



Meeting note

File reference	TR010056
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	18 March 2020
Meeting with	Highways England
Venue	Teleconference
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.

Statutory consultation

The Applicant confirmed that its statutory consultation was carried out between 27 September 2019 and 8 November 2019. Over 2000 people attended consultation events and over 900 formal consultation responses were received.

The Applicant summarised areas of interest arising from the consultation responses, including:

- Measures to prevent a rat-running eg at Cowley Lane;
- car parking provision relating to the repurposed A417 route; and
- safeguarding routes on the local road network/private means of access which would be affected by the Proposed Development.

The Applicant explained it had received comments regarding noise impacts associated with a stretch of concrete surface on the A419 located a significant distance from the Red Line Boundary and outside the scope of the Proposed Development. Indications from the Applicant's noise assessment are that traffic generated by the Proposed Development will not have an impact on receptors in this area.

The Applicant explained that it had also received consultation responses regarding the Air Balloon pub, suggesting that it should be retained or replaced. The Applicant confirmed that the building was not designated as a heritage asset, and regretfully retention or replacement of the building could not be accommodated within the Proposed Development. The Applicant will document and record the characteristics of the public house prior to demolition.

Land, access and the Red Line Boundary

The Applicant explained that it was carrying out further design work in response to statutory consultation feedback. The Inspectorate questioned whether this design response had given rise to any changes to the Red Line Boundary. The Applicant confirmed that whilst there had been localised adjustments which had brought new land within the Red Line Boundary, its general extent had reduced significantly through the design response.

The Applicant summarised ongoing negotiations with affected land interests. Those affected by post-consultation changes to the Red Line Boundary had been made aware of the changes. Additionally, on completion of the noise assessment undertaken as part of the post-consultation design response, approximately 40 potential new Category 3 land interests had been identified and contacted.

The Inspectorate enquired about National Trust land that the Applicant had explained at a previous meeting would be affected by the Proposed Development. The Applicant stated that it was engaged in discussions with the National Trust, including in relation to its land affected by the proposed green bridge in the vicinity of Crickley Hill. The Applicant explained that negotiations were ongoing in respect of National Trust land at Crickley Hill and the detailed design of the green bridge.

The Applicant confirmed that to date it had used the process under s172 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 to secure access to land for taking surveys. The Applicant informed the Inspectorate that one landowner had not granted access to the Applicant and as a result the Applicant had had to adopt a precautionary approach in developing its Environmental Impact Assessment in that area. The Applicant stated that it believed that its approach would provide sufficient detail to mitigate any risks identified, facilitating a robust assessment.

The Applicant acknowledged that the Proposed Development would be located within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and emphasised that there had been a landscape-led approach to all design decisions. The Applicant considered that the Proposed Development would provide enhancements to the AONB by providing links to footpaths and car parking facilities, ensuring that the AONB remains a location that people wish to visit. The Inspectorate queried the evidence base the Applicant planned to put forward in order to satisfy tests in the National Policy Statement for National Networks (NPSNN) concerning AONBs. The Applicant stated that it was confident it had a robust plan to satisfy the tests within the application.

Engagement and Statements of Common Ground (SoCG)

The Applicant described its Strategic Stakeholder Panel comprising Gloucestershire City Council (GCC); Cotswold District Council (CDC); Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC); Cotswold Conservation Board; the National Trust; and the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust. The Applicant had also established technical working groups covering (i) Environment, and (ii) Walking, Cycling and Horse Riding.

The Applicant explained that it had encouraged the three host authorities (GCC, CDC and TBC) to collaborate in the production of a joint SoCG. The Applicant was also seeking to prepare bilateral SoCGs with the following bodies:

- Natural England;
- National Trust;

- Historic England;
- The Environment Agency;
- Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust;
- The Cotswold Conservation Board; and
- The Woodland Trust.

The Applicant was also seeking a topic-based SoCG with the Walking, Cycling and Horse Riding technical working group comprising various organisations with specific interests in those areas.

The Inspectorate advised that a multilateral SoCG, as proposed in the case of the local authorities and the Walking, Cycling and Horse-Riding technical group, can be challenging to establish in respect of structure, presentation and clarity. The Applicant explained that TBC and CDC were allowing GCC to lead in the preparation of the SoCG and that the SoCG would be structured to reflect the specific areas of interest for each local authority. The Applicant stated that the local authorities are generally supportive of the Proposed Development and it did not envisage significant issues arising from the SoCG process.

Draft documents for anticipated submission

The Inspectorate asked when the Applicant intended to submit draft application documents for review. The Applicant explained that although it was working at pace in the build-up to submission, some of the application documents were not at that time at an appropriately mature stage to submit to the Inspectorate for review. The Inspectorate advised that its draft document review service, although non-statutory, was an important stage of the process and could reduce the risk of complications at the Acceptance stage. The Applicant was therefore encouraged to submit draft documents as soon as practicable.

The Inspectorate asked the Applicant if it intended to include signposting within the Environmental Statement (ES) to any post-Scoping changes to the ES arising from recent updates to the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). The Applicant stated that it was finalising an appendix which would deal with how the updates to the DMRB had affected the Scoping Opinion and subsequently the ES.

The Applicant confirmed that it is submitting its application in Spring/Summer 2020.