

Meeting note

Project name	Oxfordshire Strategic Rail Freight Interchange
File reference	TR050008
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	16 November 2021
Meeting with	Oxfordshire Railfreight Limited
Venue	Teams (virtual) meeting
Meeting objectives	Project Update meeting
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed and advice given

The Developer was aware that the Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) that a note of the meeting would be taken and published on The Planning Inspectorate's 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.

The Developer provided an update on the progress of the proposal to date. The developer is holding regular meetings with National Highways regarding the works to M40 Junction 10. The proposal is likely to include at least one Highways Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) in addition to the Strategic Rail Freight Interchange. Various highway options were being considered.

The Inspectorate advised that the developer should ensure their process for assessing alternatives is clear and the developer should state how the environmental considerations have been taken into account when deciding which options to progress.

The Developer is in the process of agreeing a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) with the Local Authorities. The Developer has made contact with all relevant Parish Councils and is engaging with the relevant statutory authorities including the Environment Agency and has held an initial meeting with Natural England. The Developer will need access to a Site for Special Scientific Interest on Network Rail's land. The Developer is holding fortnightly meetings with Network Rail.

The Developer is intending to include draft documents (for example the draft Development Consent Order (DCO) and draft explanatory Memorandum) in their consultation documentation. In regard to draft documents for comment by the Planning Inspectorate, the Inspectorate requested that the developer explain any novel approaches they are taking in their draft DCO and other documents, and to request advice on specific elements of the dDCO as the inspectorate does not undertake a line by line review of the documents ahead of submission.

The Developer stated that there were no European designated sites in proximity to the development and therefore no Habitats Regulations Assessment would be required. The

Planning Inspectorate advised the developer that they would still be required to submit a No Significant Effects Report to explain this and include, if possible, evidence of agreement from Natural England concerning the scope of the assessment.

The Developer asked if the Inspectorate were producing any advice on the Environment Act. The Inspectorate advised that most of the substance will be contained within the secondary legislation (including on Biodiversity Net Gain).

In regard to carbon, the Inspectorate explained to the developer that they may wish to review any upcoming decision letters from the Secretary of State for Transport.

The Inspectorate advised that the National Policy Statement was supportive of moving freight off road and on to rail, nevertheless the assessment of impacts on climate change would be strengthened if the modal shift projections were supported with data from operational rail freight interchanges.