



Meeting note

Project name	A303 Sparkford to Ilchester Dualling
File reference	TR010036
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	12 January 2018
Meeting with	Highways England
Venue	Planning Inspectorate offices
Attendees	The Planning Inspectorate Richard Price – Case Manager Karen Wilkinson – EIA and Land Rights Advisor Katherine King - EIA and Land Rights Advisor Michael Breslaw - EIA and Land Rights Advisor James Bunten – Case Officer The Applicant Elliot Hayes – Assistant Project Manager Will Spencer – DCO and Statutory Process Manager Alex Murphy – Project Manager Serena Gosden – Assistant Project Manager (MMSJV) Julia Barrett – Environmental Lead (MMSJV) Doug Johnson – Communications Lead (MMSJV)
Meeting objectives	Scoping clarifications and 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.

Project update and consultation approach

The Applicant explained that the scheme design had been frozen ahead of the Statutory Consultation period, which was confirmed to run from 26 January to 9 March 2018. The Applicant confirmed that its anticipated submission date was 4 July 2018.

The Applicant set out the different events that were being held as part of the Statutory Consultation period, which included a preview event for stakeholders, as requested by Somerset County Council (SCC), and four public consultation events within the local area.



The Applicant provided an update on the ongoing dialogue with affected landowners, noting previous successful meetings as part of its Non-statutory Consultation. Further consultation events for affected landowners were scheduled in the Applicant's Statutory Consultation programme. The Applicant stated that due to predominantly positive engagement with affected landowners to date, it was currently undecided whether Compulsory Acquisition (CA) needed to be included in the application.

The Applicant identified the roadside businesses that may be affected during construction phase and noted positive negotiations had already taken place with the owners. The Applicant stated its intention to provide a 'CA negotiations status report' as part of the application with updated versions provided during the Examination.

The Applicant summarised the different types of land interests that could be affected by the scheme. At present, the Applicant believes that there is no special category land affected such as Common Land or allotments; however more investigation is required to determine if any open space may be affected.

The Applicant outlined how the relevant s43 local authorities had responded to the draft Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) consultation and set out how regard had been had to those responses. The Applicant also noted the ongoing positive dialogue with two of the four affected parish councils. The Applicant noted its intention to meet with all four parish councils before or during the consultation period.

The Applicant provided an update about ongoing dialogue with SCC and noted that SCC had requested a presentation on the proposed traffic modelling with regards to concerns about local traffic movement.

There was discussion about the Proposed Development's interrelationship with the A303 Stonehenge project and other road projects on the surrounding network. The Applicant drew attention to the significant spatial separation of the Proposed Development and the A303 Stonehenge, but affirmed that regular dialogue between the two project teams; in particular respect of ensuring consistency of traffic flow data.

The Inspectorate emphasised the importance of clearly distinguishing between the two A303 NSIP schemes in their consultation documents to remove doubt as to which consultation the public were responding to. The Applicant noted that the Statutory Consultation periods for the two schemes were separated by a couple of months and did not overlap.

The Applicant briefly explained the documents within the consultation pack that would be provided to the public as part of the upcoming Statutory Consultation. The pack included a plain English consultation booklet, a questionnaire for responses and contact details for queries/ responses, and a Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) and summary.

Scoping Opinion

The Applicant summarised that some members of the public had raised concerns that the traffic model was not detailed enough to alleviate concerns about rat-running. The



Applicant explained that it was open to narrowing down the traffic model, where possible, to help provide more clarity.

The Inspectorate encouraged engagement with the Environment Agency (EA) with regards to agreeing the study area for nearby water-dependent Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), such as Wet Moor SSSI.

The Applicant stated that the EA had requested that the assessment of impacts on fish should be included in the biodiversity chapter of the Environmental Statement (ES). Although the EA's comments were not definitive, the Applicant confirmed that it was planning to hold further discussions and to enter into a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG). The Inspectorate noted that the details of the assessment should be set out in the SoCG and evidenced clearly within the ES.

The Inspectorate also advised that Natural England (NE) should be consulted to agree which sensitive ecological receptors should be assessed, for noise and vibration impacts, within the ES. The Applicant confirmed its intention to enter into a SoCG with NE.

There was discussion regarding whether the settlement of Queen Camel should be included within the ES study area for specific topics. The Inspectorate advised that professional judgement should be used and if it is not included, full justification should be set out within the ES.

The Applicant advised that identifying the relevant consultees to agree the study area for potential effects on climate had been difficult. The Inspectorate advised that the Applicant should enter into discussions with the EA and the relevant local authorities to agree the appropriate consultees.

There was brief discussion regarding the proposed Garden Village and its interrelationship with the Proposed Development. It was agreed that there may be benefits from consulting the Garden Village as a consultee.

The Inspectorate asked for feedback on the new structure of the Scoping Opinion, following the use of an updated template. The Applicant concluded that the Scoping Opinion was well constructed and easy to navigate.

AOB

The Inspectorate drew the Applicant's attention to a new function being developed on the Inspectorate's project website that enables applicants and others to sign up for email alerts about updated web content (eg new/ updated Advice Notes). The Inspectorate explained that an update to Advice 15: Drafting Development Consent Orders was in the pipeline, and that the rest of the suite of Advice Notes was in the process of being updated following the coming into force of the 2017 EIA Regulations.

The Applicant stated it was aiming to provide draft documents for review by the Inspectorate in May 2018. The Inspectorate advised that should the Applicant decide to take advantage of the service, a period of about six weeks should be programmed for the Inspectorate to review and feed back.



The Applicant's attention was drawn to the latest example document published to the Planning Inspectorate's website: [National Grid's 'Guide to the application'](#). All applicants were being advised to prepare an equivalent document as part of their applications for development consent.

Specific decisions/ follow-up required?

The following action was agreed:

- Highways England to confirm basic project information for project webpage on the Planning Inspectorate's website.