



Meeting note

Project Name	A47 Wansford to Sutton dualling
File reference	TR010039
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	7 January 2021
Meeting with	Highways England
Venue	Virtual event
Meeting objectives	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.

2018 and 2020 consultation update

The Applicant provided a brief overview of the themes emerging from the circa 700 responses received to its 2018 Statutory Consultation exercise. The Applicant drew attention to a joint response from Sutton and Wansford Parish Councils that had influenced a substantial design update in the eastern half of the scheme comprising an offline realignment of the route to the north between Sutton Heath Road and the A47/Nene junction.

The Applicant explained that the responses to its statutory consultation had been recorded in a third-party database. The Inspectorate confirmed that provision of access to the database would comprise a satisfactory response if a request to see the Applicant's raw consultation responses was engaged during the Acceptance stage¹.

The Applicant explained that it had run a further non-statutory consultation exercise in October 2020. This had provided all persons within the 2018 consultation zone, relevant local authorities and Statutory Consultees a Project Update Brochure (setting out the various changes since the previous consultation), a Design Development

¹ Under regulation 5(5) of The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009

Report and a plan of the updated Red Line Boundary (RLB). New land interests identified in light of updates to the RLB has been consulted on a statutory basis under s44 of the PA2008.

The Applicant explained that one of the design updates which created a new access from the village of Upton to the A47 via Sutton Heath Road had received a negative reception from residents of the village. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to capture the responses to any non-statutory consultation, and the Applicant's response to them, within the Consultation Report submitting with its application.

Scoping update

The Applicant set out that since the scheme's recent design changes and updated RLB, it had reviewed whether the changes gave rise to the potential for any new likely significant effects (LSEs), and as a consequence a requirement to re-scope. The Applicant explained that due to the extent of the study areas included in its original scoping exercise it was confident all LSEs for the updated scheme had been captured and assessed and that re-scoping would not be required.

The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to clearly set out in the Environmental Statement its justification for considering that re-scoping was not necessary and to confirm in the narrative how the relevant environmental bodies were consulted on the changes. The Applicant confirmed that it intended to follow the approach advised by the Inspectorate. It noted no concerns had been raised during recent dialogue with Natural England.

Current programme and future meetings

The Applicant confirmed that it revised the date upon which it expected to submit its application to the Inspectorate from March 2021 to May 2021.

Whilst the Inspectorate and the Applicant had agreed for the advice given on draft documents associated with the A47 Blofield to North Burlingham application to be transposed to the A47 Wansford to Sutton application, the Inspectorate confirmed that this did not mean that it would not be responsive to requests for focused advice on any additional draft documents that the Applicant wished to submit. The Applicant welcomed this offer and confirmed that it would consider sharing key draft documents, including the sections of its draft Consultation Report covering its approach, to the 2020 consultation exercise.

It was agreed that the next meeting would be arranged following receipt of advice on any draft documents provided. In the interim the Inspectorate requested for the Applicant to keep it up to date in the event there were further changes in the Applicant's programme for submission.

It was noted the project page on the National Infrastructure Planning website currently displayed no anticipated submission date. The Applicant agreed to provide the Inspectorate with a date and updated contact details as soon as practicable.