The Site & Surrounding Area

1.1 Site Location and Context

The application site occupies an area of approximately 45.35 hectares to the west of Northampton, centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference 476020E, 2615108N (SP706615). Drawing ES 1.1 shows the site location in its local context.

The application site is located on the rural fringe west of Northampton within an area that has seen considerable change over the past decade with commercial infrastructure and residential development having taken place on a large scale. Berrywood Road runs along the sites northern boundary and further north is the New Duston housing development. The A4500 Weedon Road runs along the sites southern boundary. Further south lies the village settlement of Kislingbury. To the eastern boundary lies Berrywood Fields. Further to the east lies St Crispins housing development which is currently under development and Princess Marina. To the west lies the existing Sandy Lane. Further west lies the village settlement of Harpole.

Land within the Proposed Scheme traverses two planning Authorities; South Northamptonshire Council to the west and Northampton Borough Council to the east.

The application site boundary is shown outlined in red on Drawing ES 1.2.

1.2 Site Description

The elevation of the site is varied in profile, lying between 75-110 AOD, rising from A4500 Weedon Road and levelling out just before Berrywood Road. The application site principally comprises of agricultural land use. Agricultural uses include a mixture of cereal crops and grazing land associated with 4 farms: Upton Lodge, Heath Farm, Wood Farm and Norwood Farm. The sites field pattern is regularly defined by hedgerows of varying quality and/or post and wire boundaries. A significant proportion of the agricultural land within the application site is owned by English Partnerships and leased to agricultural users.
A Public Right of Way (KP16) crosses the site (west/east) connecting into Larkhall Lane (west of the site) and down to the A4500 Weedon Road (east of the site). This Public Right of Way is primarily used by dog walkers from Harpole.

The northern most section of the application site follows the existing Sandy Lane alignment for approximately 300m. The existing carriageway is fringed on either side with narrow grass verges and hedgerows interspersed with mature trees. At this location and at the southern boundary with the A4500 Weedon Road occasional semi mature /mature hedgerow trees specimens are present.

Within the application site is an unnamed tributary of the River Nene which runs from north to south, from Norwood Farm to South View.

1.2.1 The Surrounding Area
To the west of the application site lies the existing Sandy Lane, which connects Berrywood Road with the A4500 Weedon Road. This area is characterised by agricultural land use with open field patterns, hedgerow boundaries and farm buildings. Sandy Lane is lined with mature hedgerows and in its vicinity there is a plant nursery, a small scrap yard and farm buildings associated with Heath Farm, Wood Farm and Norwood Farm. A small number of cottages are located close to Norwood Farm and along Larkhall Lane and a row of semi detached and detached houses are at South View close to the junction with the A4500 Weedon Road. To the west and north west of Sandy Lane are areas of agricultural land that are largely used for grazing livestock.

Approximately 1.4km further west of the application site lies the settlement of Harpole. Harpole is a small village with a number of local community facilities. Larkhall Lane and a Public Right of Way (KP16) connect the residents of Harpole with Sandy Lane.

At the northern boundary of the application site lies Berrywood Road (a Roman Road) and the New Duston housing area, an area of medium density residential dwellings. New Duston is a modern settlement approximately 1.7km from the application site, with a number of local community facilities.

Land use to the north west is agricultural with a number of farmsteads in the area including Lodge Barn, Wood Farm and Heath Farm. Areas of land to the north have been safeguarded for the provision of strategic transport links. Further north
lies areas of woodland and tree cover including Roundoak Plantation, part of the larger area of woodland at Harlestone - Dallington Heath.

The area to the east of the application site has seen considerable change over the past decade, with commercial infrastructure and residential development having taken place on a large scale. To the immediate east of the application site is land currently designated as green space and proposed for residential development. At the present time this land is primarily used for agriculture.

To the east of the application site lie a number of community facilities and residential developments. Immediately east lies a Centre for Adult Learning Disabilities. North of this centre lies Berrywood Fields, a medium residential housing development. To the south east of Berrywood Fields is the well treed landscape of St Crispins, sitting on an elevated rise. St Crispins development, built on the former grounds of St Crispin Hospital, consists of a medium density residential housing development, the White House (part of the former St Crispins Hospital now converted into apartments) and the prominent feature of St Crispins clock tower. Berry Wood lying within St Crispin consists of a fragment of well-established woodland supporting some woodland species and is designated for its ancient woodland. Princess Marina, a medium density residential housing development, lies further east of St Crispins. To the south east of St Crispins lies the Redruth Nursing Home.

A Public Right of Way (LB1) connects with KP16 skirting the edge of St Crispins before heading southwards near Redruth Nursing Home and Quinton House School. An existing Public Right of Way (LB8) commences at the point that KP16 and LB1 join and runs northwards, to meet Berrywood Road. These footpaths are primarily used by dog walkers from St Crispin, Harpole and Duston.

Approximately 1.1km further east lies the settlement of Duston. Duston is a village with a number of local community facilities.

To the south boundary of the application site lies the A4500 Weedon Road. The A4500 Weedon Road is a dual carriageway serving as an important transport corridor connecting the M1 Motorway to the west, the urban fringes of Northampton and Northampton town centre to the east. Landuse to the south is predominantly agricultural although industrial uses are located at the Swan Valley Business Park. Areas of land to the south have been safeguarded for the provision of strategic transport links.
The old village of Kislingbury lies approximately 1.1km to the Southwest of the application site. Kislingbury is a small village, within the Nene valley floodplain, with a number of local community facilities.

A number of popular Public Rights of Way and other associated footpaths, including Nene Way Recreational Path, Camp Lane track and Grand Union Canal walk lie to the south of the site.

1.3 Existing Facilities

1.3.1 Accessibility

Pedestrians

The locations for Public Rights of Way in the vicinity of the application site are shown on ES Drawing 11.1a.

An existing Public Right of Way (KP16), approximately 0.6km long, runs through the application site traversing the boundary of South Northamptonshire from Larkhall Lane, west of the application site, to a point that it connects with an existing Public Right of Way (LB1) to the east of the application site.

LB1, approximately 1.4km long, connects with KP16 and follows a route south eastwards of the application site to meet the A4500 Weedon Road.

An existing Public Right of Way (LB8), approximately 1.0km long, commences at the point that KP16 and LB1 join and runs northwards, to the east of the application site, to meet Berrywood Road.

All Public Rights of Ways are of poor condition with uneven surfacing, vegetation encroachment and no lighting.

Cycle Routes

There are no designated cycle routes passing directly through the SLRR application site. There is, however, a cycle route that runs parallel with the A4500 Weedon Road.

Public Transport

No bus services presently directly serve the SLRR application site. There are however a number of bus services operating on surrounding roads.
The nearest railway station to the application site is Northampton railway station, which lies in an eastern direction approximately 3.7km from the application site. The railway station is located on the Northampton loop of the West Coast Mainline and is served by Silverlink, Virgin and Midland Mainline trains. Services are available to London Euston, Birmingham, Milton Keynes, Coventry and Gatwick Airport.