



Meeting note

File reference	Link road from M54 – M6 / M6 Toll
Status	Final
Author	Richard Kent
Date	23 June 2015
Meeting with	Highways England
Venue	Highways England Offices, The Cube, Birmingham
Attendees	Bill Birkett Bernadette Luie Faza Hussain Matt Winter Jan Griffiths
	For the Planning Inspectorate Susannah Guest (Infrastructure Planning Lead) Richard Kent (EIA Advisor)
Meeting objectives	Inception meeting for a new Nationally Significant Infrastructure project that is being promoted by Highways England
Circulation	Attendees

Summary of key points discussed and advice given:

Introductions were made and the Planning Inspectorate advised on its openness policy, that any advice given will be recorded and placed on the Planning Inspectorate website under section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 as amended (the 2008 Act). The Planning Inspectorate also noted that any advice given under section 51 does not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) can rely.

Highways England provided an overview of the proposals for a new nationally significant infrastructure project to provide an improved link between the M54 and the M6 north and M6 Toll. Highways England explained that the proposed scheme would seek to:

- reduce congestion on roads that currently form the 'signed route' from the M54 to the M6 northbound
- improve safety and reduce traffic through villages along the current 'signed route'
- support local economic growth for the surrounding area of Telford, Shrewsbury, Wolverhampton, Cannock and Tamworth.

Highways England explained that they had undertaken public consultation on 3 route options (undertaken December 2014 / January 2015) and are currently compiling the consultation feedback and preparing a business case for a Preferred Route Announcement. Highways England anticipated that they could be in a position to announce the Preferred Route by late summer 2015.

Highways England outlined some of the environmental and other survey work that has already taken place for the route options identified, including the identification of various environmental and technical constraints for which further studies will be undertaken to supplement existing desk-based and field datasets.

Highways England outlined the indicative forward programme for the proposals and noted their intention to submit an Environmental Impact Assessment scoping request to the Secretary of State later in the year or early in 2016.

The Planning Inspectorate highlighted the advice contained in Advice Note 7 for further information on the process and statutory timescales of requesting a scoping opinion.

The meeting discussed the consultation requirements under S42 - S47 of the 2008 Act and the identification of prescribed bodies under the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 (APFP regulations). The Planning Inspectorate highlighted their Advice Note series and also the recently published "Planning Act 2008: Guidance on the pre-application process" (DCLG, March 2015).