

Application for Development Consent by Highways England (the Applicant) for the A1 Birtley to Coal House improvement scheme

Case Ref: TR010031

Examining Authority's note of Unaccompanied Site Inspections on 27 and 28 November 2019

Background

As Examining Authority (ExA), I undertook my first Unaccompanied Site Inspections on 27 and 28 November 2019 to support my Examination of this application. In the interests of efficiency, I commenced my Unaccompanied Site Inspections following my appointment, but before the Preliminary Meeting which is to be held on Tuesday 21 January 2020.

As these unaccompanied inspections were undertaken from publicly accessible land, advance permission to enter land was not required and these inspections could consequently be undertaken without any other parties being present. The inspections were carried out by car and foot.

The purpose of this note is:

- to inform the Applicant and Interested Parties of actions already taken by the ExA; and
- to enable the Applicant and Interested Parties to consider which additional locations the ExA might need to inspect.

Further site inspections will be required. The site inspection programme will be discussed at the Preliminary Meeting. There will be an opportunity to nominate further site inspection locations, including those requiring access to private land on an accompanied basis. Before providing comments on the need for and nominations about locations for additional site inspections, the Applicant and Interested Parties are requested to review the list of locations I have already inspected.

Before agreeing to any additional site inspections at particular locations, I will consider the degree to which it is necessary to visit a site that has been nominated for inspection to inform me about the application. I may decide not to visit nominated locations where I have already visited the location or where I consider that it is not necessary to see the features to be observed there.

Further details will be subsequently published regarding future site inspections.

Particulars of the site inspections

27 November 2019

The inspection was undertaken solely by David Cliff (the ExA). Weather conditions were overcast with rain showers which restricted long distance visibility. The inspection commenced at approximately 2.30pm and finished at 4.00pm.

The following locations (including nearby view points) were visited:

- Drove twice along north and south bound A1 carriageway within and on the approaches to the Proposed Development area

- Junction 65
- Residential streets near Junction 65 to the south of the A1 including Northside and The Brambles
- Bowes Incline hotel

28 November 2019

The inspection was undertaken solely by David Cliff (the ExA). Weather conditions started cloudy with showers in the morning but improved throughout the day with sunny intervals in the afternoon. Visibility was good. The inspection commenced at 9.00am and finished at 3.15pm.

The following locations (including nearby viewpoints) were visited:

- Residential streets to the south of the A1 in/near Birtley including Lockwood Avenue, Crathie, North Dene and Long Bank
- North Dene footbridge and approaches (including proposed footpath diversion)
- Bowes Railway Scheduled Monument
- Long Bank Bridleway Underpass and approaches (including proposed footpath diversion)
- Junction 66 (Eighton Lodge)
- Site of proposed construction compound at Junction 66
- The Angel of the North and surrounding pathways
- Smithy Lane overbridge
- Residential streets of Woodford and Salcombe Gardens
- Public right of way between Woodford and Salcombe Gardens (including proposed construction crossing point)
- Longacre Wood
- Locations near East Coast Main Line and Allerdene Bridge
- Site of proposed construction compound southeast of junction 67
- Junction 67 including Kingsway Viaduct
- Lamesley village including residential properties on Lamesley Road (The Vicarage, North Farm, 1-4 The Courtyard, 4-6 The Cottages and Willow Beds Farm)
- Residential properties on Coach Road and Banesley Lane
- Locations within Ravensworth Conservation Area

Conclusion

I have viewed the application site from numerous public vantage points and from different directions. I have familiarised myself with the site's location and its surroundings. Further site inspections will take place as necessary during the Examination and following further submissions from the Applicant and Interested Parties.

David Cliff
Examining Authority