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17 August 2020

Dear Ms Kopala

**PLANNING ACT 2008: APPLICATION FOR THE PROPOSED A303 SPARKFORD TO
IILCHESTER DUALLING ORDER
TR010036**

This letter encloses Highways England's response to your letter on behalf of the Secretary of State (SoS) of 21 July 2020.

As the Applicant for this scheme, we naturally hope that the enclosed submissions will be enough for the SoS to decide to grant development consent for the application, taking account of responses made by Interested Parties in due course. We have continued to progress the detailed design. As the SoS will appreciate, in the absence of a granted Development Consent Order (DCO) there becomes a limit as to what we can do pending that decision. At present, we estimate that the project is approximately 12 months behind its original programme as a result. We remain committed to delivering the scheme. We are pleased to have seen Somerset County Council's strong letter of support to the SoS dated 7 August 2020, which was copied to it. In particular, we note that the Council agrees with the Examining Authority (ExA) that the non-delivery of the parallel local road recommended by the ExA would not justify refusal of the scheme. We welcome the Council's clear statement that it wishes to work collaboratively to find and agree solutions to the residual issues.

In his letter of 21 July, the SoS does not invite submissions on any issues other than those raised in paragraph 6 and does not comment on whether – in the event that he did now grant the DCO – he would be minded to accept the recommendations of the ExA in relation to other aspects of the application and the form of the revised DCO (rDCO).

We have read the ExA's Recommendation Report and the rDCO in full. The Applicant has inevitably asked itself whether it has any concerns with the form of the rDCO which go beyond those which relate to the specific questions raised by the SoS.

We do not wish to re-run the Examination in these post-Examination submissions, but there are some topics which are of sufficient concern that we consider we must draw to the SoS's attention.

This response therefore consists of:

- Submission in response to the letter dated 21 July 2020
 - Annex A – Correspondence log with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation
 - Annex B – Meeting minutes with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation from meeting of 5 August 2020

- Annex C – Applicant’s proposed Section 278 Agreement with Somerset County Council for Higher Farm Lane
- Annex D – Letter received from the Defence Infrastructure Organisation 11 August 2020
- Annex E – Indicative Highways Lighting Design Drawings
- Annex F – Revised Signage Strategy and Signage Drawings
- Submission in response to selected additional points arising from the rDCO
 - Annex A – Signed Section 278 agreement with Somerset County Council for Traffic Calming works
 - Annex B – Applicant’s proposed Section 278 agreement with Somerset County Council for signage and traffic regulation order
- Updated Outline Environmental Management Plan
- Applicant’s revised DCO.

Yours sincerely,



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