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Planning Inspectorate Case Team M54/M6

M54 to M6 Link Road Scheme – Deadline 7

This cover letter provides information on the following:

- Documents submitted at Deadline 7
- Further details on three amendments to documents made at Deadline 7

Summary of key amendments

The following section provides details of where minor changes have been made to the scheme to reflect requests from the Examining Authority (ExA) or third parties. The changes are all very minor and would not result in any materially new or different environmental effects.

Incorporation of additional footpath into the design

On 26 February 2021 the ExA published a Schedule of Recommended Amendments to the Applicant's draft Development Consent Order submitted at Deadline 6 [REP6-002/REP6-003] [PD-025]. The recommended amendment to Schedule 3 Part 6 provided for an additional pedestrian and cycle link between the existing A460 and the new roundabout at western side of the dumbbell roundabout at Featherstone. The ExA stated that this should run as per option E2 as discussed in our response to ExQ3.10.8.

On 16 March 2021 we submitted an e-mail to the ExA proposing that the route broadly followed an alternative alignment previously referred to as E1 in the Applicant's response to ExQ3.10.8. It was confirmed that this route would be a footpath and would not cater for cyclists. See [AS-134] for a plan and e-mail summarising the alternative suggested. The ExA issued a Rule 17 letter dated 19 March 2021 stating:

'While this alternative route would not be suitable for cyclists, the ExA notes that such users are less sensitive to using slightly longer routes than pedestrians. Subject to the caveats set out in

the Applicant's communication, the ExA considers that this alternative route would provide an appropriate route and asks that the Applicant include that within its submissions at D7, 26 March 2021.'

Consequently, a new footpath route has been added to the Scheme broadly following the E1 route, as shown on the Streets, Rights of Way and Access Plan [TR010054/APP/2.7 Version P05] sheet 4 of 10 submitted at Deadline 7. An additional Work Item (Work No 91) has been added to the Works Plans, draft Development Consent Order (DCO) and Statement of Reasons submitted at Deadline 7 to secure provision of this additional footpath.

The design change has been assessed in line with the methodologies set out in the ES [TR010054/APP/6.1]. The new pedestrian route would result in an improvement for pedestrians using the existing A460 footway, compared to the current proposal. The new route would result in a reduction in route length of approximately 248 m for pedestrians travelling from The Avenue, Featherstone to the south of the M54 compared to the route running alongside the carriageways around Featherstone Interchange. Additional tree loss would be minimised by sensitive routing, details of this have been included in the OEMP (D-L7) [TR010054/APP/6.11, Version 5 submitted at Deadline 7]. All mitigation measures specified within the OEMP will apply, including those relating to protected species and lighting (D-BIO8) [TR010054/APP/6.11]. We are satisfied that there would be no change to the overall conclusions of any of the topic specific assessments as reported in the ES.

Hilton Lane Speed Limit Change

Staffordshire County Council requested that there be an incremental speed limit drop from National Speed Limit to 40mph then 30mph along Hilton Lane rather than an abrupt change from National Speed Limit to 30mph. We seek to implement this change through a change to the draft DCO and Traffic Regulations Measures Plans [TR010054/APP/2.8 Version P04] sheet 5 of 10 submitted at Deadline 7. Please also see pages 42-43 of the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) with Staffordshire County Council for a record of the agreed position on this matter.

Changes to A460 tie in

Minor changes to the design have been made to the tie in detail between the new and old alignment of Cannock Road at the request of Staffordshire County Council. See page 42 of the Statement of Common Ground with SCC submitted at Deadline 7 for a record of this agreement. This change has been reflected in the General Arrangement Scheme Layout plans and all other plans that have the General Arrangement overlaid. An additional Work Item (Work No 90) has been added, and two Work Items (Work No 18 and 19) have been removed from the Works Plans, draft DCO and Statement of Reasons submitted at Deadline 7 to reflect this minor design change.

Documents Submitted

Please see below for a table of documents submitted at Deadline 7, with details of what has changed since the previous version. Where SoCGs are final at this deadline these are enclosed to provide the ExA with more time to consider the contents during the final stages of Examination.

Table 1: Documents submitted at Deadline 7

No.	Document name	Version	Changes
1.5	Guide to the Application (clean and tracked)	P14	Updated for revised/ new application documents.
2.4	Works Plans	P04	As per General Arrangement Scheme Layout, plus the removal of Work No 18 and 19 and the addition of Work No 90 and 91 (change to sheet 4 only)
2.5	General Arrangement Scheme Layout	P04	Minor amendments to tie in detail between the new and old alignment of Cannock Road and change in priority at Cannock Road/ Avenue junction (change to Sheet 4 only).
2.7	Streets, Rights of Way and Access Plans	P05	As per General Arrangement Scheme Layout plus addition of the new footpath to the Featherstone West roundabout (change to sheet 4 only).
2.8	Traffic Regulation Measures Plans	P04	As per General Arrangement Scheme Layout plus addition of new Traffic Regulation Order to add a 'buffer' speed limit of 40 mph along Hilton Lane as agreed with Staffordshire County Council (change to sheets 4 and 5).
2.9	Classification of Roads Plans	P04	As per General Arrangement Scheme Layout (change to sheet 4 only).
2.11	Outline Drainage Plans	P04	As per General Arrangement Scheme Layout (change to sheet 4 only).
3.1	Draft DCO (clean and tracked; pdf and word versions)	6	The Applicant has reviewed the ExA's Schedule of Recommended Amendments to the draft DCO [PD-025] and amended the draft DCO accordingly. A full response to each proposed amendment is provided in Section 3 of our document TR010054/APP/8.27 submitted at Deadline 7. Section 3 also summarises other changes made to the draft DCO at Deadline 7.
	Validation report for Draft DCO	N/A	N/A
3.2	Explanatory Memorandum (clean and tracked)	5	The Explanatory Memorandum has been updated to reflect the changes to the draft DCO requested by the ExA and to explain the addition of a new paragraph at Article 11(8) (classification of roads etc.) which secures a reduced speed limit on Hilton Lane requested by Staffordshire County Council (the rationale for this change is also provided at table 3.3 in doc 8.27).

No.	Document name	Version	Changes
4.1	Statement of Reasons (clean and tracked)	P09	Changes to work packages to reflect minor design changes described in this letter.
6.2	Environment masterplan Figures 2.1 to 2.7.	P16	Update to add in new footpath from Cannock Road and to update changes to detail at the A460 tie in.
6.8	Tree Preservation Order Impact/Removal Plans (clean and tracked)	3	Amended to add in tree preservation order/tree removal plans as requested by the ExA in their comments on the draft DCO (26/02/21).
6.11	Outline Environmental Management Plan (clean and tracked)	5	Amended to include additional commitments made in SoCG and to cover construction of the new footpath at Cannock Road.
8.8LA(A)	SoCG with Staffordshire County Council SoCG	7(P08)	Signed final SoCG.
8.8LA(B)	SoCG with South Staffordshire Council	7(P08)	Signed final SoCG.
8.8LA(C)	SoCG with City of Wolverhampton	3(P04)	Signed final SoCG.
8.8P(C)	SoCG with Historic England	7(P08)	Signed final SoCG.
8.8P(D)	SoCG with Hilton, Featherstone & Brinsford and Shareshill Parish Councils	4(P08)	Signed final SoCG.
8.8LIU(E)	SoCG with Mark and Tracey Commins	5(P06)	Signed final SoCG.
8.8LIU(M)	SoCG with Openreach	2(P02)	This version of the SoCG represents our understanding of the position, as no comments have been received. This is considered by us to be in its final form, as we consider it highly unlikely that we will receive a response before the end of the Examination due to the lack of engagement to date.
8.8O(D)	SoCG with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust SoCG	6(P08)	Signed final SoCG
8.27	Applicant Responses to the Examining Authority's Further Written Questions And Representations Made at Deadline 6	1	Document provides our responses to further written question responses from interested parties; our responses to representations made at Deadline 6; our response to the ExA's recommended changes to the draft DCO (and other changes to the draft DCO) and our responses to additional ExA requests.

Responses to Rule 17 letter issued on 19 March

On 19 March 2021 the ExA issued a Rule 17 letter requesting further information. On these requests we confirm as set out in the table below.

Topic	Matters Raised	Applicant Response
Staffordshire County Council	The need for Protective Provisions.	The two highway authorities have agreed that there is no need for Protective Provisions in the draft DCO in favour of the County Council. This agreement is recorded in the signed SoCG submitted at Deadline 7. There is therefore no need for draft 'without prejudice' provisions to be submitted at Deadline 8.
SSW and Cadent Gas	Protective Provisions	Response to be provided at Deadline 8.
National Trust	Planning Obligation	We have entered into discussions with the National Trust on this matter. A full response will be provided at Deadline 8.
Footpath link	Right of Way between Cannock Road and Featherstone West Roundabout	Response provided in this letter and accompanying documents.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any queries or would like to discuss any documents submitted at this Deadline.

Yours Sincerely



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