

Alternate Line 3 alignment for super premium transit route for buses in Transport Strategy for the Eastern Arc, currently under consultation

This response is from **Friends of Lye Valley (FLV, see website at <http://www.headington.org.uk/lyevalley/index.html>)** a group formed of people who are working to protect and preserve this internationally-important site for wildlife in the Headington area.

The Line 3 aims to build a road over the south end of the Golf Course (Oxford Golf Club) from Hollow Way to meet up with Lye Valley road, run along this residential street and then divert into the valley, crossing the watercourse in the bottom of the valley of the Boundary and Lye Brooks and then uphill north to connect with the Churchill Hospital Site.

Friends of Lye Valley strongly object to this proposal for the following reasons:

If this road were to be constructed it would be nothing less than a disaster for important wildlife in the area and severely damage a valued green, restful and pleasant landscape, much enjoyed by the general public

- This route twice bisects important green wildlife areas associated with the golf course and the corridor habitats associated with the streams. It would sever the two halves of the Lye Valley wetland fen SSSI by running **between** the north and south SSSI units. Populations of mobile species would be isolated by such a road and such fragmentation would be more likely to result in local extinctions. Just one example of a species which would be heavily impacted is the sizeable badger population on site; these currently forage freely over the whole of the golf course and the stream valleys.
- The part of the route over the golf course from Hollow Way is the important rainwater catchment of the South Fen unit of the Lye Valley SSSI, designated for its rare calcareous alkaline fen wetland, which is a habitat of European importance and which has severely declined nationally. Building a road here would have hydrological implications for the springs in the South Fen, preventing some rainwater infiltration into soil and thus reducing the spring water supply. A proposal to build houses in this area in 2007 was prevented for just this reason. This South Fen SSSI unit is already under water-stress and in 'Unfavourable' condition from the drying effect of erosion of the adjacent Boundary Brook. In addition to the Hollow Way golf course area catchment, running the route along the existing Lye Valley road would necessitate widening that road, again with negative hydrological implications for the South Fen SSSI, a few tens of metres down the slope from the current road.
- The part of the route over the golf course leading from Hollow Way would travel over part of a Local Wildlife Site (LWS 50M02 Lye Valley and Cowley Marsh LWS) designated in this area for the relic dry limestone flora of the fairways and roughs. The valuable flower assemblage contains many species of great value to pollinators as a nectar source and certain plants now rare in the UK.

- The Churchill Hospital field section at the northern end of the route contains rank grassland of value to small mammals such as voles and thus to predatory birds such as owls and hawks. It is also an important breeding site for protected common lizards and a forage area for badgers. This is currently a site under proposal for inclusion in the previously mentioned LWS 50M02. All provisional LWS areas are treated as if they were full LWS with regard to planning issues.
- Between the Lye Valley road and the Churchill Hospital field is an area of the LWS which includes the Lye Brook itself and associated wetland riparian habitats. The stream corridor with wet peaty areas and alder wet woodland is a UKBAP (section 41) priority habitat. Putting a road here would destroy some of this habitat and this is the point where the wildlife corridor connecting the north and south sections of the Lye Valley fen SSSI would be severed.
- There are glow worms throughout the valley. These would be negatively impacted by light pollution from such a road. Mating would be compromised.
- The increased traffic this road will bring to the area means increased NOX air pollution, which means more nitrogen deposition. The SSSI fens are very low nutrient ecosystems that function only with extremely low nitrogen, thus this extra N deposition would be expected to cause a degree of damage to the vegetation.
- The Lye Valley has been described as a green jewel in an urban landscape, where people can escape from the stresses of city life and gain the health benefits of a quiet, relaxing walk without actually seeing any of the built up areas, breathing polluted air and hearing the traffic noise of the roads all around it. Construction of this road through the heart of the valley (no doubt with an ugly viaduct over the Lye Brook itself) would destroy both this peace and the rural feel of the pleasant, currently entirely green, landscape views.

Friends of Lye Valley

25 March 2015