

WRITTEN REPRESENTATION

M4 Junctions 3 to 12 Smart Motorway

Our Reference 10031723

Your Reference TRO10019

8 October 2015

- 1 This Written Representation is submitted on behalf of the University of Reading. The University is a major landowner along the A327 corridor to the south of Reading. The interest of the University in the Application relates to both the operational needs of the University itself and also the development of some of its landholdings for residential and business/employment purposes.
- 2 The University has approximately 17000 students and employs about 4000 staff. It has 2 main campuses. Whiteknights Campus to the east of the A327 between Reading and Shinfield and London Road Campus to the south of the A4 London Road on the southern edge of Reading Town Centre. It is an internationally recognised university being ranked in the top 1% worldwide. Both campuses contain commercial development. In particular the Whiteknights Campus houses the world renowned Henley Business School and the Enterprise Centre providing business space for developing innovative businesses with plans to expand provision further in future years.
- 3 The University has major landholdings at Shinfield some of which are surplus to requirements. They are mainly along the A327 corridor immediately south of the M4 Motorway.
- 4 A significant part of the land is included within the South of the M4 Strategic Development Location, as included in Policy CP19 of the adopted Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (adopted on 29 January 2010).
- 5 The University is developing the Thames Valley Science Park at Shinfield on land to the south of and adjoining the M4 Motorway. The Science Park is included as Policy CP16 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy. Floorspace of 55000m² is allocated in the Core

Strategy for the period up to 2026. Planning permission was granted in 2010 by Wokingham Borough Council for the initial phase (18,850m²)(Ref O/2009/1027). It is intended that the Science Park will reach over 70,000m² by 2035. It is expected that occupations of the Science Park will commence in early 2017 and continue until at least the mid 2030s.

- 6 Planning permission was granted by the Secretary of State in October 2012 for residential development of up to 1200 dwellings, 150 units of specialist housing for elderly persons together with a local centre and other ancillary uses (Application reference O/2010/1432 and Appeal reference APP/X0360/A/11/2151409). Implementation is expected to commence in early 2016.
- 7 Planning permission was also granted by the Secretary of State in October 2012 for the Shinfield Eastern Relief Road. (Application reference F/2010/1428 and Appeal reference APP/X0360/A/11/2151413). The Relief Road runs around the north and east of Shinfield and will replace the A327 through Shinfield. It includes a new bridge over the M4 Motorway. The Relief Road is currently under construction with opening scheduled for Summer/Autumn 2016. The timetable for implementing the road has been brought forward from that originally envisaged as a result of a loan from the Homes and Communities Agency. The estimated cost is approximately £30m. It is noted that the Relief Road is not shown on the relevant Works Plan for the Application TRO10019-2.2. (Sheet 7 of 31 Lower Earley). This should be corrected. The Relief Road provides access to the Thames Valley Science Park.
- 8 The University broadly supports the M4 Junctions 3 to 12 Smart Motorway Scheme and agrees with the strategic aims which are set out in paragraph 2.1.3 of Volume 4.1 - Statement of Reasons. Additional capacity on the Motorway is necessary to sustain development in the general area in the medium term future at least. The proposal in the Application which can achieve that additional capacity is welcomed together with the resulting reduced congestion and improved reliability of journeys.
- 9 The University will however need to be satisfied that the strategic aims are being met by the Scheme. This is important to the University for operational reasons for the Campuses, to ensure the commercial viability and attractiveness of the Thames Valley Science Park and to ensure that there is appropriate capacity on the Motorway, including at Junctions 10 and 11, to enable future developments along the A327 corridor and at Shinfield to be delivered.
- 10 Reference to the Chapter 13 of the Environmental Statement (ES)- Effects on All Travellers shows that in assessing driver stress the approach has been to consider the Motorway itself and the roads directly connected to the Junctions. These details are shown on Tables 13.4 and 13.5. The tables do not refer to the A327 corridor and therefore it has to be assumed that the A327 has not been included in the assessments. The A327 is a Strategic Road Corridor and runs from Reading, through Shinfield, Arborfield and Eversley to the A30 to

the south east. It is considered that this is an important omission as there are likely to be implications for the traffic flows on the A327 as a consequence of the Application proposals. The University has invested significant amounts of money in the corridor and indeed is continuing to do so. It does not want to see the benefits of that investment diminished. The assessments do need to include the A327 corridor and hence traffic flow information should be made available for the A327 corridor. It may be that further investment in the corridor is justified in association with the Application proposals for the Scheme which would have overall benefits for the future operation of the network.

- 11 It is also the case that both Junctions 10 and 11 of the Motorway have been improved, at considerable cost, in recent years. The University wants to be assured that the future efficient operation and safety of the Junctions is not affected by the Application proposals. The supporting documents for the Application do not contain any analyses of these matters.
- 12 It is important that further details are made available on the traffic flows which have been used for the assessments which have been reported. The background documents do not appear to include a Transport Assessment, Traffic Impact Report or Modelling Reports.
- 13 It is noted that Deadline 2 requires the submission of Local Impact Reports from Local Authorities and Statements of Common Ground. The University will be reviewing those reports and statements and is likely to make comments on some of these documents by Deadline 3 on 5 November 2015.

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