

Application for Development Consent for  
A19 Downhill Lane Junction Improvement  
Case Ref: TR010024

## **Examining Authority's Note of Unaccompanied Site Inspection on Monday 12 August 2019**

### **Background**

As Examining Authority (ExA) I undertook my first Unaccompanied Site Inspection to support my examination of an application for development consent for the proposed A19 Downhill Lane Junction Improvement (the Application) on 12 August 2019. The application has been made by Highways England (the Applicant).

In the interests of efficiency, I commenced my unaccompanied inspections following my appointment but before the Preliminary Meeting (PM) which was held on 13 August 2019.

Inspections were undertaken from publicly accessible land including highways and public rights of way. No access to private land was sought and therefore I was able to undertake the inspection on an unaccompanied basis.

The inspections were undertaken to view the proposed Application site as shown on the Land Plans [APP-007]<sup>1</sup>, Works Plans [APP-008] and Engineering Drawings and Sections [APP-010] submitted with the Application. Locations within the setting of the development proposal were also inspected along with the relationship between the nearby major developments namely:

- the A19 Testo's Junction Improvement Scheme; and
- the International Advanced Manufacturing Park (IAMP).

I undertook the inspection alone. I did not encounter any interested parties or other persons during my inspection. Weather conditions were reasonable, being cloudy and dry. Visibility was good at all times. My inspection was undertaken by car and on foot.

The purpose of this note is:

- to inform the Applicant and interested parties (IPs) involved in the Examination of actions already taken by the ExA; and
- to enable the Applicant and IPs to consider which, if any, additional sites the ExA might need to inspect.

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<sup>1</sup> The Application documents and other Examination documents are available in the Examination Library at the project website: <http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/document/TR010024>. All Examination documents are provided with a unique identification number for referencing purposes, shown in square brackets [ ].

Further site inspections will be required. The site inspection programme was discussed at the PM held on Tuesday 13 August 2019. The Applicant and IPs were provided with an opportunity to provide comments to the ExA on the approach that I should take to site inspections and to nominate site inspection locations including to propose inspections of private land on an accompanied basis. However, before providing comments on the need for and nominations about locations for additional site inspections, the Applicant and IPs are requested to review the actions recorded in this note.

Before agreeing to any additional site inspections at particular locations, I will consider the degree to which it is necessary to visit a site that has been nominated for an inspection to inform the ExA about the application. I may decide not to visit nominated locations where I have already visited the location or I consider that it is not necessary to see the features to be observed there.

Further site inspection notes will be published following further site visits.

### **Particulars of the Inspection**

The purpose of the visit was for me as ExA to become familiar with the Application site and surrounds. My visit commenced at approximately 7.30am and was completed by approximately 12.00 noon.

I began my inspection at the Clarion Hotel Boldon and drove along Abingdon Way to join the A184 Newcastle Way and the A19 southbound leaving at the Downhill Lane Junction. In doing so I took note of the volume of early morning traffic and the traffic management arrangements in place associated with the Testo's Junction Improvement Scheme. I continued on the A1290 southbound, passing the IAMP One site and West Moor Farm, turning left into Cherry Blossom Way and right into Nissan Way, noting in passing the wind turbines within the vicinity of Hylton Plantation. In the vicinity of the Turbine Trade Park I noted the Washington Business Centre, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, and Gateshead Future Technology Centre among other occupiers. From there I drove along the A1231 Sunderland Highway turning into Castletown and visiting Hylton Castle and Hylton Red House. I observed community facilities in Hylton Castle and drove along Washington Road and Ferryboat Lane noting commercial properties in the Sunrise Enterprise Park. I noted the presence of a substantial band of vegetation on the western side of Ferryboat Lane and the location of the Noise Action Planning Important Area 6637 (Figure 12.1 of the Environmental Statement (ES) [APP-028]).

In driving around Town End Farm and Hylton Castle I took account of the location of local community facilities including schools (Town End Academy), shops and other services as well as sensitive receptors identified in the ES in terms of the air quality assessment (Figure 6.2 of the ES [APP-023]). This included properties on Boston Crescent, Baltimore Avenue and Boston Street. In Hylton, I took note of the general location

of Local Wildlife Sites and the Hylton Castle Cutting SSSI (Figure 9.1 of the ES [APP-026]). I also noted the substantial band of vegetation to the west of Baltimore Avenue.

From Washington Road I travelled eastwards along Downhill Lane and the A184 taking note of the character of West Boldon and East Boldon. On Downhill Lane I noted the character of the road, junction layouts at each end and the elevated position of the road to the northern end offering views back towards the A19. I then returned to Town End Farm via Hylton Lane, where I took note of the community facilities.

Returning to the application site via Washington Road I took note of the general extent of land being sought to be acquired permanently as well as the land to be acquired temporarily, particularly in the vicinity of Town End Farm.

I observed the extent of the Nissan Motor Manufacturing Plant and its extensive servicing and parking areas as well as the Gateshead College Skills Academy. In the vicinity of Washington Road West and Follingsby Lane South I noted a number of features including the North East Aircraft Museum, the footbridge across the A19 at the end of Washington Road, the Three Horse Shoes Public House (now Rustica), residential properties (Unsworth Cottages and The Chalet) and construction worksites. I also noted the location of the proposed NMU crossing on the A1290 and the general areas of proposed land acquisition / temporary use to the west of the A19.

To the west of the A1290 I observed the construction of IAMP One including the closure of Follingsby Lane. From Downhill Lane West and Follingsby Lane I noted the temporary access road to North Moor Farm, and other farm buildings including Hylton Bridge Farm and Hylton Grove Farm. I drove further west along Follingsby Lane noting the location of other farm buildings, the site of the Follingsby Max development and the Follingsby Park business area.

Returning to West Pastures, I drove north, again noting farm buildings in the distance, the location of the travellers' site and the location of the A19 Testo's Junction Improvement Scheme site compound. I continued westbound on the A184 as far as the junction with the A194(M) noting the general location of Scot's House and other listed buildings, (Figure 7.1 of the ES [APP-024]) before returning to the Testo's roundabout.

Further afield I also visited Sulgrave and the Bentall Business Park from my journey along the A1290 as well as driving to the Penschaw Memorial where I observed the wider context of the application site.

My visit finished with a drive along the A19 northwards from its junction with the A183 to the exit after the Testo's junction, returning to the Clarion Hotel via Abingdon Way and the Boldon Business Park.

## **Conclusion**

I have viewed the application site from numerous public vantage points from all directions. I have familiarised myself with the site's location and its context. Based on my visit I do not consider it necessary to visit the locations identified again, unless specifically requested to do so. In such a case I consider that a visit would only be to view specific identified features.

Kevin Gleeson  
Examining Authority