

Meeting note

Project name	A303 Sparkford to Ilchester Dualling
File reference	TR010036
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	8 November 2017
Meeting with	Highways England
Venue	Temple Quay House, Bristol
Attendees	The Planning Inspectorate Kathryn Dunne – Infrastructure Planning Lead Richard Price – Case Manager Kate Mignano – Case Officer Katherine King – EIA and Land Rights Advisor Michael Breslaw – EIA and Land Rights Advisor The Applicant Alex Murphy – Project Manager, Mott MacDonald Sweco JV Tom Roberts – Project Manager, Highways England Clare Postlethwaite – Principal Environmental Coordinator, Mott MacDonald Sweco JV Elliot Hayes – Assistant Project Manager, Highways England Will Spencer – DCO and Statutory Process Manager, Highways England
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. The Inspectorate explained that the publication of the meeting note could be delayed up to six months, or until a formal scoping request had been submitted.

Project introduction

The Applicant explained the project was identified in the Department for Transport's Road Investment Strategy (RIS), with work to commence on site by March 2020.

The proposal is to provide a continuous dual carriageway along the general alignment of the A303 from Podimore roundabout to Sparkford bypass, which is approximately a three mile stretch.



The objectives of the proposal are to reduce congestion and journey times as well as pollution and will provide safer local access for pedestrians and cyclists.

Originally there were 13 design options considered. These were narrowed down to four design options, two of which were consulted on in February/ March 2017; one offline and one online. Seven public consultation events were held and the Applicant stated there was 82% support for the Proposed Development, with two to one in favour of Option 1 (online option). The Preferred Route Announcement was made for Option 1 on 24 October 2017.

The details of the design are currently being refined and will include consideration of de-trunking and grade separated junctions depending on anticipated traffic flows. The Applicant confirmed they consider the works to be an 'alteration' of a highway (as opposed to construction or improvement) under s27 of the PA2008.

The Applicant described the anticipated timescales for the proposal as follows:

- Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping – November 2017.
- Statutory Consultation – 25 January 2018 to 8 March 2018.
- Submission of the application – July 2018.
- Road open 2022/ 2023.

Environmental Impact Assessment

The Applicant provided the following information:

Two Conservation Areas are in the vicinity of the site namely West Camel and Queen Camel. There are areas of ancient woodland and Local Wildlife Sites, two Scheduled Monuments and 90 Listed Buildings within one kilometre of the site: three Grade I listed churches, six Grade II* and 81 Grade II listed buildings.

Local geological sites include Camel Hill Quarry and Sparkford Copse. The River Cam and Dyke Brook/ River Cary are identified as flood zones 2 and 3.

There are Noise Important Areas including Camel Cross and West Camel Methodist Church in the vicinity of the site.

The Applicant confirmed there is no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA), but the proposal could have air quality effects on the Down Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Stockton Wood and Hazel Grove House which is a Grade II registered park and garden.

The Applicant is currently in discussion with the Environment Agency and the Local Authority with regard to historic landfill sites. There is also the potential for underground Archaeology.

Ecology

The Applicant confirmed a range of surveys were currently taking place including those for badger, reptiles, great crested newt, birds, barn owls, bats, voles and otters. Any



loss of habitat identified as a result of the Proposed Development will be replaced and increased.

Ecological and topographical survey work is almost complete.

Scoping

The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to provide as much information as possible, showing clearly on the plans which accompany the Scoping Report, areas for site compounds and land identified for mitigation and habitat improvement.

The Inspectorate requested the GIS shapefile be sent at least ten days in advance of the Scoping Request. The Applicant noted this and confirmed the Scoping Report would be sent at the end of November 2017.

It was noted that as scoping would be carried out under the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (The 2017 EIA Regulations), if the Application is submitted and accepted to proceed to examination the Relevant Representation period would need to be the statutory minimum of 30 days, as opposed to the 28 days required previously under the previous EIA Regulations.

Land interests

The Applicant confirmed the site covers 40 hectares of land; some of this is in Highways England's ownership. Engagement with land owners is ongoing and all affected land owners have been contacted. Applications under s53 of the PA2008, 'Access to Land' are not expected in relation to the application.

Stakeholder engagement

The Applicant stated engagement to date had been positive; with the host local authority; Somerset County Council; parish councils (Sparkford, Yeovilton, West Camel and Queen Camel); the local MP; the Local Enterprise Partnership; National Trust; Natural England and the Environment Agency.

Specific decisions/ follow-up required?

The following actions were agreed:

- The Inspectorate to send list of draft documents it is able to review.
- The Applicant to provide GIS shapefile 10 days in advance of Scoping Request.