

A509 Isham Bypass

Public Inquiry

30<sup>th</sup> October 2007

Landscape and Environment Proof  
of Evidence - Summary  
of David William Ellwood BA (Hons),  
DipLA, MLI  
on behalf of Northamptonshire  
County Council



Northamptonshire County Council  
County Hall  
Northampton  
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October 2007

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## **1 NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S REPRESENTATIVE**

- 1.1 My name is David William Ellwood. I hold a Bachelor of Arts degree with honours, and a Diploma in Landscape Architecture from Manchester Polytechnic (now University). I am a chartered member of the Landscape Institute. Since 1985 I have had experience of a wide range of environmental impact assessment work, both with local planning authorities and a number of private consultants.
- 1.2 As a Principal Landscape Architect with Atkins, I am involved in the environmental aspects of development projects for Government Agencies, Local Authorities and private organisations in the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland. Experience includes townscape and visual appraisal. I have undertaken work on numerous highway and other transport schemes, involving route selection and appraisal, scheme design, and environmental impact assessment.
- 1.3 As Principal Landscape Architect in the consultancy's Cambridge office, my role has been to co-ordinate the environmental assessment work for A509 Isham Bypass. I am also the Landscape Architect for the environmental impact assessment. I have been involved in the scheme since 2002.

## **2 SCOPE OF EVIDENCE**

- 2.1 My evidence to this Inquiry addresses the environmental impact assessment process, the degree to which the scheme complies with planning policy and consideration of particular environmental issues, so that the significance of the impact of the scheme can be established. It complements evidence on matters relating to the engineering of the scheme, traffic and economics and noise and air quality, which will be provided by other witnesses.

## **3 FORM OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT**

- 3.1 The Environmental Statement was structured to provide clear information about the development of the Scheme and its details before considering the potential environmental impacts which might arise from its implementation.
- 3.2 For each of the topic areas, the method of assessment was outlined. The baseline conditions were described and potential impacts identified. Mitigation measures to be incorporated in the Scheme were then described, before reporting on the assessment of the impacts of the scheme with the mitigation measures in place. Specialist reports, included in Appendices, supported the assessment. A Non Technical Summary was produced, summarising the overall impact of the Scheme.

## **4 SCHEME OBJECTIVES**

- 4.1 The Northamptonshire County Council's objectives for the proposed A509 Isham Bypass are:
  - ◆ to reduce community severance currently experienced through the village of Isham by removing through traffic, particularly heavy goods vehicles

- ◆ to reduce the number and severity of road accidents
- ◆ to reduce congestion on the A509 particularly during peak hours
- ◆ to enhance the local environment of Isham and improve conditions for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians
- ◆ to improve transport links between Kettering and Wellingborough

## **5 ALTERNATIVE ROUTES**

- 5.1 Atkins began the preliminary assessment with thirteen route options, included in the brief agreed by the members of the Wider Reference Group in January 2002.
- 5.2 Through a process of environmental assessment and public consultation, a preferred route was chosen.
- 5.3 The preferred option, Route 2, was further developed and became the subject of the Environmental Statement which was submitted to Northamptonshire County Council in August 2005.
- 5.4 The route passes to the west of Isham, commencing at the A14 Pytchley Roundabout and would run southwards to rejoin the A509 Wellingborough Road midway between Hill Top and Great Harrowden. The length of the A509 Isham Bypass would be 4.3km.

## **6 TRAFFIC**

- 6.1 The provision of a dualled A509 Isham Bypass will provide the additional capacity in the A509 corridor between Kettering and Wellingborough, while providing traffic relief to the village of Isham.

## **7 LAND USE**

- 7.1 Eight farm enterprises are affected. Mitigation measures include correct soil handling and reinstatement, payment of appropriate compensation, creating access to severed land and repairing damage to field drains. With these mitigation measures in place, only two enterprises (Mr Brown, Manor House Farm and Reynolds Farms Ltd) will suffer a moderate negative impact due to land loss and disruption. Impacts on the other enterprises will be minor or insignificant.

## **8 LANDSCAPE AND TOWNSCAPE**

- 8.1 The A509 Isham Bypass would have an adverse visual impact on 87 properties. The number of properties experiencing moderate and substantial impact will reduce as the landscape mitigation scheme matures. The landscape proposals aim to integrate the Scheme into the surrounding landscape, screen unattractive views from properties and footpaths, retain existing planting where possible, and create new copses to complement those existing. The impact of lighting will be minimised through the use of high pressure sodium full cut-off lanterns and additional planting. The Bypass would benefit the character of Isham village by removing through traffic.

## **9 BIODIVERSITY**

- 9.1 The A509 Isham Bypass would be likely to have a moderate adverse impact on the ecological features identified in the assessment, mainly due to cumulative adverse impacts on features of local conservation value.
- 9.2 New habitats would be assessed three years after completion of the scheme in order for management proposals to be formulated to increase their wildlife potential.
- 9.3 Reductions in water quality of watercourses and ponds receiving surface water run-off would be avoided by the use of pollution control measures.
- 9.4 Measures implemented during construction such as the provision of badger tunnels and fencing would receive regular inspection and maintenance in order to ensure their effectiveness.
- 9.5 The extent of light pollution from road lighting will be reduced by designing light fittings to reduce light emitted above the horizontal.
- 9.6 Mitigation measures meeting the targets of the Northamptonshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) include planting a greater total length of hedgerow than that lost, targeted replanting of existing defunct hedgerows, lowland grassland mix planting, and planting of native species trees.

## **10 HERITAGE**

- 10.1 The proposed development would have a moderate adverse impact on the cultural heritage (prior to the undertaking of mitigation measures), taking into account the proposed removal of features and sites of regional significance. This overall impact will be reduced to slight adverse, based on the principle that full investigation and recording of archaeological information forms part of the mitigation strategy.
- 10.2 Full excavation of features identified at Hill Top will be carried out prior to construction. This work will be based on a full project design, and will aim to answer regional research questions. An Archaeological Watching Brief will be undertaken to observe the removal of deposits north west of Isham. In liaison with the landscape architect, mitigation of the effects on the historic landscape will involve integrating the scheme into the surrounding landscape and reducing the visual impact of the scheme through sensitive design of boundaries and barriers.

## **11 NOISE**

11.1 The impact of the proposed A509 Isham Bypass when in operation on noise is assessed as beneficial in comparison with the equivalent future Do Minimum scenario. The adverse effects of the proposed scheme have been minimised by the decision to locate the proposed bypass in cutting where it passes closest to existing properties at Isham and Hill Top. However, properties at the western end of Winston Drive and Fairfield Road may still experience 'substantial' or 'significant' deteriorations to their noise environment with the Bypass in operation due to the fact that their outlook will change from a generally rural environment, to include the direct effect of traffic noise from the proposed Bypass. A low noise road surface and a 1.8m high noise barrier would provide a noticeable reduction in noise for these properties.

## **12 AIR QUALITY**

12.1 The impact on local air quality of the A509 Isham Bypass when in operation, and the associated re-distribution of traffic on the existing road network, is assessed as beneficial in comparison with the equivalent Do Minimum scenario. There could be an increase of greenhouse gases of up to 58% and an increase in total emissions of up to 124% over the Do Minimum scenario.

12.2 With the A509 Isham Bypass in operation, even within 20m of the kerbside, air quality is very much better than the air quality objectives set out in the Air Quality Limit Value Regulations 2001 and therefore air quality mitigation measures are not considered to be necessary.

## **13 WATER ENVIRONMENT**

13.1 Overall, the A509 Isham Bypass is likely to have a slight adverse impact on the water environment.

13.2 The following mitigation measures are recommended with respect to the operation of the road:

- ◆ Trapped gullies, through which surface water from roads and impermeable parking areas should be discharged as a first measure to reduce pollution;
- ◆ Three reedbed/balancing ponds (one for each Brook receiving road runoff) as a secondary measure to remove likely contaminants and to attenuate storm flows to greenfield runoff rates;
- ◆ Pollution incident containment will hold potential accidental spillages from the higher risk roundabouts especially at sensitive locations, including the crossing of Hardwick Brook.

## **14 ACCESSIBILITY**

14.1 The implementation of the mitigation measures will ensure that there should be no hindrance to movement. Minor diversions to public rights of way should result in no more than slight adverse impacts on the non-motorised users of those routes directly affected by the Scheme.

- 14.2 The existing degree of severance will be significantly reduced through the village of Isham with the provision of a bypass and the community to some extent can 'claim back' its village amenities. Pedestrians, cyclists and residents should feel safer with the reduction in volumes of traffic within the village of Isham. Overall impact on accessibility is therefore assessed as beneficial.

## **15 PHYSICAL FITNESS AND JOURNEY AMBIENCE**

- 15.1 The A509 Isham Bypass should result in an increase in the number of cyclists and pedestrians within Isham, due to the reduction of traffic. A cycleway will also be provided north of Isham. The overall impact of the Scheme in terms of improving potential for physical fitness is assessed as slight beneficial.
- 15.2 The overall impact of the proposal on journey ambience for the traveller is assessed as slight to moderate beneficial.

## **16 CONSTRUCTION**

- 16.1 The impacts of construction would be temporary in nature and, with mitigation measures in place, adverse impacts during construction should be limited. The key consideration during the road construction would be the timing of the clearance works and major construction activities. Noise control measures will be agreed with the local authority to ensure construction noise is minimised; stringent measures will be taken to protect the ecology and the drainage system of the area during the construction phase; construction traffic will be restricted to main roads and within the site boundary and dust and dirt nuisances will be kept to a minimum by employing appropriate working practices.

## **17 PLANNING**

- 17.1 The A509 Isham Bypass is in general conformity with planning and transportation policy. Where the proposals do not accord with some of the objectives of planning policies, sensitive and appropriate mitigation measures have been proposed in the Environmental Statement to reduce these adverse effects. The bypass will contribute towards meeting the objectives for growth contained within the Milton Keynes South Midland Sub Regional Strategy by providing part of the infrastructure necessary to accommodate housing and employment development. In addition it will significantly reduce the current adverse effects of traffic on the local community and built environment in Isham. The A509 Isham Bypass has been integrated with planning policy at a local and regional level to plan for development in North Northamptonshire and ensure that housing and employment growth can be accommodated without placing an unacceptable burden on local infrastructure.