

# A47 Blofield to North Burlingham

**Scheme Number: TR010040**

**Volume 8**

## **8.5 Statement of Common Ground with Highways England and Natural England**

Rule 8(1)(e)

Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed  
Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009

July 2021

Deadline 1

Infrastructure Planning

Planning Act 2008

**The Infrastructure Planning  
(Applications: Prescribed Forms and  
Procedure) Regulations 2009**

A47 Blofield to North Burlingham  
Development Consent Order 202[x]

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**STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND – NATURAL ENGLAND**

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| <b>Regulation Number:</b>                     | Rule 8(1)(e)   |
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|----------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Rev 0          | July 2021   | Deadline 1               |

### STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

This statement of Common Ground has been prepared and agreed by (1) Highways England Company Limited and (2) Natural England.

Signed .....

Nikki Rowley-Todd

Project Manager

On behalf of Highways England

Date: **INSERT DATE**

Signed .....

**NAME**

**POSITION**

On behalf of Natural England

Date: **INSERT DATE**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Purpose of this Document

1.1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SOCG) relates to an application made by Highways England (“the Applicant”) to the Planning Inspectorate (“PINS”) under Section 37 of the Planning Act 2008 (“PA 2008”) for a Development Consent Order (a “DCO”). If made the DCO would grant consent for the Applicant to undertake the A47 Blofield to North Burlingham Scheme (“the Scheme”). A detailed description of the Scheme can be found in the ES Chapter 2 The Proposed Scheme (**APP-40**).

1.1.2 This SoCG does not seek to replicate information which is available elsewhere within the Application documents. All documents are available on the Planning Inspectorate website.

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/eastern/a47-blofield-to-north-burlingham/>

1.1.3 The SoCG has been produced to confirm to the Examining Authority where agreement has been reached between the parties to it, and where agreement has not (yet) been reached. SoCGs are an established means in the planning process of allowing all parties to identify and so focus on specific issues that may need to be addressed during the examination.

### 1.2 Parties to this Statement of Common Ground

1.2.1 This SoCG has been prepared by (1) Highways England as the Applicant and (2) Natural England.

1.2.2 Highways England became the Government-owned Strategic Highways Company on 1 April 2015. It is the highway authority in England for the strategic road network and has the necessary powers and duties to operate, manage, maintain and enhance the network. Regulatory powers remain with the Secretary of State. The legislation establishing Highways England made provision for all legal rights and obligations of the Highways Agency, including in respect of the Application, to be conferred upon or assumed by Highways England.

1.2.3 Natural England is the government’s adviser for the natural environment in England, helping to protect England’s nature and landscapes for people to enjoy and for the services they provide. Within England, they are responsible for:

- promoting nature conservation and protecting biodiversity
- conserving and enhancing the landscape
- promoting access to the countryside and open spaces and encouraging open-air
- recreation
- contributing in other ways to social and economic well-being through management of the natural environment, e.g. changes to wildlife licensing to improve flexibility for developers.

### 1.3 Terminology

1.3.1 In the tables in Section 3 'Issues' of this SoCG, the following terminology is used:

- "Agreed" indicates where the issue has been resolved
- "Not Agreed" indicates a final position
- "Under discussion" where these points will be the subject of on-going discussion wherever possible to resolve, or refine, the extent of disagreement between the parties.

1.3.2 It can be taken that any matters not specifically referred to in the Chapter 3 of this SoCG are not of material interest or relevance to Natural England, and therefore have not been the subject of any discussions between the parties. As such, those matters can be read as agreed, only to the extent that they are either not of material interest or relevance to Natural England.

## 2 RECORD OF ENGAGEMENT

2.1.1 A summary of the meetings and correspondence that has taken place between Highways England and Natural England in relation to the Application is outlined in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1 : Record of Engagement

| Date     | Form of correspondence | Key topics discussed and key outcomes (the topics should align with the Issues tables)  |
|----------|------------------------|---|
| 07/03/18 | Letter                 | NE provided comment in the Scoping Opinion.   |
| 01/02/20 | Email                  | Consultation was undertaken with NE to consider biodiversity net gain. The fragmented landscape presents an opportunity for biodiversity net gain and to mitigate habitat severance.  |
| 13/02/20 | Email                  | Natural England detailed that Barbastelle bats are flying to feed south of A47 from NWL road. They detailed that contact should be made with the Norfolk County Council to obtain survey records for Barbastelle bats.<br><br>This was undertaken and these records were requested 13.02.2020, however no additional data was received. |
| 28/07/20 | Email                  | The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) published updated guidance that had been referenced in the proposed methodology section of the EIA Scoping Report. Technical disciplines contacted NE to confirm changes to the proposed methodology to be adopted in the Environmental Statement (ES).                                  |
| 04/08/20 | Email                  | Alterations in guidance and changes to the scoping discussion.  |
| 28/09/20 | Email                  | Report to Inform Habitat regulations Assessment (HRA) submitted on 28.09.2020. Response agreed by Natural England on 19.10.2020.  |
| 23/04/21 | Email                  | SoCG shared with Natural England for comment.   |

2.1.2 It is agreed that this is an accurate record of the key meetings and consultation undertaken between (1) Highways England and (2) Natural England in relation to the issues addressed in this SoCG.

### 3 ISSUES

Table 3-1 : Issues

| Issue                               | Document Reference (if relevant)           | Natural England Comment   | Highways England Response   | Status           | Date |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|------------------|------|
| NE informed of DMRB guidance update | ES technical chapters                      | NE responded to individual discipline leads regarding scope.  | Specialist teams responded to NE queries and adopted changes in the relevant ES chapters as per discussions.  | Under discussion |      |
| Mapping                             | ES Chapter 8, Figure 8-1 (APP-046)         | NE want statutory sites, County Wildlife Sites and priority habitats on one plan. NE said Roadside Nature Reserve (RNR) records are held by Norfolk WT.   | This was provided.  | Under discussion |      |
| Impact upon Barbastelle bats        | ES Chapter 8, section 8.12.5 (APP-046)     | Barbastelle bats are flying to feed south of A47 from NWL road. Highways England to ask Norfolk County Council for survey records for Barbastelle. Records requested 13.02.2020.                | Records were requested on the 13.02.2020. No additional data was received from Norfolk County Council. However, discussions regarding Barbastelles bats was carried out with NWL Environment Liaison Group. | Under discussion |      |
| HRA                                 | HRA; ES Chapter 8, section 8.8.1 (APP-119) | Natural England reviewed the HRA and subject to the proposed avoidance and mitigation measures concur with the conclusion that there will be no likely significant effects on designated sites. | Noted   | Under discussion |      |