

**PLANNING COMMITTEE:** 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020  
**DEPARTMENT:** Planning Service  
**DIRECTOR OF PLANNING:** Peter Baguley

**APPLICATION REF:** N/2019/0840

**LOCATION:** Land off A5199, Northampton Road, Northampton

**DESCRIPTION:** The construction of new roads (Northampton North West Relief Road) on land South of the A5199 Northampton Road between the Brampton Heath Golf Centre and the River Nene, including two new roundabouts and links bridging over the River Nene to Brampton Land and over the Northampton loop of the West Coast mainline to connect with the Dallington Grange development

**WARD:** Kings Heath Ward & Kingsthorpe Ward

**APPLICANT:** Northamptonshire County Council  
**AGENT:** N/A

**REFERRED BY:** Director of Planning and Sustainability  
**REASON:** County Council Application of Strategic Importance

**DEPARTURE:** No

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#### **APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION:**

#### **1 RECOMMENDATION**

##### **1.1 NO OBJECTION IN PRINCIPLE** subject to the following:

- 1) Northamptonshire County Council seeking an appropriate level of mitigation with due regard to comments received from relevant consultees and conditioning any planning permission accordingly in respect of impacts arising from the development on the local highway network, air quality, flood risk and drainage, biodiversity, noise, and impacts on amenity, particularly during the course of construction; and
- 2) Northamptonshire County Council give due consideration to the impacts of the proposed development on the Safeguarded Former Transport Route identified in Policy C3 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and Policy 30 of the emerging Northampton Local Plan Part 2, and to ensure that the development does not delay or compromise the allocation and delivery of the Northampton North Orbital Road.

#### **2 THE PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 This is a re-consultation from Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) following the receipt of amended details in respect of a full planning application submitted by NCC for the construction of a new relief road, known as the North West Relief Road (NWRR).
- 2.2 The proposed NWRR will measure approximately 1.9 km in length and be situated to the north west of Northampton. The application site extends across the administrative boundaries of both Daventry District Council (DDC) and Northampton Borough Council (NBC), the greater extent of the site being situated within DDC.
- 2.3 To the north, the road will connect into a new roundabout, the Sandy Lane Roundabout, located on the A5199 Northampton Road, and then connect to another new roundabout, the Brampton Lane Roundabout (part of the A5199 Welford Road). The road will extend southwards crossing over the railway line via a proposed new bridge connecting to a new roundabout, the Dallington Grange Roundabout, east of Grange Farm proposed as part of the Dallington Grange Sustainable Urban Extension.
- 2.4 The Northern Section of the NWRR, the subject of this application, is to be delivered by NCC. The remainder of the road to the south beyond the Dallington Grange Roundabout is to be delivered as part of the Dallington Grange SUE development, granted approval in principle by Committee on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018 for up to 3,000 houses and associated infrastructure, subject to the completion of a Section 106 Agreement. This southern section of the NWRR would link to the existing section of road provided by the Harlestone Manor housing development to the south, located in the administrative boundary of Daventry, which links to the New Sandy Lane roundabout.
- 2.5 The development proposed under this application will comprise the following components:
- A main carriageway comprising a single two-lane carriageway on a raised embankment with landscape earthworks and planting on both sides connecting Dallington Grange Roundabout to Sandy Lane Roundabout. The proposed road is designed as a single carriageway designed to enable it to be upgraded to dual carriageway in the future if required.
  - A railway bridge over the Milton Keynes to Rugby railway line.
  - A shared cycleway/footway along the entire length of the western edge of the carriageway.
  - Proposed Sandy Lane Roundabout to replace the existing junction arrangements that connect Sandy Lane and the A5199 Northampton Road. Amended from previous submission to accommodate greater highway capacity.
  - Proposed Brampton Lane Roundabout to replace existing junction arrangements that connect Brampton Lane with the A5199 Northampton Road/ A5199 Welford Road. Amended from previous submission to accommodate greater highway capacity.
  - Closure of a short section of the A5199 Northampton Road, approximately 250m in length, to motorised vehicles starting at Sandy Lane/ A5199 Northampton Road junction to the Brampton Mill Equestrian Centre side road access. This will connect to the footway and cycleway provisions for both Sandy Lane Roundabout and Brampton Lane Roundabout to provide access for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders only.
  - Highway balancing ponds and flood compensation storage areas.
  - Raised earth embankment to reduce width of the floodplain downstream of River Nene and Brampton Brook confluence to restrict flows during a flood event.
  - Drainage channel diversion away from Flood Mitigation Embankment.
  - Alterations to Public Rights of Way comprising Permanent Closure of Public Footpath CC6; Permanent Diversion of Public Footpath HW44; Permanent Diversion of Bridleway HW6; and Permanent diversion of National Cycle Route 6 approximately 15m west of its existing alignment to accommodate Brampton Lane Roundabout and provide safe access for users.
- 2.6 The amended scheme alters the red outline of the application site for part of the site situated within the administrative boundary of Daventry District Council. The extent of the application site and site layout within Northampton Borough remains as previously submitted.

- 2.7 The proposed amendments to the scheme are a result of on-going consultation and design development, further ground condition survey works and updated information on traffic flow since the original 2019 submission. The revised application is supported by an addendum to the Environmental Statement and updated Transport Assessment and technical supporting documents.
- 2.8 The main differences between the scheme as originally submitted in 2019 and the amended scheme are as follows:
- Flood Management – replacement of Flood Storage Areas A, B & C with single Flood Storage Area A of same footprint.
  - Flood Management Infrastructure – inclusion of diverted drainage channel to support mitigation of downstream flood risk and flood mitigation bund.
  - Relocation of highway balancing pond to south of Causeway.
  - Inclusion of Accommodation Access points to provide access to landowners with access to land parcels severed by the main carriageway and causeway but which are to be continued to be used for agricultural purposes.
  - Inclusion of Maintenance Access to allow general maintenance of design features such as bridges and balancing ponds.
  - Amendments to the design and adjustment to the location of the proposed Sandy Lane and Brampton Lane Roundabouts to accommodate greater highway capacity:
- 2.9 The submitted Transport Assessment sets out the aims of the NWRR:
- The NWRR between the A428 Harlestone Road and the A5199 Welford Road is necessary to enable and unlock the future development of 6,600 houses and more than 3,000 jobs in Northampton;
  - Required to help relieve the pressure that already exists on the local highway network in northern Northampton and nearby villages which currently suffer from high volumes of traffic and associated disturbance;
  - Aims to improve the quality of life for existing residents and commuters and enhance the character of existing nearby villages by redirecting traffic and reducing local congestion;
  - The road will form part of long-term strategy to deliver route from the A4500 near Junction 16 of the M1 and the A43 north of Northampton creating an orbital route option around Northampton.

### **3 SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 3.1 The application red line site comprises approximately 56.7 hectares of land situated to the north west of Northampton, approximately 1.2km south-east of Church Brampton and immediately east of Brampton Heath Golf Centre and Harlestone Nature Reserved situated within Daventry.
- 3.2 The site is broadly defined by the A5199 Welford Road and Sandy Lane to the north, the Brampton Heath Golf Centre to the west, the River Nene to the east, and the Rugby to Milton Keynes railway line to the south, with a shorter section of road and proposed drainage features extending into the fields to the south of the railway line.
- 3.3 The majority of the site is situated within the administrative boundary of Daventry District Council, with the southern end situated within Northampton Borough.
- 3.4 National Cycle Route 6 is situated to the east of the site, crossing the application site at the Brampton Lane/ Welford Road junction. Public right of way CC6 runs diagonally across the north-eastern corner of the site, between Welford Road and Sandy Lane.
- 3.5 The nearest existing residential properties are located at Grange Farm, approximately 200m west of the scheme, at its southern end, within Northampton Borough, and Boughton Crossing House, close to the existing junction between Brampton Lane and Welford Road. The Windhover public

house/restaurant, with the Brampton View Care Home situated immediately to the north, lies adjacent to the site to the north of Brampton Lane.

- 3.6 The land is currently predominantly agricultural fields intersected by small areas of woodland, hedgerows and drainage fields that feed into the Brampton Arm of the River Nene. The site is generally level throughout with a rise within the site from approximately 65m above ordnance datum (AOD) to 80m (AOD) in the section crossing the railway line and, being situated at the lowest gradient of a valley, has upwards gradients from the site from both the east and west.
- 3.7 The majority of the site is situated within Flood Zone 3. There are no statutory environmental designations within or adjacent to the site. Harlestone Firs Local Wildlife Site is situated some distance to the south west beyond Grange Farm. There are no specific heritage assets within the site, but there is potential for buried archaeological sites in and around the site dating from the Neolithic period through to the Iron Age.

## **4 PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 There are no previous applications specific to the application site itself, although the southern section of the site overlaps the boundary of the proposed Dallington Grange SUE in respect of the location of three proposed borrow pits and a small section of proposed road that would link to the Dallington Grange Roundabout. There have, however, been a number of applications for significant residential development in the vicinity of the site as part of sites allocated for Sustainable Urban Extensions within the Northampton Related Development Area either consented, under construction or under consideration.

## **5 PLANNING POLICY**

### **5.1 Statutory Duty**

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a planning application to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for the purposes of this application comprises the adopted West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014) and the Northampton Local Plan (1997) saved policies.

### **National Policies**

- 5.2 **The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the current aims and objectives for the** planning system and how these should be applied. In delivering sustainable development, decisions should have regard to the mutually dependent social, economic and environmental roles of the planning system. The NPPF should be read as one complete document. However, the following sections are of particular relevance to this application:

Chapter 2 – Achieving sustainable development  
Chapter 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes  
Chapter 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy  
Chapter 9 – Promoting sustainable transport  
Chapter 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change  
Chapter 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

### **5.3 West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014)**

The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) provides an up to date evidence base and considers the current Government requirements for plan making as it has been prepared in full conformity with the NPPF. Policies of particular relevance are:

Policy SA - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
Policy S1 - The Distribution of Development

Policy S3 - Scale and Distribution of Housing Development  
Policy S4 - Northampton Related Development Area  
Policy S5 - Sustainable Urban Extensions  
Policy S7 - Provision of Jobs  
Policy S10 - Sustainable Development Principles  
Policy BN2 - Biodiversity  
Policy BN5 - The Historic Environment and Landscape  
Policy BN7 - Flood Risk  
Policy BN9 - Planning for Pollution Control  
Policy N1 - The Regeneration of Northampton  
Policy N4 - Northampton West Sustainable Urban Extension  
Policy N7 - Northampton Kings Heath Sustainable Urban Extension  
Policy N8 - Northampton North of Whitehills Sustainable Urban Extension  
Policy N12 - Northampton's Transport Network Improvements

#### 5.4 **Northampton Local Plan 1997 (Saved Policies)**

Due to the age of the plan, the amount of weight that can be attributed to the aims and objectives of this document are diminished, however, the following policy is material to this application:

T5 – Permission for development of land north west of Kings Heath and a securing provision or appropriate contribution towards the highway improvements and infrastructure required.

### 6 **CONSULTATIONS/ REPRESENTATIONS**

- 6.1 NCC have consulted the relevant statutory consultees directly on the amended details including the County Highway Authority, NBC Environmental Health and the relevant drainage bodies. These consultees will respond directly to NCC Planning the responses of whom will be considered as part of their assessment of the development proposals.

### 7 **APPRAISAL**

#### **Background/Strategic Considerations**

- 7.1 The initial consultation from NCC was considered by NBC Planning Committee on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019. The Committee resolved the following:

**NO OBJECTION IN PRINCIPLE** subject to the following:

1. Northamptonshire County Council seeking an appropriate level of mitigation with due regard to comments received from relevant consultees and conditioning any planning permission accordingly in respect of impacts arising from the development on the local highway network, air quality, flood risk and drainage, biodiversity, noise, and impacts on amenity, particularly during the course of construction; and
  2. Northamptonshire County Council give due consideration to the impacts of the proposed development on the Safeguarded Former Transport Route identified in Policy C3 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and Policy 30 of the emerging Northampton Local Plan Part 2, and to ensure that the development does not delay or compromise the allocation and delivery of the Northampton North Orbital Road.
- 7.2 The background to the evolution of a scheme for the North West Relief Road and the strategic considerations were set out in the officer's report to Committee on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019, a copy of which is appended to this report for information.
- 7.3 This report is intended to provide an update to the previous report outlining the proposed amendments to the scheme and any impacts arising and should be read in conjunction with the previous report.

## Highways

- 7.4 The NPPF at paragraph 109 advises that development should only be refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 7.5 The amended details include the submission of a revised Transport Assessment based on updated transport modelling details provided by the Northamptonshire Strategic Transport Model (NTSM). Since the submission of the planning application in June 2019 a number of components of the NTSM have been updated as follows:
- A change in the scale of development for some of the committed developments captured in the NSTM;
  - Finalised designs for road junctions for proposed Dallington Grange development;
  - Updated traffic flow information based on traffic survey data gathered during surveys in May 2019.
- 7.6 The revised Transport Assessment advises the following:

“The proposed scheme will provide additional infrastructure capacity to support movements generated by forecast development and growth in the region. The key locations and corridors which showed a reduced 2031 traffic volume as a result of the NWRR included:

- Harlestone Road West of the New Sandy Lane Roundabout;
- A508 Kingsthorpe Road / Harborough Road;
- A45 Nene Valley Way and A5076 Mere Way;
- Brampton Lane (between Lower Harlestone and Pitsford);
- Harlestone Road (through the Bramptons); and
- Eastern Avenue.

Additionally, analysis of the wider benefits of the NWRR include:

- A reduction in traffic flows on a number of significant links and junctions in Northampton when compared to the Do Minimum case;
- A very strong business case with a high Benefit/Cost Ratio (BCR) which demonstrates that the savings, predominantly to travel time, outweigh the cost of delivering the scheme by 7 times, a very high return for a transport scheme;
- Additional capacity on the transport network to support housing growth targets; and
- Additional resilience to the Northampton highway network when disruption arises from time to time, such as planned roadworks, accidents or other foreseen and unforeseen events.”

- 7.7 The revised scheme retains the off-site mitigation measures as previously proposed, with some minor amendments, comprising:
- Mitigation Scheme 1: Traffic calming improvements in the villages of Moulton and Boughton; Following discussion with Northamptonshire Highways’ Road Safety Team and Highways Engineering team, it is proposed that Mitigation Scheme 1 will consist of the introduction of a priority give-way pinch-point feature on Vyse Road between Harborough Road and Howard Lane; and the enhancement of an existing priority give-way pinch-point feature near Boughton primary School. It is considered that these features will make the villages less attractive as a through route for vehicles seeking to travel to and from the proposed NWRR.
  - Mitigation Scheme 2: Capacity mitigation improvements at the A508 Harborough Road/ Brampton Lane / Vyse Road Existing Roundabout; At the A508 Harborough Road/ Brampton Lane/ Vyse Road Roundabout, this scheme consists of flare and entry width improvements to the Brampton Lane arm (increase from 4.5m to 60.2m on flare length to allow for dedicated right-hand lane into Far Barrows and 5.8m to 8m

on entry width to allow for dedicated left/ straight ahead and right turn lanes) and on the Vyse Road arm (short left-turn flare by widening the entry width from 5.2 to 9m and increasing approach road width on entry arm from 2.8m to 4m). The level of improvement proposed is the maximum which can be realistically achieved within highway land.

- Mitigation Scheme 3: Capacity mitigation improvements at the A428 Harlestone Road/ New Sandy Lane / York Road Roundabout;  
At the A428 Harlestone Road/ New Sandy Lane/ York Road Roundabout, this scheme consists of flare improvements on Harlestone Road South (left-side flare lengthened from 16m to 50m), entry width on New Sandy Lane increased from 7.2 to 8m and flare length increased from 17m to 30m, with all exist arms marked as two lane exits and lining amendments to the circulatory carriageway of the roundabout.
- Mitigation Scheme 4: To help accommodate potential traffic flow diversions associated with Mitigation Scheme 1, capacity improvements at the A508 Harborough Road/ A5076 Holly Lodge Drive Signalised Junction.  
At the A508 Harborough Road/ A5076 Holly Lodge Drive Signalised Junction, this scheme consists of lengthened left turn lanes on the Holly Lodge Drive (from 40m to 90m) and A508 Harborough Road North (from 70m to 120m) on the approaches to the junction.

7.8 The Highway Authority in considering these mitigation measures previously advised that on the basis of the above proposed mitigation, and the wider benefits of the scheme elsewhere on the Highway network, the impact of the proposed scheme cannot be considered to be 'severe' in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework.

7.9 The revised scheme includes proposed amendments to the design of the new access junctions/ roundabouts at the northern end of the NWRR including alterations to entry and exit lanes to the roundabouts to allow for increased highway capacity.

- Sandy Lane Roundabout - will comprise a four-armed roundabout replacing the existing junction at Sandy Lane with the A5199 Northampton Road and will be on an embankment up to 5m above surrounding ground levels.

Amendments comprise a realignment to all four arms proposed for the roundabout, with the northern arm connecting into the A5199 Northampton Road moving approximately 40m east and adjustments to the layout of the roundabout and embankments and road verges to accommodate the above changes.

- Brampton Lane Roundabout - will comprise a four-armed roundabout located approximately 10m south-west of the Windover Public House to replace the existing junction arrangements that connect Brampton Lane with the A5199 Northampton Road/ A5199 Welford Road and will be on an embankment up to 2m above surrounding ground levels.

Amendments comprise a realignment to proposed southern and western arms of the roundabout and adjustments to footway/ cycleway provisions on the western, northern and eastern arms of the roundabout and to embankments and road verges to accommodate the above changes.

7.10 The Transport Assessment identifies a number of junctions as being adversely affected by the proposed scheme but not proposed for immediate mitigation in order to avoid short-term improvement schemes "which may have limited longevity due to various unknown variables which can make any such schemes abortive".

7.11 The junctions identified as being adversely affected are:

- A508 Harborough Road/ Pitsford High Street priority junction
- A508 Harborough Road/ Brampton Lane priority junction

- Roman Road/ New Sandy Lane/ Berrywood Road/ Sandy Lane proposed roundabout

- 7.12 The Transport Assessment advises that these junctions are influenced by factors including the phasing of committed development traffic, committed schemes or additional infrastructure, which could influence how traffic is distributed over time and therefore suggests a Monitor and Management Strategy to assess the performance of the relevant junctions once the NWRP is operational with annual traffic counts to understand the impact of reassigned traffic prior to delivering any mitigation scheme. The Transport Assessment includes suggested mitigation schemes for these junctions for consideration.
- 7.13 The Transport Assessment concludes that the proposed scheme will provide an overall net benefit to the highway network and that any negative overall localised impacts caused as a result of the scheme can be satisfactorily mitigated.
- 7.14 The revised Transport Assessment is being reviewed by Northamptonshire Highways Development Control Team the comments of whom will be directed to NCC Planning for consideration. In respect of policy requirements, it is considered that the County Council should ensure the mitigation measures proposed are sufficient to ensure that the impacts arising from the proposed development do not lead to a severe impact on the surrounding road network.

### **Landscape and Visual Impact**

- 7.15 The existing landscape comprises predominantly arable fields intersected by hedgerows and trees. The proposed scheme will inevitably change this existing landscape through the introduction of a major road, roundabouts, a bridge over the railway, the associated lighting and embankments, new planting and proposed flood risk mitigation features. The proposed road when viewed from within the Borough to the south will be viewed in the context of the proposed Dallington Grange development.
- 7.16 The landscape and visual impacts were considered in the previous report to Committee attached to this agenda and describe the physical characteristics of the road and associated features, including the railway bridge, in more detail.
- 7.17 In respect of the amendments proposed under the revised scheme as outlined in this report the most prominent physical change will be the proposed raised earth embankment measuring approximately 280m in length, up to 2m above existing ground level, and up to 20m in width which will tie into the raised ground associated with the railway embankment and the proposed alterations to the flood storage area to the north of the railway. These proposed alterations are situated within Daventry District however, in the context of the surrounding varied levels, the railway line, the proposed Dallington Grange development and the overall context of landscape changes proposed to enable the delivery of the NWRP, it is not considered these additional landscape features would lead to any significant increased visual impact.
- 7.18 An appropriate landscaping scheme will assist to some degree in mitigating the impacts of the development on the character of the surrounding landscape and provide some ecological mitigation. However, the introduction of the road and associated features will have an inevitable visual impact which must be balanced with the strategic objectives of housing growth and the requirement for associated infrastructure.

### **Ecology**

- 7.19 The application site is not subject to any statutory environmental designations. The application is supported by a number of ecological reports and a detailed Arboricultural Report. The nature of the landscape within the application site which includes the River Nene has the potential to support a variety of habitats and species. The submitted reports identify the presence of a number of species on site including bats, badgers, water shrew, otters, reptiles, barn owl, smooth newts, and common frogs and toads.



- 7.20 Control of the impacts on biodiversity arising during the construction stage would be controlled by the agreement of an appropriate Construction and Environmental Management Plan by condition.
- 7.21 The amendments to the location of balancing ponds, proposed bund and proposed alterations to the Sandy Lane Roundabout and Brampton Lane Roundabout will result in an increase in habitat loss to that previously proposed. The revised Environmental Statement considers that the magnitude of impacts on any key receptors has however not changed from that previously proposed.
- 7.22 Responses from statutory consultees in respect of biodiversity and ecological matters would be directed to NCC as the determining Planning Authority for consideration to ensure the appropriate level of survey work and ecological mitigation is carried out and ensure the proposed development does not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on biodiversity.

### **Surface Water Drainage**

- 7.23 The site lies predominantly within Flood Zone 3 within the River Nene flood plain. The construction of the road will result in an impermeable area resulting in an increase in the rate and volume of surface water runoff and a loss of part of the floodplain. Therefore, in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF, the scheme should provide an appropriate level of mitigation to ensure that the development itself is appropriately flood resistant, that there is an appropriate level of compensation to off-set the loss of floodplain, and that the development does not lead to increased flood risk elsewhere.
- 7.24 The scheme is classed as 'Essential Infrastructure' which means that it is acceptable for it to be situated with Flood Zone 3a and 3b.
- 7.25 The design of the proposed flood mitigation measures has been amended following further investigation of ground conditions. The submitted details advise that higher ground water levels in the southern part of the site mean that any flood storage areas immediately adjacent north of the railway line will need shallower slopes, and a larger buffer will be required between the flood storage replacement areas and the railway to prevent changes in groundwater levels impacting the railway embankment. The flood storage areas north of the railway line have been redesigned to maximise the available volume in combination with the provision of a flood mitigation bund. The amended scheme now includes a raised earth embankment measuring approximately 280m in length, up to 2m above existing ground level, and up to 20m in width which will tie into the raised ground associated with the railway embankment with the intention of bisecting the floodplain downstream of the River Nene and Brampton Brook confluence and upstream of the railway overbridge with the purpose of reducing the width of the floodplain and flows downstream. In association with the embankment, a new drainage channel diversion, approximately 165m in length, is proposed to support the mitigation of downstream flood risk. Alterations to the number and location of the flood storage replacement areas are also proposed.
- 7.26 The relevant drainage bodies have been consulted by the NCC the responses of whom will be sent direct to them for consideration.

### **Air Quality, Noise and Lighting**

- 7.27 Policy BN9 of the JCS seeks to ensure that new development likely to cause pollution or result in exposure to sources of pollution will need to demonstrate an appropriate level of mitigation by maintaining or improving air quality, particularly in poor air quality areas, in accordance with national air quality standards and best practice and, in respect of noise and lighting, reducing or minimising any adverse impacts.
- 7.28 The Environmental Statement has been updated to account for the environmental impact of the revised traffic flows on air quality and noise. The submitted details advise that committed

developments expected to influence local traffic flows have been accounted for in the growth factors applied to baseline traffic flows.

- 7.29 Impacts in respect of air quality and noise are likely to arise during the construction phase as a result of dust and particulate matter generated during construction, and from general construction and associated vehicle movements. Measures to control these impacts can be approved through the agreement and implementation of an appropriate Construction and Environmental Management Plan by condition. Impacts during the operational phase are likely to arise from vehicle emissions associated with the new road.
- 7.30 NBC Environmental Health has been consulted directly by NCC the response of whom will be sent direct to them for consideration.

#### **Other Considerations - Northampton to Market Harborough Railway Line**

- 7.31 Members may be aware that the Proposed Submission Local Plan mentions as an opportunity the possibility of providing new transport links from the north to Northampton and more widely to the Oxford-Cambridge Corridor along the alignment of the former Northampton to Market Harborough railway line. The recent issues consultation for the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan also asked whether the potential to deliver a re-opened line on that route should be considered for that plan.
- 7.32 Outside the Borough, in Daventry District, the proposed NWRR has a roundabout that crosses the alignment of the former railway where it meets the A5199 close to the Windhover public house/restaurant (proposed Brampton Lane Roundabout). As the re-opening of the railway has not gone beyond the stage of being an aspiration, there is no funding for it and there is no formal agreed support for it, it is considered that whilst the Council could draw the applicant's attention to this matter, it cannot be a material consideration in the routing of the new road. Any subsequent scheme to re-open the railway would have to factor in the presence of the Relief Road.

#### **Other Considerations – Northampton Northern Orbital Road**

- 7.33 Similarly, it is recognised that there are long held aspirations to support the NNOR and the benefits it could deliver. However, despite public consultation, the delivery of the NNOR has not gone beyond the stage of being an aspiration, has no support in adopted policy and no agreed funding. Therefore, whilst it is recognised that the NNOR might in the future make significant improvements and facilitate further sustainable housing and employment growth, it is not considered that an objection to the current NWRR proposal, and the immediate growth it would support, could be sustained on the grounds of those grounds.

### **8 CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 The requirement for the NWRR as necessary infrastructure to support the delivery of housing and employment growth within the Borough is clearly recognised and supported within the policies of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. The NWRR also forms in integral part of a longer-term strategy proposed by the County Council for the delivery of the Northampton Northern Orbital Route (NNOR) intended to alleviate existing highway capacity issues and provide additional highway capacity to accommodate growth proposals for the north and west of Northampton.
- 8.2 The delivery of Phase 2 of the NWRR is an important piece of infrastructure in relation to the delivery of the Dallington Grange SUE to ensure an appropriate level of mitigation in respect of highway impacts and provide a northern access point for the site. The site, along with other sites on the northern and western boundaries of Northampton within the Northampton Related Development Area, is a key strategic housing site and forms a vital component in the delivery of housing for the Borough.
- 8.3 It is recognised that the delivery of Phase 2 of the NWRR road in itself requires an appropriate level of mitigation to ensure the highway impacts on the surrounding road network arising from the

proposed development are not severe. In addition, appropriate levels of mitigation in respect of air quality must be sought to ensure the development as a minimum maintains existing air quality levels or seeks where possible to improve air quality.

- 8.4 Subject to appropriate mitigation in respect of impacts on the highway, air quality, flood risk and ecology, the associated visual and environmental impacts of the proposed scheme need to be balanced with the wider strategic benefits of the scheme to provide the necessary infrastructure for the provision of a longer-term, wider strategic route to enable the sustainable housing and employment growth required within the Borough and the Development Plan area. It is considered that these strategic benefits weigh heavily in favour of the proposal.

## 9 BACKGROUND PAPERS

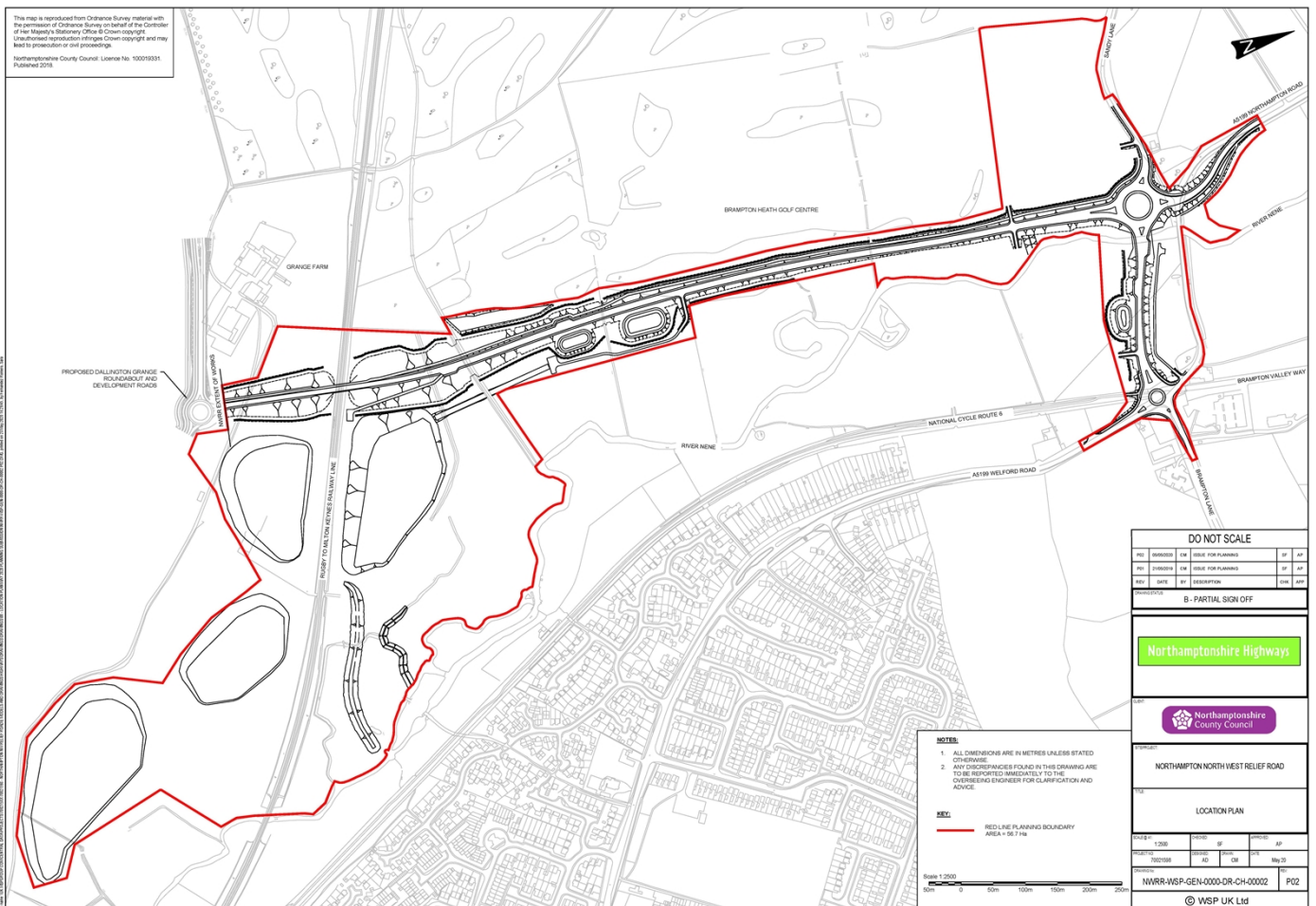
- 9.1 N/2019/0840 (NBC reference) & 19/00045/CCDFUL (NCC reference).

## 10 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The development is not CIL liable

## 11 SUMMARY AND LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN

- 11.1 In reaching the attached recommendations regard has been given to securing the objectives, visions and priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan together with those of associated Frameworks and Strategies.



<b>PLANNING COMMITTEE:</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup> December 2019</b>
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	<b>Planning Service</b>
<b>HEAD OF PLANNING:</b>	<b>Peter Baguley</b>
<b>APPLICATION REF:</b>	<b>N/2019/0840</b>
<b>LOCATION:</b>	<b>Land off A5199, Northampton Road, Northampton</b>
<b>DESCRIPTION:</b>	<b>The construction of new roads (Northampton North West Relief Road) on land South of the A5199 Northampton Road between the Brampton Health Golf Centre and the River Nene, including two new roundabouts and links bridging over the River Nene to Brampton Land and over the Northampton loop of the West Coast mainline to connect with the Dallington Grange development.</b>
<b>WARD:</b>	<b>Kings Heath Ward &amp; Kingsthorpe Ward</b>
<b>APPLICANT:</b>	<b>Northamptonshire County Council</b>
<b>AGENT:</b>	<b>WSP, Tewkesbury</b>
<b>REFERRED BY:</b>	<b>Head of Planning</b>
<b>REASON:</b>	<b>County Council Application of Strategic Importance</b>
<b>DEPARTURE:</b>	<b>No</b>

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## **CONSULTATION BY NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **8 RECOMMENDATION**

#### **8.1 NO OBJECTION IN PRINCIPLE** subject to the following:

Northamptonshire County Council seeking an appropriate level of mitigation with due regard to comments received from relevant consultees and conditioning any planning permission accordingly in respect of impacts arising from the development on the local highway network, air quality, flood risk and drainage, biodiversity, noise, and impacts on amenity, particularly during the course of construction; and

- 1.2 Northamptonshire County Council give due consideration to the impacts of the proposed development on the Safeguarded Former Transport Route identified in Policy C3 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and Policy 30 of the emerging Northampton Local Plan Part 2, and to ensure that the development does not delay or compromise the allocation and delivery of the Northampton North Orbital Road.

### **9 THE PROPOSAL**

- 9.1 The application is a consultation from Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) in respect of a full planning application submitted by NCC for the construction of a new relief road, known as the North West Relief Road (NWRR) measuring approximately 1.6 km in length and situated to the north west of Northampton. The proposed road is designed as a single carriageway designed to enable it to be upgraded to dual carriageway in the future if required.
- 9.2 To the north, the new road will connect into a new roundabout at the Sandy Lane junction with the A5199 Northampton Road before connecting into a further new roundabout to the east at the Brampton Lane junction with the A5199 Welford Road. From the Sandy Lane junction roundabout, the relief road will extend southwards over the Rugby to Milton Keynes railway line connecting into the Dallington Grange Roundabout, a new roundabout east of Grange Farm proposed as part of the Kings Heath Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) development (Dallington Grange) which includes a link to the A428 New Sandy Lane.
- 9.3 The proposed scheme includes the following elements:
- A single two-lane carriageway (plus 3m wide shared cycle/footway to the west side of the road) connecting the Dallington Grange Roundabout to the A5199 at Sandy Lane;
  - Railway overbridge over the Rugby to Milton Keynes railway line;
  - River crossing over the River Nene;
  - A new roundabout at the Sandy Lane junction with the A5199 Northampton Road including Public Right of Way (PRoW) crossing provisions; (Toucan and pedestrian crossing – north side of roundabout and shared use uncontrolled crossing western arm (Sandy Lane));
  - Single two-lane carriageway (plus street lighting) connecting the new Sandy Lane Roundabout and Brampton Lane;
  - A new roundabout at the existing Brampton Lane, A5199 Welford Road and Northampton Road Junction, including PRoW crossing provisions to include the diverted Public Footpath CC6 and National Cycle Route 6 (both to be permanently diverted);
  - Modifications to the existing A5199 Northampton Road from Sandy Lane to Brampton Lane to provide a traffic free route for non-motorised users;
  - Flood and drainage provisions;
  - Landscaping and ecological mitigation areas.
- 2.4 The NWRR carriageway will be on an embankment with landscaped earthworks and planting on both sides and will include street lighting between the Sandy Lane Roundabout and the Brampton Lane Roundabout and on the approaches to the roundabouts. The Sandy Lane Roundabout will include footway/ cycleway provisions on the western and northern arms to ensure connectivity to existing pedestrian/cycle routes. The Brampton Lane Roundabout will include footway/ cycleway provisions on western, northern and eastern arms and approaches. A short section of the A5199 Northampton Road, approximately 250m in length, will be permanently closed for motorised use, running from Sandy Lane/ A5199 Northampton Road junction to Brampton Mill Equestrian Centre side road access. National Cycle Route 6 is proposed to be permanently diverted to accommodate the Brampton Lane Roundabout. The cycle route would be diverted approximately 15m west of its existing alignment to ensure users can safely cross the proposed roundabout.
- 2.5 The Northern Section of the NWRR, the subject of this application, is to be delivered by NCC. The remainder of the road to the south beyond the Dallington Grange Roundabout is to be delivered as part of the Dallington Grange SUE development, granted approval in principle by Committee on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018 for up to 3,000 houses and associated infrastructure, subject to the completion of a Section 106 Agreement. This southern section of the NWRR would link to the existing section of road provided by the Harlestone Manor housing development to the south, located in the administrative boundary of Daventry, linking to New Sandy Lane roundabout.
- 2.6 The planning application is accompanied by a Planning Statement, Design and Access Statement, Statement of Community Involvement, and an Environmental Statement which includes a transport assessment, flood risk assessment, and reports relating to ecology, noise, air quality, heritage, landscape, visual effects, and construction management.

2.7 The submitted Transport Assessment sets out the aims of the NWRR:

- The NWRR between the A428 Harlestone Road and the A5199 Welford Road is necessary to enable and unlock the future development of 6,600 houses and more than 3,000 jobs in Northampton;
- Required to help relieve the pressure that already exists on the local highway network in northern Northampton and nearby villages which currently suffer from high volumes of traffic and associated disturbance;
- Aims to improve the quality of life for existing residents and commuters and enhance the character of existing nearby villages by redirecting traffic and reducing local congestion;
- Road will form part of long-term strategy to deliver route from the A4500 near Junction 16 of the M1 and the A43 north of Northampton creating an orbital route option around Northampton.

### **3 SITE DESCRIPTION**

3.4 The application red line site comprises approximately 43.9 hectares of land situated to the north west of Northampton, approximately 1.2km south-east of Church Brampton and immediately east of Brampton Heath Golf Centre and Harlestone Nature Reserved situated within Daventry.

3.5 The site is broadly defined by the A5199 Welford Road and Sandy Lane to the north, the Brampton Heath Golf Centre to the west, the River Nene to the east, and the Rugby to Milton Keynes railway line to the south, with a shorter section of road and proposed drainage features extending into the fields to the south of the railway line.

3.6 The majority of the site is situated within the administrative boundary of Daventry District Council, with the southern end situated within Northampton Borough.

3.4 National Cycle Route 6 is situated to the east of the site, crossing the application site at the Brampton Lane/ Welford Road junction. Public right of way CC6 runs diagonally across the north-eastern corner of the site, between Welford Road and Sandy Lane.

3.5 The nearest existing residential properties are located at Grange Farm, approximately 200m west of the scheme, at its southern end, within Northampton Borough, and Boughton Crossing House, close to the existing junction between Brampton Lane and Welford Road. The Windhover public house/restaurant, with the Brampton View Care Home situated immediately to the north, lies adjacent to the site to the north of Brampton Lane.

3.6 The land is currently predominantly agricultural fields intersected by small areas of woodland, hedgerows and drainage fields that feed into the Brampton Arm of the River Nene. The site is generally level throughout with a rise within the site from approximately 65m above ordinance datum (AOD) to 80m (AOD) in the section crossing the railway line and, being situated at the lowest gradient of a valley, has upwards gradients from the site from both the east and west.

3.7 The majority of the site is situated within Flood Zone 3. There are no statutory environmental designations within or adjacent to the site. Harlestone Firs Local Wildlife Site is situated some distance to the south west beyond Grange Farm. There are no specific heritage assets within the site, but there is potential for buried archaeological sites in and around the site dating from the Neolithic period through to the Iron Age.

### **4 PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 There are no previous applications specific to the application site itself, although the southern section of the site overlaps the boundary of the proposed Dallington Grange SUE in respect of the location of three proposed borrow pits and a small section of proposed road that would link to the Dallington Grange Roundabout. There have, however, been a number of applications for

significant residential development in the vicinity of the site as part of sites allocated for Sustainable Urban Extensions within the Northampton Related Development Area either consented or under consideration.

## **5 PLANNING POLICY**

### **5.1 Statutory Duty**

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a planning application to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for the purposes of this application comprises the adopted West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014), Northampton Local Plan (1997) saved policies.

#### **National Policies**

**5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the current aims and objectives for the planning system and how these should be applied.** In delivering sustainable development, decisions should have regard to the mutually dependent social, economic and environmental roles of the planning system. The NPPF should be read as one complete document. However, the following sections are of particular relevance to this application:

Chapter 2 – Achieving sustainable development  
Chapter 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes  
Chapter 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy  
Chapter 9 – Promoting sustainable transport  
Chapter 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change  
Chapter 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

### **5.3 West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014)**

The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) provides an up to date evidence base and considers the current Government requirements for plan making as it has been prepared in full conformity with the NPPF. Policies of particular relevance are:

Policy SA - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
Policy S1 - The Distribution of Development  
Policy S3 - Scale and Distribution of Housing Development  
Policy S4 - Northampton Related Development Area  
Policy S5 - Sustainable Urban Extensions  
Policy S7 - Provision of Jobs  
Policy S10 - Sustainable Development Principles  
Policy BN2 - Biodiversity  
Policy BN5 - The Historic Environment and Landscape  
Policy BN7 - Flood Risk  
Policy BN9 - Planning for Pollution Control  
Policy N1 – The Regeneration of Northampton  
Policy N4 – Northampton West Sustainable Urban Extension  
Policy N7 – Northampton Kings Heath Sustainable Urban Extension  
Policy N8 – Northampton North of Whitehills Sustainable Urban Extension  
Policy N12 - Northampton's Transport Network Improvements

### **5.4 Northampton Local Plan 1997 (Saved Policies)**

Due to the age of the plan, the amount of weight that can be attributed to the aims and objectives of this document are diminished, however, the following policies are material to this application:

T5 – Permission for development of land north west of Kings Heath and a securing provision or appropriate contribution towards the highway improvements and infrastructure required.

## 6 CONSULTATIONS/ REPRESENTATIONS

### 6.1 NBC Public Protection – comments received are summarised as follows:

- Raise concern regarding the extent of information provided in respect of air quality in order to fully determine the impact of development in terms of air quality on receptors within Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) 4 (Harborough Road) from the operational phase of the road scheme.
- Advise modelling should take account of potential for future dualling so modelling is representative of a conservative worst case scenario.
- Raise concern regarding the traffic flow data and how real term concentrations at receptors with relevant exposures within the AQMA could be greater as a direct result of the highway scheme. Suggest consideration should be given to further modelling assessing what junction/ signalling improvements can be undertaken to bring about significant improvements to ambient NO2 levels.
- The applicant has not used the most current version of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) Emission Factor Tool Kit, Version 9 released in May 2019. The applicant should be required, as a minimum, to remodel the air quality impact from the operational phase.
- Traffic data should be upscaled to 2026 so air quality impact can be modelled as a future year with and without the Dallington SUE.
- The NWRR is deemed as an interim measure to increase capacity on the local road network and to unlock the Dallington Grange SUE. Northamptonshire County Council need to take all necessary measures to ensure delivery of the Northampton Orbital Scheme in the fastest possible time to deal with the cumulative effects of all committed surrounding development.
- The construction phase impact assessment is considered acceptable. Request condition for Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) which should also incorporate measures compliance with any noise reduction/ management points.
- A condition is requested stipulating the hours of construction (with the exception of overnight possession works over the West Coast Mainline). Suggest Monday to Friday 07.30 to 18:00 hours, Saturdays 08:30 to 13:00 hours and no works on Sundays, Bank Holidays or Public Holidays.
- Noise modelling has identified a number of receptors within the Borough's area that will be directly affected by the operational phase of the scheme in both the long and short term, notably Grange Farm and a property west of Welford Road. Would encourage NCC, as the determining authority, to require the applicant to install an environmental noise barrier where properties have been identified as being directly affected by road traffic generated by the proposed scheme.

### 6.2 NCC Highways - comments submitted to NCC Planning Services from NCC Highways in respect of the application are summarised as follows:

#### Background

- The LHA strongly supports the principle of the Northampton North West Relief Road, the scheme having been identified as a commitment in the Northampton Town Transport Strategy



(January 2013) which forms part of the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan (our Local Transport Plan) and identified as a priority for development by the County Council's Cabinet on 12 January 2016.

- In respect of the overarching North West Relief Road proposals, significant elements have already been secured as part of other development proposals, notably Dallington Grange, which will deliver the section of the North West Relief Road from the A428 Harlestone Road to a new roundabout just south of the West Coast mainline railway.

### Introduction

- In respect of this Application for this section of the Northampton North West Relief Road, following extensive review of the submitted Transport Assessment (TA) and comments made by the LHA and local residents/groups, an Addendum Transport Assessment (ATA) has been produced as well as an additional Technical Note. This further information seeks to address the concerns raised by the LHA and various other interested parties.
- The ATA has revised the traffic flow assumptions at a number of junctions and there are updated designs for the new roundabout junctions to reduce the extent of potential delays and queuing identified in the original submitted TA. The new roundabout designs proposed as part of the scheme are now shown to operate within absolute capacity following the alterations to the design and the updated flows.
- The only meaningful queue remaining is the Vyse Road approach to A508 Harborough Road Roundabout in the future year of 2031. This extra traffic and growth is a result of the developments, not the North West Relief Road (NWRR), and the Northamptonshire Strategic Transport Model (NSTM) shows a slight reduction in traffic approaching from Vyse Road as traffic re-routes.
- The NSTM is an industry standard computerised model that distributes traffic across a network based on local conditions, constraints, such as junctions or links and assists in identifying how new developments and road schemes affect how traffic moves around a highway network both in the current year based on traffic counts etc, but also in the future year taking into account future development growth and associated infrastructure.
- The capacity of a junction is considered in terms of a ratio of the flow of traffic expected to use a junction and the physical capability of a junction and associated geometry to accommodate such traffic. A junction is said to be at absolute capacity with a "Ratio of Flow to Capacity", or 'RFC' of 1. For new junctions the theoretical capacity of a junction is 0.85 RFC, which is normally required to be adhered to.
- Whilst the capacity of the scheme roundabouts is identified to operate with Ratio of Flow to Capacity results of between 0.85 and 1.0 in the 2031 future year scenarios, in this instance this is considered acceptable on the basis that the modelling has been undertaken using 'demand flows' from the NSTM rather than 'actual flows'. Actual flows, which would be a more realistic basis for the assessment, would be up to 7% lower at these junctions, and would therefore present improved operational results if adopted for the individual capacity modelling.
- In addition, the NSTM flows assume that the full build out of Dallington Grange is complete in the 2031 modelling scenarios. This is highly unlikely to be the case in reality, and as such the inclusion of that presumption provides for an additional level of robustness to the assessment.

### Wider Benefits of the Scheme

- The implementation of the NWRR would result in strategic re-routing of traffic around Northampton. As a result of this, there would be a reduction in traffic flows in the future year scenarios on a number of key links and junctions around Northampton.

- The largest traffic flow reductions predicted are on the Harlestone Road, with other reductions identified on Mill Lane and the A508 south of the Cock Hotel junction, providing relief to this section of the Kingsthorpe corridor.
- Whilst there would be increases in traffic flow local to the scheme, particularly on Brampton Lane for example, the strategy for dealing with this (as outlined by the LHA in previous correspondence) is to encourage traffic on to the principal road network, such as the A5076 and away from the villages (such as Boughton and Moulton). The off-site mitigation is therefore being promoted with this aim in mind.
- The future implementation of the 'Northampton Northern Orbital Route' would provide relief from traffic for the villages of Boughton and Moulton. The implementation of the NWRR however, is required to provide a continuation of the wider orbital road network (either already constructed, or planned) for the West and South West of Northampton, such as the 'Sandy Lane Improvement North', the 'Sandy Lane Relief Road', and the 'Cross Valley Link Road'.

### Highway Design

- The proposed road is of single carriageway standard, but designed to enable it to be upgraded to dual carriageway in the future.
- One point that was raised by the LHA previously was that a suitable turning head will need to be provided (in the Causeway link where the physical barrier is proposed) to enable a vehicle to drive back to the roundabout in a forward gear. A suitable turning head will be provided as part of the detailed design.
- The LHA confirm that the proposed structures associated with this scheme are both of the status 'Agreed in Principle' (AIP).
- A 'Walking, Cycling and Horse Riding Assessment' has been submitted in support of this Application, which has identified the relevant facilities in the vicinity affected by the scheme, including Public Rights of Way (PRoW). This assessment has identified a number of 'opportunities' to accommodate and where possible enhance affected routes. It is not clear however, on the main scheme plans, whether these opportunities have been incorporated in to the scheme.
- Clearly existing PRoW Routes should be retained until alternative / diversion routes are available with the associated Orders to support such changes. Temporary diversions or closures in the interests of public safety during construction may be required but should be kept to a minimum but are also subject to appropriate Orders.
- Whilst some crossing facilities of the roundabouts are proposed, these do not necessarily tie in exactly with the existing PRoW routes. Localised diversion and extinguishment for the sections that will cross the new all-purpose highway will be required. It would appear that a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) is required to restrict vehicular rights on a section of Northampton Road, (Prohibition of Motor Vehicles) in order to facilitate the extinguishing of a section of PRoW CC6 which effectively gets diverted onto the Brampton Valley Way, across the new roundabout and then along the section of Northampton Road. The success of the TRO would be necessary prior to the section of PROW CC6 being permanently closed.
- Details such as this can be secured, should you feel that necessary with the imposition of an appropriate condition(s). Clearly there are also statutory processes associated with Public Rights of Way, (PRoW) Diversions, Closures, (permanent or temporary for construction purposes) etc. See Section 6 below for further advice on this element.

- The general layout of the scheme with associated junctions and structures is therefore acceptable in principle to the LHA, subject to the comments above being satisfactorily addressed, detailed design, Road Safety Audit (a RSA Stage 1 has been undertaken), and technical approval.

#### Off-site Mitigation Works

- As noted above the provision of the NWRR will affect traffic movements around Northampton and as such there are impacts on junctions that required assessment and following that assessment mitigation has been identified.
- The ATA has provided further detail on the off-site mitigation measures (drawings provided at Appendix D) proposed in connection with the scheme, including the results of capacity assessments. The proposed mitigation measures, are listed below:
  - Mitigation Scheme 1: Traffic calming improvements in the villages of Moulton and Boughton;  
Following discussion with Northamptonshire Highways' Road Safety Team and Highways Engineering team, it is proposed that Mitigation Scheme 1 will consist of the introduction of a priority give-way pinch-point feature on Vyse Road and the enhancement of an existing priority give-way pinch-point feature near Boughton primary School. It is considered that these features will make the villages less attractive as a through route for vehicles seeking to travel to and from the proposed NWRR.
  - Mitigation Scheme 2: Capacity mitigation improvements at the A508 Harborough Road / Brampton Lane / Vyse Road Existing Roundabout;  
At the A508 Harborough Road / Brampton Lane / Vyse Road Roundabout, this scheme consists of flare and entry width improvements to the Brampton Lane and Vyse Road arms. The level of improvement proposed is the maximum which can be realistically achieved within highway land.
  - Mitigation Scheme 3: Capacity mitigation improvements at the A428 Harlestone Road / New Sandy Lane / York Road Roundabout;  
At the A428 Harlestone Road / New Sandy Lane / York Road Roundabout, this scheme consists of flare improvements on Harlestone Road south together with lining amendments to the circulatory and exits.
  - Mitigation Scheme 4: To help accommodate potential traffic flow diversions associated with Mitigation Scheme 1, capacity improvements at the A508 Harborough Road / A5076 Holly Lodge Drive Signalised Junction.  
At the A508 Harborough Road / A5076 Holly Lodge Drive Signalised Junction, this scheme consists of lengthened left turn lanes on the Holly Lodge Drive and A508 Harborough Road North approaches to the junction.
- On the basis of the above proposed mitigation, and the wider benefits of the scheme elsewhere on the Highway network, the impact of the proposed scheme cannot be considered to be 'severe' in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- A number of Public Rights of Way will be affected by the scheme, and the layout and the layout design needs to accommodate these with appropriate diversions in place prior to existing routes being affected. Temporary closures and diversions may be necessary for construction purposes in the interests of public safety. There will also need to be suitably worded planning conditions to ensure that PRoW matters are suitably protected and where possible maintained during the construction period. The applicant should be made fully aware of responsibilities in respect of Public Rights of Way.
- Request conditions in respect of details of any works affecting public right of way, construction management plan.

- No objection subject to suitably worded conditions being imposed as indicated above.

## 7 APPRAISAL

### Background/ Strategic Considerations

- 7.1 The history of a proposed relief road connecting the A428 Harlestone Road and A5199 Welford Road dates back to consultation in the 1980s, followed by a preferred route being agreed as part of the Northampton Local Plan (2012). The need for the scheme was re-established in the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) 2014 due to the designation of additional growth sites within the Northampton Related Development Area. The road is intended to provide better connectivity east to west and west to east of north Northampton, and to support the development of housing growth proposed to the west and north of Northampton identified in the JCS, in particular Northampton West SUE (Policy N4), in the region of 2,500 dwellings; Northampton Kings Heath SUE (Dallington Grange) (Policy N7), in the region of 3,000 dwellings; and North of Whitehills SUE (Buckton Fields) (Policy N8), in the region of 1,000 dwellings. The relevant policies for these SUE's recognise the associated need for the NWRR in respect of assisting in mitigating the highway impacts arising from these developments and contain a requirement for a financial contribution towards the road (previously referred to as the North West Bypass). The provision of the North West Relief Road, both Phase 1 (A428 to Grange Farm) and Phase 2 (Grange Farm to A5199) is also identified in T2 and T3 of the Infrastructure Schedule of the JCS.
- 7.2 In respect of Dallington Grange, an outline application (including access) was granted 'approval in principle' by Committee on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018 subject to the completion of a Section 106 legal agreement. The development includes the provision of up to 3,000 houses, a secondary school, two primary schools, a local centre and 7.2ha of employment land, and Phase 1 of the NWRR (the southern section) within the site. Phase 2 of the NWRR is recognised as a necessary piece of infrastructure in relation to the delivery of this important strategic housing site both in terms of providing the necessary mitigation in terms of associated highway impacts and in also providing a northern access point to the site. The committee report for the Dallington Grange SUE set out the Borough's commitment along with the County Council to the delivery of Phase 2 of the NWRR (the northern section) through contributing up to £4.2m of Section 106 receipts, and through CIL contributions arising from development of the site. The S106 for the Dallington Grange SUE is currently being negotiated but includes a requirement for the delivery of Phase 1 of the NWRR by September 2021.
- 7.3 The NWRR also forms part of a longer-term strategy to deliver a route from the A4500 near Junction 16 of the M1 and the A43 north of Northampton creating an orbital route around Northampton, the Northampton Northern Orbital Route (NNOR). Whilst a preferred option for the NNOR is yet to be agreed, the intention is that the NNOR would provide a link from the NWRR Phase 2 and the A5199 between Kingsthorpe and Chapel Brampton with the A43 north of Moulton and linking to Moulton Park Industrial Estate. The County Council advise that completion of this ring road will reduce the amount of traffic passing through northern parts of Northampton and a number of surrounding villages, and assist in providing additional highway capacity to accommodate growth proposals for the north and west of Northampton. It is recognised that the NWRR in itself, whilst providing additional capacity and alleviating traffic in some areas, it will result in some increased traffic impacts in other areas, the details of which are discussed later in this report. However, this needs to be balanced with the wider strategic aims for the road network.
- 7.4 The principle of the provision of NWRR as proposed is considered in accordance with the aims and objectives of the NPPF to provide sustainable development that supports housing and economic growth ensuring the provision of the necessary infrastructure, although this needs to be balanced with ensuring appropriate mitigation of any environmental impacts, and with Policies S1, S4 and S5 of the JCS, which seek to ensure the delivery of a sufficient supply of sustainable housing growth within the Development Plan area identified within the JCS.

### Community Consultation

- 7.5 The submitted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) advises that following feasibility and option exercises, public consultation was carried out in 2017 which included a number of public consultation events in local village halls/community centres communicated via NCC's website, with direct notification to the Parish Council's along the route, previous consultation responders and registered land owners along the route. Questionnaires were available on line and at exhibitions. The SCI advises that "Based on the response of the questionnaire 64% of respondents out of a total of 878 supported the need for the NWRR", however, feedback also raised concerns about delivering the NWRR in advance of the North Northampton Orbital Route (NNOR) and not providing infrastructure which has capacity for future growth, and also concerns regarding environmental impacts from the road and associated developments.
- 7.6 The design of the Proposed Scheme was further progressed, and a further round of consultation carried out in 2019, comprising two public exhibitions, leaflet distribution to over 7,000 residents and businesses in the area around the NWRR corridor, project webpage, press releases, formal invitations to councillors, parish councils and Council officers and on social media. Consultation was also carried out with a number of statutory and non-statutory consultees including the Environment Agency, Network Rail, Natural England and the Borough Council to inform the EIA.

### **Highways**

- 7.7 The NPPF at paragraph 109 advises that development should only be refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 7.8 The application is supported by a Transport Assessment (TA) which advises that the NWRR will be the primary access route into the Dallington Grange development, is proposed to support the additional traffic generated from this development and to ease the existing and forecasted increasing traffic in Northampton Town, providing an alternative route option for vehicles travelling through Northampton and the surrounding villages.
- 7.9 The TA assessed the impacts of the proposed NWRR in respect of traffic re-routing as a result of the new road, altering existing journey patterns to use the new road once open, and to assess the impact that the re-routed and newly generated traffic from the Dallington Grange and other approved development would have on the surrounding existing road network. Work was undertaken to model the NWRR in the Northamptonshire Strategic Transport Model (NSTM) to understand how traffic would likely reroute and alter existing journey patterns to use the NWRR and understand the impacts of this traffic on the surrounding highway network.
- 7.10 The TA identified, that whilst the NWRR would add additional capacity to the local highway network and contribute towards alleviating existing pressures and impacts arising from proposed growth, the following locations could experience significant traffic impacts due to the NWRR being built:
- Significant congestion and delay at Harborough Road/ Brampton Lane/ Vyse Road Existing Roundabout, particularly on Vyse Road and Brampton Lane arms of the junction;
  - Significant congestion and delay at A428 Harlestone Road/ New Sandy Lane/ York Roundabout;
  - Increased volume of traffic routing through the villages of Moulton and Boughton.
- 7.11 In response to the impacts highlighted above, the TA recommends the following mitigation measures:
- Traffic Calming in Boughton and Moulton
  - Capacity improvements at A508 Harborough Road / Brampton Lane / Vyse Road Roundabout;
  - Capacity improvements at A428 Harlestone Road / New Sandy Lane / York Road (NWRR) Roundabout.

- 7.12 A Transport Assessment Addendum (TAA), has been submitted in order to address concerns raised regarding future traffic modelling, the forecast level of future operational performance, the associated forecast vehicle queuing and delay on the two new roundabouts proposed as part of this scheme, and further development of proposed mitigation measures.
- 7.13 The TAA also acknowledges concerns raised by Whitehills & Spring Park Residents' Association (WASPRA) who commissioned their own independent Traffic Volume/Capacity (V/C) Study – Vyse Road/ A508 Brampton Lane Roundabout (July 2019) which expressed concerns regarding how representative traffic flows from the NSTM used in the submitted TA are likely to be representative of future traffic conditions in reality. The report focused on the Brampton Lane approach to the A508 Harborough Road/ Brampton Lane/ Vyse Road existing roundabout and how traffic flows collected on behalf of WASPRA on this approach were higher than those extracted from the NSTM.
- 7.14 The submitted TAA acknowledges that whilst the NSTM is validated entirely in line with the required standards set out in the WebTAG guidance against a broad basket of observed traffic and journey time data, at local level there are individual locations where there are significant differences between modelled and observed data, the above junction being one of these locations. As such WSP, the traffic consultants on behalf of the County Council, applied localised adjustment factors at the specific localities where it was indicated there were major differences between the NSTM traffic flow data and the May 2019 traffic surveys undertaken at the junctions assessed in detail in the TA.
- 7.15 Following these further assessments, proposed mitigation measures have been amended as follows:
- Amendment to designs of Northampton Road/ Welford Road/ Brampton Lane Roundabout and A5199 Northampton Road/ Sandy Lane / NWRR Roundabout to provide additional operational capacity to reduce the extent of queuing – comprising entry and exit widening to allow two lanes to be used for the dominant movements at each junction.
- 7.16 Proposed off-site mitigation measures as now detailed in the TAA comprise of:
- Traffic calming in Boughton and Moulton
  - Capacity improvements at A508 Harborough Road/ Brampton Lane/ Vyse Roundabout – increased flare length from 8.4m to 78.2m at entry arm to Brampton Lane to allow for dedicated right-hand lane into Far Barrows; and short left-turn flare added to Vyse Road approach;
  - Capacity improvements at A428 Harlestone Road/ New Sandy Lane/ York Road (NWRR) Roundabout – left-side flare lane increase on Harlestone Road South lengthened to c.50m; all existing arms marked as two lane exits; and lane markings provided on circulatory carriageway of roundabout.
  - A508 Harborough Road/ A5076 Holly Lodge Drive Signalised Junction (existing) – lengthening of left turn lanes on Holly Lodge Drive and A508 Harborough Road North
- 7.17 The TAA concludes the following:
- The scheme will reduce traffic flows on a number of significant links and junctions in Northampton when compared to the Do Minimum case;
  - The scheme has a very strong business case with a high Benefit/ Cost Ratio (BCR) which demonstrates that the savings, predominantly to travel time, outweigh the cost of delivering by 7 times, a very high return for a transport scheme;
  - The scheme provides additional capacity on the transport network to support housing growth targets; and
  - The scheme will provide additional resilience to the Northampton highway network when disruption arises from time to time, such as planning roadworks, accidents or other foreseen and unforeseen events.
  - Concludes, on balance the transport impact of the proposed NWRR scheme are not severe, and therefore complies with requirements of the NPPF.

- 7.18 The TAA is being reviewed by Northamptonshire Highways Development Control Team, however, it is understood that the principle of the above proposed mitigation measures has been agreed. Any additional comments submitted by Northamptonshire Highways Development Control Team prior to committee will be reported accordingly. In respect of policy requirements, it is considered that the County Council should ensure the mitigation measures proposed are sufficient to ensure that the impacts arising from the proposed development do not lead to a severe impact on the surrounding road network.

### **Landscape and Visual Impact**

- 7.19 The existing landscape comprises predominantly arable fields intersected by hedgerows and trees. The proposed scheme will inevitably change this existing landscape through the introduction of a road, roundabouts and a bridge over the railway, and the associated lighting and embankments. The proposed road when viewed from within the Borough to the south will be viewed in the context of the proposed Dallington Grange development.

- 7.20 The submitted Design and Access Statement provides further details on the proposed design and associated structures and landscaping:

The main section of the proposed scheme runs along the edge of the valley floor. The entire 1570m length of single lane carriageway from the Sandy Lane Roundabout to the north to the Dallington Grange Roundabout in the south will be on an embankment up to 12m in height (at its highest point) above existing ground levels, with landscape earthworks on either side. This section of carriageway includes the proposed railway approximately 200m north of the Dallington Grange Roundabout which would be approximately 75m in length and approximately 10m high above existing ground levels with landscaped earthworks on either side of the embankment. The structure is proposed as a precast, integral bridge, 12.5m wide, with 1.8m high parapets with solid panels and 1:3 embankment slopes with retaining wall structures. No street lighting is proposed on this section other than on approaches to roundabouts.

- 7.21 The section of single lane carriageway from the Sandy Lane Roundabout to the Brampton Lane Roundabout measuring approximately 320m in length would include street lighting on either side for its entire length and be on a raised embankment up to 4m in height (at its highest point) above existing ground levels with landscaped earthworks on either side of the embankment. This section would also include a bridge over the River Nene spanning approximately 30m and approximately 10m high above existing ground levels, with landscaped earthworks on either side of the embankment. The proposed structure is a precast integral bridge, with 1.8m high parapets and 1:3 embankment slopes with retaining wall structures and a series of arch segments clad proposed to be clad with brickwork.

- 7.22 The Design and Access Statement advises that woodland planting is proposed on the embankments to the railway bridge, and on the wider parts of the embankments on the main section of road, with hedgerow and hedgerow trees planted where embankments are too narrow for woodland establishment to assist in filtering views of the road and associated traffic.

- 7.23 An appropriate landscaping scheme will assist to some degree in mitigating the impacts of the development on the character of the surrounding landscape and provide some ecological mitigation. However, the introduction of the road and associated features will have an inevitable visual impact which must be balanced with the strategic objectives of housing growth and the requirement for associated infrastructure.

### **Ecology**

- 7.24 The application site is not subject to any statutory environmental designations. The application is supported by a number of ecological reports and a detailed Arboricultural Report. The nature of the landscape within the application site which includes the River Nene has the potential to support a variety of habitats and species. The submitted reports identify the presence of a number of

species on site including bats, badgers, water shrew, otters, reptiles, barn owl, smooth newts, and common frogs and toads.

- 7.25 Control of the impacts on biodiversity arising during the construction stage would be controlled by the agreement of an appropriate Construction and Environmental Management Plan by condition.
- 7.26 Responses from statutory consultees in respect of biodiversity and ecological matters would be directed to the County Council as the determining Planning Authority for consideration to ensure the appropriate level of survey work and ecological mitigation is carried out and ensure the proposed development does not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on biodiversity.

### **Surface Water Drainage Flood Risk**

- 7.27 The site lies predominantly within Flood Zone 3 within the River Nene flood plain. The construction of the road will result in an impermeable area resulting in an increase in the rate and volume of surface water runoff and a loss of the floodplain. Therefore, in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF, the scheme should provide an appropriate level of mitigation to ensure that the development itself is appropriately flood resistant, that there is an appropriate level of compensation to off-set the loss of floodplain, and that the development does not lead to increased flood risk elsewhere.
- 7.28 The scheme is classed as 'Essential Infrastructure' which means that it is acceptable for it to be situated with Flood Zone 3a and 3b.
- 7.29 The application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment which advises that the proposed scheme includes three highway balancing ponds to temporarily store water during and after storm events and control the discharge into existing watercourse via drainage channels, one located to the north of the Sandy Lane Roundabout/ Brampton Lane Roundabout carriageway, and two to the east of the new carriageway between Sandy Lane Roundabout and the Dallington Grange Roundabout. In addition, four flood storage replacement areas are proposed to replace part of the flood plain lost as a result of the proposed scheme located either side of the main north/south carriageway situated north of the railway line. The balancing ponds and replacement flood storage areas, are also intended to provide opportunities to create new areas for biodiversity.
- 7.30 The relevant drainage bodies have been consulted by the County Council the responses of whom will be sent direct to them for consideration.

### **Air Quality, Noise and Lighting**

- 7.31 Policy BN9 of the JCS seeks to ensure that new development likely to cause pollution or result in exposure to sources of pollution will need to demonstrate an appropriate level of mitigation by maintaining or improving air quality, particularly in poor air quality areas, in accordance with national air quality standards and best practice and, in respect of noise and lighting, reducing or minimising any adverse impacts.
- 7.32 Impacts in respect of air quality and noise are likely to arise during the construction phase as a result of dust and particulate matter generated during construction, and from general construction and associated vehicle movements. Measures to control these impacts can be approved through the agreement and implementation of an appropriate Construction and Environmental Management Plan by condition.
- 7.33 In respect of air quality impacts during the operational phase, the proposed scheme has the potential to change the total flow, distribution and characteristics of traffic movements on the affected road links, resulting in changes to air pollution arising from emissions by road vehicles. This redistribution of traffic arising from the construction of the NWRR is anticipated to result in less traffic in some areas, but with a potential increase in vehicle-related emissions and noise in other areas, predominantly those at either end of the road.



- 7.34 The application is supported by a Local Air Quality Assessment completed to predict the potential impact of these changes on ambient pollutant concentrations at identified sensitive receptors within proximity to affected road. Air quality conditions were described for base year (2018) and Assessment Years (2021 and 2031) with assessment years considered on Do-Minimum (without proposed scheme) and Do-Something (with proposed scheme) scenarios. Changes in local traffic related pollution levels predicted at the receptor locations were assessed by comparing the predicted concentrations of NO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub> & PM<sub>2.5</sub> with current air quality Objectives and considering the change (improvement or worsening).
- 7.35 The submitted details have been assessed by NBC Public Protection, the comments of whom are summarised at paragraph 6.1 above. The applicant is in the process of seeking to address these concerns and any further response received will be reported to Committee.
- 7.36 In respect of noise impacts, the submitted noise modelling is accepted and it is recommended that NCC should seek the provision of an environmental noise barrier where properties have been identified as being directly affected by road traffic generated by the proposed scheme.
- 7.37 Lighting along the NWRR is predominantly proposed on the carriageway from the Sandy Lane Roundabout to the Brampton Lane Roundabout with limited lighting proposed on the approaches to the roundabouts only on the section from the Dallington Grange Roundabout to the Sandy Lane Roundabout. As such, it is not considered the proposal would lead to any adverse impacts to the area of the site within the Borough in this respect.

#### **Other Considerations - Northampton to Market Harborough Railway Line**

- 7.38 Members may be aware that the Proposed Submission Local Plan mentions as an opportunity the possibility of providing new transport links from the north to Northampton and more widely to the Oxford-Cambridge Corridor along the alignment of the former Northampton to Market Harborough railway line. The recent issues consultation for the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan also asked whether the potential to deliver a re-opened line on that route should be considered for that plan.
- 7.39 Outside the Borough, in Daventry District, the proposed NWRR has a roundabout that crosses the alignment of the former railway where it meets the A5199 close to the Windhover public house/restaurant (proposed Brampton Lane Roundabout). As the re-opening of the railway has not gone beyond the stage of being an aspiration, there is no funding for it and there is no formal agreed support for it, it is considered that whilst the Council could draw the applicant's attention to this matter, it cannot be a material consideration in the routing of the new road. Any subsequent scheme to re-open the railway would have to factor in the presence of the Relief Road.

#### **Other Considerations – Northampton Northern Orbital Road**

- 7.40 Similarly, it is recognised that there are long held aspirations to support the NNOR and the benefits it could deliver. However, despite public consultation, the delivery of the NNOR has not gone beyond the stage of being an aspiration, has no support in adopted policy and no agreed funding. Therefore, whilst it is recognised that the NNOR might in the future make significant improvements and facilitate further sustainable housing and employment growth, it is not considered that an objection to the current NWRR proposal, and the immediate growth it would support, could be sustained on the grounds of those grounds.

## **8 CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 The requirement for the NWRR as necessary infrastructure to support the delivery of housing and employment growth within the Borough is clearly recognised and supported within the policies of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. The NWRR also forms in integral part of a longer-term strategy proposed by the County Council for the delivery of the Northampton Northern Orbital Route (NNOR) intended to alleviate existing highway capacity issues and provide additional highway capacity to accommodate growth proposals for the north and west of Northampton.

- 8.2 The delivery of Phase 2 of the NWRR is an important piece of infrastructure in relation to the delivery of the Dallington Grange SUE to ensure an appropriate level of mitigation in respect of highway impacts and provide a northern access point for the site. The site, along with other sites on the northern and western boundaries of Northampton within the Northampton Related Development Area, is a key strategic housing site and forms a vital component in the delivery of housing for the Borough.
- 8.3 It is recognised that the delivery of Phase 2 of the NWRR road in itself requires an appropriate level of mitigation to ensure the highway impacts on the surrounding road network arising from the proposed development are not severe. In addition, appropriate levels of mitigation in respect of air quality must be sought to ensure the development as a minimum maintains existing air quality levels or seeks where possible to improve air quality.
- 8.4 Subject to appropriate mitigation in respect of highway, air quality, flood risk and ecology, the associated visual and environmental impacts of the proposed scheme need to be balanced with the wider strategic benefits of the scheme to provide the necessary infrastructure for the provision of a longer-term, wider strategic route to enable the sustainable housing and employment growth required within the Borough and the Development Plan area. It is considered that these strategic benefits weigh heavily in favour of the proposal.

## **9 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

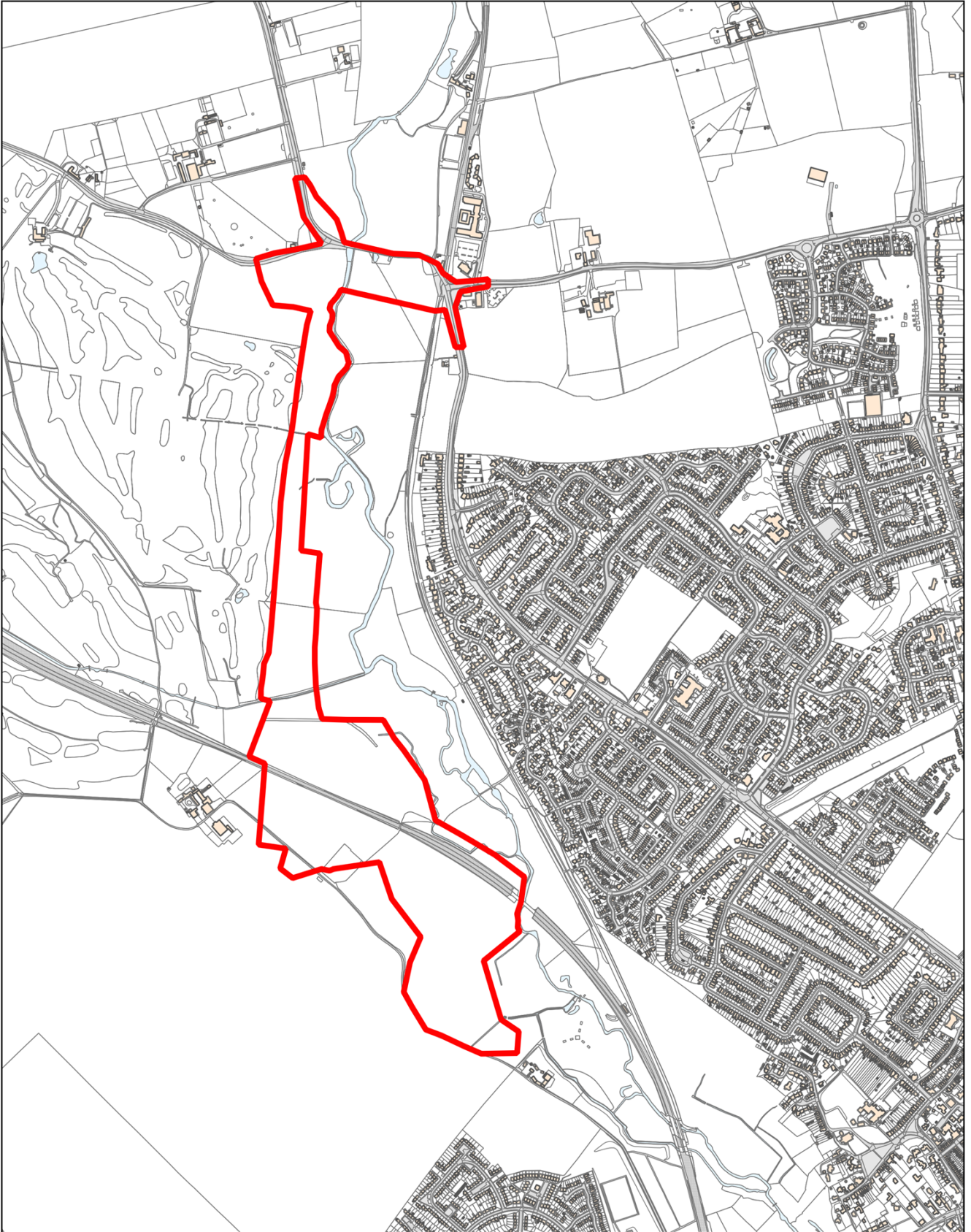
- 9.1 N/2019/0840 (NBC reference) & 19/00045/CCDFUL (NCC reference).

## **10 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The development is not CIL liable

## **11 SUMMARY AND LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN**

In reaching the attached recommendations regard has been given to securing the objectives, visions and priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan together with those of associated Frameworks and Strategies.



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