

Eames, Angus

Subject: FW: Final SoCG with Reading BC
Attachments: DOC.PDF

From: Saunders, Chris [<mailto:Chris.Saunders@reading.gov.uk>]
Sent: 08 October 2015 14:54
To: Tooth, Chris; Butler, Cris
Cc: Stinson, Lynne; Maddocks, Chris; Chris Tooth; M4 J3 to 12 Smart Motorways
Subject: RE: M4 J3-12 Smart Motorway - Issue of draft SoCG with Reading BC

Dear Chris

I have looked through the SoG and looked at our files and the dates and information are correct. I attached a signed copy of the draft for you information.

Kind Regards

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M4 JUNCTIONS 3 TO 12 SMART MOTORWAY

**The M4 Motorway (Junctions 3 to 12)(Smart Motorway)
Development Consent Order 201[]**

Planning Inspectorate Scheme Reference: TR010019

WITHOUT PREJUDICE

STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

between

(1) HIGHWAYS ENGLAND

and

(2) READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

This Statement of Common Ground has been prepared and agreed by (1) Highways England Company Limited and (2) Reading Borough Council.

Signed

[Redacted Signature]

Signed

[Redacted Signature]

on behalf of Highways England

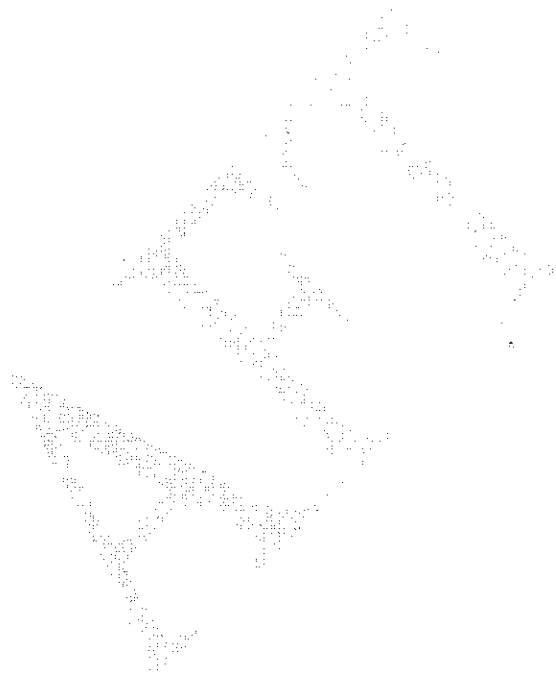
on behalf of Reading Borough Council

Date: 8th October 2015.

Date: 8th October 2015

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1 Introduction

Purpose of Statement of Common Ground

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground ("SoCG") has been prepared in respect of an application ("Application") made by the Highways Agency (which has now become the "Highways England Company Limited", known as "Highways England") to the Secretary of State for Transport ("Secretary of State") for a Development Consent Order ("DCO") under section 37 of the Planning Act 2008 ("PA 2008").
- 1.2 The draft DCO is referred to as The M4 Motorway (Junctions 3 to 12) (Smart Motorway) Development Consent Order 201[*] (the "Order"). The Order would grant powers to improve the M4 motorway ("M4") to a smart motorway between junction 3 (Hayes) in west London and junction 12 (Theale), which is near Reading (the "Scheme").
- 1.3 Guidance on the purpose and possible content of SoCGs is given in paragraphs 58 - 65 of the Department for Communities and Local Government's "Planning Act 2008: Guidance for the examination of applications for development consent" (March 2015).
- 1.4 Paragraph 58 confirms the basic function of SoCGs:

"A statement of common ground is a written statement prepared jointly by the applicant and another party or parties, setting out any matters on which they agree. As well as identifying matters which are not in real dispute, it is also useful if a statement identifies those areas where agreement has not been reached. The statement should include references to show where those matters are dealt with in the written representations or other documentary evidence."

Parties to this Statement of Common Ground

- 1.5 This SoCG has been prepared by (1) Highways England as the Applicant and (2) Reading Borough Council.
- 1.6 The Application was made by the Highways Agency. On 1 April 2015, the Highways Agency became a government-owned Strategic Highways Company, limited by shares, with the Secretary of State as sole shareholder. Highways England is the new company. It is established as the highway authority in England for the strategic road network and has the necessary powers and duties to operate, manage, maintain and enhance the network. Regulatory powers remain with the Secretary of State. The

legislation establishing Highways England made provision for all legal rights and obligations of the Highways Agency, including in respect of the Application, to be conferred upon or assumed by Highways England.

- 1.7 Bracknell Forest Council is the local planning authority and council responsible for the area of Bracknell within the county of Berkshire.

Summary of the Scheme

- 1.8 The M4 is the main strategic route between London and the west of England, and on to South Wales. Major towns and cities along the M4 include London, Reading, Swindon, Bristol, Newport, Cardiff and Swansea.
- 1.9 The M4 between junctions 3 and 12 carries over 130,000 vehicles per day, and more in places. At peak times, traffic flows on many links are close to or exceed the total flow that the link is designed to handle. This causes heavy congestion on the M4, which can lead to unpredictable journey times.
- 1.10 The Scheme will help to relieve congestion by permanently converting the hard shoulder of the M4 to a running lane and using technology to vary speed limits and manage traffic. Signs and signals will be used to inform drivers of conditions on the highway network, when and where variable speed limits are in place, and when lanes are closed.
- 1.11 The Scheme is some 51 km (32 miles) in length and will have a number of principal elements:
- 1.11.1 conversion of the hard shoulder to a permanent running lane and, where no hard shoulder is in place at present, the construction of a new lane. This will mainly take place between junction 4b and junction 8/9;
 - 1.11.2 replacement of overbridge structures where portals are too narrow to accommodate the improved motorway;
 - 1.11.3 extension of underbridges and other structures such as culverts and subways to accommodate the improved motorway;
 - 1.11.4 changes to junctions and slip roads needed to accommodate traffic joining and leaving the improved motorway, and to allow use of the hard shoulder as a running lane, as well as allowing "through junction running" ("TJR");

1.11.5 provision of new gantries and signs to allow the motorway to function as a smart motorway with a variable speed limit, and to provide messages to road users; and

1.11.6 other infrastructure needed for the improved motorway, such as Emergency Refuge Areas ("ERAs"), enhanced communication systems, closed circuit television ("CCTV") and electrical supplies, as well as works to accommodate statutory undertakers' apparatus and other parties who may be affected by the Scheme.

1.12 The works are more particularly described in Part 1 of Schedule 1 of the Draft DCO (Application Document Reference 3.1).

1.13 The Application was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 30 March 2015, and the Planning Inspectorate, on behalf of the Secretary of State, accepted the Application on 27 April 2015.

Structure of this Statement of Common Ground

1.14 This SoCG has been prepared for the purposes of the Examination to be held by the Secretary of State in accordance with PA 2008. In this SoCG, Highways England has provided a summary of its assessment for each issue addressed, as recorded in the Application documentation and subsequent reports.

1.15 Throughout this SoCG the phrase "It is agreed....." is used as a precursor to any point of agreement that has been specifically stated to be agreed between (1) the Applicant and (2) Reading Borough Council. The phrase "It is not agreed...." is used as a precursor to any point that (1) the Applicant and (2) Reading Borough Council, wish to state as clearly not yet agreed. Points that are "not agreed" will be the subject of on-going discussion wherever possible to resolve, or refine, the extent of disagreement between the parties.

1.16 This SoCG considers the items raised by Reading Borough Council in general correspondence on the Application. The SoCG has also been drafted having regard to the list of principal issues set out at Annex B of the Examining Authority's Rule 6 letter dated 7 August 2015. However, only the principal issues of concern to Reading Borough Council are addressed in this SoCG. Any of the principal issues identified which are not specifically referenced in this SoCG are to be taken to be agreed between the parties.

1.17 This SoCG considers the following items:

1.17.1 Land allocations; and

1.17.2 Traffic flows.

1.18 This SoCG considers data and assesses them in respect of the above topics and the methodologies set out in:

1.18.1 The Environmental Statement ("ES") (Application Document Reference 6.1).

1.19 Where items in the ES and/or the accompanying technical reports are agreed, this is stated with the relevant document reference. Where items of data are new or represent an agreed variation presented in a technical report or other document, then a list of those documents is provided in Appendix 1 to this SoCG.

1.20 The assessments include a combination of desk based studies, site investigations and technical assessment work. The ES sets out mitigation and remedial measures where appropriate, concluding with a summary of the residual effects following mitigation. [The mitigation referred to in the ES has been refined and enhanced during the course of the Examination as set out in this SoCG and Highways England's submissions to the Examining Authority.]

2 Overview of Previous Engagement

2.1 A summary of key meetings, workshops and consultation undertaken between (1) Highways England and (2) Reading Borough Council can be found in the following tables:

Table 2.1.1: Pre-application Engagement

Date	Form of Contact	Summary
10 March 2014	Invitation to attend a Preview Public Information Exhibition, to be held on 18 March 2014	Preview Public Information Exhibition as part of initial stakeholder engagement and information exercise
18 March 2014	Preview Public Information Exhibition	Did not attend
9 July 2014	Letter from Highways Agency requesting suitable dates for a pre-application notification meeting to discuss the Scheme proposals	Request for suitable dates when Highways Agency could meet with Reading Borough Council during July and August 2014 to discuss the Scheme proposals and the local planning authority's involvement in the DCO process
8 August 2014	Invitation to attend an Environmental Information Workshop – Scoping (1), to be held on 20 August 2014	Invitation to an information meeting to discuss the EIA Scoping Report
20 August 2014	Environmental Information Workshop – Scoping (1)	Did not attend
1 September 2014	Invitation to attend an Environmental Information Workshop – Scoping (2), to be held on 12 September 2014	Invitation to an information meeting to discuss the EIA Scoping Report
12 September 2014	Environmental Information Workshop – Scoping (2)	Did not attend
18 September 2014	Meeting between Highways Agency and local planning authorities	Information meeting to discuss the Scheme and planning related issues. Representative from Reading Borough Council

Date	Form of Contact	Summary
		attended
3 October 2014	Formal Issue of Draft Statement of Community Consultation for review under Section 47 of the Planning Act 2008	Formal consultation on Draft Statement of Community Consultation. No response received
24 October 2014	Letter from Highways Agency requesting completion of land ownership confirmation questionnaire	Questionnaire to obtain confirmation that the details previously provided regarding the Scheme are still valid and to offer the opportunity to provide any updates
4 November 2014	Response to request for land ownership confirmation questionnaire	Completed questionnaire on request for land ownership details for Reading Borough Council
10 November 2014	Planning Act 2008 Section 47: Notification Letter	Details of the pre-application consultation to be held between 10 November and 21 December 2014
10 November 2014	Planning Act 2008 Section 42: Notice of statutory Pre-application consultation period	Notification of the formal pre-application consultation between 10 November and 21 December 2014 about the Scheme in accordance with Section 42 of the Planning Act 2008. Delivery of the Preliminary Environmental Information Report and Non-Technical Summary
18 November 2014	Public Exhibition Preview Event	Representative from Reading Borough Council attended
3 December 2014	Letter from Reading Borough Council requesting information on cumulative developments	Request for details on relevant developments within 1km of the Scheme
5 December 2014	Email from Reading Borough Council to Highways Agency	Provision of information and links to documents on cumulative developments

Date	Form of Contact	Summary
5 December 2014	Email exchange relating to cumulative development	Review of proposed and allocated sites within the borough
6 January 2015	Invitation to attend an Environmental Information Workshop – Preliminary Environmental Information Report, to be held on 20 January 2015	Invitation to an information meeting to discuss the Preliminary Environmental Information Report
9 January 2015	Letter from Reading Borough Council regarding cumulative development	Confirming no proposed developments within or immediately adjoining the proposed Order limits
20 January 2015	Environmental Information Workshop – Preliminary Environmental Information Report	Did not attend
11 February 2015	Email requesting confirmation on viewpoints proposed for the ES	Clarification requested that the viewpoints selected for the Preliminary Environmental Information Report are acceptable, and therefore can be used for the purposes of the ES. No response received
25 February 2015	Letter from Highways Agency requesting confirmation of Interests	Request for confirmation that the information on Reading Borough Council held by Highways Agency as outlined in the Book of Reference was correct at the time of writing
6 March 2015	Response to request for land ownership confirmation questionnaire	Completed questionnaire on request for land ownership details for Reading Borough Council. Further correspondence followed in this regard to close out queries

Table 2.1.2: Post-application Engagement

Date	Form of Contact	Summary
27 April 2015	Email from Reading Borough Council to	Confirmation from Reading Borough Council that the applicant has

Date	Form of Contact	Summary
	Highways England	fulfilled the duties in accordance with the requirements of Section 42, 47 and 48 of the Planning Act 2008
5 May 2015	Email requesting access for ecological surveys	Access request for ecology surveys within Reading Borough Council land
15 May 2015	Repeat email requesting access for ecological surveys (originally requested 5 May 2015)	Access request for ecology surveys within Reading Borough Council land. No response received
27 May 2015	Email from Highways England providing preview of Section 56 notice template to landowners	Copy of the Section 56 letter sent to the relevant local planning authorities for information and advising where application documents are available for inspection
28 May 2015	Section 56 notice of acceptance of an application for a Development Consent Order	Copy of the Section 56 letter sent to the relevant local planning authorities for information
8 June 2015	Letter from Highways England regarding Freehold Land Interests	Requesting confirmation whether Reading Borough Council is willing to enter into negotiating terms relating to the purchase of land
11 June 2015	Email request from Reading Borough Council to Highways England	Request for reissue of Section 56 notice. Emailed electronic copy and posted additional copy on 12 June 2015
15 July 2015	Email enquiry from Highways England to Reading Borough Council to confirm if any further traffic information is required	Request to establish if further information is required to progress communication in relation to the Scheme and in reaching a Statement of Common Ground
21 July 2015	Email from Reading Borough Council to Highways England relating to local road	Request for modelling reports or summary of modelling undertaken for the Scheme, particularly

Date	Form of Contact	Summary
	impact information	local road impacts
22 July 2015	Email request from Reading Borough Council for Section 56 notice	Request for reissue of Section 56 notice. Emailed electronic copy on 23 July 2015
28 July 2015	Email from Highways England to Reading Borough Council in response to email of 21 July 2015	Offered copy of Traffic Forecasting Report, plots relating to local road network and suggested dates for meeting in August 2015. Declined offer of meeting and will await receipt of traffic data plots
29 July 2015	Letter from Highways England regarding Leasehold land interests	Requesting confirmation whether Reading Borough Council is willing to enter into negotiating terms relating to the purchase of land
10 August 2015	Email from Highways England providing traffic data plots following email of 28 July 2015	Traffic data plots detailed in Appendix 1 to this SoCG were provided to Reading Borough Council on 10 August 2015. A request for a meeting was also made. Reading Borough Council advised that a decision on the need for a meeting would be taken following a review of the traffic data plots

2.2 It is agreed that this is an accurate record of the key meetings, workshops and consultation undertaken between (1) Highways England and (2) Reading Borough Council, in relation to the issues addressed in this SoCG.

3 Matters Agreed

3.1 Land Allocations

3.2 It is agreed that the land allocations (SA2a and SA2b) within Reading Borough Council have been included in the assessment of cumulative and in-combination impacts of the Scheme as reported in Chapter 16 and Appendices 16.1 and 16.2 of the ES (Application Document References 6.1 and 6.3 respectively).

3.3 DCO Requirements

3.4 Reading Borough Council has reviewed the draft requirements in Schedule 2 to the draft DCO and agrees that they are appropriate to secure the mitigation and other matters to be addressed in that Schedule.

4 Matters Not Agreed

4.1 The following matters are not yet agreed and are subject to on-going discussion between Highways England and Reading Borough Council.

4.2 Traffic Flows

4.3 Reading Borough Council is seeking clarification of the predicted traffic flow changes on the local road network from the Scheme. As detailed in Appendix 1 to this SoCG, a plan indicating the forecast traffic flow changes with and without the Scheme was provided to Reading Borough Council on 10 August 2015 and is currently being reviewed by Reading Borough Council. These show that over a typical weekday there will be slight reductions (approximately 1%) in traffic approaching Reading on the A4 and A329 and an increase of 4% in traffic using the A33 south of Reading towards the M4.

Appendix 1: Supplementary Technical information

Date	Form of Document	Summary
10 August 2015	Traffic Flow Data	Forecast traffic flows for the Opening Year (2022), both with and without the Scheme for each of four modelled time periods plus Annual Average Daily Traffic and Average Annual Weekly Traffic values

