

FORMAL RESPONSE@2025 01 08: (NH/24/093340) Scoping Opinion re: WBC Planning Application
243188 Hall Farm/Loddon Valley

FAO: Development Management and Compliance, Wokingham Borough Council

Reference: 243188

Our reference: NH/24/09334

Location: Hall Farm/Loddon Valley

Proposal: Scoping Opinion application to determine the content of an Environmental Impact Assessment for the proposed development of the Site to deliver around 3,930 dwellings together with associated infrastructure (to include internal roads / internal and external access points, landscaping, site wide flood alleviation and surface water drainage and other required infrastructure). New link road over the M4 motorway to Lower Earley Way; new junctions and potential highway upgrades to existing routes. Phased expansion of the Thames Valley Science and Innovation Park (around 100,000m²). New neighbourhood and district centres (retail, leisure, sports, cultural, health and service facilities); and associated education facilities to include primary and secondary school provision. Provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace, landscaping to include a country park.

Dear Sir or Madam,

Thank you for your letter dated 20 December 2024, consulting us on the above EIA Scoping Opinion.

National Highways has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport as strategic highway company under the provisions of the Infrastructure Act 2015 and is the highway authority, traffic authority and street authority for the strategic road network (SRN). The SRN is a critical national asset and as such National Highways works to ensure that it operates and is managed in the public interest, both in respect of current activities and needs as well as in providing effective stewardship of its long-term operation and integrity.

We will therefore be concerned with proposals that have potential to impact the safe and efficient operation of the SRN, in this case the M4 motorway.

We do not offer a view if the EIA is required or not as this is for the Local Planning Authority to determine.

We reviewed information on your planning portal and note that proposal is for the delivery of around 3,930 dwellings together with associated infrastructure as well as a new link road over the M4 motorway to Lower Earley Way and the phased expansion of the Thames Valley Science and Innovation Park, new neighbourhood and district centres, associated education facilities to include primary and secondary school provision and the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace, landscaping to include a country park. Around 100,000m² of research and development floorspace or equivalent trip generating activity within use class E(g), B2 and B8 and other complementary uses, through an extension of the Thames Valley Science and Innovation Park.

The proposal includes the potential delivery of new link road over the M4 to Lower Earley Way and associated highways works; and it is proposed to produce an Illustrative Masterplan to demonstrate how the quantum of development proposed could be delivered within the site. To date National Highways has not seen any evidence in accordance with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) to demonstrate that the proposed new link over the M4 is feasible/deliverable and therefore welcome early engagement regarding this matter.

We also note that two high pressure gas mains run across the site, with one being located along the northern boundary adjoining the M4.

We note that details of measures to protect the environment during the construction of the Proposed Development will be set out in a CEMP and be implemented on a phase-by-phase basis, with CEMP being a condition of the planning permission(s) and that it will be regularly monitored. We welcome this approach and wish to be consulted on this document.

We look forward to working with the Applicant and Wokingham Borough Council to develop the scope and any modelling requirements to inform the subsequent Transport Assessment (TA) and we would expect the TA to assess any potential impacts to the M4 and take into account any other development in the area.

Please continue to consult us as the proposal develops via our planning inbox: planningse@nationalhighways.co.uk

Regards

Mrs Beata Ginn

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