

A47 Wansford to Sutton
National England
Woodlands
Manton Road
Bedford
MK41 7LW

15 November 2021
Your Ref: TR010039

Planning Inspectorate
National Infrastructure Planning
Temple Quay House
Temple Quay
Bristol
BS1 6PN

By Email only

Dear Ms Allen

**Application by Highways England for an Order for Development Consent for the
A47 Wansford to Sutton Scheme (TR010039)**

Rule 6 Letter - Preliminary Meeting

I understand that, following the expiry of the deadline for the submission of relevant representations and the unaccompanied site visit carried out by the Examining Authority, details of which are now on the project's web page, we will shortly receive the Examining Authority's Rule 6 letter setting out the draft timetable for the examination of this application.

Prior to receipt of the Rule 6 letter, and in light of the potential for the Preliminary Meeting to be timetabled before the Christmas holiday season, it might be helpful for you to be aware of the high priority that the Applicant gives to the wellbeing of its staff, consultants, advisers and contractors. This is a particularly important consideration due to the detrimental impact on wellbeing resulting from the ongoing pandemic. The Applicant would therefore be very concerned if the publication of a timetable for the examination required an unduly heavy workload over the Christmas period potentially further impacting on wellbeing.

We are conscious that the Planning Inspectorate shares our concerns and values, and will have in mind the objectives in its Strategic Plan, in particular in its People Strategy to "create a positive Health, Safety and Wellbeing culture with the right behaviours, policy and processes in place".

Were the Preliminary Meeting and start of the statutory six-month period for completion of the examination to be timetabled before the Christmas period, the Examining Authority's first written questions will require detailed responses from the Applicant shortly after the Christmas period at Deadline 1. Our experience suggests that the first written questions and Applicant responses set the whole agenda for the remainder of the examination and that the quality of response is of the highest importance. In other words, there will be a significant workload on the Applicant that could require its staff, consultants, advisers and contractors to work throughout the Christmas and New Year period including the bank holidays and contractor office shut down periods when specialist staff will be unavailable to support responses.

This is a scenario that the Applicant would wish to avoid if at all possible. I am therefore writing to request that the draft timetable takes account of the priority that the Applicant and the Planning Inspectorate give to wellbeing and therefore defer the Preliminary Meeting until early in January 2022.

Yours sincerely



Chris Griffin
National Highways Limited