



Meeting note

Project name	M60/M62/M66 Simister Island Interchange Scheme
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	12 February 2021
Meeting with	Highways England (the Applicant)
Venue	Microsoft Teams
Meeting objectives	Inception Meeting
Circulation	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.

Introduction to the scheme

The Applicant outlined that the scheme would be located at the intersection of the M60 to Manchester Orbital, M62 Hull to Liverpool and M66 Burnley to Manchester. The Applicant explained that the case for intervention at Simister Island was that it is one of the busiest motorway junctions in north-west. It is currently used by around 90,000 vehicles a day, which already exceeds its design capacity.

The Applicant confirmed that a Preferred Route Announcement (PRA) had been made for the Northern Loop option at the end of January 2021. The Applicant explained that the scheme would introduce a two-lane free-flow link from M60 northbound to westbound. The loop section would provide free-flow link from M60 eastbound to southbound, including a new bridge over the M66 and junction 18 slip roads. The M66 motorway would also be realigned as it heads south under junction 18, with another lane introduced to accommodate the merging traffic from the loop. The Applicant outlined that M60 junction 17 through to junction 18 would be expanded to five lanes of running traffic in both directions, achieved by converting the current hard shoulder.

The Inspectorate queried if the M60 junction 17 to 18 element of the scheme was integral to the application. The Applicant confirmed that the improvements to junction 17 to 18 and the works at Simister Island were symbiotic and relied upon each other to justify the scheme as a whole.

The Applicant explained that the key scheme objectives are to improve journey experience and journey times, reduce congestion, provide safer journeys for all road

users, minimise impact on the Air Quality Management Areas and Noise Important Areas with the scheme boundary, and facilitate economic growth across Greater Manchester.

The Applicant provided a high-level summary of the land it understood would be required to deliver the scheme. The Applicant outlined its approach to identifying land for permanent and temporary land-take and confirmed that all likely affected landowners had been contacted. The Inspectorate queried what would happen to the land enclosed by the Northern Loop element of the scheme. The Applicant confirmed that design considerations for this element of the scheme were being developed following the PRA. The Applicant stated that it was considering its approach to biodiversity netgain in line with the Highways England key performance indicator appropriate for the project and that this would be part of the land-take considerations.

The Applicant provided an overview of the wider development aspirations held for the locality as noted in some plans and programmes which, if they came to fruition, could require further interventions to the strategic road network and consideration as part of the Applicant's cumulative impact assessment. The Applicant discussed the Manchester North West Quadrant study and updated on the current status of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework and the provisions of Policy GM allocation 1.1; an area located to the north west of the Applicant's scheme identified with potential for 1,200,00 sqm of industrial warehousing, around 1,000 additional homes and a new primary school.

Next steps

The Applicant explained that following the PRA it was now entering Stage 3 of its Major Projects lifecycle, Preliminary Design. The next steps for the Applicant would be to undertake environmental surveys and monitoring and prepare Preliminary Environmental Information prior to consultation under the PA2008.

The Applicant stated that it expected to submit its application for development consent to the Inspectorate in March 2022.