

A47/A11 Thickthorn Junction

Scheme Number: TR010037

Volume 9

9.38 Applicant's Response to the Secretary of State's 3rd Request for Comments

The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010
Rule 8(1)(c)

Planning Act 2008

October 2022

Infrastructure Planning

Planning Act 2008

**The Infrastructure Planning
(Examination Procedure) Rules 2010**

A47/A11 Thickthorn Junction
Development Consent Order 202[x]

**9.38 APPLICANT'S RESPONSE TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S
3rd REQUEST FOR COMMENTS**

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 The Development Consent Order (DCO) application for the A47/A11 Thickthorn scheme was submitted on 31 March 2021 and accepted for examination on 28 April 2021.
- 1.1.2 The examination closed on 23 March 2022 and the Examining Authority submitted their recommendations to the Secretary of State on 20 June 2022.
- 1.1.3 This document sets out Highways England's (the Applicant's) response to the Secretary of State's 2nd Request for Comments issued on 19 August 2022.

2 KEY ABBREVIATIONS

- 2.1.1 The following abbreviations may be used in the Applicant's responses:
- dDCO = draft Development Consent Order
 - DMRB = Design Manual for Roads and Bridges
 - EIA = Environmental Impact Assessment
 - ES = Environmental Statement
 - ExA = Examining Authority
 - NPSNN = National Policy Statement for National Networks 2014
 - the Scheme = the A47/A11 Thickthorn Junction

3 APPLICANT'S RESPONSES TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S 3RD REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

No.	Question To	SoS Question	Response
1	The Applicant	<p>1. The Secretary of State notes that the signed Statement of Common Ground dated 22 August 2022 is also dated November 2021 in places. The Applicant is asked to confirm that the correct version of the Statement of Common Ground was submitted in response to the Secretary of State's consultation letter dated 19 August 2022.</p>	<p>The Applicant can confirm that the Statement of Common Ground between Natural England and Highways England submitted to the Secretary of State on 5 September 2022 is the final signed version of the Statement of Common Ground. The document was finalised in November 2021 as detailed on the cover page, however this was not formally signed by Natural England and National Highways until 22 August 2022, as indicated by the date of the signatures.</p>
2	The Applicant	<p>2. The Secretary of State notes Natural England's advice to the Applicant regarding the realignment of Cantley stream and the possible need for a mitigation license in respect of Otters, as outlined in the signed Statement of Common Ground dated 22 August 2022, and the concerns raised by Dr Boswell in his email of 11 September 2022 regarding otters and a letter of no impediment. The Secretary of State invites the applicant to respond to these points.</p>	<p>With regards to the otters, updated surveys have been undertaken by the Applicant throughout 2022. The data that has been collated via trail cam and survey would indicate that the otters are utilising Cantley Stream periodically to forage for food and re-mark territory i.e., every three to four weeks, however, this may vary seasonally depending on food availability within the otter's territory. Most of the otter signs were noted downstream of the DCO boundary (along Cantley Stream) within the locality of the Stillwater fishery. It is intended that continuity of the river corridor would be maintained during construction, and as such it is not anticipated that the works would be licensable with regard to otters and will be carried out under a sensitive working method statement. A specialist ecological consultant is currently developing the working method statement in consultation with Natural England.</p>