



Meeting note

File reference	TR010032
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	10 June 2021
Meeting with	Highways England (the Applicant)
Venue	Microsoft Teams
Meeting objectives	Project Update Meeting
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed and advice given:

The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) advised that a note of the meeting would be taken and published on its website in accordance with section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 (the PA2008). Any advice given under section 51 would not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) could rely.

oLEMP Stakeholder Feedback

The Applicant provided an update in respect of preparation of its outline Landscape and Ecology Mitigation Plan (oLEMP) following workshops and informal discussions with key environmental bodies. The Applicant explained that the majority of comments it expected had been received.

The Applicant outlined how the Inspectorate's comments on the draft oLEMP had been regarded and explained where actions had arisen from the comments. The Inspectorate acknowledged the Applicant's work in progressing the oLEMP but emphasised the importance of setting out clearly why measures have been included and to signpost back to the relevant environmental assessments. The Examining Authority will want effective signposting within the document suite so that it has an overall view of where the information lies.

There was discussion on the level of detail contained within the oLEMP. The Inspectorate set out that the balance had to be appropriate so that key environmental bodies have enough detail to make an informed view and to provide comfort whilst being flexible enough that ongoing site investigation data (and appropriate flexibility more generally) can still be integrated. The Inspectorate advised that, whilst requests for more detail are likely, the Applicant needs to show how the level of detail known at the time is adequate.

The Inspectorate queried when the next iteration of the draft oLEMP will be circulated for review. The Applicant speculated it would be around August time following receipt and consideration of any comments from Natural England (NE). The Inspectorate noted the importance of NE's input on the document.

Stakeholder Engagement Update

The Applicant briefly set out an overview of its ongoing stakeholder engagement, which included progress with the affected port companies Port of London Authority (PoLA) and Port of Tilbury (PoT) in respect of tunnel depth discussion. The Applicant noted positive progress with the Marine Management Organisation in relation to its Deemed Marine Licence application.

The Applicant provided an update on ongoing local authority engagement. The Inspectorate queried if the same concerns raised previously at the first submission are still pertinent and enquired what routes the Applicant had explored to ensure it understood the local authorities' key concerns. The Applicant highlighted regular engagement with the local authorities and noted existing mechanisms such as contractual agreements which can enable engagement.

The Inspectorate noted Thurrock Council's concerns in respect of the Applicant's timescales between its supplementary consultation exercise and submission. The Applicant explained that it will be sharing consultation materials with local authorities before the consultation formally began, to allow them to comment before the consultation commenced, and stated it would fully consider and regard all responses received within its programme.

The Applicant provided an update in respect of Statements of Common Ground (SoCGs), acknowledging encouraging progression on the suite through regular meetings and issue logs with the parties.

Hole Farm

The Applicant set out that Highways England has recently bought Hole Farm, a 100-acre site to the north of the Proposed Development. Whilst only a portion of the Hole Farm site will be included with the Order limits, the remainder will be used as additional green space and a community forest managed by Forestry England. The Inspectorate queried if the area outside the Order limits is to be used for mitigation purposes. The Applicant confirmed it wouldn't.