

Application by Highways England for M54 to M6 Link Road

Comments on the suitability of virtual site inspection methods - Issued on 18 Jan 2020

Response Deadline 5A 27th Jan 2021

Responses From: Allow Ltd

1. Allow Ltd are disappointed the February site inspections will not be going ahead as planned. If an ASI would be '*permissible*' under current Government guidance on COVID-19, then at the very least unaccompanied site inspections should be taking place on the 9th and 10th February. A physical visit would ensure the Examiners are able to make unbiased observations of the site during the examination period to assist with considering all material matters outstanding.
2. We do not agree that there is sufficient time remaining in the Examination timetable following the rescheduled ASI dates in late March.
3. If a virtual site inspection becomes the only option left available for the Examiners to safely understand the site, in respect of the material matters outstanding, then Allow Ltd consider from the two options suggested by the Examining Authority, 360° photography from specific locations to be the most appropriate.
4. Notwithstanding above, Allow Ltd consider there may also be some merit in Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) video footage of the proposed development site, specifically to show the crossing points of bats over the location of the proposed link road.
5. Allow Ltd consider it of the utmost importance the Examiners view the site in person, especially in consideration of the woodland mitigation areas proposed, but if not possible, locations of 360° photography should be agreed with Interested Parties, to ensure there are no areas or viewpoints absent from the photography collected by the Applicant or their contractors.
6. To conclude, Allow Ltd consider the two virtual site options proposed to present unnecessary challenges on the Applicant and Interested Parties within the consultation period. We do not consider there to be sufficient time available within the Examination timetable to review, understand and make informed responses to the additional digital information that will consequently be submitted.