen, Oxford Meadows, the Otmoor Basin, the Upper Ray Valley and Bernwood Forest.

We are also very concerned about the lack of public consultation on the proposals. This includes: the lack of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), the lack of commitment by Highways England to achieving a net gain for biodiversity, and the lack of a Habitats Regulations Assessment on all three corridors by the Department for Transport. **If the SEA is not undertaken before a preferred corridor is selected, the opportunity to fully scrutinise the comparative impacts of all possible Expressway routes will be lost.**

BBOWT is collaborating with several environmental and other organisations including the [RSPB](https://www.rspb.org.uk/our-work/our-positions-and-casework/casework/cases/oxford-to-cambridge-expressway/) which has restored the reserve at Otmoor during the last 20 years to a wetland oasis, which now has breeding bitterns and marsh harriers, recently returned after an absence of centuries.

**If you share our concerns about the lack of the lack of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) we would ask you to raise this with your constituency MP as a matter of urgency.**

You may also be interested in the Wildlife Trusts guidelines which show how new housing developments can be built in a way that provides people with greener, inspirational homes which help to reverse decades of wildlife and habitat decline.  You can read more on this [here](http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/living-landscape/planning/housing-and-nature).

We hope that you will find this information useful and informative. If for any reason you would prefer not to receive any further emails from us, please contact us and we will remove you from our mailing list.

Yours sincerely

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Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust

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