

Application by National Highways for the M3 Junction 9 improvement scheme

Case Reference: TR01005

Examining Authority's Note of an Unaccompanied Site Inspection 1

The Examining Authority (the ExA) undertook the first Unaccompanied Site Inspection (USI) on Thursday 9 March 2023. The purpose of the USI was to support the Examination of the application for development consent for proposed improvements to the M3 junction 9 (the application); the application was at the pre-examination period at the time of the USI.

The USI was spent viewing affected areas from publicly accessible land, including highway and public rights of way (PROW). The USI was undertaken in order to view the areas of proposed improvement works, the existing road and PROW network, surrounding properties and environment; it is anticipated that further USIs will take place during the Examination.

Particulars of the Site Inspection

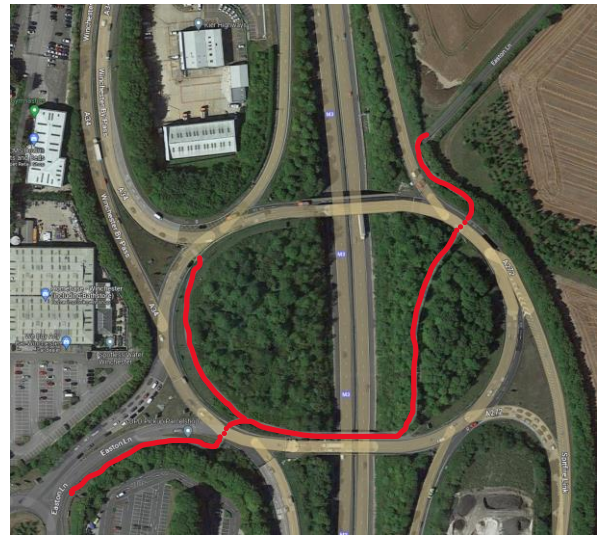
The USI was undertaken by both members of the ExA. There were no other persons in attendance. The USI was undertaken by foot and by car. Weather conditions were cold with a northerly wind and occasional light to heavy rain. The air temperature was around 4 degrees Celsius. Weather conditions allowed for long distance views and sounds to be heard to allow a general assessment of the general conditions.

The visit started at approximately 10:30 and finished at 15:00. A list of the locations visited is attached in Annex A.

Annex A

M3 Junction 9 Gyratory

The ExA began their site inspection by walking the PROW and footways in the area around the Junction 9 gyratory (J9). The public paths include a subway under the south western side of the junction which allowed access to the footway on the southern bridge of the J9. From here the footpath through to north eastern side of gyratory was used and the ExA walked to the bottom of Easton Lane (west of J9) up to where the PROW changes to a road. The ExA returned to J9 and walked along the footpath on the western side of the inner island. The area is generally shrub and tree growth typical of highway settings. The PROWs, including National Cycle Network Route 23 and a bridleway were observed, along with observation of the general traffic flow on the M3 and J9. 1 no cyclist and 1 no. pedestrian were passed.



Easton Lane (West of M3)

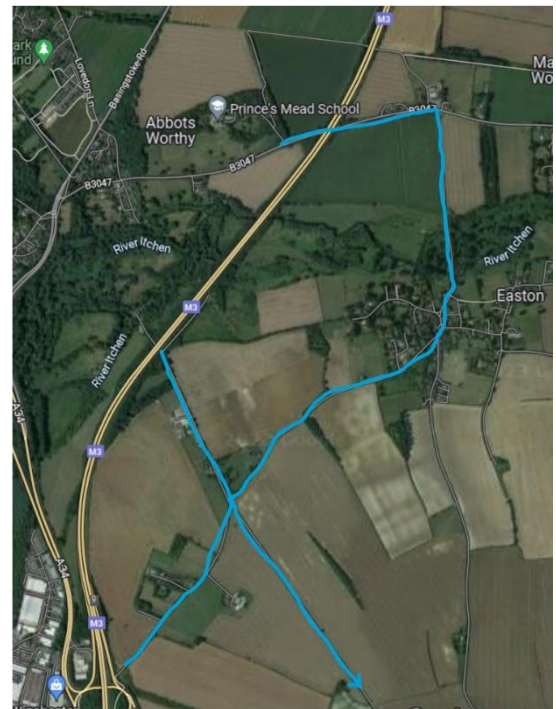
The ExA continued by inspecting Easton Lane and surrounding environment from the 'Tesco' roundabout, towards the City, up to approximately Fiona Close. The observation was undertaken at approximately 11:30, therefore not at peak travel times. The number and type of properties were noted along with the general traffic, cyclist and pedestrian use at the time.



Easton, Easton Lane and Long Walk

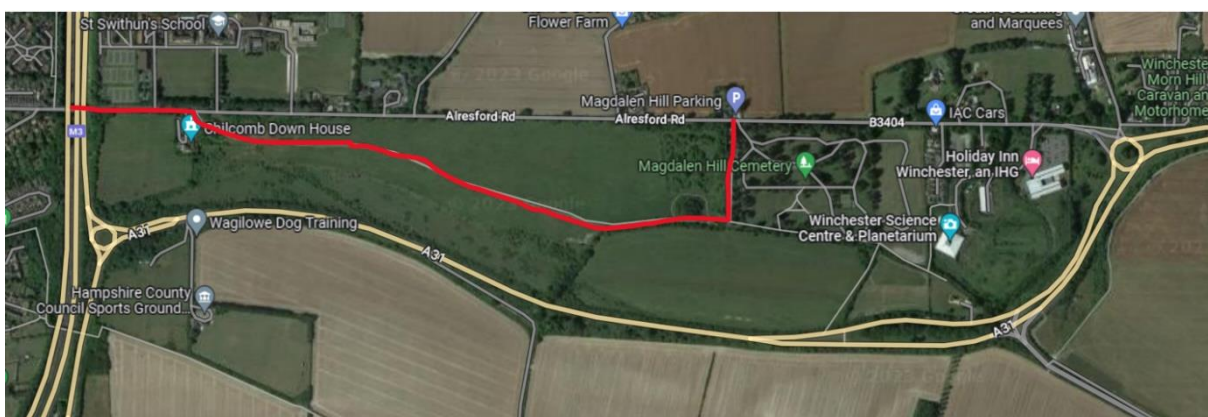
The ExA drove from Abbots Worthy, over the M3 and into Easton and then drove the full extent of Easton Lane up to the start of the PROW that passes to J9. The ExA also drove along the northern end of Long Walk, up to the M3 bridge. The ExA looked at the setting of the area and the landscape of this part of the South Downs National Park and also observed the nearby properties, farmland and hedgerows.

Following this inspection, the ExA drove south along Long Walk to the B3404, continuing to view the setting and landscape in the area.



Magdalen Hill, St. Swithen's School and B3404 Bridge over M3

Using PROWs, the ExA walked from the Magdalen Hill Parking area on the B3404, opposite the entrance to the Magdalen Hill Cemetery, to the entrance of the Magdalen Hill Down Nature Reserve before walking through the nature reserve on the designated path back to the B3404 opposite St. Swithen's School. The ExA also observed the M3 from the B3404 bridge, before returning along the same route. The ExA observed the setting of Magdalen Hill and the visual opportunities from the Downs towards the M3. The setting and location of St. Swithen's School was also observed. The bridge over the M3 afforded the ExA the opportunity to see the topography of the M3 in relation to J9 and also the nearby residential properties in and around Longfield Road on the western side of the M3.



Winchester City

At the end of the USI, the ExA drove a number of roads within the City to observe general traffic movements and also the general setting and location of the City in relation to the application boundary.