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To all Interested and Statutory Parties

Your Ref:

Our Ref: TR010054

Date: 31 March 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 (as amended) – Rule 9

Application by Highways England for an Order Granting Development Consent for the M54 to M6 Link Road Project

Proposed Changes and Publication of 360° Photography

We write further to the letter from the Applicant dated 26 March 2021 which accompanied the Applicant's Deadline (D) 7 submissions.

Proposed Changes

In that submission, the Applicant made a number of proposed alterations to the Proposed Development although not formally requesting them as a change to the Application. The Examining Authority considers that these alterations should be considered as a formal request to change the Proposed Development.

These changes propose:

1. Proposed Footpath between Cannock Road to Featherstone West roundabout (Work 91);
2. Re-design of Cannock Road/The Avenue junction so as to change priority;
3. Re-design of area in front of the petrol station and local businesses on Cannock Road (Work 90 to replace former Works 18 and 19);
4. Addition of 40mph speed limit on Hilton Lane to east of existing proposed 30 mph speed limit;
5. Formal inclusion of tree removal plans as examination documents in their own right; and
6. New fence and hedge on south side of Dark Lane (part of Work 80).

The Work numbers are as set out in the draft Development Consent Order (version 6) (Examination Library Reference [REP7-011]), the Streets, Rights of way and Access Plan [REP7-006], Traffic Regulations Measures Plans [REP7-007], and Works Plans

[REP7-004], all submitted at D7. There are equivalent changes in the General Arrangement Scheme Layout Plans [REP7-005], and provisions relating to them in the Outline Environmental Management Plan [REP7-010], also as submitted at D7. Plans showing the Tree Preservation Order Impact/Removal Plans, which had previously been submitted as part of the Appendix 7.1 to the ES [AS-100/AS-101] were also separately submitted [REP7-024] as well as a number of other documents.

The ExA has reviewed the information provided and assessed the Applicant's letter in line with paragraphs 109 to 115 of DCLG Guidance 'Planning Act 2008: Examination of Applications for Development Consent' and the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note 16.

The ExA notes that the identified amendments to the design are set within the red line boundary for the scheme and both individually and cumulatively would not result in a materially different project. The Applicant has been in discussions with those who would be directly affected by the proposed changes. The ExA accepts that the proposed changes would still allow for the Examination to be completed within the statutory timetable of six months (section 98(1) Planning Act 2008 (as amended)). They would represent minor design changes.

The ExA is therefore able to accept the above matters as non-material changes to the Application.

360° Photography

At D6A the Applicant submitted 360° Photography [REP6A-002] which had been commissioned in the event that the ExA had been unable to attend the site to view it for itself. As Participants will be aware the ExA was able to undertake further Unaccompanied Site Inspections on 16 and 17 March 2021 and has published a note of this [EV-024].

Representations were submitted at D7 that the 360° Photography was not easily viewable and the locations of the photographs were not clear, making comments difficult.

It appears that there was a misunderstanding as to the display mechanism that is available. While the base photographs have been included [REP6A-002], the mechanism was not published. This can be found at <https://app.holobuilder.com/app/?p=f9280e39-443f-4521-9b18-7e7ab56d2f61>.

This is a browser based viewer and has been tested by Planning Inspectorate staff on three different browsers. This also includes an inset including the locations of the individual photographs shown on an aerial photography base, thereby making orientation easier.

Due to this misunderstanding the ExA is content to receive further representations on the 360° Photography at **D8 (7 April 2021)** and, as it would be covered by "comments on any additional information/submissions received by D7", would not necessitate a change in the Examination Timetable.

Yours faithfully

Robert Jackson

Robert Jackson, Lead Member of the Panel