



Meeting note

Application: TR010018 – A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Scheme

Status: Final

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Date: 24 June 2014

Meeting with:

The applicant (Highways Agency)

Martin Clarke

Jeremy Damrel

Shirley Henderson

Thomas Darcy

Gordon McCreath

The Planning Inspectorate

Jessica Powis (Infrastructure Planning Lead)

Kay Sully (Case Manager)

John Pingstone (Case Officer)

Jenny Colfer (Senior EIA Advisor)

Noreen Sutton (Legal Manager)

Venue: Temple Quay House, Bristol

Meeting objectives: For the applicant to provide an update on the developments and progress of its pre-application consultation

Circulation: All attendees

Summary of key points discussed and advice given:

The Highways Agency (HA) was advised of the Inspectorate's duties to publish advice given under s51 of the Planning Act 2008 (PA 2008), and that under this duty a note of the meeting would be published to the project page of the Planning Portal.

The HA gave a brief overview of the project. The options consultation was carried out in September 2013 with 6 possible route variations. During that consultation tolling remained part of the application, resulting in a large degree of negative feedback. Tolling no longer forms part of the application and as a result of this feedback has become more positive.

Project Milestones

Statutory consultation (under ss42, 47, 48) has been recently completed. It was confirmed that this was the only stage of statutory consultation. A preferred route announcement is intended to be made this summer (2014). The HA suggested that

following this, draft documents could be supplied to the Inspectorate in order to receive feedback. It was suggested that various documents could be supplied including the draft DCO and plans. The Inspectorate suggested that it would be helpful to have the explanatory memorandum supplied with the DCO, and that feedback could be given on the consultation report. The HA suggested that a further conversation could be had at a future date to identify exactly which documents would be supplied for review.

It was thought that the application will be submitted in November 2014 and that the Inspectorate website could be amended to reflect this. If consented the Government would like the project constructed by 2020.

Consultation and Engagement

The HA explained their engagement strategy during consultation. This has included regular meetings with local authorities, statutory and non-statutory environmental bodies, 30 manned events (resulting in 1500+ people attending) and an online survey also resulting in 1500+ responses.

The HA explained that they had also ensured that affected landowners were consulted. The Inspectorate queried how many land interests would be affected. The HA stated that (approximately) 1500 interests were involved, including 700 in Category 1 (as defined in s57 PA 2008). It was explained that special category land may be affected including commons and open space but that legal opinion was being sought.

There has been some concern about borrow-pit locations, and therefore further engagement is planned.

A meeting is planned to discuss Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) with local authorities. This will be a joint meeting with three local authorities. Meetings are also lined up with other statutory bodies. The HA queried whether a joint Local Impact Report (LIR) could be submitted by local authorities. The Inspectorate suggested that joint working and joint submissions are encouraged between local authorities as they may avoid duplication and help to focus the issues.

The Inspectorate informed the HA that several letters had been received direct by PINS from residents of Hilton making comments on a number of matters including some on the adequacy of consultation. These letters will be published alongside s51 advice in response. These letters will be kept on file and can be considered for acceptance purposes in accordance with Paragraph 68 of DCLG Pre-Application Guidance.

The HA queried whether a s55 checklist should be submitted. The Inspectorate pointed out that the newly published Pre-Application Prospectus suggests that it can be helpful for the applicant to complete the checklist in order to give themselves certainty that they have complied with the requirements. If submitted as part of the application documents the checklist should be appended to the application form or the cover letter. In order to provide clarity a 'draft' watermark could be used within the document.

The HA asked whether any outreach had been considered. The Inspectorate stated that its assessment had been that interest in an outreach event was low, and that

given that statutory consultation had already taken place the most beneficial period for any future outreach may be during the relevant representations period, should the application be accepted. The Inspectorate queried whether it might be helpful if a meeting was held with local authorities, the HA thought that this might be helpful and that contact details would be supplied.

Scoping Opinion

The HA noted the advice given within the scoping opinion with regards to figures, that they should be clear and legible and that this would be achieved by using a variety of different scales as appropriate and by providing key plans.

The HA asked whether it might be appropriate to provide large amounts of technical data in electronic form only rather than in hard copy. The Inspectorate noted that this approach had been taken on other application such as for the Hinkley Point C Connection project, however the ExA once appointed may exercise their discretion to request hard copies.

With regards to alternatives the HA stated that they intend to supply this information within the ES. With regards to the scheme design, although the Rochdale Envelope approach will be used, as much detail will be provided as possible and the 'worst-case' assessed, including for example a Construction Code of Practice that will provide information on the routing of construction traffic. A Transport Assessment will be provided separately from the ES, but will cross-refer when appropriate.

The HA queried the Scoping Opinion's reference to assessing the effects of decommissioning. The Inspectorate pointed out that that advice may apply more to other projects.

The Inspectorate asked how the HRA report was progressing. The HA advised that the proposed scheme's effects on 2 European sites had been screened at this stage. The draft findings have been issued to Natural England (NE) for a response. Dialogue is also ongoing with NE regarding protected species with the hope of agreeing a SoCG. The HRA screening should be completed by October.

Documents

The HA queried whether it would be helpful if a design development document was submitted, including an element by element breakdown of any consents needed. The Inspectorate suggested that this would be helpful to give comfort to the ExA that post-DCO consents are in hand. It would also be helpful to provide a mitigation document showing how the mitigation is secured, and the link between the mitigation and the DCO.

A consents position statement will be submitted. The Inspectorate asked whether consideration had been given to working with the Consents Service Unit, as this service can help to identify consents and bring parties together through a Consents Management Plan. The HA are considering this option.

The Inspectorate asked whether draft documents would be shared with any other key stakeholders. The HA were of the view that they would be shared where appropriate. The Inspectorate pointed out that it is helpful to share draft documents, particularly

the DCO, with any party that has a role in discharging a requirement so that their agreement can be sought.

With regards to the draft National Policy Statement for National Networks, the HA stated that it is tracking how the application is aligned with the Policy. The HA queried whether it would be helpful if this tracking document was submitted with the application. The Inspectorate suggested that it may be helpful, but that consideration would need to be given to when the NPS is designated and whether changes are made between the draft version and the final version. If the NPS is designated during the examination the ExA is likely to ask questions on it.

The Inspectorate asked whether any significant issues had been identified at this stage as this may assist with resource planning. The HA stated that they would keep the Inspectorate informed of any issues arising from consultation and feedback at future meetings.

It was suggested that draft documents would be submitted around the 3rd week of August and that a meeting could be held in September, to be arranged.