



DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

16 June 2015

REPORT BY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

Subject:	Construction of A45 Daventry Development Link Road on Land Between Junction 16 Of The M1 Motorway And A45 West Of Weedon Bec - 14/00086/CCDFUL
Applicant:	Northamptonshire Highways
Recommendations:	That the application be approved subject to the conditions outlined in Appendix A (to follow)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with professional planning advice on any issues, Development Plan Policies and other material considerations relevant to the determination of a planning application.

2. How the role of the Committee contributes to the Council Plan

2.1 The Council's vision is to make Northamptonshire a great place to live and work. This is achieved through increasing the wellbeing of your county's communities and/or safeguarding the county's communities.

This initiative specifically delivers increased wellbeing and/or safeguarding by:

- Contributing to creating safer communities
- Contributing to creating healthy communities
- Contributing to creating prosperous communities
- Creating a Sense of Place

3. Background

Site Description

3.1 The application site comprises a roughly linear stretch of land extending from the roundabout with Junction 16 of the M1 around to the north of the villages of Upper Heyford, Flore and Weedon, and terminating at the western side of Weedon.

3.2 The site is located on predominantly greenfield land, consisting primarily of agricultural fields interspersed with trees and hedgerows and a number of watercourses including the Grand Union Canal, the River Nene, incorporating Whilton and Hollandstone Brooks.

3.3 There are a small number of existing buildings and structures located above ground within the red line boundary including agricultural buildings and dilapidated railway carriages currently used for agricultural storage. Just north of Weedon Bec is the West Coast Main Line Railway which intersects the application site.

3.4 A number of agricultural tracks cross the site. There are also a number of roads that intersect the site at different points including:

- A45 at the eastern and western extents of the site;
- A5 Trunk Road;
- Upper Heyford Farm Road;
- Brington Road; and
- Brockhall Road

3.5 Within the site there are a limited number of historical features, principally the Grand Union Canal Conservation Zone and a number of archaeological sites along the route corridor. There are other designated Heritage Assets, for example Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens, or Listed Buildings adjacent to the site.

History

3.6 In the early 1990's as part of their trunk road network the Highways Agency (HA) agreed a preferred route for the A45 Weedon, Flore and Upper Heyford bypass. However, following a review of their trunk road schemes in July 1998, the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) announced that the bypass would be withdrawn from the national trunk road programme. This section of the A45 was then de-trunked by the HA in July 2001 and the bypass scheme along with other trunk road schemes within the County were handed over to Northamptonshire County Council (NCC). The County Council at this time chose not to pursue the bypass, although in June 2002 it decided to continue to protect the former HA A45 trunk road bypass scheme to the north of Weedon and Flore as there was strong local support for a northern route, and this route was protected as NCC's Preferred Route.

3.7 In 2009 and 2010, a further appraisal of alternative transport solutions for the corridor between Northampton and Daventry was undertaken which considered many forms of infrastructure improvements and this was used to inform a series of meetings held with key stakeholders such as the parish and district councils within the study area. These meetings reconfirmed the strong preference for a northern bypass solution on the corridor between Northampton and Daventry.

3.8 In 2012, a public consultation was undertaken to seek the views of the public on traffic issues along the A45 corridor between Northampton and Daventry, and to present a number of alternative route options for a bypass. The options that were presented to the public consisted of two northern routes, a central route and a southern route:

- *Northern Route Option A* - at an estimated cost of £40-45 million the proposed 5.9km long single carriageway runs west from M1 junction 16 passing to the north of Upper Heyford, Flore and Weedon Bec rejoining the existing A45 east of Dodford.
- *Northern Route Option B* - at an estimated cost of £30-35 million the proposed 4.1km long single carriageway runs west from M1 junction 16 passing to north of Upper Heyford then rejoins the existing A45 before passing to the north of Flore and Weedon Bec, rejoining the A45 east of Dodford.
- *Central Route* - at an estimated cost of £50-55 million the proposed 4.8km long single carriageway runs west from M1 junction 16 passing to the north of Upper Heyford,

south of Flore and then north of Weedon Bec rejoining the existing A45 east of Dodford.

- *Southern Route* - at an estimated cost of £45-50 million the proposed 7.6km long single carriageway runs west from the M1 junction 16 passing between Upper and Nether Heyford, south of Flore and Weedon Bec rejoining the existing A45 west of Dodford.

3.9 The outcome of the public consultation showed that there was strong local support for the Northern Route Option A which reaffirmed the preferred route protected by NCC in 2002 and it was recommended that this option be formally approved as NCC's Preferred Route for the bypass. This was officially confirmed in 2013 through Cabinet resolution and the route was protected.

3.10 It is anticipated that the construction of the A45 Daventry Development Link Road will improve transport links between the towns of Northampton and Daventry, and improve access between Daventry and the M1 motorway. The scheme will facilitate and support the growth of development within Daventry District and relieve the A45 through the villages of Flore and Weedon of through traffic. In Weedon, it will significantly reduce traffic congestion at the existing signalised junction of the A5 with the A45, and reduce the number and severity of road accidents providing a high quality route for through traffic. At present it is anticipated that construction will commence in 2015, with the new road being complete and operational in 2017.

4. Proposal

4.1 Northamptonshire County Council, as Highway Authority, are seeking planning permission to construct approximately 5.7km of single carriageway which will start at a new roundabout on the existing A45 between the settlements of Dodford and Weedon (to the east of Globe Farm) and pass to the north of the villages of Weedon, Flore and Upper Heyford before rejoining the A45 at a new roundabout between Upper Heyford and the M1 motorway at junction 16. The proposed road has been designed to a 70mph speed limit and has the potential for converting to dual-carriageway in the future. The proposed scheme will also include earthworks (cuttings and embankments) and the construction of eight structures including bridges, a culvert and a farm crossing.

4.2 The Environmental Statement has submitted with the application and it considers the potential impacts of and measures to be taken in mitigation of the development, including: landscape and visual impacts; nature conservation and ecology; noise; air quality and dust; soils, land quality and agriculture; water resources; rights of way; archaeology; blasting; alternatives; cumulative impacts; social-economics. The applicant has also submitted a limited amount of further Environmental Information in response to some consultee comments. The ES concludes that potential residual negative environmental impacts can be made acceptable by the imposition of planning conditions and obligations, and that the potential environmental and local amenity impacts are therefore acceptable and would not conflict with the Development Plan. Compliance with the Development Plan will be assessed in this report.

5. Consultation

5.1 The following is a summary of the responses received during consultation on this application. Full copies of responses can be made available to the committee members on request.

Daventry District Council (Planning)

5.2 No formal response has been received. However, the application was to be discussed at their Planning Committee on 10th June (after the deadline for this report) and with a recommendation to support the proposal.

Daventry District Council (Environmental Protection)

5.3 No formal response has been received.

South Northamptonshire Council (Planning)

5.4 No objection subject to planning conditions being imposed to secure the following:

- The minimisation of noise, vibration and dust impacts during construction
- The routing of construction traffic so as to avoid Upper Heyford and surrounding villages in South Northamptonshire
- The timely implementation and on-going maintenance of landscaping
- The undertaking of further archaeological works and the proper preservation, recording and archiving of findings
- The provision of full ecological mitigation
- Reinstatement of as much best and most versatile agricultural land as possible following construction

In addition, SNC requested that proper consideration should also be given to crossover points when the new road connects with public rights of way.

South Northamptonshire Council (Environmental Protection)

5.5 No objection. Considers that the proposed mitigation measures submitted with the Environmental Statement (ES) are satisfactory.

Flore Parish Council

5.6 Supportive of the proposed development but raised concerns to the following and requested that they be incorporated into appropriated planning conditions:

- *Spoil Relocation and Transportation Strategy*: They wish to see as much material to be re-used on site (for embankments works) and for the use of the local highway network to be minimised; preference would be for the use of internal-haul roads within the work site to be used. Any vehicles that use the local highway network must use an agreed transportation route and for vehicle wash facilities to be in place (to remove the risk to traffic of dangerous driving conditions with mud on the road). They also ask if routes have been determined for the removal of waste and the materials required.

- *Flore High Street Mitigation Strategy*: Consideration should be given for physical changes along the High Street, post opening of the link road, ie parking lay-by's (for existing retail shops, Millennium Hall usage etc), traffic calming, an additional pedestrian crossing on the High St for the proposed development of 67 dwellings, signage & brown signs to signpost passing through traffic to village retail facilities i.e. Post Office/grocery shop, plant nursery/tea shop, public house, garage. Funding should be provided by the County for key elements of this.
- *Daventry to Northampton cycle route*: Improvements should be made for cyclists between Daventry and Northampton through appropriate shared facilities. Within Flore such provision should be included within the High Street Mitigation Strategy - especially the extreme ends of the High Street out of the village.

In addition, the parish council wanted to know if the Daventry Development Link Road was to be a 'clearway' or if there be controls over stopping.

Weedon Parish Council

5.7 Whilst fully supportive of the proposed scheme, the parish council made a number of comments relating to matters during the construction of the bypass and afterwards such as construction management conditions, signage and mitigation measures.

Newnham Parish Council

5.8 Expressed concern that any scheme which improved the A45 M1 to Daventry route would increase highway and traffic problems already being experienced by the residents.

Environment Agency

5.9 Initially objected to the proposed development on the grounds that the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) submitted with the application does not provide a suitable basis for assessment to be made of the flood risks arising from the proposed development. Following extensive discussions between the EA and the applicant, revised information was submitted addressing these matters and the EA has withdrawn their objection but has requested that planning conditions be imposed relating to contamination and surface water drainage.

Highways England (formerly Highways Agency)

5.10 Initially issued a 'Holding Objection' to the proposed application as the applicant has failed to demonstrate or give adequate information to determine the Highway Agency's full view. Following submission of further information and clarification by the applicant's consultants, the Highway Agency has no objection subject to planning conditions being imposed relating to drainage for the A5 Trunk Road and that the development be carried out in accordance with the details provided on Drawing No. R1999/73 Rev B (or as amended by Road Safety Audit or Detailed Design).

Highways Authority

5.11 Initially commented in its regulatory role that the applicant has failed to demonstrate or give adequate information to determine the Highway Authority's full view. Following submission of further details, the Highway Authority has no objection in principle subject

to planning conditions being imposed requiring the submission of a construction management plan, full details of all crossing points including public rights of way (PRoW) and Green Bridge, full engineering details, full signage details and full details of works affecting existing PRoW.

Natural England (NE)

5.12 No objection. Made the following comments:

- Noted that the application is in close proximity to Bugbrooke Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Natural England is satisfied that the proposed development being carried out in strict accordance with the details of the application, as submitted, will not damage or destroy the interest features for which the site has been notified.
- Noted the proposed scheme's impact on agricultural land and recommended that should the application be approved, the applicant should use an appropriately experienced soil specialist to advise on, and supervise, soil handling, including identifying when soils are dry enough to be handled and how to make the best use of the different soils on site.
- Expect the Planning Authority to assess and consider the other possible impacts resulting from this proposal on the following when determining this application:
 - i. local sites (biodiversity and geodiversity)
 - ii. local landscape character
 - iii. local or national biodiversity priority habitats and species.
 - iv. Potential for positive or negative impacts to the Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area
- Referred to the requirement for the application to be assessed in line with NE's Standing Advice

Historic England (formerly English Heritage)

5.13 Recommended the Planning Authority, in consultation with specialist conservation advisors, ensure that any direct and indirect impacts on all heritage assets, including on those of national importance, can be either avoided or mitigated.

5.14 In addition, Historic England commented that the proposed scheme has the potential to further minimise harm and deliver additional enhancements to the significance of the nationally important archaeological remains of two Neolithic long barrows in line with the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework than is currently proposed in the associated mitigation scheme. Recommended that further consideration be given to the design of the proposed Green Bridge which is in the vicinity of the barrows

Canal & Rivers Trust

5.15 No objection. Requested that planning conditions be imposed requiring full details of the design, materials and finishes of the combined canal and rail bridge to be submitted for approval, provision of details of an anti-graffiti finish to the bridge and full details of any hard and soft landscaping to be provided in and around the bridge. In addition, the Trust also requested that an informative be attached to the decision notice to advise the

applicant to contact them for any necessary consents and compliance with the Trust's code of practice for works.

Network Rail

- 5.16 Supportive of the proposed development subject to the necessary clearance as well as a Basic Asset Protection Agreement.

National Grid

- 5.17 Initially issued a 'Holding Objection' to the proposed application due to it being in close proximity to a High Voltage Transmission Overhead Line. Following submission of further details, National Grid have withdrawn their holding objection and issued advice/guidelines for development in the vicinity of overhead power lines.

British Pipeline Agency

- 5.18 Advised that the proposed scheme would affect the high pressure petroleum pipeline system and that they advised early engagement with them including details of how the pipeline would be crossed and protected.

The Ramblers Association

- 5.19 Noted that the proposed scheme affects 5 public rights of way (PRoW) but only expressed concern over the proposed diversion of Footpath EU1 which they considered to be too long and they would prefer the footpath to stay on its present line. Following further discussion with the applicant and affected landowner, the Ramblers have accepted an amended diversion of the footpath but are still concerned at where it meets the A5.

Natural Development Officer, Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area (NIA)

- 5.20 Confirmed that the application site lies within the Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area (NIA) and commented that the proposed scheme presents an opportunity to create a significant local habitat corridor. For its full potential to be realised the newly created habitat must be representative of the local ecology, bearing in mind that many species native to the UK or even Northamptonshire have a very restricted distribution within the county. The Phase I habitat survey, the botanical survey of the Weedon A5 field and Bugbrooke Meadow SSSI citation all provide clues as to the most appropriate species list for the site. Provided recommendations on appropriate planting and species for the proposed scheme.

County Archaeological Advisor (CAA)

- 5.21 The County Archaeological Advisor (CAA) is generally supportive of the approach proposed by the applicant detailed in their archaeological and heritage reports submitted in support of the application. However, the CAA has expressed concern over the suggested mitigation for the Neolithic long barrows and areas of ridge and furrow to the north of Flore. Following further discussions and the submission of revised landscaping and construction details by the applicant, the CAA is satisfied that the concerns have been addressed but has requested that that a planning condition be imposed to secure

the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with paragraph 141 of the NPPF to any permission granted.

5.22 No responses were received from:

- Upper Heyford Parish Council;
- Dodford Parish Meeting;
- The British Horse Society;
- Northamptonshire Local Access Forum;
- Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust.

Public Advertisement and Neighbour Notification

5.23 The application was advertised by way of site notices and a press notice in a locally circulated newspaper. In addition, direct notifications were sent to 201 properties and businesses in the vicinity of the development.

5.24 A total of 24 letters of representation have been received from local residents, landowners and local businesses. 15 of these raise objections or points relating to the proposed development and 9 are in support of the proposed scheme. The main points of concern/objections to the proposed scheme can be summarised as follows:

- i. Pollution (light, dust, noise and vibration);
- ii. Landscape and Visual Impact;
- iii. Construction Impacts;
- iv. Impact on small holdings, leisure activities and local businesses;
- v. Increase in risk from flooding;
- vi. Alignment of the proposed bypass;
- vii. Archaeological Impacts;
- viii. Traffic Problems/Increased congestion;

6. Policy Context (National Planning Policy Framework & Development Plan Policies)

6.1 The following provide the policy context considered to be most relevant to the proposed development:

National Planning Policy Framework

	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
	Core Planning Principles (Paragraph 17)
Section 1	Building a Strong, Competitive Economy
Section 3	Supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy
Section 4	Promoting Sustainable Transport (Paragraph 32)
Section 7	Requiring Good Design (Paragraphs 63-66)
Section 8	Promoting Healthy Communities (Paragraphs 69-72)
Section 10	Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change (Paragraphs 93-98)
Section 11	Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment (Paragraphs 109 & 118)
Section 12	Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment (Paragraphs 128 – 134)

West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part One) (December 2014)

Policy SA	Presumption In Favour Of Sustainable Development
Policy S1	The Distribution of Development
Policy S10	Sustainable Development Principles
Policy C3	Strategic Connections
Policy C4	Connecting Urban Areas
Policy C5	Enhancing Local and Neighbourhood Connections
Policy BN2	Biodiversity
Policy BN5	The Historic Environment and Landscape
Policy BN7	Flood Risk
Policy BN8	The River Nene Strategic River Corridor
Policy BN9	Planning for Pollution Control
Policy BN10	Ground Instability
Policy D5	Daventry's Transport Network Improvements
Policy R3	A Transport Strategy for the Rural Areas

South Northamptonshire Local Plan 1997 (Saved Policies)

Policy G3	General
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Daventry District Council Local Plan 1997 (Saved Policies)

Saved Policy GN2	General
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7. Assessment

7.1 The main issues to consider in determining this application are:

- i. Whether the proposal accords with the relevant policies (the NPPF & the Development Plan);
- ii. Whether there are any design and appearance; traffic and highway safety; residential amenity (noise, dust, lighting); heritage; ecology or landscape; water and drainage; construction impacts or other issues to justify refusal of the application.

Development Plan

National Planning Policy Framework

7.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. National policy statements form part of the overall framework of national planning policy, and are a material planning consideration in decisions on planning applications. The NPPF establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking, this means that proposals for development that accord with the development plan shall be approved without delay.

7.3 There is a particular focus on economic growth within the NPPF and a desire to proactively drive and support sustainable economic development. The NPPF focuses on many consideration relevant to this application, including: promoting sustainable transport (including modal shift); achieving good design; conserving and enhancing the natural

environment (including protecting valued landscapes, recognising the intrinsic character of the countryside, and conserving and enhancing biodiversity); preserving and enhancing the historic environment (including the setting of heritage assets); and, minimising noise and pollution.

7.4 It is considered that the strongest support in the NPPF for the application comes from Section 1 paragraphs 18-21 which cover the objectives of 'Building a Strong, Competitive Economy'. The economic advantages to Daventry that will result from the Daventry Development Link Road carry significant weight in support of the application.

West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part One) (December 2014)

7.5 Policy SA of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan seeks to support sustainable development and proposals that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. This is further supported by Policy S1 which recognises the need for limited development in the rural areas and sets out a series of criteria to ensure development proposals are consistent with the objective of meeting local needs and supporting local services.

7.6 Clear policy support for the proposed bypass can be found in Policy D5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan which identifies the need for improvements to the A45/A4500 corridor which links Daventry to Northampton. This policy provides significant weight in support of the application.

Traffic and Transportation

7.7 Concerns have been expressed by local residents and businesses regarding the potential traffic and highway safety implications of the proposed development. With regard to these, the applicant has submitted a Transport Assessment in support of their planning application in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 32 of the NPPF. The Transport Assessment states that the proposed bypass scheme will help to facilitate and support growth within the Daventry area, relieve the existing through traffic problems being experienced by the villages of Flore and Weedon, and improve links between Daventry and Northampton, and the M1. In addition, the proposed bypass will significantly reduce traffic congestion at the existing signalised junction of the A5 with A45 in Weedon, and reduce the number and severity of road accidents thereby providing a high quality route for through traffic. The applicant's Environmental Statement has also assessed the potential effects relating to transportation and traffic of the proposed bypass and it has concluded that there will be a limited impact in the form of slight increase in traffic during the construction phase and in the operational phase, there will be a clear reduction in the levels of traffic through the villages currently affected such as Flore and Weedon.

7.8 Initially, both the Highways Agency and Highway Authority commented that the applicant has failed to demonstrate or give adequate information to determine their full view on the planning application for the proposed bypass. Following submission of further information and clarification by the applicant's consultants, neither the Highway Agency or the Highway Authority have an objection to the proposed scheme subject to planning conditions being imposed relating to matters concerning drainage, signage, construction details, PRoWs and construction management. The Development Plan provides significant policy support for improvements to the A45/A4500 corridor and overall, it is considered that the traffic and transportation impacts of the proposed scheme are

acceptable having regard to Policies S10 and D5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan.

Noise and Vibration

- 7.9 Concerns have been expressed by local residents and businesses about the potential impact from noise associated with the proposed scheme during the construction and operational phases. These concerns need to be carefully considered against Policies S10 and BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan which seeks to minimise pollution from noise.
- 7.10 With regard to the potential noise and vibration impacts of the proposed scheme, the applicant has submitted detailed assessments of the proposed scheme during the site preparation, earthworks and construction phase, and the operational phase as part of their supporting Environmental Statement. These assessments identified a total of 1,861 sensitive receptors within the study area and a number of these were selected as representative receptors for the purposes of the assessment.
- 7.11 The applicant has concluded that at all sensitive receptors there is likely to be a direct, temporary short to medium term impact from noise during the construction phase of the proposed scheme but this will not be of a significant level and can be mitigated through the implementation of best practice measures. With regard to the potential impact from vibration, the applicant has stated that vibration associated with piling can be mitigated by design and that in the one instance where there is likely to be significant effects from the vibration associated with the compaction of road surfacing, the applicant is considering the use of low-vibration generative equipment. It is considered that these impacts could be controlled through a construction management plan which can be secured by planning condition.
- 7.12 With regard to the operational phase of the proposed scheme, the applicant has concluded that the road traffic noise will be of a direct, temporary short-term, and direct, permanent long-term negligible significance for the majority of receptors. However, for some receptors the change in noise and level of noise is sufficient to warrant the consideration of mitigation measures either in the provision of sound insulation where required or a noise barrier.
- 7.13 It should be noted that no objections as regards noise and/or vibration have been received from statutory consultees. However, informal comments regarding the noise assessment have been received from Daventry District Council's EHO which were passed onto the applicant for information. On balance, the noise impacts of the proposed scheme are considered to be acceptable subject to planning conditions having regard to Policies S10 and BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan.

Air Quality and Dust

- 7.14 Concerns relating to air quality in particular dust from the proposed scheme have been raised by local residents and these need to be carefully considered against Policies S10 and BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan which seeks to minimise pollution. In respect of the potential impacts on air quality, the applicant has submitted a detailed assessment of the proposed scheme during the site preparation, earthworks and construction phase, and the operational phase as part of their supporting Environmental Statement. The assessment concluded that there are likely to be impacts

from dust during the construction phases of the proposed scheme but these could be reduced through good site practice and the implementation of suitable mitigation measures. It is considered that these impacts could be controlled through a construction management plan which can be secured by planning condition.

7.15 With regard to the operational phase of the proposed scheme, the applicant's assessment has concluded that the impact on local air quality from the proposed scheme would be beneficial as concentrations of NO₂ and PM₁₀ would be reduced due to traffic being diverted off local roads and away from sensitive receptors.

7.16 In the light of the above assessment it is considered that no objection to the proposal could be sustained on grounds of air quality subject to the planning condition mentioned and having regard to Policies S10 and BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan.

Landscape and Visual Character

7.17 Concerns have been expressed by local residents over the landscape and visual impact of the proposed scheme. These concerns need to be carefully considered having regard to Policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Saved Policy G3 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan, Policy GN2 of the Daventry District Local Plan, and Paragraphs 17 (bullet 5) and 109 (bullet 1) of the NPPF. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been submitted as part of the Environmental Statement and provides the applicant's assessment of the proposed development on landscape and visual amenity. The report establishes that landscape impacts are those that occur upon the landscape character and resource while visual impacts are those that arise from changes in the appearance of the landscape and have a resulting impact on visual amenity. Existing landscape features, designations and views were identified as part of the baseline assessment for the LVIA:

Key Landscape Receptors

- Site Topography;
- Trees and vegetation within the site;
- Public Rights of Way within and surrounding the site;
- Character of the site and surrounding area, including the Grand Union Canal Conservation Area, Brockhall Registered Park and Garden, and Bugbrooke Meadows

Key Visual Receptors

- Views from local residential areas;
- Views for users of Public Rights of Way within and surrounding the site;
- Views from surrounding highways; and
- Views from the Grand Union Canal Conservation Area

7.18 The LVIA has considered the effect of the proposed scheme on the key landscape receptors during both the construction phase and the operational phases and identified the key issues which include the effects of the proposed scheme on the existing landscape character of the site and its surrounding, due to changes in site topography, vegetation (tree) loss and change from open agricultural fields to one with hard surfacing, artificial lighting and traffic. It also identified the effects on sensitive receptors during both phases of the proposed scheme including effects on views from surrounding roads and

residences, and on local character which the LVIA considered would be greater during the construction phase due to additional noise and visual intrusion from working plant/machinery, and the removal of vegetation. Various mitigation measures are proposed to minimise impacts on landscape and visual amenity during the construction and operational phases by the applicant and these can be secured by the imposition of planning conditions where appropriate.

7.19 It is acknowledged that the proposed scheme, particularly whilst it is under construction, will have a generally significant negative effect on the character and appearance of the open countryside in particular towards the western end of the proposed scheme and this is contrary to Policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan, Saved Policy G3 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan, Policy GN2 of the Daventry District Local Plan and Paragraphs 17 (bullet 5) and 109 (bullet 1) of the NPPF. However, it is considered that on balance the need and benefits of the proposed scheme outweigh the landscape and visual impacts, and therefore the proposed scheme is considered to be acceptable.

Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

7.20 Concerns have been expressed by local residents, Historic England and the County Archaeological Advisor over the potential impact of the proposed scheme on designated and non-designated heritage assets. These concerns need to be considered against Section 12 (especially paragraphs 134 and 135), and Policies BN5 and S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan that seek to protect, conserve and enhance designated and non-designated heritage assets. In respect of the potential impacts on designated and non-designated heritage assets, the applicant has submitted detailed archaeological and heritage assessments in support of their application. These assessments have identified areas of archaeological interest of varying periods within the application site and a number of other heritage assets such as conservation areas with the Grand Union Canal Conservation Area being traversed by the western end of the scheme traverses, listed buildings and a registered historic park and garden located in or around the application site.

7.21 The applicant's assessment has concluded in the Environmental Statement that during the site preparation, earthworks and construction phase of the proposed scheme, there are likely to be impacts on potential buried or surface archaeological deposits present within the application site and that suitable mitigation measures will need to be implemented prior to development. In addition, the assessment has determined that there are a number of designated heritage assets that would be directly affected by the proposed scheme, including the Grand Union Canal Conservation Area, Brockhall Conservation Area, and non-designated heritage assets included within the assessment were the Neolithic Long Barrows, Late Iron Age Enclosure, Roman Settlement, Late Medieval / Post-Medieval Lane from Dodford to Flore and ridge and furrow and Field Divisions within the Site. Whilst mitigation measures are proposed to reduce the effects on the majority of the non-designated heritage assets, no substantive measures are proposed to reduce the negative effects on the Grand Union Canal Conservation Area, Ridge and Furrow and Field Divisions. Therefore, the residual effects of the proposed scheme on these assets are considered to range from minor to moderate negative significance depending on the asset concerned. However, there will be a positive effect on the local environment of 12 Listed Buildings in the village of Flore, due to a reduction in traffic including reduced noise and visual intrusion once the new bypass is completed.

- 7.22 Both Historic England and the County Archaeological Advisor (CAA) expressed concern over the suggested mitigation for the Neolithic long barrows in the proximity of the proposed green bridge. Following further discussions and the submission of revised landscaping and construction details by the applicant, the CAA and Historic England are satisfied but are disappointed that the Neolithic long barrows could not be incorporated within the road scheme as it is beyond the scope of the scheme being forward by the Highway Authority.
- 7.23 With regard to the impact on the Grand Union Canal Conservation Area, comments have been received from the Canal and River Trust who have not raised any objection to the proposed scheme but have requested that planning conditions be imposed requiring full details of the design, materials and finishes of the combined canal and rail bridge to be submitted for approval, provision of details of an anti-graffiti finish to the bridge and full details of any hard and soft landscaping to be provided in and around the bridge.
- 7.24 It is considered that on balance the need and benefits of the proposed scheme outweigh the heritage impacts and the proposal is acceptable having regard to Section 12 of the NPPF, and Policies S10 and BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan.

Biodiversity

- 7.25 Policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan states the need to protect, conserve and enhance natural assets, and enhance biodiversity. These objectives are further supported by Policy BN2 which supports development proposals that will maintain and enhance existing designations or assets or deliver a net gain in biodiversity. Section 11 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment) Paragraph 118 of the NPPF requires development proposals to conserve or enhance biodiversity and where significant harm would occur this should be adequately mitigated, and opportunities to enhance biodiversity are encouraged. As part of their Environmental Statement, the applicant has undertaken detailed surveys and assessments of the application site and surrounding area including protected species and other biodiversity assets such as local wildlife sites. These surveys and assessments concluded that the proposed scheme would have significant effect at the local level through the loss of trees, hedgerows and other vegetation which would impact on the identified species groups present such as bats, great crested newts and breeding birds.
- 7.26 Following further advice, the Planning Authority requested additional details and clarification on matters relating to protected species from the applicant which has been provided. It should be noted that no objections have been received from statutory consultees such as Natural England and that a number of compensation/mitigation measures have been recommended by the applicant's ecological consultant including the installation of bird and bat boxes, provision of a biodiversity rich landscaping scheme including native species and wildlife attracting plant species, working practises during site clearance and construction, and retention of trees where possible. Planning conditions can be imposed to secure these measures and the other recommendations mentioned in the applicant's ecological assessment. Therefore, the biodiversity impacts of the proposed scheme are considered to be acceptable having regard to Policies S10 and BN2 the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan and paragraph 118 of the NPPF.

Agricultural Land

- 7.27 In their Planning Statement, the applicant states that the proposed development will affect approximately 123 hectares (ha) of land, of which approximately 109 ha are in agricultural use, including 52.3 ha classified as 'best and most versatile' land. Concerns have been expressed by a landowner over the potential impact of the proposed development will have on agricultural activity through the loss, severance and fragmentation of agricultural holdings. Policy R2 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2014 seeks to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land from inappropriate development. Further support for the protection of the best and most versatile agricultural land from development proposals which would result in its irreversible loss can be found in Saved Policy G3 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan and Policy GN2 of the Daventry District Local Plan. Paragraph 112 of the NPPF requires the economic and other benefits of best and most versatile agricultural land to be taken into account.
- 7.28 The effects of the proposed bypass scheme have been assessed in the Environmental Statement submitted by the applicant in support of their planning application. The applicant acknowledges that the most significant effects of their proposed scheme would be the loss of agricultural land and the potential mishandling of the soil resource such that the soil's ecosystem as well as agricultural functions would be lost; and the loss of productive land from, and severance to, the agricultural holdings affected. In order to mitigate/reduce the effects of the proposed scheme, the applicant is proposing to reinstate land currently within the red line boundary of the application back to agricultural use following completion of the bypass. In addition, the applicant is also proposing to implement a soils resources plan following best practise/guidance for the handling and storing soils, and re-using or disposing of surplus soils in a sustainable manner.
- 7.29 Both Natural England and South Northamptonshire District Council have noted and commented on the impact of the proposed scheme on agricultural land requesting reinstatement of as much best and most versatile agricultural land as possible following construction and that best practice be followed for soil management.
- 7.30 It is therefore considered that whilst the development could be seen as contrary to Policy R2 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Saved Policy G3 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan and Policy GN2 of the Daventry District Local Plan with regard to the loss of the best and most versatile land, in this instance the benefits associated with the implementation of the proposed scheme outweigh the potential impacts of the development.

Lighting

- 7.31 Concerns have been expressed by local residents and businesses about the potential impact from lighting associated with the proposed bypass. These concerns need to be carefully considered having regard to Policies S10 and BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Saved Policy G3 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan and Policy GN2 of the Daventry District Local Plan which seek to ensure that new development proposals do not have any significant negative impact on amenity.
- 7.32 Both the applicant's Planning Statement and supporting Environmental Statement state that an assessment of the lighting impact from both the construction and operational phases of development has been undertaken. The applicant has identified that that there

will be potential lighting impacts from the construction phase of the proposed development in the form of temporary lighting associated with the illumination of contractors' activities, compounds and work tasks for safety and security reasons. It has been suggested by the applicant that this could be managed and mitigated through the imposition of a planning condition requiring the submission of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). With regard to the operational phase of the development, the applicant has stated that there will be permanent lighting installations at three roundabouts, (the two junctions with the existing A45 and the junction with the A5). These lighting installations will be designed in accordance with guidance set out in BS13201-S 'Road Lighting - Part 2: Performance Requirements'.

7.33 It should be noted that no statutory consultees have raised any concerns or objections regarding lighting and that the temporary lighting impacts during the construction phase of the proposed development can be controlled through the imposition of a planning condition. Therefore, it is considered that the lighting impacts are acceptable having regard to Policies S10 and BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan, Saved Policy G3 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan and Policy GN2 of the Daventry District Local Plan.

Flooding, Hydrology and Water Resources

7.34 Concerns have been expressed by local residents over the potential increase in the risk of flooding from the proposed scheme and these would need to be carefully considered having regard to Policy BN7 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan which requires that any new development proposal demonstrates that there is no increased flood risk and where required, be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). Paragraph 100-103 of the NPPF seeks to ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere as a result of development and if necessary, the Sequential Test and Exception Test should be applied. The road scheme crosses the Whilton Branch of the Nene Valley and as such this is an active floodplain (Zone 3a & 3b) requiring consideration under these tests. The route has to cross the flood plain to enable the villages to be bypassed, and as an infrastructure project it satisfies the Exception Test subject to the necessary FRA criteria being met.

7.35 A detailed flood risk assessment (FRA) has been provided by the applicant as part of their Environmental Statement (ES). The Environment Agency (EA) initially objected to the proposed scheme on the grounds that the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) submitted with the application does not provide a suitable basis for assessment to be made of the flood risks arising from the proposed development. Following extensive discussions between the EA and the applicant, revised information was submitted addressing these matters and the EA has withdrawn their objection but has requested that planning conditions be imposed relating to contamination, surface water drainage and flood protection. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable having regard to Policy BN7 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan and paragraphs 100 - 103 of the NPPF.

Ground Conditions, Hydrogeology and Contamination

7.36 Policy BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan requires that any new development proposal likely to cause or result in pollution should demonstrate that they provide opportunities to minimise and where possible reduce pollution issues that are a barrier to sustainable development and healthy communities. The

Environmental Statement has identified the potential pollution risks associated with the proposed scheme and has detailed how these will be mitigated during the construction phase and this can be secured through the imposition of a planning condition.

7.37 It should be noted that no objections have been received from statutory consultees and that South Northamptonshire District Council's Environmental Protection Officer considers that the proposed mitigation measures submitted with the Environmental Statement are satisfactory. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable having regard to Policies S10 and BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan.

Socio-Economic

7.38 As part of their Environmental Statement, the applicant has undertaken an assessment of the potential social and economic effects of the proposed scheme and has concluded that during the site preparation, earthworks and construction phase of the proposed scheme, there likely to be positive effects during this phase in the form of potential direct and indirect employment opportunities.

7.39 When the proposed scheme is operational, the applicant has stated that it will improve accessibility through the local area, thereby aiding the creation and safeguarding of jobs, and it is anticipated that this will have a positive effect on the local economy. Not stated by the applicant but considered to be a possible negative socio-economic impact, would be the potential loss of trade to businesses along the existing A4500 which will be bypassed. This risk is an inevitable consequence of bypass roads but has to also be balanced against the amenity and safety benefits of removing traffic from villages and under socio-economic benefits.

Waste

7.40 Comments have been made by Flore Parish Council regarding how the applicant is going to manage the wastes arising from the proposed bypass scheme. Both the applicant's Planning Statement and supporting Environmental Statement state that consideration has been given to the effects of waste arising from the construction of the proposed bypass scheme. The applicant acknowledges that the proposed development will generate considerable quantities of construction waste but has stated that this can be mitigated by implementing the following measures:

- Implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP);
- Adherence to the Waste Hierarchy;
- Implementation of a Site Waste Management Plans (SWMP) and associated waste monitoring;
- Management of supply chains and good on-site storage of materials to prevent wastage;
- Segregation of recyclable materials; and
- Development of a Handover Environmental Management Plan (HEMP)

7.41 It is considered that these measures are acceptable having regard to Policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

Other Matters

Landowner Representations

7.42 A number of landowners have made representations through their agents raising matters relating to mitigation and compensation agreed with the Highway Authority. These matters will be dealt with under a separate process and are therefore not a material consideration to be assessed in this report.

Impact on Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

7.43 The Environmental Statement states that during the site preparation, earthworks and construction phase of the proposed scheme, there will be disruption to the amenity value and users of the PRoW and non-designated public routes and that in the operational phase of the development, it is envisaged that the proposed scheme will help to improve accessibility and as such, have an overall positive effect on the majority of the PRoW and non-designated public routes, and amenity value. However, it is acknowledged that there will be slightly longer journey times for users of Footpaths EU1 and EU7.

7.44 Whilst no specific objections have been received in relation to the effect of the proposed scheme on the PRoW and non-designated public routes, the Ramblers Association did express concern over the proposed diversion of Footpath EU1 which they considered to be too long and they would prefer the footpath to stay on its present line. Following further discussion with the applicant and affected landowner, the Ramblers Association have accepted an amended diversion of the footpath but are still concerned at where it meets the A5. They would prefer the footpath to be diverted over a private footbridge and terminate on the A5 opposite the lane leading to Dodford and the Grand Union Canal. The applicant whilst supportive of this suggestion is not able to secure this at this time as it is outside the scope of the current planning application. Notwithstanding not taking forward the suggestion of the Ramblers Association, it is therefore considered that the proposed scheme will not have a significant adverse impact on the users of PRoW network.

Alternatives

7.45 The EIA Regulations require Environmental Statements to include an outline of the main alternatives studied by the applicant and an indication of the main reasons for the choice made, taking into account the environmental effect.

7.46 As part of this assessment, that applicant considered the following alternatives against a number of environmental and technical criteria:

- Alternative Schemes
- Alternative Routes (Sites) for the Proposed Scheme
- Proposed Scheme Design Iterations; and
- The 'Do Nothing' Scenario

7.47 Following this assessment process and public consultation, it was identified that the Northern Route Option A was the most favourable and this is formed the basis of the Proposed Scheme which was taken forward as the preferred route.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 This application for planning permission for the construction of approximately 5.7km of single carriageway including earthworks (cuttings and embankments) and the construction of eight structures including bridges, a culvert and a farm crossing follows a detailed public consultation process and the consideration of a range of options. The application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement which considers a number of environmental issues and impacts and identifies appropriate mitigation measures.
- 8.2 Statutory consultees are generally in support of the application and the mitigation measures proposed, subject to some additional details and conditions to be attached to any planning permission. There were 24 representations received, 15 raising objection and 9 in support of the scheme.
- 8.3 The application has significant support from Policy D5 of the West Northamptonshire Core Strategy Local Plan which identifies a need for improvements to the A45/A4500 corridor which links Daventry to Northampton and the M1. There is also significant support from the economic benefits under Section 1 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The amenity and environmental impacts of the development have been assessed against the Development Plan and the NPPF and whilst some conflicts with policy have been identified relating in particular to landscape and visual character and agricultural land, and other negative impacts relating to cultural heritage, biodiversity, flood risk and socio economic impacts, these can be mitigated to an acceptable level and controlled by planning conditions.
- 8.4 The application is subject to Environmental Impact Assessment and the Environmental Statement and all environmental information submitted by the applicant, by consultees and contained within representations, has been taken into account in the assessment of this application and the conclusion and advice.
- 8.5 On balance it is considered that the Development Plan and other policy support in the NPPF for the need for the Daventry Link Road are sufficient to outweigh the identified conflicts with the Development Plan and the other identified negative environmental, amenity and socio economic impacts which can be mitigated and controlled.
- 8.6 Accordingly, it is therefore recommended that the application is determined in accordance with the advice subject to conditions set out in Appendix A.

9. List of Appendices

Appendix A: Proposed Planning Conditions (to follow)

Author:	Name: Peter Moor Team: Development Control
Contact details:	Tel: (01604) 367019 Fax: (01604) 366065 Email: pmoor@northamptonshire.gov.uk
Background Papers:	14/00086/CCDFUL
Does the report propose a key decision is taken?	NO
If yes, is the decision in the Forward Plan?	N/A
Will further decisions be required? If so, please outline the timetable here	NO

Is this report proposing an amendment to the budget and/or policy framework?	NO
Have the financial implications been cleared by the Strategic Finance Manager (SFM)? Have any capital spend implications been cleared by the Capital Investment Board (CIB)	NO. There are none relevant to the determination of the planning application. Name of SFM: N/A N/A
Has the report been cleared by the relevant Director?	NO but cleared by Assistant Director Environment and Planning
Has the relevant Cabinet Member been consulted?	NO
Has the relevant scrutiny committee been consulted?	NO
Has the report been cleared by Legal Services?	NO Name of solicitor: NA
	Solicitor's comments: N/A
Have any communications issues been cleared by Communications and Marketing?	NO Name of officer: N/A
Have any property issues been cleared by Property and Asset Management?	N/A
Has an Equalities Impact Assessment been carried out in relation to this report?	NO. There are no equal opportunity implications relevant to this application.
Are there any community safety implications?	These are considered in the report.
Are there any environmental implications:	These are considered in the report.
Are there any Health & Safety Implications:	NO
Are there any Human Resources Implications:	NO
Are there any human rights implications:	This planning application has been processed in accordance with the prescribed Town and Country Planning legislation and regulations. These afford individuals the rights to have their say on the development proposed and for the impacts of the development to be assessed having regard to the potential for impact on any individual, and the decision to be made taking into account any views expressed. The most relevant parts of the Human Rights Act are: Article 6 (Right to a Fair Trial); Article 8 (Right to Privacy); Article 10 (Freedom of Expression); and Protocol No1 which entitles every person to peaceful enjoyment of his/her possessions.
Constituency Interest:	NCC: Long Buckby NCC: Bugbrooke NCC: Woodford and Weedon DDC: Weedon SNC: Heyfords and Bugbrooke