



Meeting note

Project name	A47 North Tuddenham to Easton
File reference	TR010038
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	29 June 2020
Meeting with	Highways England
Venue	Telecon
Meeting objectives	Project update
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

The Applicant confirmed to the Inspectorate that statutory consultation closed on 30 April 2020 following an extension of the consultation period to allow additional time for responses to account for restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The Applicant explained that it was currently considering the responses to statutory consultation and how it would have regard to those comments in finalising the design of the scheme.

Referring to the Statutory Consultation Plan Layout¹, the Inspectorate enquired about a proposed spur at the Berrys Lane/Wood Lane junction which would facilitate the Norwich Western Link Connection; a non-Highways England scheme. The Applicant stated that it was exploring how this work could be included in its draft Development Consent Order (DCO).

The Inspectorate asked the Applicant if Easton Parish Council had responded to statutory consultation, and if so whether it had expressed a preference for a pedestrian overpass or underpass of the A47. The Applicant stated that it understood the parish council's interest was to minimise the visual intrusion of any crossing, but it had not expressed a preference for either option.

¹ Available at: <https://highwaysengland.co.uk/projects/a47-north-tuddenham-to-easton-improvement-scheme/>

The Inspectorate asked where the Applicant proposed to locate construction compounds. The Applicant explained that the exact location of construction compounds was still to be finalised. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to ensure construction compounds were included in its Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). The Applicant should also ensure that any assertions made in the Environmental Statement (ES), for example around agreement with local authorities about LVIA methodology, are also evidenced. The Inspectorate advised that Examining Authorities are usually assisted by construction compounds being expressed in the Work Plans.

The Applicant anticipated that in light of the responses received at statutory consultation, and arising from other forms of engagement, some minor changes to the Red Line Boundary (RLB) would be required. As an example, the Applicant referred to the proposed diversion of the high-pressure gas main in the area of Berrys Lane. The Applicant explained that it was liaising with National Grid and as a result was considering amending the RLB to provide for the installation, wayleave and exclusion zone around the gas main.

The Inspectorate asked if supplementary consultation will be held in respect of any forthcoming changes to the RLB/scheme design. The Applicant explained that it intended to carry out a targeted engagement exercise. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to articulate clearly in the Consultation Report how its targeted engagement exercise satisfied the relevant requirements of the PA2008.

Noise surveys

The Applicant sought advice on how best to approach noise surveys, considering the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on current data sampling. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to follow guidance produced by relevant professional bodies. If noise data was collected as usual then the methodology should explain that due to COVID-19 the data collected may not fully represent background noise levels. The methodology should also set out data sources, assumptions (worst case scenarios etc) and limitations of survey data. There would be an understanding that data for the months comprising 'lockdown' were likely to represent an anomaly in trends, as outlined in the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note Seven².

Next steps

The Applicant stated that it intended to submit its DCO application in Q1 2021 and expressed a desire to utilise the Inspectorates draft documents review service in September/October 2020.

The Inspectorate and the Applicant agreed to schedule their next project update meeting to coincide with the end of the Applicant's targeted engagement exercise in Q3 2020.

² Available at: <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/legislation-and-advice/advice-notes/>