



Meeting note

Project name	M3 Junction 9 Improvement
File reference	TR01005
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	30 September 2020
Meeting with	Highways England
Venue	Teams Virtual Meeting
Meeting objectives	Project update and next steps
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

The Applicant noted that it had been some time since the last meeting with The Inspectorate and updated on team and project changes that had occurred in that time.

The Applicant explained that, in response to the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) consultation undertaken in summer 2019, alterations had been made to the junction design. These alterations included reducing congestion through increasing capacity and safety and addressing comments made relating to the distance available to change lanes when joining and leaving on certain routes. In addition, further potential areas for earthworks and mitigation have been identified beyond the Indicative Application Boundary as presented in the statutory consultation. The Applicant explained that factors such as biodiversity net gain objectives and compliance with the National Policy Statement (NPS) as well as buildability have been considered in the refinements proposed to the scheme design.

Given the nature of the changes proposed to the scheme, following from the consultation, design refinements, increased data and amendments to the requirements within the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, the Applicant stated that they would be looking to re-scope the project. This would mean a new scoping request would be issued to the Inspectorate in Q4 2020.

Following from a new scoping request, the PEIR would be updated and the Applicant anticipated that there would be further statutory consultation undertaken in Q1 2021. The Applicant explained that it was taking into account that on-going restrictions on



public life arising from COVID-19 might impact on their approach to consultation activity. The Applicant's programme indicated a likely future submission date of autumn 2021.

The Applicant explained that there were a number of environmental and topographical constraints in the area of the scheme, including specifically, the South Downs National Park and River Itchen Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and SSSI. The Applicant is currently researching a number of possibilities for crossing the River Itchen SAC. The Inspectorate queried when the preferred option would be known. The Applicant noted that it would be selected for inclusion in the submitted Development Consent Order application.

The Inspectorate advised that COVID-19 may have altered baseline conditions so that surveys carried out in 2020 may not be representative and the Applicant may need to provide robust methodologies to give the Inspectorate confidence in their approach; the Inspectorate advised that consultation with the relevant bodies and methods such as sensitivity testing could be employed. The Applicant confirmed that results would be verified in their assessments where relevant to ensure that it is suitably representative.