



Application by Highways England for the M25 Junction 28 improvement scheme

Case Reference: TR010029

Examining Authority's Note of an Unaccompanied Site Inspection 1¹

The Examining Authority (the ExA) undertook an Unaccompanied Site Inspection 1 (USI1) on Wednesday 17 February 2021. The purpose of the USI was to support the Examination of an application for development consent for proposed improvements to the M25 junction 28 (the application).

A significant proportion of the time taken to carry out the USI1 was spent viewing affected areas from publicly accessible land. The ExA did, however, receive permission in advance of their visit to enter land at the Gardens of Peace Muslim Cemetery (Garden of Peace) site, Grove Farm and Maylands Golf Course. Inspections carried out at these sites remained unaccompanied once access was granted.

The USI1 was undertaken in order to view the areas of proposed improvement works, the existing road network, surrounding properties and environment.

It is not anticipated that further USIs will take place during the Examination.

Particulars of the Site Inspection

The USI1 was undertaken by both members of the ExA. There were no other persons in attendance.

The USI1 was undertaken by foot and by car. Weather conditions were overcast with a westerly wind and occasional light drizzle. The air temperature was around 9 degrees Celsius. Weather conditions allowed for long range views to be visible at all times.

Inspections commenced at approximately 08:45 and finished at 14:00. A list of the locations visited is attached in Annex A.

¹ Please note that in line with the Government Guidelines at the time of this note that social distancing was maintained throughout the Unaccompanied Site Inspection.

Annex A

Gardens of Peace

The ExA began their site inspections at the Garden of Peace. This site is currently undergoing enabling works in preparation for the development of the site as a cemetery for members of the Muslim community. The ExA's visit to this site was pre-arranged because the site is private land. As the site is both private land and a construction site we were met by a site foreman who granted access to the site and pointed out markers on site showing the location of the existing gas main under the Gardens of Peace site before leaving the ExA to continue the site visit unaccompanied. The ExA was also able to observe the Putwell Bridge Travellers site from the Gardens of Peace site.

Putwell Bridge Farm entrance

After leaving the Gardens of Peace site, the ExA walked Eastwards along the A12 to the j28 roundabout, stopping to observe the area from the entrance to Putwell Bridge Farm.

Grove Farm

The ExA walked clockwise around the j28 roundabout, crossing over the A12 and on to Grove Farm. Only the route used to exit Grove Farm is safely accessible by foot, so the ExA entered the Farm by this roadway. The ExA was met just beyond the security gate by Mrs Jones who confirmed that we were able to safely access all areas of their property. The ExA noted the existing residential buildings on site and the other usage of the site. The ExA walked anticlockwise around the perimeter of the Grove Farm landholding, observing the areas where the proposed loop road connecting the M25 northbound to the A12 eastbound would enter the site; the approximate locations of proposed pond structures; the locations of proposed bridge structures; the locations of existing electrical cables, pylons and poles; the existing route of the Weald Brook and Ingrebourne River and the location and route of the realigned A12 eastbound off-slip.

Maylands Golf Course

The ExA next walked westwards along the A12 to Maylands Golf Course. The ExA was able to observe the long views eastwards towards the M25 from the access road to the golf course. The ExA walked along the length of the first hole towards the second hole to observe the existing location and playing direction. We ventured into the land to the west to observe the location of and proximity of the proposed development to the golf course. We then observed and noted the proposed realignment of the second hole as suggested by the applicant, noting again the playing direction towards the Weald Brook and M25, the land form and existence of a pond, and the suggested route back towards the third hole. The ExA then walked to the third hole and back to the clubhouse.

Woodstock Avenue and Kenilworth Avenue

The ExA continued on foot westwards along the A12 from Maylands Golf Course to the junctions of Woodstock Avenue and Kenilworth Avenue with the A12 and observed the relationship between each junction and the eastbound carriageway of the A12.

Gallows Corner

The ExA then drove west along the A12 to the junction with Gubbins Lane, drove southwards down Gubbins Lane and then continued west along Squirrels Heath Road to the junction with the A127, noting the intersections as we went. The ExA continued along the A127 back towards the Gallows Corner junction where we stopped in order to more closely observe the junction on foot.

Nags Head Lane Bridge over M25

The ExA next drove eastwards along the A12, returning to the junction with Gubbins Lane and again drove along Gubbins Lane to the junction with Squirrels Heath Road. This time the ExA drove eastwards along Squirrels Heath Road towards the M25, turning onto Nags Head Lane and stopping to observe the Nags Head Lane bridge over the M25 on foot.

Brook Street

Finally, the ExA continued to drive along Nags Head Lane to the junction with Brook Street where we turned westwards to return in the direction of the M25. The ExA stopped to observe the junction, traffic and noise levels, evidence of flooding and pedestrian connectivity with Brook street and the j28 roundabout, the petrol station and garden centre immediately adjacent to the junction. We then proceeded along Brook Street to the Wigley Bush Lane bridge over the A12, where the ExA was able to look westwards towards the M25.