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Dear Mr Connors

HIGH SPEED RAIL (LONDON – WEST MIDLANDS) ACT 2017
LONDON BOROUGH OF HILLINGDON: COLNE VALLEY VIADUCT GROUNDWORKS SOUTH
CONSULTATION ON INDICATIVE MITIGATION

Further to our request for the approval of Plans and Specifications (Paragraphs 2 and 3 for the Colne Valley Viaduct Groundworks South Resubmission under Schedule 17 to the High Speed Rail (London – West Midlands) Act 2017 ‘the HS2 Act’; this letter provides information regarding the indicative mitigation to be carried out as part of the Scheduled Works that are contained within the application boundary, namely:

Work No. 2/1 - A railway (19.27 kilometres in length), partly on viaduct and partly in tunnel, commencing by a junction with Work No. 1/61 at its termination, continuing north-westwards and terminating at a point 530 metres north of the junction of footpath LMI/17/2 with footpath LMI/17/1; and

Work No. 2/1 includes viaducts over Newyears Green Bourne, Harefield No.2 Lake, the Grand Union Canal, Savay Lake, Moorhall Road, Korda Lake, Long Lake, the River Colne and the A412 Denham Way (North Orbital Road) and shafts at Chalfont St. Peter, Chalfont St. Giles, Amersham, Little Missenden [and Chesham].

This planning submission for plans and specification displays a number of elements of mitigation for the wider works in the Colne Valley, namely habitat creation, water resources/flood risk, highways and landscape, which will be sought via Bringing in to Use approvals for the Scheduled Work identified above.

Much of the information below was provided at the time of the previous Groundwork South Plans and Specification submission. However, this letter has been updated to reflect the smaller application extent and to focus on the area subject to this resubmission.

The proposed mitigation for the wider Scheduled works is summarised below:

Ecology and Habitats

Within the Groundworks South package area, the habitat typologies proposed will increase the range of habitats within the area impacted by the proposed works resulting in a more varied and ecologically rich landscape which exceeds the aspirations originally set out in the Environment Statement. Wetland mitigation has been provided through a large area alongside the Newyears Green Bourne and pockets of woodland and retained trees incorporated into the scheme will supplement areas of woodland planting undertaken by Fusion.

Targeted species mitigation includes a replacement bat house on land to the south of Dews Lane. This was previously consented by Fusion under LBH consent 73195/APP/2020/1946. Additionally, habitat features as noted above have been incorporated in to other landscape designs, including those for woodland planting to the south of Dews Lane.

It is considered that the quantum of habitat now delivered, or to be delivered as a part of the proposed design within this location of the Colne Valley will adequately mitigate the quantum of habitat lost through the works.

Landscape

Landscape mitigation was broadly identified within the HS2 ES Community Forum Area 7 map-book being comprised of either woodland and/or scrub mitigation. The proposed designs have sought to provide this mitigation where possible. By way of comparison to the original Environment Statement drawings:

- The areas of woodland/scrub planting shown to the west of the realigned Harvil Road have been incorporated in to the proposed design through a series of native broadleaf woodland blocks and woodland/edge planting. This will, in time, screen the ATFS from receptors on Harvil Road and the realigned U34 public right of way. Additionally, tree belts planted adjacent to the realigned Harvil Road will assist in screening the wider works from Harvil Road.
- Woodland and tree planting shown along Dews Lane in the ES drawings has been broadly replicated.

The proposed landscape contouring typically comprises gentle reprofiling of the existing ground plain to return land to pre-construction levels and replicate the distinctive character of the area. The exceptions to this include more extensive reprofiling of land around the South Embankment to accommodate the railway and the ATFS platform; excavation of habitat ponds and scrapes within the flood plain to the south of Newyears Green Bourne; localised modification of lake edges around pier 13; and the use of small drainage ditches.

The landscape design is considered sufficient to deliver the mitigation envisaged at the HS2 ES stage and will, in time, mature to provide generally filtered and transient glimpses of the viaduct from public highways and footpaths when they are not immediately adjacent to its alignment. As a result, the landscape is not expected to result in any worse visual impact effects than those set out in the HS2 ES, and, importantly, is likely to deliver greater ecological benefit when compared to the ES.

Flood Risk

This proposed application incorporates the Newyears Green Bourne realignment earthworks which have been previously approved under Schedule 17 (Ref: 75435/APP/2021/1228) and Schedule 33 to the HS2 Act. In addition, a Bringing into Use application has also been submitted for the Newyears Green Bourne realignment. The proposed contours which are shown in this plans and specifications submission replicate those previously approved. The proposed earthworks will deliver on the required floodplain storages for the permanent works and this has been evidenced to the Environment Agency as a part of Schedule 33 consents for the wider permanent works in the Colne Valley.

Highways

The required Public Right of Way diversions associated with the U34 footpath are incorporated in to the overall scheme and achieve gradients of 1 in 15 or less.

As a part of the proposed landscape design, additional permissive paths are included, which will improve overall pedestrian and cycle connectivity through the Colne Valley and provide for improved circular walking opportunities as the HS2 scheme completes.

Connections and improvements to the rights of way network include:

- An additional connection to footpath U34 from Harvil Road which shall connect to improvements to the rights of way network being proposed by the adjacent contractor.
- A permissive route along the old alignment of Dews Lane once the new alignment of Dews Lane is finished being utilised for construction (already approved under a separate submission Ref:5435/APP/2020/1057 and subject a Bringing into Use application).
- A permissive access for anglers providing connection to fishing swims on the eastern edge of Harefield No.2 Lake from the U34 footpath

Noise

This consent application does not contain any specific measures for the purposes of the mitigation of noise. The predominant noise mitigation through the application area will be delivered by noise barriers on the viaduct and embankments themselves. The efficacy of these was previously demonstrated in the Noise Demonstration Report contained in the application for the Colne Valley Viaduct itself (LBH Reference: 74320/APP/2019/3187).

Consultation Response

Following extensive consultation, ALIGN JV, believe the mitigation adequately mitigates the effects as required under Paragraph 9(4)(b).

Should the Council have any comments, please send them to us by the same deadline as set out for the determination of the Schedule 17 Plans and Specifications application under the HS2 Act.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further please contact Ben Hampson at (b.hampson@alignjv.com).

Yours sincerely,

Ben Hampson
Town Planner
ALIGN JV