



Application by National Highways for the Lower Thames Crossing

Case reference: TR010032

Examining Authority's Note of an Unaccompanied Site Inspection (USI) undertaken on 20 October 2023 (USI-06)

Background to Site Inspections

Information about the background to and purposes of unaccompanied inspections by the Examining Authority (ExA) is provided in its note for USI-01 [[SI-001](#)]. That note and the note for USIs-02 to 05 [[SI-002](#)][[SI-003](#)][[SI-004](#)][[SI-005](#)] taken together describe the inspections undertaken so far. A summary key plan showing the routes of unaccompanied inspections 1 to 5 is in **Annex A** to the note to USI-05. Because this inspection was carried out in a location in Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire that is not associated with the proposed location for the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC), a separate location plan is provided in **Annex A** to this note.

Particulars of the Inspection

The ExA undertook its fourth Accompanied Site Inspection (ASI4) [[PD-036](#)] on 20 October 2023, to support examination of an application for development consent for the proposed LTC (the application). ASI4 was an inspection of tunnelling and viaduct construction works in progress for HS2 at the Chiltern Tunnel South Portal compound at Chalfont Lane between West Hyde and Maple Cross, near Rickmansworth. The site straddles the boundary between the counties of Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire. This location was selected for an inspection on the basis that it enabled the ExA to observe surface works associated with tunnelling in progress (the Chiltern Tunnel), undertaken in similar geology to that for the proposed LTC tunnelling works and using similar waste management methods. This location also enabled observations to be made of a major project construction compound in active use, in relation to its effects on the surrounding environment, transport network and settlements.

ASI4 focused on the work processes being carried out within the compound and required accompaniment throughout by representatives of the HS2 contractor, Align Joint Venture. The Applicant, Thurrock Council and Gravesham Borough Council were also in attendance. The Thames Crossing Action Group (TCAG) was invited to send a representative but did not attend ASI4.

Immediately prior to and following the ASI, the ExA inspected the external environs of the compound on public highways on an unaccompanied basis as USI-06. The USI is recorded in this note. The purpose of the USI was to enable the ExA to appreciate the external effects of the works underway in terms of noise or any other emissions from the work site, landscape and visual effects and the relationship between the work site and activities within it and the surrounding environment, transport network and sensitive receptors (largely dwellings).

Note of Inspection

The inspection was undertaken by car and on foot, commencing at approximately 8-20am until 8-40am, commencing again midday and concluding at 1pm. The following routes were taken in the environs of the HS2 compound, an approximately triangular site enclosing some 200 hectares of land used to support construction of the Chiltern Tunnels and the Colne Valley Viaduct for HS2.

- Viewing construction works in progress on the Colne Valley Viaduct from the A412 Denham Way (prior to the ASI);
- Viewing the eastern boundary and environs of the works site from the A412 Denham Way and from the closest settlement, Old Uxbridge Road and Copper Mill Lane, West Hyde;
- Viewing the environs of the works compound from the closest settlement, dwellings on Woodland Road and Hornhill Road, Maple Cross; and
- Viewing the northern boundary and environs of the works compound from an unnamed public highway running parallel to the M25 between Hornhill Road and Shire Lane, West Hyde.

The weather during the initial inspection was overcast. The inspection commencing at midday had largely sunny weather with some broken cloud. There was good long-range visibility. All relevant features and views were able to be seen at long-range throughout the inspection.

The routes are itemised in the following tables and a map can be found in **Annex A**.

Colne Valley Viaduct: Construction Works

Location(s)	Relevant Observations
A412	The works site was approached from the south on the A412, Denham Way (North Orbital Road), enabling observations to be made of construction in progress and largely completed elements of the HS2 Colne Valley Viaduct. Construction of the viaduct was proceeding southwards from the HS2 Align JV compound (to which it was connected by a haul road), with active construction observed within the Broadwater Lake and South Harefield area. Entrance to the works site for ASI4 was made from Chalfont Lane (a public road that is temporarily closed and presently forms the main gate and an internal road within the compound) for 8-40am.

West Hyde, Maple Cross and M25: Environs of Works Site

Location(s)	Relevant Observations
Chalfont Lane	At the end of ASI4, the ExA exited the HS2 compound on Chalfont Lane at approximately midday. Proceeding eastwards the inspection crossed the A412, Denham way, which abuts the western boundary of the compound for approximately 0.5 kilometre.
Old Uxbridge Road and Copper Mill Lane, West Hyde	Proceeding westwards, the ExA observed the village of West Hyde. The closest dwellings to the HS2 compound are located on Old Uxbridge Road, approximately 150 metres from the southern boundary of the works area. Observations were made of possible noise or dust emissions and traffic movements associated with the compound, but no significant effects were observed in what was otherwise a relatively tranquil residential setting. There were no views to the interior of the compound from publicly accessible land. No dwellings/ gardens backed onto the compound.
Woodland Road and Hornhill Road, Maple Cross	The inspection proceeded northwards on the A412 and then westwards on Woodland Road and Hornhill Road in the village of Maple Cross. A school and housing is found here, at approximately 650 – 800 metres separation from the HS2 compound. There were no views to the interior of the compound from publicly accessible land. Observations were made of possible noise or dust emissions and traffic movements associated with the compound, but no significant effects were observed in what was otherwise a relatively tranquil residential setting. No dwellings/ gardens backed onto the compound.
Unnamed public highway running parallel to the M25 between Hornhill Road and Shire Lane, West Hyde	The inspection proceeded southwards towards the HS2 compound along an unnamed public highway immediately to the west of the M25 alignment until the (currently temporarily closed) Chalfont Lane M25 overbridge was reached. This provided access to a more rural area with a small number of isolated dwellings and some mobile home accommodation. Higher land in this location provided extensive open views over the

Location(s)	Relevant Observations
	<p>compound and works in progress. A dedicated slipway entrance and exit to the compound from the M25 and a substation providing compound power were also observed. Observations were made of possible noise or dust emissions and traffic movements associated with the compound, but no significant effects were observed: the dominant contribution to the acoustic background in this location was traffic noise from the M25. The compound frontage in this area is formed by the M25 and Chalfont Lane, with no abutting residential properties.</p>

