



# The Planning Inspectorate Yr Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

## **The Planning Act 2008**

### **Application for Development Consent for the A417 Missing Link**

Application ref: TR010056

### **Examining Authority's Note of an Unaccompanied Site Inspection**

*14 September 2021, 08:30 to 14:30*

Both Members of The Examining Authority (ExA), Kenneth Stone and David Wallis, together with the Case Manager for the application, George Harrold, undertook an Unaccompanied Site Inspection (USI1). This note is a brief record to inform the Applicant, Interested Parties and other parties of the actions taken by the ExA.

The ExA used a combination of driving and walking routes to experience and record the local area, the details of which are broadly summarised below. All inspections took place from a public highway, public footpath or public place.

The weather was poor throughout the day, with moderate rainfall at times and varying degrees of thickness of fog restricting visibility to sometimes 60-80 metres from the ExA. Patches of clarity in visibility were experienced between 11:30am and 13:00pm.

The ExA was mindful of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including in terms of travel restrictions and altered behaviour.

The following is a summary of the visit.

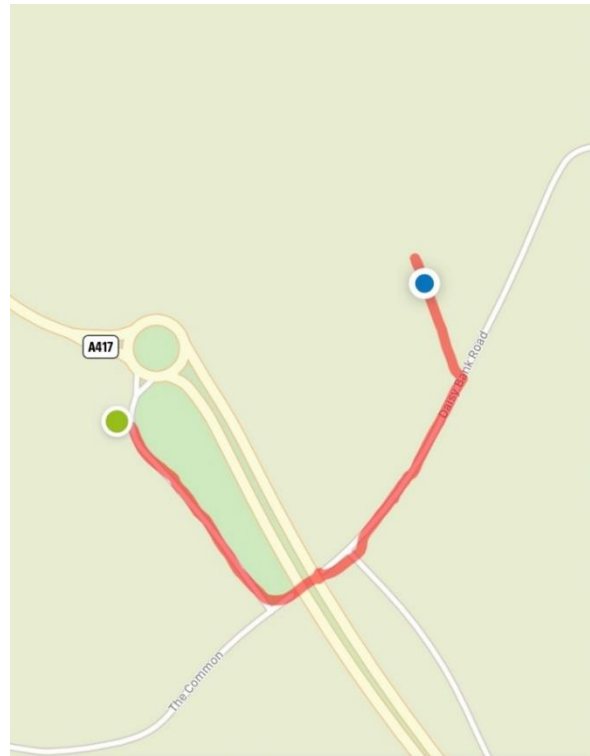
## Stage 1

08:30 – 09:35

The ExA travelled by car north from Cirencester on Gloucester Road, joining the dual carriageway section of the A417 at the Daglingworth Quarry junction. The ExA turned at the Cowley roundabout, parking in a lay-by close to the junction.

From there, the ExA walked down to the 'T' junction for Cowley and Brimpsfield, heading through the underpass and a short way up the single-track road. The ExA crossed a stile and walked into the field up to the first marker post. This is shown in the adjacent image.

Note was made of the landscape, topography and traffic conditions in and around the Cowley roundabout. The walking route was followed back to the starting point where it ended.



## Stage 2

09:35 – 10:00

The ExA travelled by car on the A417, stopping in the car park of the Golden Heart Inn to view the traffic conditions in that locality. Following this, the ExA drove to the Birdlip junction and through the local roads into the Barrow Wake public car park. Due to the fog, views out of the car park were restricted and obscured, and the ExA note a need to return to this viewpoint. However, the full extent of the car park, and the underpass towards Shab Hill, were visited.

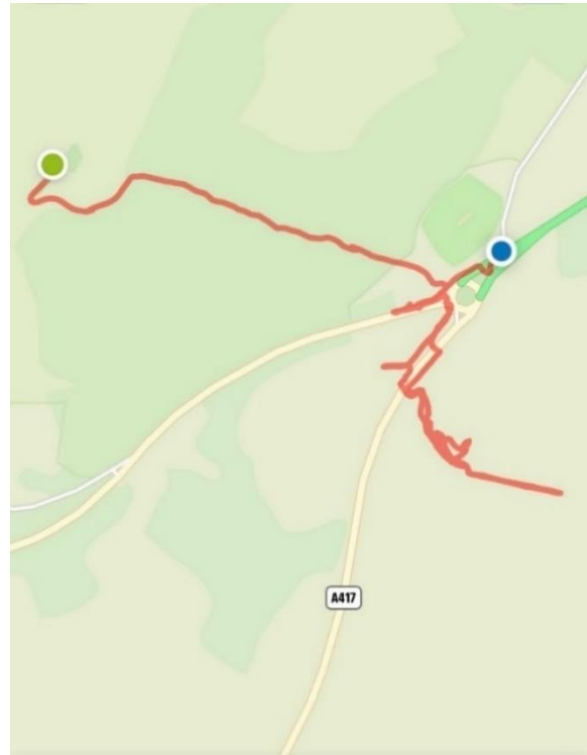
The ExA noted the traffic and highway conditions in the fog, as well as visibility from the Birdlip junction.

## Stage 3

10:00 – 11:40

The ExA travelled through the Air Balloon roundabout junction, onto the A436, left onto Leckhampton Hill and then left onto the track leading to the Crickley Hill car park.

The ExA walked along the Cotswold Way National Trail south-east through the woodland down to the Air Balloon roundabout. The ExA noted the relationship with the Air Balloon Cottages and then crossed over the A417, taking in the car park and grounds for the Air Balloon Public House, then across to Emma's Grove. The ExA followed the Gloucestershire Way long distance footpath through the grove and a distance across the fields in a south-easterly direction, prior to returning to the A417 and observing the Leckhampton Hill junction.



Along the walking route, the character, terrain, topography, trees, other vegetation, general wildlife and evidence of use associated with the various open spaces and facilities were noted. Opportunity was taken to observe the existing A417 and A436 interchange from a highway perspective (both in driving and walking conditions) and to view the proximity of the residences on the northern side of the carriageway.

#### **Stage 4**

11:40 – 12:15

The ExA headed north-east on the A417 by car, stopping to view the setting of the National Star College. A route was then followed down Ullenwood Manor Road to the A436 before heading west into the Air Balloon roundabout. The ExA continued by car over the roundabout and into Brockworth via the A417, noting the accesses for Crickley Hill Tractors and Cold Slad Lane.

The traffic conditions, landscape character and topography were observed over the course of the drive.

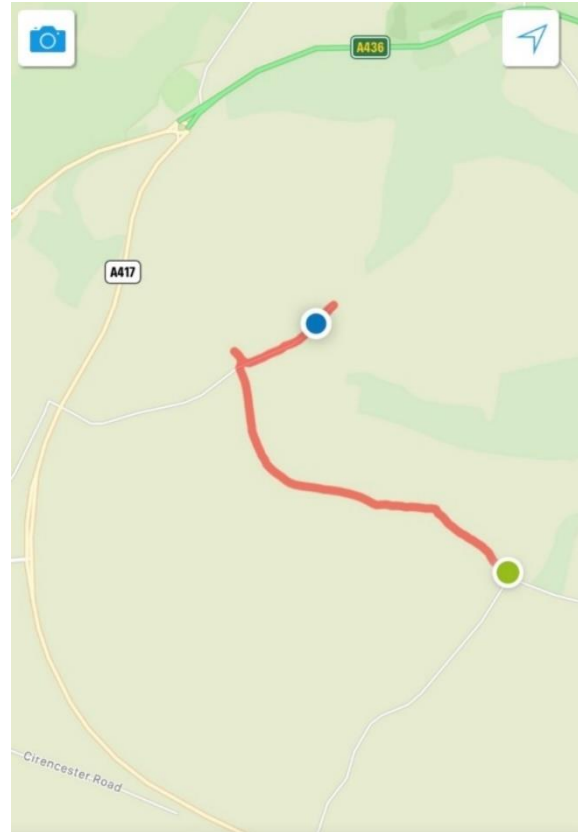
## Stage 5

12:30 – 13:50

Travelling by car, the ExA headed east then south on the A417, taking the left-hand turn towards Stockwell. After a pause just beyond the farmstead (as the road rises up away from the barns), the ExA travelled to a prominent right-hand bend in the highway and commenced a walking route.

The walk followed a footpath that initially headed north-west along the edge of a woodland and then through agricultural fields up onto Shab Hill. The footpath passed by two properties on Shab Hill and headed north up to the Birdlip Radio Station. The ExA noted the location of the masts and took a walk eastward up to the entrance to the Rushwood Kennels and Cattery.

The ExA observed the landscape features, albeit with visibility reduced due to the foggy conditions, the drainage of the land, the condition of the footpath and the location of various addresses along the walk. The path was re-walked as the ExA returned to the vehicle.



## Stage 6

13:50 – 14:20

The ExA undertook a car journey eastward on the highway into the village of Cowley, noting the condition and accessibility of the local road network. The ExA explored local roads before returning past Westerleigh Cottage in a westward direction back towards Stockwell. The ExA paused at the Stockwell junction, observing visibility and traffic conditions, before travelling back towards Cirencester on the A417, observing the approach to the Cowley roundabout in the process.