

Application by Highways England for an Order granting Development Consent for the A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down

Examining Authority's Note of Unaccompanied Site Inspection on Wednesday 13 March 2019

Background

1. As the Examining Authority (ExA) we undertook our first Unaccompanied Site Inspection (USI) on 13 March 2019. The purpose was to support our examination of an application for development consent for the proposed construction of a highway. The application has been made by Highways England (the Applicant).
2. In the interests of efficiency, we carried out this USI following our appointment but before the Preliminary Meeting (PM) which is to be held on 2 April 2019.
3. The USI was primarily undertaken from publicly accessible land including highways and public rights of way. We did visit Stonehenge and the Visitor Centre. No other access to private land, including that forming part of the application site, was sought and therefore we were able to undertake the inspection on an unaccompanied basis.
4. We undertook the inspection on our own accompanied only by members of the Planning Inspectorate Case Team. We did not discuss the application with Interested Parties (IP) or other persons during our inspection. However, before starting the inspection, we did visit Salisbury Racecourse, Netherhampton which is the venue for the PM.
5. Weather conditions were windy but reasonable, being mostly dry with light showers around mid-morning. Visibility was acceptable at all times. Our Inspection was primarily undertaken by car, but we did walk several sections of the route or on nearby land.
6. The purpose of this note is:
 - to inform the Applicant, IPs and other persons 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.
7. Further site inspections will be required. Before agreeing to any additional site inspections at particular locations, we 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. We may decide not to visit nominated locations where we have already visited the location, or we consider that it is not necessary to see the features to be observed there.
8. The date for the Accompanied Site Inspection (ASI) will be included in the ExA's Examination Timetable which will be appended to the Rule 8 letter issued after the PM. Arrangements for the ASI will be published in due course.



9. Further notes of USIs will be published following all further visits to the site.

Particulars of the site inspection

10. The purpose of the visit was for us as the ExA to become familiar with the application site and surrounding area. Our USI commenced at approximately 9.45am and was completed by approximately 4.00pm.
11. We began our inspection by arriving along the A303 from the west and noted the western extent of the proposed Order limits. We stopped at Byway SLAN3 close to Yarnbury Camp/Castle. We then continued to head east on the A303 and then north on the B3083. We stopped a little to the north of the A303 and by the access to Cherry Lodge; walking part of the B3083.
12. We then headed into Winterbourne Stoke parking at the Bell Inn. We walked north along the footpath (Byway WST04) through Manor Farm to the proposed location for Work No. 1B. We then continued heading east along the A303, at the Long Barrow Roundabout we headed north along the A360, stopping close to the Winterbourne Stoke Barrow Group. We continued north, stopping again at Rollestone Cross. We headed back stopping at the Stonehenge Visitor Centre; visiting Stonehenge.
13. We headed south again, continuing along the A360 south of the A303 driving to the southern extent of the proposed Order limits. We returned to Longbarrow Roundabout, stopping just to the south of it, then continued east on the A303 stopping in a layby close to the Winterbourne Stoke Barrow Group.
14. We continued along the A303 to Countess Junction, then heading south into Amesbury stopping first close to the entrance gates of Amesbury Abbey and Abbey Mews Apartments and St Mary and St Melor Church. We headed along Stonehenge Road, stopping close to Park Farm and then walked north west along this road to the A303.
15. We returned to the Countess Junction, stopping close to the Travelodge. We walked the area to the north and east of the roundabout. We then headed north on the A345 and then entered Fargo Road, stopping at Woodhenge and walked the surrounding area. We then left the area of the application site.

Conclusion

16. We have now familiarised ourselves with the route of the Proposed Development, existing roads and the surrounding area, including the proximity of the various settlements in its vicinity. Further USIs will take place during the Examination.

Wendy McKay

Lead Member of the Panel of Examining Inspectors