



## Meeting note

<b>Project name</b>	A358 Taunton to Southfields
<b>File reference</b>	TR010061
<b>Status</b>	Final
<b>Author</b>	The Planning Inspectorate
<b>Date</b>	7 June 2022
<b>Meeting with</b>	National Highways (the Applicant)
<b>Venue</b>	Microsoft Teams
<b>Meeting objectives</b>	Project update
<b>Circulation</b>	All Attendees

### Summary of key points discussed, and advice given:

The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) advised that a note of the meeting would be taken and published on its website in accordance with section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 (the PA2008). Any advice given under section 51 would not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) could rely.

### Update since the last meeting

The Applicant explained that communications on the supplementary consultation were not able to be announced until after the pre-election period on 6 May 2022. Pre-consultation events such as community forums and meetings with councils took place before the supplementary consultation started on 24 May. Further events were planned during the consultation which concluded on 26 June 2022. The Applicant stated that it continues to engage with groups, individuals and landowners to share the consultation information.

The Applicant informed the Inspectorate that they have updated parts of the project following a review of all statutory consultation feedback and ongoing design development. The Applicant is also proposing some additional local road improvements on parts of the local road network.

### Update on supplementary consultation

The supplementary consultation ran from 24 May to 26 June 2022. The Applicant explained that since the previous meeting with the Inspectorate on 31 March 2022 they had been considering consultation responses and conducted further surveys: ecological, archaeological and detailed traffic modelling. As a result, the Applicant has made changes to the previous project design. The changes are split into four topics:

- Transport, traffic flows and access

- Walking, cycling, horse-riding and disabled user access
- Environmental mitigation
- Location of main construction compound

The Applicant provided a summary of the proposed changes. The full details of the changes are available on the Applicant's website under 'Consultation Materials'. The Inspectorate queried if any of these changes had any implications for the Environmental Impact Assessment scoping exercise previously undertaken. The Applicant explained that the changes were refinements and not significant changes but would confirm their position.

Post meeting note: National Highways confirm that the proposed changes presented at supplementary consultation have not resulted in a change to the scope of the assessments. Additional mitigation proposed has applied the same methodologies and survey areas as set out in the Applicant's Scoping Report. This is with the exception of Cultural Heritage. Following comments raised, the study area for non-designated resources relating to buildings was increased to 1km.

### **Response to the Community of Parishes' proposals**

The Community of Parish Councils submitted suggestions for alternative proposals in July 2021. There were 12 proposals in total and these included adding more junctions to the A358 as well as additional connectivity. The Applicant compared these proposals to the preliminary design to understand how they performed against a range of criteria. The Applicant explained that junction provision needs to consider numerous factors – design standards, safety, topography, traffic demand, environmental impact and costs. These were discussed and information presented at meetings prior to statutory consultation. At these meetings, the Applicant confirmed the basis of its design for the statutory consultation and which aspects of the 12 proposals were included in that design. Following statutory consultation, the Community of Parish Councils provided a formal response, broadly along the same lines as the original 12 proposals. A meeting was held with Parish Councils on 26 May to outline any changes that had been made at supplementary consultation that were relevant to the proposals suggested by the Community of Parish Councils.

### **Consultation – 24 May to 26 June 2022**

The Applicant confirmed that it was holding supplementary consultation from 24 May 2022 to 26 June 2022. As part of the pre-consultation warm up, the Applicant explained they had promoted the consultation through:

- letter drops, media releases, social media, and other digital channels
- issuing stakeholder resource packs to key stakeholders including MPs to help promote the consultation
- holding stakeholder briefings (MPs, parish councils and local councils-including newly elected members)

The Statement of Community Consultation Addendum was published on 20 May 2022. The Applicant also published notices along the route. The Applicant carried out landowner engagement and statutory consultation with the affected landowners. The consultation included both digital and in-person engagement and consultation tools including a virtual exhibition, three in-person events and webinars.

The consultation documents included:

- Consultation booklet
- Feedback questionnaire
- Response to feedback from the 2021 public consultation booklet
- Technical documents
  - Technical traffic note
  - Environmental note
  - Summary of changes booklet
- Updated plans
  - walking, cycling and horse-riding, including disabled users, strategy drawings
  - general arrangements plan
  - plan and profile drawings
  - application site boundary

All material was available on the Applicant's website and in local libraries.

### **Actions and next Steps**

The Applicant is planning to submit draft documents in August 2022, when they will also confirm if there are any changes to the Environmental Impact Assessment . The draft documents would likely comprise of a draft introduction to the application, Environmental Statement chapters 1 to 4, and a selection of draft plans.

The next meeting with the Inspectorate will be held after the supplementary consultation has concluded and the draft documents have been reviewed by the Inspectorate.

The DCO will be submitted later in 2022.