



Meeting note

File reference

Status

Final

Author

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Date

10 March 2016

Meeting with**Venue**

Temple Quay House, Bristol

Attendees

Jeremy Damrel – Highways England

Bonny Pailing - AAJV

Stephen Hall - AAJV

Simon Lawrence - AAJV

Andrew Alcorn - Highways England

Liz Brown – AAJV

Brian Gash – Highways England

Susannah Guest - Infrastructure Planning Lead

David Price - EIA Manager

Callan Burchell - Assistant Case Officer

Meeting**objectives**

To provide the Inspectorate with an introduction to the A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down scheme, being taken forward by Highways England in accordance with commitments made within the Road Investment Strategy

Circulation

All attendees

Summary of key points discussed and advice given:

The developer was reminded of the Planning Inspectorate's openness policy that any advice given will be recorded and published on the planning portal website under s51 of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) (PA 2008) and that any advice given does not constitute legal advice upon which the applicants (or others) can rely.

Introductions were made by everyone present, and individual roles were explained.

In accordance with Highways England's approach to health and safety, the meeting commenced with a safety moment on the 'safety in public communications events'. Attendees were given the opportunity to discuss their personal experiences of the topic. The developer discussed the use of appropriate venues and the challenges that can arise when using visual aids.

Project Outline

The developer introduced the scheme to The Inspectorate by providing a brief outline of the scheme's history and noting the recent Public Information Events. The developer noted some of the potential key features of the scheme including the dualling of the single carriageway, enhancement of the World Heritage site, improvements to Countess and Longbarrow roundabouts and a bypass of Winterborne Stoke. The developer noted that the Road Investment Strategy had announced a number of schemes in the south west and these included the A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down, Sparkford to Ilchester and Taunton to Southfields.

The Inspectorate enquired about the proximity and potential inter-relationships between these schemes. The developer noted their respective locations and discussed how the schemes would be considered during the planning and critical construction phases. The Inspectorate confirmed that if each of the three schemes were considered to be Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects, then the Inspectorate would welcome contact with each project team in due course.

The developer reflected on the influence and importance of the World Heritage Site. The developer outlined the key objectives for the scheme being related to: the World Heritage Site; environment and community; economic growth; and transport issues. The developer discussed potential approaches as to how the cultural heritage assets could be appropriately considered in the business case for the scheme.

The developer provided an overview of the current stage as well as future stages of the project. The developer is currently considering a number of route options/corridors and hopes to refine the number of options by the end of the year/early 2017. The developer anticipated consultation on options in spring 2017 and a Preferred Route Announcement by summer 2017.

The developer provided an overview of the environment workstream for the project explaining that the assessment approach will broadly follow the requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges. The developer explained the environmental context for the options area including the World Heritage Site (WHS) and other important features e.g. Special Protection Area's (SPA's) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The developer noted that survey work would be commencing in the near future.

The developer asked about the Evidence Plan process. The Inspectorate provided the background to this process and explained the recent developments including experience on recent projects. A general discussion was had regarding the role of the Planning Inspectorate in this process. The developer was pointed towards several real case examples of Evidence Plans and also the Planning Inspectorate's Pre-application Prospectus (see links below). The Inspectorate indicated that they would be keen to remain involved with pre-application discussions that may affect the scope of the assessment.

The developer provided an overview of engagement with key stakeholder groups and the non-statutory consultation that had taken place to date. The developer highlighted that there is on-going dialogue with groups including local authorities, environmental bodies and affected landowners.

The developer noted that they are aware of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) proposal for 450 residential units situated north of the proposed A303 project.

The Inspectorate referred to recent advice notes relevant to the screening, scoping stage and the assessment of cumulative effects (see links below).

Follow up / specific decisions?

It was agreed that further project up-date meetings would be helpful. It was suggested that meetings or teleconferences could usefully be scheduled on a bi-monthly basis.

Triton Knoll Electrical System – EIA Evidence Plan

<http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN020019/2.%20Post-Submission/Application%20Documents/Reports/8.16%20TK%20electrical%20works%20Evidence%20Plan%20April%202015.pdf>

Pre-application prospectus for applicants

<http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/pre-application-service-for-applicants/>

Advice Note - Screening and Scoping

<http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2015/03/Advice-note-7v4.pdf>

Advice Note – Cumulative effects assessment

<http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2015/12/Advice-note-17V4.pdf>