



## **Application by Highways England for an Order granting Development Consent for M54 to M6 Link Road**

**Case Reference: TR010054**

### **Examining Authority's Record of an Unaccompanied Site Inspection on Tuesday 16 June 2020**

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1 As Examining Authority (ExA) we undertook our first Unaccompanied Site Inspection to support our examination of an application for development consent for the proposed road linking the M54, from junction 1, to the M6 at junction 11, on 16 June 2020.
- 1.2 The application has been made by Highways England (the Applicant).
- 1.3 We carried out the unaccompanied visit shortly after our appointment as ExA but before the Preliminary Meeting, the date of which is yet to be confirmed.
- 1.4 Inspections were undertaken from publicly accessible land including highways and public rights of way. No access to private land including that forming part of the application site was sought and therefore we were able to undertake the inspection on an unaccompanied basis.
- 1.5 We undertook the inspection on our own. We did not encounter any interested parties or other persons during our inspection with one exception. Towards the end of the visit when we stopped outside Moseley Olde Hall a lady approached us to confirm the Hall was closed and we had a brief exchange to confirm who we were.
- 1.6 Our inspection was primarily undertaken by car, driving the surrounding roads and stopping at various points to view or walk for particular points.
- 1.7 Further site inspections, including accompanied inspections, will be required. Before agreeing to any additional site inspections at particular locations, we will consider the degree to which it is necessary to visit a site that has been nominated for an inspection to inform the ExA about the application. We may decide not to visit nominated locations where we have already visited the location or we consider that it is not necessary to see the features to be observed there.
- 1.8 Arrangements for any Accompanied Site Visits will be included in the ExA's Examination Timetable and the Rule 8 letter to be issued after the Preliminary Meeting.
- 1.9 Further site inspection notes will be published following further site visits.

#### **2. Particulars of the Inspection**

- 2.1 The purpose of the visit was for us as ExA to become familiar with the Application site and surrounding area. Our visit commenced at approximately 11:00 hours and was completed by approximately 13:30 hours. The weather

was generally dry and visibility was good. Due to social distancing restrictions we each drove our own cars and followed a previously settled route.

2.2 The details of the route and general commentary are provided in the following bullet points.

- We met and commenced the site visit at Hilton Park (northbound) Services. From there we drove along M6 under J11 and to J12.
- Exited at junction 12 and drove west on A5 to Gailey roundabout crossing West Coast Main Line.
- We then drove south on A449 to M54 J2. Along the route we noted the location of the West Midlands Interchange Site and various villages including Standeford, Cross Green and Coven Heath.
- At Junction 2 we entered the M54 and drove east on M54 to J1
- Exited the M54 at Junction 1 onto the A460 northbound and stopped at The Avenue in Featherstone. At this point we walked back to Junction 1 of the M54 and circuited the junction. This enabled us to view general landform, woodland belts and general layout and arrangement of current road system and surrounding development. We were also able to take in parts of Featherstone and this part of Cannock Road.
- On returning to our vehicles we then drove northeast on A460 to M6 J11 and then to M6 (Toll) junction T8 and returned on A460 and then south on A462 towards Warstone. This enabled us to view the route to be replaced, including the various current junction arrangements on route and at junction 11, the villages of Featherstone, Shareshill and housing at Laney Green.
- Travelled west on Hilton Lane over M6 to A460 stopping en route to walk Right of Way Shareshill 3 north of Hilton Lane. This enabled us to view the general alignment of the proposed route at this point, the general topography, landscape, woodland blocks, field boundaries and general landform in the area. We were able to hear traffic from the M6 and saw some horse riders along bridleway Shareshill 1.
- Drove south along Dark Lane from Hilton Lane stopping at Park Drive where we walked and reviewed location of housing, the edge of Hilton Park, boundary, location of proposed turning area and the proposed new footpath link to Hilton Lane.
- Drove down to junction and turned right onto A460 and drove and turned in for Shareshill where we stopped, then drove on to Little Saredon and round to the A460 along Mill Lane.
- Traveling South along A460 turned left into lower part of Hilton Lane and traversed Hilton Lane/Dark Lane loop to ensure all parts had been covered.
- At the junction of Dark Lane and A460 went straight across to New Road and turned left onto Hilton Road down to The Avenue. Drove West on The Avenue and then along East Road, Brookhouse Lane, Cat and Kittens Lane and Brinsford Lane to A449. Along this journey we were able to view the sites of ROF Featherstone.

- Drove south on A449 crossing M54 J2 in general direction of Wolverhampton, to then return on A460 to ARN.
- Drove past Hilton Cross Business Park.
- Drove on to Moseley Olde Hall to see relationship with M54 and general area, and on way viewed surrounding area and saw Whitgreaves Wood.
- Returned to A460 and onto to Junction 1 of the M54 where the visit was concluded.

### 3. **Conclusion**

- 3.1 We have now familiarised ourselves with the route of the proposed scheme, existing roads and the surrounding area, including the landscape and general landform and the proximity of the various settlements in its vicinity.
- 3.2 We did not walk along all the various existing routes for Non-Motorised Users. We would anticipate visiting these routes during the course of the Examination. We may visit these routes on an unaccompanied basis since we would be using public rights of way.
- 3.3 Further unaccompanied site visits will take place during the examination. The programme for accompanied site inspections will be discussed at the Preliminary Meeting when it is conducted.

*Robert Jackson*

Robert Jackson

**Lead Member of the Panel of Examining Inspectors**

*Kenneth Stone*

Kenneth Stone

**Panel Member**