



## Meeting note

<b>File reference</b>	M25 J10 and J28 Schemes
<b>Status</b>	<b>Final</b>
<b>Author</b>	Robert Ranger
<b>Date</b>	14 September 2017
<b>Meeting with</b>	Highways England (HE)
<b>Venue</b>	Temple Quay House
<b>Attendees</b>	Highways England  Graham Bown (Atkins Project Manager J10) Hugh Coakley (HE Project Manager J10) Nicholas Coombes (HE DCO manager) Pete George (Atkins Project Manager J28) Clare Gibbons (Atkins DCO lead J28) Piotr Grabowiecki (HE Project Manager J28) John Rowland (HE senior project manager) Jackie Watson (Atkins DCO lead J10) Neil Watson (Atkins environment lead)  The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate)  Gail Boyle (EIA and Land Rights Advisor) Gareth Leigh (Infrastructure Planning Lead) Robert Ranger (Case Manager)
<b>Meeting objectives</b>	Inception Meeting for M25 schemes
<b>Circulation</b>	All

### Summary of key points discussed and advice given:

The Planning Inspectorate explained the duties placed upon it under section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended) (the PA2008). A note of the meeting would be taken recording the key points discussed and any advice issued by the Planning Inspectorate. The note would be published on the Planning Inspectorate's website. Any advice issued by the Planning Inspectorate would not constitute legal advice upon which the Applicant, or others, could rely.

## **M25 Junction 28**

HE introduced the proposals. They explained that the M25 Junction 28 scheme is in the North East quadrant of the M25, and lies between the London Borough of Havering and Brentwood Borough Council.

It is sited in a largely rural environment. The neighbouring farm, Grove Farm, is largely fallow and hosts several small businesses and a residential property. There is a deer breeding ground to the north of the scheme, and two watercourses run close to the proposed scheme. It is close to a golf course.

The junction is a typical three-tier junction, with all movements via a roundabout which is signal controlled except on the A1023. The junction hosts 7500 vehicle movements per hour, which is close to capacity, with a growth of 30% by 2037 anticipated.

There is a footpath that crosses the junction exits at level between Havering and Brentwood.

The junction was identified for improvement to address congestion and accommodate future growth. There is a high incidence of accidents, and although they are mostly of low severity the resilience of the junction is poor and they can cause the junction to close.

The upgrade of the junction between the M25 and A12, potentially to include a right-turn lane, was included in the Road Investment Strategy.

The scheme falls within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA); covering the London Borough of Havering and Brentwood Borough Council has declared an AQMA for the eastern half of the junction and another for Brook Street Roundabout. The scheme is also designed to protect and improve conditions for non-motorised users.

HE continued that the scheme is constrained by a BPA pipeline carrying petroleum, overhead pylons, the Great Eastern railway line running parallel to the A12 to the south, and the complex levels of the site which amount to a design constraint.

There is a listed building to the east, the Nags Head Inn.

A Preferred Route Announcement (PRA) was made in August 2017. HE anticipate statutory consultation between January and February 2018, with submission of a Development Consent Order (DCO) application in July or early August 2018. The scheme is proposed to begin works in March to April 2020.

HE also anticipate submission of a scoping request to the Inspectorate in October 2017, in order to prepare Preliminary Environmental Information by January 2018.

The Inspectorate advised that an updated advice note on scoping (Advice Note 7) is being prepared, and that applicants are asked to submit a shape file 10 working days before submitting a EIA scoping request. The Inspectorate will also request further information from the applicant so that a page for the project on the National Infrastructure Portal website can be set up.

HE gave a presentation of scheme options. Option selection was informed particularly by considerations of the assessments against achieving the scheme objectives, compliance with design standards, operational safety along with environmental considerations and affordability. The option selection has also considered feedback received during the non-statutory consultation. The preferred options emerged as a cloverleaf to the north west of the junction, which reduced construction impacts and avoided ancient woodland to the north east. The announced preferred option is a dual lane loop around Grove Farm.

HE explained that planning considerations included the development of green belt land, the Crossrail safeguarding area to the south of the scheme, interactions with Lower Thames Crossing and other improvements on the A12, a proposed burial site to the south and housing allocations in the Brentwood draft Local Plan.

HE further explained that environmental considerations included the three previously mentioned AQMAs, listed buildings, a number of noise important areas, a former landfill site to the north east, two waterbodies, ancient woodland, potential for presence of protected species, two registered parks and local nature reserves. Currently, HE does not anticipate any significant effects on AQMAs or on the noise sensitive areas, and that there is unlikely to be any implications in terms of Water Framework Directive compliance. Investigation works connected with the former landfill site are continuing.

HE confirmed that the scheme will include the acquisition of land and discussions are ongoing to acquire as much of the land as possible by agreement. Key parties likely to be affected include Grove Farm and the Maylands Golf Course. HE are also in discussions with Key Stakeholders, including host lower and upper tier authorities.

The Inspectorate advised that the applicant should consider any possible interactions between this scheme and the Lower Thames Crossing, other improvements on the A12, and the M25 Smart Motorway scheme.

## **M25 Junction 10**

HE introduced the M25 Junction 10 scheme. The junction lies on the south west quadrant of the M25, on the A3 which serves the ports at Portsmouth. The junction causes considerable congestion at peak times. The Painshill Interchange to the north of the junction is also included in the scheme.

The junction is a signal controlled roundabout, hosting approximately 7,600 movements an hour at peak times.

The scheme was identified for improvements to address safety; the junction gives rise to the highest number of casualties (mainly slight injuries) in the South East. The junction is heavily used, with over 48,000 vehicles entering the roundabout from the A3 and a further 48,000 entering from the M25 every day. There is anticipated growth of 16% by 2037 partly driven by planned housing growth in Guildford, Woking and Elmbridge.

HE explained that the environment surrounding M25 Junction 10 is particularly sensitive. The junction is surrounded by The Ockham and Wisley Commons Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and land to the south is designated as forming part

of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). There is also nearby ancient woodland. The junction is surrounded by common land. There are a number of designated heritage assets close to the land and areas at risk of flooding.. The scheme will include replacement land for common land and measures to enhance provision for non-motorised users.

The Inspectorate asked whether there were anticipated air quality issues for sensitive habitats. Whilst HE believes that legally binding limits are not applicable to sites alongside motorways and close to urban areas, HE was aware that this is likely to be a policy issue that will need to be addressed. Consideration is being given to what mitigation measures might help address this.

However, early assessments against the Habitats Regulations for the scheme have not been able to exclude the potential for AEOI (adverse effects on integrity) in relation to TBH SPA. It is therefore possible that HE will have to present a case in their Application for 'No Alternatives' (the effects have been assessed for all route options investigated) and 'IROPI' (Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest), as well as a package of Compensatory Measures in order to meet the requirements of the Habitats Regulations. No firm detail was available on the design of the Compensatory Measures at the time of the meeting.

HE presented some of the options that are currently being considered. Land take and safety are emerging as significant issues in the option selection process.

The Inspectorate asked about possible impacts on the Hindhead Tunnel. HE confirmed that none were anticipated since the tunnel was some distance to the south.

HE explained that side road options led to significant stakeholder consultations. They included access to Wisley Lane and other private properties.

At their stage 2 consultation, HE reported that there had been overwhelming support for improvements to the junctions, along with public concern over environmental matters.

HE acknowledged that the timing of the project is contingent on a PRA being made, which is anticipated during October.

HE explained that the scheme presented a number of accordance issues with national policy, including the ecological designations of nearby land, a number of designated heritage assets, such as the nearby Gothic Tower and scheduled monument, the green belt, flood risk and air quality. The scheme is likely to take land from the SPA, and so HE is not ruling out the need to make a case for Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest.

The scheme is likely to include provision for off-site mitigation and compensation. The Mole Gap SAC has not been definitively screened out at this stage, but is at some distance from the site and significant effects are unlikely. There will be a need for European Protected Species Licences and so discussions will take place with Natural England in advance of submission in the hope of securing a letter of no impediment before the DCO application.

The Inspectorate advised that European Protected Species were likely to include Dormice.

HE do not anticipate any significant legal compliance issues with the Air Quality Directive or the Water Framework Directive.

Substantial harm to designated heritage assets is considered unlikely, although there could be some slight encroachment into the boundaries of the registered parks and gardens at Painshill and/or Wisley. There is also the potential for the setting of a small number of listed buildings and a scheduled monument to be affected. The scheme will include replacement land, and is wholly within the green belt. There is a small amount of Crown land that could be affected. The application will include disapplication of the Green Belt (London and Home Counties) Act 1938.

HE explained some of the local issues, including a proposed major development at Wisley Airfield and an anticipated 20,000 new homes in the next 15 years, mostly within the A3 corridor.

HE believe that the proposal is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project because it is an alteration with an area greater than 15 hectares.

HE propose to submit a scoping request in mid October 2017; no topics are currently expected to be scoped out. HE asked if it would be possible to submit a scoping report with a wider red line boundary in anticipation of a PRA, which could be refined once the preferred option was known. The Inspectorate advised that this was possible, but HE should consider the implications of the new regulations which place a greater emphasis on scoping. There is nothing to prevent re-scoping once more information is available, aside from the applicant's programme. The Inspectorate confirmed that the red line boundary in the EIA Scoping can be refined as the work progresses, including in the PEIR and consultation materials.

HE propose to submit a DCO application at the end of July 2018, and to undertake statutory consultation between January and February 2018.

The Inspectorate asked about the interaction between the scheme and the M25 Junction 10 to 15 Smart Motorway proposals. HE explained that it was not yet clear whether it would be optimal to include any widening of the M25 in the DCO or to deliver it via other powers.

The Inspectorate asked if HE were likely to seek any powers to enter onto land. HE confirmed that they were seeking to enter land by agreement where necessary, and did not anticipate applying for any powers.

In response to a question from the Inspectorate, HE confirmed that they did not anticipate that either the Junction 28 or Junction 10 scheme would be other than an NSIP as the design developed. In response to a further question from the Inspectorate, HE explained that they were engaging with statutory undertakers in connection with the Junction 10 scheme, including working to avoid a gas pipeline and electricity pylons. They anticipated that they would negotiate protective provisions.

The Inspectorate advised that many of the advice notes relating to environmental matters, including Advice Note 7 on screening and scoping, were being revised.

However, the changes were not likely to significantly alter what had been discussed. Particularly, the Inspectorate has not changed its advice in connection with the assessment of cumulative effects.

HE asked how best to send a shape file to the Inspectorate. The Inspectorate requested that it be sent by email. They confirmed that there is a limit to the size of file that can be received by email (10 – 15mb) and advised that all documents should be accessible, including for parties working electronically, and so advised against large file sizes that might make a document difficult to download.

The Inspectorate confirmed that a regulation 8 notice that an Environmental Statement will be provided can accompany a scoping request. The Inspectorate also confirmed that they will contact the applicant to obtain the information necessary to set up project pages on the National Infrastructure Planning website for both schemes.

HE asked if certain plans that are required to accompany an application can be signposted within the Environmental Statement rather than duplicated. The Inspectorate advised that the Environmental Statement must be capable of being read alone, but that duplication can be avoided by signposting and efficient drafting. Other documents should be written for legibility and with regard to their purpose.

HE asked if the Inspectorate would be prepared to comment on a draft Habitats Regulations Assessment report. The Inspectorate confirmed that they would, particularly in respect of Junction 10.

HE asked if the structure of the consultation report and the manner in which consultee responses were presented was prescribed. The Inspectorate confirmed that the consultation report must demonstrate compliance with S49 and the duty to have regard to responses received, but the way in which it was formatted was a matter for the applicant. The Inspectorate can request all consultation responses if compliance is not clear from the consultation report.

### **Specific decisions / follow up required?**

The Inspectorate will request details to create project pages on the National Infrastructure Planning website.