



**CORRIDOR BETWEEN THE A34 MILTON INTERCHANGE AND THE B4015
NORTH OF CLIFTON HAMPDEN**

CASE REF: APP/U3100/V/23/3326625

CASE REF: NATTRAN/SE/HAO/286 (DPI/U3100/23/12)

I have been asked to provide a programme for the Inquiries as early as possible to assist the Rule 6 parties with their arrangements. I am unable to provide a programme in advance of the exchange of proofs of evidence and time estimates provided by the parties. These are due on 23 January and 6 February respectively. Moreover, all parties should be aware that any programme/timetable may be subject to change for a number of reasons, including illness and other unexpected circumstances. Should these arise, the Inquiry will consider how to make best use of time, whilst being fair to all parties. For this reason all parties need to be as flexible as possible, but I will try to accommodate any particular constraints subject to fairness to all parties.

I have also given consideration to the need for additional sitting dates in lieu of 12, 13 and 14 March. Given the constraints on various parties I suggest that 10 May be retained as an additional reserve day at the present time. This can be reviewed as the Inquiries progress.

There are two Inquiries and I shall hear the evidence in relation to the Planning Inquiry first, as set out by the previous Inspector. Whilst I am unable to provide a programme at this point in time, I have reviewed the evidence submitted so far, and feel that it may be helpful to outline the likely main issues and suggest a running order in relation to the planning application.

I have considered the previous Inspector's Post Pre-Inquiry Note, the submitted Statements of Case and objections in relation to the planning application. That note set out the matters on which the Secretary of State particularly wishes to be informed about. These are:

- a) The extent to which the proposed development is consistent with Government policies for delivering a sufficient supply of homes as set out in the Framework (Chapter 5); and
- b) The extent to which the proposed development is consistent with Government policies for building a strong, competitive economy as set out in the Framework (Chapter 6); and
- c) The extent to which the proposed development is consistent with the development plan for the area.

As you may be aware a revised National Planning Policy Framework was published in December together with a Written Ministerial Statement. Any evidence should take account of the Policies within the revised version of the Framework, and where appropriate, the Written Ministerial Statement.

Likely Main Issues

The issues on which I wish to hear evidence are set out below. In most instances, these topics will include an assessment of the policy issues sought by the Secretary of State. Any residual matters should be addressed as part of topic 14. Should the parties wish to rely on conditions to resolve any of these matters, I shall require the proposed wording of the condition as well as sufficient information for me to be satisfied that the condition would overcome the concern in question. This matter should be addressed within the submitted evidence.

- 1) The need for and benefits of the scheme
- 2) Whether the transport modelling on which the proposal is based is robust and takes account of any significant traffic impacts in the wider area
- 3) Whether the proposal would make acceptable provision for sustainable travel, including walking and cycling and accord with the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP)
- 4) Consideration of alternatives
- 5) The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding landscape, including any loss of trees and/or hedges
- 6) Whether the proposal would be acceptable in terms of impacts on noise
- 7) Whether the proposal be acceptable in terms of air quality
- 8) The effect of the proposal on climate change and carbon emissions
- 9) Whether the proposed bridge would deliver the high-quality design sought by the Framework and development plan policies
- 10) The effect of the proposal on biodiversity, including Biodiversity Net Gain and whether a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening should be undertaken for Cothill Fen Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Little Wittenham SAC.
- 11) The effect of the proposal on the significance of heritage assets
- 12) Whether the proposed scheme would be safe from flooding over its lifetime and the effect on flood risk elsewhere. I shall also need to understand arrangements for the management and maintenance of any surface water management features.
- 13) The effect of the proposal on the Green Belt
- 14) Other policy matters and the overall planning balance

Running Order – Planning Inquiry

I have given consideration to the running order of the Planning Inquiry. I agree with the previous Inspector that the evidence should be heard on a topic basis. This will help to avoid the repetition of evidence, and in the case of Rule 6 parties they will only need to attend for the topics on which they intend to submit evidence.

In accordance with the previous Inspector's note, following my opening announcements we will hear opening statements from all main parties. We will hear

first from the Local Planning Authority, followed by the two District Councils, then the supporting Rule 6 parties and finally the opposing Rule 6 parties.

Interested parties who wish to make submissions in relation to the planning application will be given the opportunity to do so, although there is scope for some flexibility if someone has difficulties that prevent them from attending and speaking on the first day.

I propose that we then hear all of the transport related evidence since that includes the topics with the greatest Rule 6 party interest. This would include topics 2-4 above. We will hear firstly from those opposing the scheme, then from those supporting it.

I note that three Rule 6 parties (POETS, the Joint Parish Councils and East Hendred Parish Council) will be represented by a single advocate and are anxious to limit the amount of time they spend at the Inquiry. Where the objections from these parties are similar, they may wish to consider combining their evidence and perhaps submit shorter individual proofs in respect of any additional matters.

We will then move on and hear the evidence in relation to climate change and emissions (topic 8). This will be followed by the need for the scheme (topic 1), noise impacts and air quality (topics 6 & 7), the design of the bridge (topic 9), effects on character and appearance including trees and hedgerows (topic 5), various biodiversity considerations (topic 10), the effect on the significance of heritage assets (topic 11), and flooding issues (topic 12). We will then finish with the planning evidence, that will include any outstanding matters from the matters identified by the Secretary of State. I would expect Green Belt issues (topic 13) to be addressed as part of the planning evidence. There may also be scope for other topics to be combined/addressed by a single witness.

I have tried to group topics that are likely to involve the same or similar witnesses together as far as practical. At this point in time, based on the information available I would expect topics 1,2,3,4,6 and 7 to be heard during the first two weeks. However, due to the number of Rule 6 parties and the range of issues encompassed within these topics this may not be achievable, therefore all parties should ensure that their witnesses are available at subsequent dates.

Lesley Coffey

Planning Inspector

12.01.24