



Meeting note

Project name	A47 Wansford to Sutton, A47 Blofield to North Burlingham, A47 North Tuddenham to Easton, A47/A11 Thickthorn Junction
File reference	
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	29 April 2020
Meeting with	Highways England
Venue	Teleconference
Meeting objectives	Project updates
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.

General

Project Updates

The Applicant advised that Statutory Consultation has been completed for all four schemes but also stated that due to the current Covid-19 situation, the Statutory Consultation has been extended for the A47 North Tuddenham to Easton project. The closing date for this consultation has been extended to 30 April 2020.

The Applicant also advised that the Environmental Impact Assessments are underway for all four schemes.

Separate meetings will be held between the Applicant and the Inspectorate for each individual scheme going forward.

Draft Document Review

The Applicant expressed its wish to take advantage of the draft document review service offered by the Inspectorate and provided a list of documents it intends to submit. The Inspectorate confirmed that it is best practice to submit all the draft documents for each individual project at the same time with the exception of the Consultation Report and the HRA which can be reviewed separately. Going forward, the Applicant will agree review timetables for each individual scheme.

The Applicant stated that the format of the draft Book of Reference submitted for the A47 Blofield to North Burlingham will be carried through to all further A47 schemes, as will the format of the draft Environmental Statement extracts. It was agreed that if the Applicant applied the advice received to the subsequent suites of documents, it may not be necessary to resubmit those documents in the following draft document reviews for the remaining schemes.

A47/A11 Thickthorn Junction

The Applicant informed the Inspectorate that statutory consultation had been undertaken in July 2019 and that it had reviewed the feedback, made some design modifications, and is engaged with parish councils as a result.

The Inspectorate queried the degree of discussion between the Applicant and Network Rail in respect of the interface with the railway bridge to the south of the scheme. The Applicant informed the Inspectorate that it has designed mitigation for the effects of the scheme's interface with the railway bridge and is working closely with Network Rail.

The Inspectorate noted that there is an urban extension to the east of the scheme. The Applicant informed the Inspectorate that it is liaising with the developer, with particular regard to co-ordinating their respective drainage systems, site compounds and haul roads.

A brief discussion was held relating to the Local Authority plans to extend the Park and Ride site adjacent to the roundabout, and the Applicant confirmed that it is still planned and that continuous engagement is being conducted with Norfolk County Council regarding the matter.

The Inspectorate asked about current activities around the scheme. The Applicant informed the Inspectorate that archaeological trenching will commence in June 2020 and that it will be working with a county archaeologist throughout the process. The Applicant stated that the proposed development will not be interacting with any scheduled monuments.

The Inspectorate asked if there had been any changes to highlight since the Applicant carried out its baseline tests. The Applicant explained that there will be housing developments constructed to the north but that it does not believe they will have an impact on the scheme. The Inspectorate sought clarification as to how these developments would be considered in the cumulative assessments within the Environmental Statement (ES). The Applicant asked to refer back to the Inspectorate on that point – with the intention of discussing this further at the next meeting between PINS and the Thickthorn Project team.

The Applicant stated that ecology surveys may be delayed as a result of Covid-19 but will be undertaken as soon as possible.

The ES is expected to be completed in February 2021. The Applicant informed the Inspectorate that it intends to submit its application for a DCO in Q1 2021.

A47 Blofield to North Burlingham

The Applicant gave a brief overview of the project including a description of the location of the proposed scheme in relation to the three other A47 schemes. This proposal is for a new dual carriageway to the south of the existing A47 Blofield to North Burlingham single carriageway.

The Applicant explained that the statutory consultation had been completed and the feedback received will be reviewed and used to make further refinements to the proposed design and development of mitigation measures. The provision of statutory undertakers equipment across the area was noted and the potential for diversions to be required before or as part of the scheme.

The Applicant gave an overview of the project timeline to date and explained that it was working in line with that timeline and were on schedule to meet the proposed application submission date of November 2020.

A47 Wansford to Sutton

The Applicant gave a brief overview of the project explaining that this proposal was the most westerly located of the four projects.

The statutory consultation on the scheme was carried out in 2018 and the feedback received from the consultation will be used to make further refinements to the scheme design and development of mitigation measures. The Applicant confirmed that following consultation with Historic England the scheme alignment will still avoid the scheduled monument. It also confirmed that an alternative alignment option is being assessed following the statutory consultation with the local community.

The Applicant explained that it is the intention to carry out targeted consultation once the option assessment has been completed.

The Applicant will restart discussions with Natural England about the Habitats Regulations Assessment for the scheme.

The Applicant gave an overview of the project timeline to date and explained that the target date for application submission is early 2021.

A47 North Tuddenham to Easton

The Applicant informed the Inspectorate that it is in the process of conducting its statutory consultation which has been extended (to the 30th April) due to the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure that people who wish to can engage with the process. The Inspectorate noted that it had received a copy of Wensum Valley Alliance's comments to the Applicant regarding the statutory consultation. The Applicant also explained that it is carrying out ground investigation surveys during this time.

The Applicant outlined the relationship with the proposed Norwich Western Link; a separate scheme being promoted by Norfolk County Council which would be progressed through the Town and Country Planning Act regime.

Conversation around some points of diversion which would become necessary relating to a National Grid high-pressure gas main, British Telecom, Anglian Water and UK Power Networks took place. The Inspectorate noted that the Red Line Boundary (RLB) appeared generous in various areas. The Applicant explained that the RLB will be assessed again once the necessary diversions have been reviewed. The Inspectorate discussed whether any circumstances could result in the need for further targeted consultation.

Specific decisions/ follow-up required?

The following actions were agreed:

- A47 Thickthorn - The Applicant to refer back to the Inspectorate in respect of addressing the cumulative assessments in the ES;
- A47 meetings will be separated into project-specific meetings going forward;
- Schedule a meeting in June for A47 Blofield to North Burlingham ahead of draft document submission in July;
- Schedule a meeting in June for A47 North Tuddenham to Easton; and
- Schedule meetings in late June/early July for the two remaining schemes: A47/A11 Thickthorn Junction and A47 Wansford to Sutton.