

Ref: TR010036

Application by Highways England for an Order granting Development Consent for works to the A303 between Ilchester and Sparkford

Examining Authority's Note of Unaccompanied Site Inspection on Wednesday 20 February 2019

1. Background

- 1.1 As Examining Authority (ExA) we undertook our second Unaccompanied Site Inspection to support our examination of an application for development consent for the proposed dual carriageway on the A303 linking the Podimore Bypass and the Sparkford Bypass on 20 February 2019. The application has been made by Highways England (the Applicant). This took place the day after the Accompanied Site Inspection.
- 1.2 Inspections were undertaken from publicly accessible land including highways and public rights of way. No access to private land including that forming part of the application site was sought and therefore we were able to undertake the inspection on an unaccompanied basis.
- 1.3 We undertook the inspection on our own. We did not encounter any interested parties or other persons during our inspection.
- 1.4 Weather conditions were quite good, being dry and with some sun. Visibility was good. Our inspections were undertaken both by car and on foot using a car to travel between the main locations.
- 1.5 The purpose of this Note is to inform the Applicant and interested parties of actions already taken by the ExA.

2. Particulars of the Inspection

- 2.1 The purpose of the visit for us as ExA was to become more familiar with the Application site and surrounding area. Predominantly it was to visit locations which had been identified in the written submissions to the examination that were in the public domain which we had not previously visited at either our Unaccompanied Site Inspection on 17 October 2018¹ or at the Accompanied Site Inspection on 19 February 2019. It was also held before the series of Issue Specific, Compulsory Acquisition and Open Floor Hearings to be held commencing on 26 February 2019. Our visit commenced at approximately 09:00 hours and concluded at approximately 11:30 hours.
- 2.2 We began our inspection by parking on the Podimore slip road from the A303 to the west of the "No Entry" sign, and then walked up to the junction with the A303. We then crossed the A303 and walked along the verge on the north side of the A303 to the end of the Bridleway Y 30/28 which we walked along in a northerly direction to the junction with Bridleway Y 30/29. We then walked back to the car along the verge on the south side of the A303.

¹ A Note of that visit can be found on the examination website under document reference EV-005

- 2.3 We then drove back to the Podimore roundabout and then travelled in an easterly direction along the A303 to the existing Downhead junction. We then travelled along this road and turned left to drive south to the turning head on the north side of the A303 and inspected this area. We then drove back and noted the location of the manege on the west side of this road to the south of Annis Hill Farm and the location of the proposed turning head opposite. In returning to the A303 we noted the western end of Slate Lane (Public Right of Way (PRoW) Y 27/20).
- 2.4 We then drove along the A303 turning into Steart Lane and drove in a northerly direction to the junction with PRoW Y 27/20 where we parked. At this point, (Viewpoint 17 on the Visual Impacts Plan²) we walked along the restricted byway in a westerly direction to Viewpoint 14³ and then retraced our footsteps.
- 2.5 We then drove to Queen Camel where we parked near to the bridge across the River Cam and then walked around this area particularly beside the A359.
- 2.6 Following this we drove up Gason Lane noting the various public rights of way from it. We then parked close to the junction with the A303 and inspected this junction.
- 2.7 After traveling a short section of the A303 we turned into Traits Lane and then through Wales and along the West Camel Road before driving around West Camel, including up Howell Hill, turning on to the A303 from Plowage Lane before turning off to the south at Camel Cross.
- 2.8 Following further driving along the roads to the south of the A303 we drove past the Countess Gytha Primary School and along the A359 to Sparkford High Street noting the location of the Grade II* Triumphal Arch.
- 2.9 We then left the area to the south towards Yeovil on the A359 on the proposed diversion route.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 Any future site inspections will take place should the need arise.

Lesley Coffey

Lesley Coffey
**Lead Member of the Panel of
Examining Inspectors**

Robert Jackson

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Panel Member

² Figure 7.7 – Examination Document reference APP-123

³ ibid