

A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Scheme
Environment Agency response to Examining Authority's (ExA's) Second written questions

19th August 2015

| Development Consent Order | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|---|---|
| Ref: | Respondent | Question | Environment Agency Response |
| Q2.6.11 | Applicant EA | Borrow Pit number 6 (near Dry Drayton) is located within a geologically sensitive area due to the underlying Woburn Sands aquifer. EA requests that the DCO provides a requirement for the EA to retain a role in assessing any design and monitoring information for the borrow pit in this location (should also include the production of a scheme for dewatering to be incorporated within the borrow pit design plans.) Baseline monitoring data is also required for hydrocarbons. The applicant advises that this will be secured through protective provisions to be included in the DCO. Should this be a requirement or a protective provision? | <p>As stated within Issue 3.3 of our Written Representations, we were intending to address this through the detailed design phase (see reference 4.5 of our Statement of Common Ground with HE). Dewatering of excavations is currently exempt from permitting regulations though discharge of contaminated water may require an environmental permit.</p> <p>If the Examining Authority considers that this matter needs to be secured within the DCO, then we would recommend that this come in the form of a requirement. This information required would be in the form of a hydrogeological assessment to identify the impacts to local receptors and the associated risks involved.</p> |
| Q2.6.12 | Applicant EA | Can the EA and the applicant provide an update in relation to EAs request for an Accident Management or Emergency Plan. | As per Issue 3.1 of our Written Representations, we believe that through discussion with the applicant, that this will be addressed through the detailed design phase. This is applicable at the detailed design phase as we discuss the forms of drainage 'shut off' to isolate any potential contaminants and also locations for signage, procedures etc. |

| Environmental Impact Assessment | | | |
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| Ref: | Respondent | Question | Environment Agency Response |
| Q2.8.3 | Applicant EA | How is the applicant responding to requests from EA to change the detailed design of the proposed viaduct across the River Great Ouse and the location of Borrow Pit 7? What would be the impact on the ES of any changes made? | <p>We have recently (11th August 2015) received the revised modelling and FRA section in relation to the crossing of the River Great Ouse. This will be assessed to establish accuracy / validity and impacts to third parties resulting from the installation of the viaduct.</p> <p>Any changes to the detailed design of the viaduct could result in changes to the local hydrology. Depending upon the amendments included, this could increase or decrease flood risk upstream or downstream and affect both depths and velocities. We would need to fully assess any revised proposals to the viaduct engineering which would incorporate the need for the submission of further hydrological modelling.</p> <p>We do not consider there to be sufficient time within the examination programme for the crossing to be redesigned, remodelled and reassessed.</p> |

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| Environmental Impact Assessment | | | |
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| Ref: | Respondent | Question | Environment Agency Response |
| Q2.8.7 | Applicant EA | The DCO would permit the contractor to reduce the headroom of the viaduct across the River Great Ouse to below 3000mm, which is of concern to the EA because of the potential effects on navigation. The EA suggest in their WR (para 2.2.1) (REP2-154) that their concerns could be overcome by a suitable DCO Requirement. What progress has been made towards agreeing wording for an additional requirement? | <p>We have put the following suggested wording to Highways England.</p> <p><i>"No part of the authorised works relating to the Great Ouse shall reduce the width of the channel to less than 12.0 metres or the headroom measured from the normal water retention level (10.05 m AOD) of the Great Ouse to less than 3.0 metres unless the Environment Agency has first given consent in writing."</i></p> <p>We understand that this is agreed in principle by Highways England. Our preference would be for this to be a requirement in the DCO.</p> <p>Although under the protective provisions 'works affecting watercourses' will first require our consent, there are provisions for any refusal of consent to be challenged as being unreasonable.</p> <p>We consider that it is important to agree this prohibition at this stage given the importance of maintaining navigation rights on the River Great Ouse. This wording would be a standard condition on any flood defence consent issued by the Environment Agency under the Water Resources Act 1991.</p> <p>You will note in Ref 2.1 of the Statement of Common Ground that HE have made an alternative proposal to secure this concern. Discussions are still ongoing with the applicant on this point and we will update the Examining Authority on the outcome of these.</p> |

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| Water Issues | | | |
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| Ref: | Respondent | Question | Environment Agency Response |
| Q2.13.1 | Applicant EA | As the 2001 flood event has been said to be the result of blocked culverts and insufficient maintenance, would the scheme increase the number of culverts on the eastern Award Drain? If so, how would the maintenance of the additional culverts be regulated. (REP2-014, para3) | <p>Paragraph 11.2.3 of the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) indicates that a new culvert will be used to convey the Eastern Award Drain under the new A14. Huntingdonshire District Council is responsible for maintaining this watercourse. However, maintenance of the culvert itself would be the responsibility of the owner of the culvert which we presume would be Highways England but they would need to confirm this.</p> <p>As per Issue 1.13 of our written representations, we believe that a maintenance schedule is to be produced by the applicant. We understand that this will be part of the detailed design phase or stipulated within the maintenance contracts.</p> |
| Q2.13.2 | Applicant EA | What are the 'minor outstanding issues' with the applicant referred to by the Environment Agency at the draft DCO Hearing? | <p>This refers to the hydrological issues that we raised through our Written Representations. These relate to issues such as location of soil storage areas, flood compensation areas and hydraulic modelling.</p> <p>The term 'minor outstanding issues' reflected our position that we did not have an 'objection in principle' to the proposal as submitted. Moreover we require amendments to be made in order to make the proposals acceptable. We have received assurances that these issues will be reviewed according to our stated requirements.</p> <p>We consider these matters to be fundamental to the effective delivery of the scheme and the protection of third parties. Should they not be overcome then our position may change.</p> <p>Please note: We are still in the process of receiving and reviewing models for specific watercourses along the route detailing any flood risk impacts as a result of the proposed route. This also includes the revised sections of the FRA pertinent to the respective watercourse.</p> <p>Due to the proposed timing of the submission, we would request that "water" elements of the DCO be addressed later on in the Hearings process in order for us to first obtain and assess all relevant information (and updates).</p> |