



Meeting note

Project name	A2 Bean and Ebbsfleet Junctions Improvements
File reference	TR010028
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	11 April 2018
Meeting with	Highways England
Venue	Temple Quay House, Bristol
Attendees	The Planning Inspectorate Susannah Guest – Infrastructure Planning Lead Helen Lancaster - Senior EIA and Land Rights Advisor James Bunten – Case Officer Paige Hall – National Infrastructure apprentice The Applicant Brian Gash – Senior Project Manager, Highways England (HE) Hugh Coakley – PM team, HE John Pingstone – DCO and Statutory Processes Team, HE Joanne Farrar – DCO Lead, Atkins Liz Brown – Environmental Lead, Atkins Craig Twyman – Design Lead, Atkins
Meeting objectives	Project update and consultation feedback meeting
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed and advice given

The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) advised that a note of the meeting would be taken and published on its website in accordance with section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 (the PA2008). Any advice given under section 51 would not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) could rely.

Project outline and update

The Applicant provided an overview of the Scheme, which aims to increase capacity, efficiency and safety to the existing Bean and Ebbsfleet junctions located on the A2, near Dartford. The Applicant outlined the surrounding area, identifying nearby developments and residential areas, but noted that it was predominantly rural to the south of the A2 with large areas of farmland and woodland prominent particularly in the vicinity of Bean Junction and Bean Triangle.

The Inspectorate queried the development located in the north-west of the Ebbsfleet junction. The Applicant identified the new housing areas being developed as part of Ebbsfleet Garden City and noted a separate proposed development to the east of the Ebbsfleet Junction that would form part of the Ebbsfleet garden village. A sub-station located to the west of the Ebbsfleet junction, due to open in 2019, was briefly discussed;



the Applicant later advised that the substation and the Highways England Scheme share land boundaries.

The Applicant explained how the design has evolved from the layout proposed at Preferred Route Announcement in August 2017. Following feedback from residents and local authorities, the design is being modified at Bean Junction to reinstate the B255 to A296 slip road, and at Ebbsfleet Junction to adjust the layout of the eastbound entry slip road. The Applicant noted that gantry locations and cycle/ pedestrian routes were still under review.

The Inspectorate queried the access from the south for cyclists using for the Bean junction. The Applicant noted the proposed route of the cycle path and explained that the scheme aimed to improve access for both cyclists and pedestrians due to the existing amenities located at the north of the junction.

The Applicant noted that the scheme proposed to use and supplement the drainage strategies already in place.

EIA update

The Applicant outlined the environmental context of the site, noting receptors such as areas of ancient woodland, scheduled monuments and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). At Ebbsfleet Junction, the Applicant highlighted the nearby Ebbsfleet Marshes Local Wildlife Site and a Roman settlement located to the south of the A2. The Applicant has been advised by the local authority that the area to the north of Ebbsfleet Junction is also of schedulable quality and an area is proposed for archaeological survey within the red line boundary in consultation with Kent CC.

The Applicant confirmed that the majority of the survey work for its Environmental Statement (ES) had been completed in 2017 but further surveys were required to complete and update existing data. The Inspectorate recommended that the survey work for its assessment within the ES is complete at submission and queried if the Applicant had used shared survey work for any of its assessment. The Applicant confirmed it had compiled its own survey work.

The Applicant stated that it had moved the alignment of the Bean South Roundabout (BSR) further to the east to reduce potential noise and air quality effects on the row of dwellings known as Hope Cottages.

The Applicant noted that it proposed to undertake new planting to extend and enhance the area of woodland to the south-east of the BSR to provide appropriate mitigation for the Scheme. The Applicant confirmed this area is owned by the Crown Estate, when queried by the Inspectorate, and noted ongoing work to provide mitigation to likely sensitive areas.

The Applicant confirmed that the red line boundary (RLB) did not encroach on the ancient woodland located to the south-east of the BSR. The Inspectorate asked whether the RLB was the worst-case scenario. The Applicant stated that it was and noted that due to the uncertainty of the gantry locations, an 'island' RLB was currently unlikely.



There was brief discussion regarding the translocation of the colony of man orchids that had been identified in the Applicant's Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR). The Applicant advised it was reviewing the responses to the PEIR consultation with regards to the appropriate methodology and noted it would be fully assessed within the ES.

The Applicant provided an update on the ongoing dialogue with the key environmental Statutory Consultees such as Natural England (NE) and Forestry Commission. The Inspectorate queried the dialogue with Kent County Council with regards to heritage methodology. The Applicant acknowledged ongoing discussions regarding its strategy for mitigating potential effects on the Roman settlement and noted that that KCC had requested additional information that has been included in a desk based assessment.

The Inspectorate questioned whether the Scheme is likely to increase air quality effects on nearby receptors. The Applicant stated that it was still conducting its traffic modelling and noted that the Scheme may help reduce effects on air quality as one of the main objectives was to increase efficiency. The Applicant noted that the Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report concluded that the Scheme would not result in significant effects on European sites within the study area and that it would be engaging with NE regarding air quality once the traffic modelling had been completed to confirm that this is still the case.

Consultation Update

The Applicant provided a brief update on its Statutory Consultation, which ran from 21 February to 4 April 2018, and identified the relevant local authorities, key Statutory Consultees and interest groups.

The Applicant acknowledged additional persons with land interests who had been given an extended deadline of 16 April 2018 to respond. The Inspectorate queried whether the additional persons were located together or spread out. The Applicant confirmed the latter.

The Applicant acknowledged that other nearby schemes conducting consultation – Lower Thames Crossing and London Resort – may have affected the level of response that was received. The Inspectorate queried whether there were any commitments outlined in its Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) which had not been honoured. The Applicant confirmed it conducted its s47 consultation fully in line with its SoCC.

The Inspectorate queried whether the Applicant planned any further, targeted consultation or whether the RLB was likely to change. The Applicant confirmed that it was unlikely.

The Applicant provided a brief funding update.

Interrelationship with other NSIPs

The Scheme's interrelationship with London Resort and Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) was discussed. The Applicant confirmed that it hadn't included London Resort in its traffic modelling or proposed methodology for cumulative effects assessment as the two schemes are mutually exclusive. The Inspectorate expressed concern about the omission



of the London Resort from the cumulative effects assessment and noted that one of the tests for Acceptance was the submission of an adequate ES.

The Inspectorate acknowledged the difficulty of undertaking the cumulative effects assessment and drew the Applicant's attention to the advice in the Planning Inspectorate's Advice note seventeen¹ on how a cumulative effects assessment can attach different levels of certainty to other projects, depending on their status within the planning process. The Inspectorate advised that if the Applicant was relying on the 'mutually exclusive' argument that justification should be provided to support this.

The Applicant queried what the trigger would be for the Scheme to be withdrawn should the London Resorts project come forward and how a legally robust assurance could be provided that this would happen.

The Applicant explained the LTC proposed route in relation to the scheme and highlighted some of the potential effects.

Milestone dates

The Applicant highlighted the key milestone dates required to meet the first Road Investment Strategy (RIS1) start of construction date of March 2020. The Applicant provided an anticipated submission date of autumn 2018. The Inspectorate highlighted that various other Highways England schemes were working to the same deadline.

The Inspectorate queried when the submission of draft documents would be likely. The Applicant stated that it would contact the Inspectorate with regards to an anticipated date of submission in due course but noted some documents may be mature enough to submit sooner.

The Inspectorate explained its timescales for issuing feedback on draft documents and advised that a quicker turn around could be accommodated if an accurate time of submission was provided in advance. The Inspectorate requested an update on the status on draft documents in four to five weeks.

The Applicant confirmed the appointment of Burges Salmon as their legal representation for the scheme.

The Applicant's attention was drawn to the latest example documents published to the Planning Inspectorate's website: National Grid's ['Guide to the application'](#) and ['Statement of Commonality'](#). All applicants were being advised to prepare equivalent documents as part of their applications for development consent.

Specific decisions/ follow-up required?

The following actions were agreed:

- The Applicant agreed to contact the Inspectorate in four to five weeks to provide an update on draft document submission.
- It was agreed to have regular contact going forward.

¹

Advice note seventeen: Cumulative effects assessment relevant to nationally significant infrastructure projects