



National Infrastructure Planning
Temple Quay House
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Bristol
BS1 6PN

A47 North Tuddenham to Easton
Highways England
Woodlands
Manton Road
Bedford
MK41 7LW

20 July 2021

Dear Ms Church

**APPLICATION BY HIGHWAYS ENGLAND FOR AN ORDER GRANTING
DEVELOPMENT CONSENT FOR THE A47 NORTH TUDDENHAM TO EASTON
PROJECT (TR010038)**

**APPLICANT'S RESPONSE TO RULE 6 LETTER AND PROCEDURAL DEADLINE
A SUBMISSION**

1. Introduction

In advance of the Preliminary Meeting in respect of the application for the A47 North Tuddenham to Easton Order (the Application), this letter addresses a number of matters raised in the Examining Authority's (ExA) notice of the Preliminary Meeting (the Rule 6 Letter), to be discussed further at the Preliminary Meeting.

2. Annex F - Statements of Common Ground

Since acceptance of the Application, Highways England has been working towards producing a number of Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) with a number of consultees in relation to the Scheme, as follows:

- Natural England
- Environment Agency
- Historic England
- Norfolk County Council
- Breckland Council
- Broadland District Council
- South Norfolk Council

Highways England will seek SoCGs where possible with the bodies listed above that it has been engaging with to-date and/or those that may be affected by the Application. Highways England will also keep the ExA updated on the progress of

the SoCGs and negotiation with the Statutory Undertakers and any required Protective Provisions throughout the Examination.

Highways England will endeavour to meet the deadlines set out in the timetable in relation to submission of the SoCGs.

3. Annex F - The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the Habitats Regulations)

We acknowledge the ExA's request for completed matrices to:

- Summarise the likely significant effects for each European site assessed; and
- summarise the implications for the integrity of each European site assessed, where a likely significant effect either alone or in combination with other plans and projects has been identified.

In response to this request, we wish to direct the ExA's attention to Appendix C 'Planning Inspectorate Screening Matrix' of application document '6.9 Report to Inform Habitats Regulations Assessment' (**APP-139**). This contains the completed matrices as per Appendices 1 and 2 templates accompanying Advice Note Ten: Habitat Regulations Assessment relevant to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects, November 2017¹.

We would be grateful for confirmation at the Preliminary Meeting that this fulfils this requirement.

4. Timetable for Examination

Highways England has the following comments on the ExA's timetable.

Item 11 – Deadline 3

Submission of comment on Local Impact Reports and the Applicant's response to the ExA's First Written Questions is exactly 2 weeks following submission of these documents to the Planning Inspectorate. Taking into account time for these documents to be checked and uploaded by the Planning Inspectorate, this leaves a limited period for a thorough review by the Applicant and Interested Parties, respectively, of this output that may include new or updated documents in response to ExA questions. With a period of 5 weeks after Deadline 3 before the 02 to 05 November Hearings, Highways England would wish to explore the potential to extend Deadline 3 by a week without impacting the remaining Examination timetable.

Item 11 – Deadline 4

With four days of Hearings planned to finish Friday 05 November, the time scale for submission of written summaries of oral submissions made at hearings w/c 1 November 2021 by Deadline 4 (Tuesday 09 November 2021) could also prove to be very challenging. Specifically, Highways England will

¹ Available at <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/legislation-and-advice/advice-notes/>

be required to respond to the Examining Authority's written questions for Deadline 4, together with preparing submissions on the oral case following a possible four days of hearings in that week.

Conscious of the value of the other Deadline 4 outputs to inform subsequent timetable activities, Highways England would therefore wish to request moving Deadline 4 to Friday 12 November 2021.

Item 11 – Deadline 7 and proposed new deadline

It would assist Highways England with preparing its response to the items required at Deadline 7 if the deadline was pushed back to Monday 17 January 2022. This would allow enough time following the time spent at any hearings at the end of w/c 3 January 2022 or early into w/c 10 January 2022 to respond to the following items:

- Comments on responses to the ExA's further Written Questions (if required)
- Comments on the ExA's proposed schedule of changes to the draft DCO (if issued)
- Comments on any additional information/ submissions received by D6
- Any further information requested by the ExA under Rule 17 of the Examination Rules

In addition, Highways England is proposing a new deadline in w/c 17 January for submitting written summaries of oral submissions made at any hearings in w/c 3 January 2022 or w/c 10 January 2022 (as appropriate). This would still leave time for Interested Parties to respond at Deadline 8 to any submissions received at Deadline 7, the new proposed deadline.

Items 13 and 21 – Hearings (2 to 5 November 2021 and w/c 3 January 2022)

It would also assist all parties' preparation to have full agendas for all hearings as soon as is practicable and in good time prior to a hearing. This will enable Highways England to better assist the ExA in hearings.

Highways England would also be grateful if the ExA is able to provide an early indication of the precise nature of any additional Issue Specific Hearings (ISHs) in order for Highways England, and stakeholders, to secure the availability of appropriate experts for the respective hearings.

Finally, with notices of Hearings needing to be issued at least 21 days in advance and newspaper bookings needing the notice 2 weeks prior to publication, Highways England would be grateful if the ExA could confirm the exact dates of each hearing no later than as follows:

- Friday 24 September 2021 - for notice publication Tuesday 12 October 2021 ahead of Tuesday 2 to Friday 5 November 2021 Hearings.

- Friday 27 November 2021 - for notice publication Tuesday 12 October 2021 ahead of w/c 03 January 2022 Hearings, assuming no Hearing on the Bank Holiday Monday.

Where Hearings are required during w/c 3 January 2022, we would request these are held on Thursday or Friday of that week or early in the following week (w/c 10 January 2022) to cater for the UK and Scottish Bank Holidays on the Monday and Tuesday, respectively, of that week. A number of the key members of the Project team are based in Scotland and will be essential for the hearings if any are to take place during w/c 3 January 2022. In addition, at least one working day of preparation time for the hearings will be required following the end of the Bank Holidays which all parties will benefit from.

Items 25 – Deadline 10

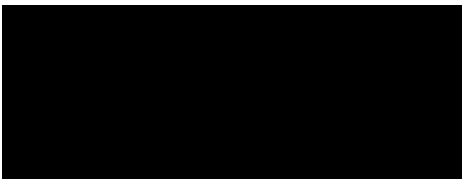
Highways England would request the Examination closure date of 9 February 2022 is maintained and would discuss the above requests in this context.

5. Proposed Attendees at Preliminary Meeting 1

Highways England will attend the Preliminary Meeting and proposes to address the ExA on the matters set out in this letter. The list of proposed attendees at the Preliminary Meeting 1 on behalf of Highways England is enclosed at Schedule 1.

Highways England will also be attending Preliminary Meeting 2, if required, and all hearings listed at Annex D of the Rule 6 letter and, following receipt of the agendas, Highways England will produce a list of proposed speakers and present this to the ExA ahead of the relevant hearing.

Yours sincerely



James Powis
Project Manager
Highways England

SCHEDULE 1

List of Applicant Attendees at Preliminary Meeting 1

Attendee	Organisation	Email	Phone Number
Michael Fry (Barrister – consultant to WBD, Speaker at PM)	Womble Bond Dickinson (UK) LLP	[REDACTED]@ftbchambers.co.uk	020 7353 8415
Claire Brook (Lead Legal Advisor)		[REDACTED]@wbd-uk.com	0345 415 0000
Kate Ashworth		[REDACTED]@wbd-uk.com	
James Powis (Project Manager)	Highways England	[REDACTED]@highwaysengland.co.uk	0300 470 7093 / [REDACTED]
Glen Owen (Senior Project Manager)		[REDACTED]@highwaysengland.co.uk	[REDACTED]
Brian Harrison (Project Manager)	Galliford Try	[REDACTED]n@gallifordtry.co.uk	[REDACTED]
Barrie Arthur (Project Manager)	Sweco	[REDACTED]r@sweco.co.uk	0131 550 6300
Michael Robinson (DCO Lead)		[REDACTED]@sweco.co.uk	0113 262 0000
Gail Currie (EIA Lead)		[REDACTED]@sweco.co.uk	0113 262 0000