



Application by Highways England for M25 Junction 28 improvement scheme

Case Reference: TR010029

Examining Authority's Note of an Unaccompanied Site Inspection 2¹

The Examining Authority (the ExA) undertook an Unaccompanied Site Inspection 2 (USI2) on Friday 4 June 2021. The purpose of the USI2 was to support the Examination of an application for development consent for proposed improvements to the M25 junction 28 (the Proposed Development). This is the second USI which the ExA has carried out, the first taking place on Wednesday 17 February 2021; the note can be found in the Examination Library reference [EV-007].

A significant proportion of the time taken to carry out the USI2 was spent viewing affected areas from publicly accessible land. The ExA did, however, receive permission in advance of their visit to enter land at Grove Farm. Inspections carried on site remained unaccompanied once access was granted.

The USI2 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 Unaccompanied Site Inspections will take place during the Examination.

Particulars of the Site Inspection

The USI2 was undertaken by both members of the ExA. There were no other persons in attendance.

The USI2 was undertaken on foot. It was raining throughout the duration of the Site Inspection, with intensity ranging from light drizzle to heavy rain. The air temperature was around 15 degrees Celsius. Weather conditions allowed for long range views to be visible at all times.

Inspections commenced at approximately 09:45 and finished at 11:30. 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

M25 junction 28 roundabout

The ExA began its site inspection on the westbound carriageway of the A12, adjacent to the Muslim Cemetery, Gardens of Peace site. From here, the ExA walked eastwards towards the M25 observing long range views across the A12 towards the M25 and Grove Farm. The ExA walked anti-clockwise around the j28 roundabout observing the approximate locations of the non-motorised user (NMU) route and crossing locations which are proposed to accommodate these users.

Grove Farm

The ExA then walked clockwise around the j28 roundabout to the junction with the A12 off-slip and from there on to the existing site egress from Grove Farm. The ExA spent some time in this location. In light of the Applicant's representations at Issue Specific Hearing 3 held on Wednesday 12 May 2021 [EV-043], their written submissions at Deadline 7 [REP7-019] and the representations of Mr & Mrs Jones of Grove Farm [REP7-043], the ExA wished to again understand the human perception of the levels of noise experienced at the Grove Farm site and the farmhouse itself, identifying noise from the M25 and the existing A12 off slip roads. The ExA also wished to identify the likely visual effects and proposed visual screen mitigation proposed by Change Request No.8 [REP7-002, REP7-029 and REP7-030] should it be accepted into the Examination. The ExA introduced itself to Mrs Jones and was given permission to view the area for the Proposed Development from her garden, at no point were the merits of the case discussed. The ExA also noted the approximate location of the proposed altered egress route from Grove Farm which is the subject of Change Request No. 8.

A12 pedestrian crossing underpass

The ExA then walked westwards along the A12, passing Woodstock Avenue and Kenilworth Avenue and arrived at the pedestrian underpass crossing below the A12. The ExA took some time to observe the accessibility of the underpass for both pedestrians and cyclists, its general condition, the lighting levels and cleanliness before concluding the site inspection.