

From: [REDACTED]
To: [A303 Sparkford to Ilchester](#)
Cc: transportinfrastructure@dft.gov.uk
Subject: Request for comments
Date: 15 September 2020 21:17:01
Attachments: [Sparkford Hall Letter.pdf](#)
[2020.01.20 - David Warburton MP - Highways England response.pdf](#)

Dear Natasha

Application by Highways England (“the Applicant”) for an Order granting Development Consent for the A303 Sparkford to Ilchester Dualling

Following the Secretary of State’s letter of 19th August requesting comments from all interested parties, following the Applicants response of 17th August, I would like to comment on two areas as follows:

1. Noise

In Section 2.5 and 2.6 of the Applicant’s response, the Applicant objects to the wording of Requirement 14 of the rDCOS on the basis that no evidence was presented to support the statement that low noise road surface would be effective and suggested the ExAs opinion was conjecture in its recommendation.

This is in contradiction to the Applicant’s own policy of using a Low Noise Surface for “*all new and improved roads*”. The Applicant has already accepted that low noise surfaces are effective at reducing noise. Indeed section 11.3.25 of the Applicant’s Environmental Statement 6.1 Chapter 11 - Noise and Vibration, confirms this:

Part of the Road Investment Strategy (RIS) for 2015-20207 includes noise as a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for Highways England. The KPI requires mitigation to be installed at 1,150 Important Areas within 5 years. It also describes the factors which have influenced the Highways Agency Investment Plan and states “All new and improved roads now use low noise road surfaces to help reduce the noise made by vehicles”...

The Applicant seeks deletion of sub-paragraphs (2), (3), (5) and (6) of requirement 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the rDCo. I believe to do so would be huge opportunity missed to reducing existing noise levels. In particular, extending the low noise surface to the east by two miles to join up with the next section of low noise surface would certainly deliver embetterment to the Sparkford neighbourhood and community.

2. Non Motorised Users and Crossings

Although the Applicant has addressed some points raised concerning matters on safe and convenient routes for NMUs it did not respond to the ExA points 10.5.76 and 10.5.76 in its recommendations.

The ExA states that the provision of a footbridge in this location would restore the link between these two parts of Sparkford and would provide a convenient and comfortable NMU link between the PRoW network on both sides of the carriageway.

The ExA pointed out that a new crossing would also accord with paragraph 3.17 of the NNNPS which states that:

“The Government also expects applicants to identify opportunities to invest in infrastructure in locations where the national road network severs communities and acts as a barrier to cycling and walking, by correcting historic problems, retrofitting the latest solutions and ensuring that it is easy and safe for cyclists to use junctions.”

The Applicant has previously advised me before my written representation was submitted that they had applied for a designated fund (please see attached letter) for the provision of a green bridge for NMU at this crossing which is partially within the red line. When this was followed up by David Warburton MP, no such application was acknowledged to have been made and he was

informed that the Applicant would 'consider applying' for the fund. I feel somewhat misled by the Applicant as the content of my representation would have been different had I not been sent such a reassuring letter.

I trust the above is helpful

Sincerely

James March Smith

Our ref: Sparkford Hall

Mr James March Smith



Hannah Sanderson
Highways England
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
BRISTOL
BS1 6HA

www.highwaysengland.co.uk

Highways England Customer Contact
Centre: 0300 123 5000

7 December 2018

Dear Mr March Smith

A303 Sparkford to Ilchester Dualling

Many thanks for taking the time to meet with us on 20 November. I appreciate that you have met with a number of project representatives and that you still have some outstanding queries. I understand that you have corresponded with our consultant Mott MacDonald Sweco JV and as per our meeting on 20 November, Highways England have committed to provide a formal response to the queries that you had submitted to the previous project manager.

I have been through the past correspondence with Sparkford Hall on the project and have found some of your queries which I wish to address below.

Changes to the existing footpath from Sparkford Hall to Sparkford

As discussed at our meeting at your property Highways England are pursuing a Designated Fund application to improve this crossing to a combined green bridge and non-motorised user crossing.

Designated Funds are a series of ring fenced funds designated to Highways England to address a range of issues beyond the traditional focus of road investment. These funds allow for actions beyond business as usual and to maximise opportunities to deliver additional improvements as part of new road schemes.

You can find out more about Designated Funds at the following places:

<https://highwaysengland.co.uk/designated-funds/>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/highways-england-designated-funds>

The funding for this application is not yet guaranteed and is subject to Highways England internal governance. However, the project team will keep you informed of further developments, and hope to have funding for a feasibility study secured by Spring 2019.

Mitigation of noise and pollution using an earth bund

As discussed at our meeting, and further detail provided through correspondence with our consultant, work has been undertaken to understand what the noise impact of the scheme will be on Sparkford Hall. Through that modelling it has been determined that the property will not be significantly adversely affected. In the short-term the noise increase at Sparkford Hall with the scheme would be 0.2dB and in the long-term the noise increase would be 1.3dB with the scheme and would be expected to be 0.6dB without the scheme. In all cases these noise changes are classified by the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) as negligible. In this context it is worth noting that the Noise Policy Statement for England explains that reasonable steps, taking into account the guiding principles of sustainable development, need to be taken to mitigate noise, not that adverse effects cannot occur.

Sound barrier fencing by bridge

I am aware that you have made suggestions of potential sound barrier fencing by the bridge over the entrance to Sparkford Hall. This suggestion has been reviewed and it has been confirmed that this solution has not been considered as it is unlikely to make a significant impact to the noise levels.

Changing of road surface, from existing tarmac to new quieter tarmac

We note your earlier suggestion of the potential of changing the road surface from existing tarmac to new quieter tarmac. Low noise surfacing is being proposed on the new dual carriageway section of the A303. The point at which the new and existing sections of road join is not considered to be likely to cause a significant noise impact. However, we are liaising with Highways England's maintenance team to establish whether there are any proposals for renewing the existing surface during the period of the works on the scheme.

We will be sure to confirm to you any proposals for renewals on the existing carriageway as they become available to us.

Temporary lighting and noise during construction works.

I understand your concerns around construction noise and I understand our consultant has provided detailed information as to the modelling that has been completed and assurances regarding any potential impact during construction. To provide additional information and reassurance, the most significant work on the scheme within the vicinity of Sparkford Hall is going to be on the Hazlegrove roundabout. This is approximately 950 metres from Sparkford Hall (as the crow flies) and the modelling assessment of these

works determines that there will not be significant adverse effects. Our consultant has previously explained that the Outline Environmental Management Plan (OEMP) will be developed into the full Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). This will include all items identified in the Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) (see Table 3.1 of the OEMP) and any amendments to the REAC that are required to address issues raised at the Examination, which Highways England and our main works contractor will be bound by. Although I appreciate that you have raised concerns about the enforcement of these noise level requirements, the Local Authority and Highways England will undertake checks during construction to ensure that the Contractor is working within the compliance boundaries of the CEMP. A Section 61 application under the Control of Pollution Act 1974 will be progressed in advance of the start date for construction, in which the hours of working and any specific noise and vibration limits will be agreed with South Somerset District Council's Environmental Health Officer. We will also explore the possibility of conducting noise monitoring of the works from Sparkford Hall with your agreement.

To provide further reassurance, the only major works directly within the direct vicinity of Sparkford Hall with the scheme is for the removal of the existing layby in that location. I can confirm that these works will not be undertaken on the weekend and we are willing to have a discussion with you closer to the time as to the most appropriate timing within the programmed week. There will be some more minor works that involve surfacing works and the erection of signs, however we do not anticipate that these works will be intrusive.

To note, we do not have any planned construction compounds within the vicinity of your property.

During our meeting you expressed concerns about the ability to be able to take bookings for your business during the years of the projects construction. Our main design and build contractor is scheduled to come on board to the project in Spring 2019, however we have taken on board your comments and are looking at opportunities to accelerate the development of the construction phasing programme in order to be able to provide you more details. We are currently discussing this with our supply chain and I will keep you updated on developments early in the New Year.

Thank you for your continued engagement in the development of the proposed scheme. Whilst I understand that you may be disappointed that this letter does not extend an offer of a private agreement for the construction of additional noise, light, and dust mitigation between Sparkford Hall and Highways England as you had requested, we would like to work closely with you throughout the construction to minimise potential disruption. We will also be appointing a stakeholder liaison officer who will be available 24 hours a day during the construction phase.

Yours sincerely

Hannah Sanderson
Senior Project Manager Regional Investment Programme South West



David Warburton MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Nick Aldworth
Regional Delivery Director
2/07K
Temple Quay House
2 The Square, Temple Quay
Bristol
BS1 6HA

20 January 2020

Dear Mr Warburton

RE: A303 Sparkford to Ilchester dualling scheme

Thank you for your letter dated 13 November 2019 on behalf of a constituent, Mr James March Smith, concerning the pedestrian access to the village of Sparkford. The letter also discussed Highways England pursuing a designated fund application to improve the crossing to a combined green bridge and non-motorised user crossing.

May I start by taking this opportunity to thank you once again for your continued interest and support for this scheme.

You will recall we responded on 26 November 2019, but at that time were unable to provide full details in response to your enquiry as we were in purdah ahead of the General Election.

As we're no longer in purdah we can confirm that an application to improve the combined green bridge and non-motorised user crossing that Mr March Smith refers to is the type of project that could be considered under our current designated funds programme.

We are anticipating that the Government will announce the content of the second road investment period soon, and if designated funds continue to be available, we will consider Mr March Smith's proposal during the next roads period. The second road investment period will run from March 2020 until March 2025.

Once again thank you for your letter and if you have any further questions please contact the A303 Sparkford to Ilchester Dualling Project Team on a303sparkfordtoilchesterdualling@highwaysengland.co.uk.

Yours sincerely



Nick Aldworth
Regional Delivery Director
RIP South West
Email: nick.aldworth@highwaysengland.co.uk
Phone: 0300 470 5626