

West Midlands Interchange DCO Examination

Examining Authority's Record of an Unaccompanied Inspection 6 on 11 July 2019

11.45 to 13.00 and 13.30 to 14.30 hours

Clear and dry weather conditions.

Paul Singleton, Examining Authority (ExA) for the application, undertook a sixth Unaccompanied Site Inspection (USI 6) on Thursday 11 July 2019 following the closing of the draft DCO hearing at the Premier Suite in Cannock. The inspection was undertaken mainly by car.

At the request of Stop WMI Community Group, the ExA visited Kingsway Lakeside Employment Park on the edge of Cannock, noting on route the location and current stage of construction of the Designer Outlet development which has been referred in written evidence to the Examination. At Kingsway Lakeside the ExA made observations in relation to: the location of the development and its accessibility to and from the M6 Toll and the A5; the general form and layout of the development and its landscape setting including the central lake and other areas of water; the current stage of development and construction; the mix of land uses and tenants/occupiers within the Park; the variation in scale, design and elevational treatment of the warehousing and distribution units and other buildings; site boundary treatments and landscaping; the provision for cycle and pedestrian circulation; and the use of some parts of the estate roads for HGV parking.

From Kingsway Lakeside the ExA travelled to the Cannock Pentalver Container Depot which has been referred in various representations to the examination. From the site access road, the ExA observed the physical extent of the site; the overall form and layout of the depot; the scale of the buildings; the extent and height of container storage across the site and the use of reach stacker vehicles in the loading, unloading and stacking of containers.

The ExA then travelled by car from Cannock via the A5 to Gailey. From Gailey roundabout the ExA drove again on the A5 west to Weston (turning at the roundabout junction with the A41) and back to Gailey to look again at the nature of the route and traffic conditions along it following his review of further evidence submitted to the examination as to its suitability for HGV traffic.

From Gailey roundabout the ExA drove on the A449 north through Penkrige to Dunston to look again at the nature of and traffic conditions along that route. The ExA also visited Photo Viewpoint 28 (in the applicant's Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment) at Rodbaston College to view the Site from that location.

The ExA carried out a further inspection (following that undertaken on the Accompanied Site Inspection) of the potential alternative site at Dunston as assessed in the Alternative Site Assessment, including its wider landscape setting. This was undertaken by car but with a number of stops at public vantage points on School Lane, Long Lane, the (unnamed) road connecting Long Lane with Coppenhall, in Coppenhall, and on Chase View Lane.

Returning to the A449, the ExA travelled north through central Stafford, following the signed "M6 north diversion route", to join the M6 at Junction 14. Having already followed the usual diversion route south from Junction 13 to the M54 and on to Wolverhampton, this completed the ExA's assessment of the route onto which traffic may be diverted at times when the M6 is closed between Junction 14 and its junction with the M54. The USI was terminated at Junction 14 of the M6.