



Meeting note

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| Project name | A47/A11 Thickthorn Junction |
| File reference | TR010037 |
| Status | Draft |
| Author | The Planning Inspectorate |
| Date | 28 January 2021 |
| Meeting with | Highways England |
| Venue | Microsoft Teams |
| Meeting objectives | Project update 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.

Project Update

Highways England (the Applicant) provided an overview of the A47/A11 Thickthorn junction improvement scheme. The Applicant confirmed that since statutory consultation had been carried out in Summer 2019, it had undertaken work to address the common themes and concerns raised in the consultation responses and had refined its proposals. The Applicant's revised scheme had been presented to stakeholders in a July 2020 Project Update document, with the key design changes summarised as:

- A single-lane free-flowing link road connecting the A11 northbound to A47 eastbound via two underpasses (under the A11 and A47 respectively);
- various improvements to the junction design including slip widening, new signalisation and road surface treatments;
- removal of the Cantley Lane South direct connections between the A11 and A47 exit slip roads;
- a new link road connecting Cantley Lane South with the B1172 Norwich Road to the north and construction of two new bridges;
- a new junction connecting the B1172 Norwich Road to Cantley Land Link road;
- a new junction connecting Cantley Lane South to Cantley Lane link road;
- realignment of the existing Cantley Lane stream and access track and new stream culvert;
- a new footbridge over the A47 for walkers, cyclists and horse riders approximately 45m east of the existing footbridge (which will be demolished); and
- other improvements for walkers and cyclists including new access to the Park and Ride from the Cantley Lane.

The Inspectorate asked for the Applicant to summarise the impact of the scheme on existing utilities. The Applicant described the works to existing utilities that would be required to deliver the scheme, including to apparatus owned by various telecommunications service providers and Anglian Water. The Applicant confirmed that following removal of the Cantley Lane South connections between the A11 and A47 exit slip roads, the scheme no longer directly affected the Cringleford railway bridge and land/apparatus owned by Network Rail.

Overview of stakeholder engagement

The Applicant confirmed that construction work had commenced on the Cringleford residential extension to the east of the Proposed Development. The housing developer is committed under a s106 agreement to providing a proportionate area of public open space as part of its development. The open space land is proposed to be located adjacent to the eastbound carriageway of the A47, including on land required for the Applicant's scheme.

The Applicant explained that the housing developer had not finalised the exact location of the public open space and engagement between the parties was ongoing to identify an optimal solution. The final location of the public open space has yet been identified, and the land will not become 'designated' as such until the housing development had completed. Notwithstanding this, to account for the uncertainty surrounding the final location of the public open space, the Applicant proposed to assume a worst-case scenario and categorise the land required for its scheme as special category land within its application. The Statement of Reasons submitted with the application would provide detailed justification for the Applicant's approach.

The Applicant summarised its engagement to date with key stakeholders including Local Authorities and Parish Councils. Negotiations with affected land interests were ongoing.

DCO submission

The Applicant confirmed its intention to submit the application in spring 2021.

The Inspectorate requested that the Applicant keep in close contact with its Case Team during the build-up to submission and to bring to the Inspectorate attention any changes to the pre-submission programme/submission date as soon as possible.

The Inspectorate extended an offer to review focused areas of the Applicant's draft application documentation prior to submission. Both parties would consider the value in convening of a further project update meeting before the application was submitted.