3 The Environmental Assessment Process

3.1 Background Legislation


The Directive was implemented in the UK through the 'Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1988' (SI No 1199). This has subsequently been superseded by the 'Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999' (SI No 293)(hereafter referred to as the EIA Regulations).

Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations identifies those developments for which environmental assessment is mandatory. The proposals to develop the Sandy Lane Relief Road (SLRR) do not fall into this category. Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations requires an environmental assessment if the Proposed Scheme is likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location.

The Proposed Scheme falls within Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations and, as such, has been subject to the process of environmental assessment.

The main stages of the EIA process are:

- baseline environmental data gathering;
- consultations;
- assessment of impacts;
- feedback into design process;
- design of mitigation measures; and
- preparation of Environmental Statement and Non-Technical Summary.
3.2 Assessment Approach

3.2.1 Assessment Guidance
The Environmental Assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the EIA Regulations and reference to the following guidance:

- Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (former) ‘Environmental Impact Assessment’ Circular 02/99 (1999);
- Highways Agency ‘Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Volume 11 – Environmental Assessment’ (DoT 1993, as amended); and

The Environmental Statement for the Proposed Scheme follows current best practice by ensuring the environmental assessment scope, methods and significance criteria are consistent with those recommended in the Highways Agency Guidance ‘Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Volume 11 – Environmental Assessment’.

However, methods or significance criteria recommended by a relevant technical institute are substituted where considered more appropriate. Any such variation is specified in the individual topic chapters.

In order to provide a consistent approach to assessing significance the following terminology has been used throughout the Environmental Statement. Impacts have been expressed as:

- Adverse – detrimental or negative impacts to an environmental resource or receptor;
- Beneficial – advantageous or positive impact to an environmental resource or receptor; or
- Negligible/None – no significant impacts to an environmental resource or receptor.

Where adverse or beneficial impacts have been identified, these have also been assessed against Minor, Moderate, or Major.
3.2.2

Assessment Options

The environmental assessment will assess four options, as detailed below, as a result of consultation with Northamptonshire County Council, South Northamptonshire Council and the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation. The options to be assessed are ‘Do Minimum’ and three options of ‘Do Something’. These options consider the impact of the SLRR and other proposed development on the application site and surrounding areas. Baseline for environmental factors was collated at a reference year of 2006. The baseline for traffic data was collated at a reference year of 2002.

Option 1 – Do Minimum – The ‘do minimum’ scenario assumes that the SLRR is not provided and that the existing Sandy Lane is retained as at present.

Option 2 – Do Something 1 – This ‘do something’ scenario assumes that the SLRR is provided, with the existing Sandy Lane closed off to the north of T&S Threadgold Ltd and Sandy Lane Nurseries and downgraded to discourage through traffic.

Option 3 – Do Something 2 - This ‘do something’ scenario assumes that the SLRR is provided, as above. Under this ‘do something’ condition development in Upton Lodge, including a Park and Ride facility and a country park, is assumed deliverable with the SLRR providing direct access. Additional development at land west of Berrywood Fields and Norwood Farm is also assumed to be deliverable.

Option 4 – Do Something 3 -This ‘do something’ scenario assumes that the SLRR is provided, and development in Upton Lodge, land west of Berrywood Fields and Norwood Farm is delivered as above. Under this ‘do something’ condition the CVLR and SLIN are assumed to be delivered providing a continuous high standard road from the A43 Danes Camp Way, to the A428 Harlestone Road. Additional development at Dallington Grange is also assumed to be deliverable.

The impacts associated with these options will be addressed by assessing the Proposed Scheme in the context of proposed adjacent developments, and also, the consideration of strategic cumulative, indirect and secondary impacts in Chapter 16 - Cumulative Impacts.

The following table provides an indicative construction timetable of both the Proposed Scheme and the associated development outlined in the assessment options above.
### Table 3.1: Development Construction Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development</th>
<th>Construction Start</th>
<th>Construction End</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SLRR</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIN</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVLR</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upton Lodge – Development</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upton Lodge – Country Park</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallington Grange</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berrywood Fields</td>
<td>Underway</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.3 Scoping and Consultations

As part of the Environmental Assessment Process, consultation on the scope of the EIA was undertaken with the Local Planning Authorities in the form of a meeting held on 28th June 2006. A technical note was produced to outline the key issues that will be covered in the Environmental Statement and distributed to Northamptonshire County Council, South Northamptonshire Council and the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation.

The primary objectives of the Scoping Process were to:

- provisionally identify the area and potential sources of environmental impacts from the Proposed Scheme;
- carry out preliminary consultations with statutory bodies;
- to identify the extent of baseline studies required for the EIA;
- confirm the assessment methods and significance criteria to be used when preparing the Environmental Statement; and
- present the framework for the Environmental Statement.

Statutory and non-statutory organisations have been extensively consulted as part of the EIA process. Relevant consultees were contacted with respect to requests for information on the baseline conditions of the site and/or to obtain feedback on the preliminary development proposals.
3.3.1  
**Consultations Undertaken**

Consultation has taken place with a number of organisations/interested parties during the development of the project. This consultation has taken place in the form of public/private meetings, advertisements, exhibitions and formal and informal correspondence. Table 3.2 details the organisations/interested parties consulted with and provides details of the key issues which emerged during the consultation process.

**Table 3.2: Proposed Scheme Consultation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultation Group</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
A visual and landscape character appraisal to be provided.  
Traffic, Accessibility and Biodiversity assessment to be provided.  
Sensitive design of lighting to ensure 'light spill' is reduced.  
Opportunities to increase linkages with surrounding countryside and new and existing leisure facilities.  
Investigate use of sustainable modes of transport.  
Investigate the provision of cycle ways on both carriageways. |
| Environment Agency                        | Further investigation is required to establish the presence of groundwater springs.  
Local authority should be contacted to confirm presence of Integrated Pollution Control Part B |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultation Group</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prescribed Processes within the study area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Further investigation required to determine whether former landfills would affect Proposed Scheme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A detailed flood risk assessment should be carried out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The incorporation of SUDs was advised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Surface water from roads and impermeable parking areas should be discharged via trapped gullies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Heritage</td>
<td>No concerns with the Proposed Scheme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Borough Council</td>
<td>Recommendation to contact Environment Agency for information regarding Abstraction licenses, discharge consents, water quality and pollution incidents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northamptonshire County Council</td>
<td>Recommendation for Archaeological desk based survey followed by field trial trenching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Historic Landscape Character Assessment to be provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Northamptonshire Council</td>
<td>Recommendation to contact Environment Agency for information regarding Abstraction licenses, discharge consents, water quality and flooding status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northamptonshire Local Access Forum</td>
<td>Proposed Scheme must allow safe access to (proposed) areas of open space by non motorised users (support for proposed Pegasus crossing on KP16).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation Group</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Businesses</td>
<td>Potential for loss of passing trade as a result of Proposed Scheme. Design of Proposed Scheme needs to accommodate vehicular access.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Wildlife Trust</td>
<td>Protected species records provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northants Badger Group</td>
<td>Protected species records provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northamptonshire Bat Group</td>
<td>Protected species records provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Amphibian and Reptilian Recorder</td>
<td>Protected species records provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invertebrate Site Register</td>
<td>Protected species records provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Plant Recorder</td>
<td>Protected species records provided.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although only the key issues raised during the consultation process are detailed above; all issues identified have been considered in the environmental assessment process.

3.4 Format of the Environmental Statement

The Environmental Statement will comprise Parts A – E:

Part A: Non-Technical Summary
In accordance with the EIA Regulations a non-technical summary of the ES will be provided. This summary will be supplied as an individual Section within Part A of the ES and as a separate leaflet incorporating illustrative images of the site location and development proposals suitable for public consultation.

Part B: Background
The overall aim of the ES is to provide an objective and systematic account of the potential environmental effects of the Proposed Scheme and assess the ability of the site, and the surrounding area, to accept those impacts. Within this framework, Part B of the ES incorporates the following:

- an examination of the character of the site and surrounding area and a description of the site location and accessibility – Section 1 - The Site and Surrounding Area.
- a description of the scheme proposals including the preliminary design, layout, siting and scale of the development and consideration of alternative options – Section 2 - Proposals.
- a review of the Environmental Assessment process including scoping and consultations will be provided in Section 3 – The EIA Process.
- an overview of the environmental and planning policy context against which the planning application will be considered – Section 4 - Policies and Plans.

Part C: Key Issues
Having due regard to the EIA Regulations and the topic based framework set out in ‘Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Volume 11 – Environmental Assessment’, the Environmental Statement will address the following key issues:

- Air Quality
- Cultural Heritage
• Biodiversity (including protected species surveys)
• Landscape & Visual Effects
• Land Use
• Noise and Vibration
• Pedestrians, Equestrians, Cyclists and Community Effects
• Vehicle Travellers
• Water Resources
• Ground Conditions
• Disruption due to Construction
• Cumulative Impacts

Chapter 7 - Biodiversity, Chapter 8 - Landscape & Visual Effects and part of Chapter 12 - Vehicle Travellers (and the drawings associated with) have been prepared by Faulks Perry Culley & Rech. Halcrow Group Limited accepts no responsibility for the content of these Sections. Chapter 5 - Air Quality has been prepared by Air Quality Consultants on behalf of Halcrow Group Limited.

Specific assessments will be undertaken for each of these key issues in accordance with the relevant guidelines to review the potential significant environmental impacts of the Proposed Scheme. Each of the Sections will provide a review of the assessment methodology, highlight any potential impacts likely to arise from the Proposed Scheme, recommend mitigation measures where appropriate, and discuss any residual effects from the proposals. In each chapter, reporting of the assessment generally follows the structure set out below:

• Introduction
• Assessment Methodology
• Baseline Conditions
• Potential Impacts
• Mitigation Measures
• Residual Impacts
• Summary
• References
Environmental Impact Tables for the Proposed Scheme, based on the DMRB methodology, are provided in Chapter 17.

A summary of the key impacts of the Proposed Scheme during construction and operation is provided in Chapter 18 - Summary of Residual Effects, particularly in relation to the nature of the impact i.e. reversible/irreversible, short-term/long-term, and level of significance.

A Transport Assessment will be prepared by Halcrow Group Limited and will be submitted as a separate document.

**Parts D & E**

The final two Parts of the ES will incorporate drawings and appendices in numerical order relating to Sections 1-15 of the ES.

**3.4.1 Consideration of Main Alternatives**

The EIA Regulations specify for inclusion in the Environmental Statement ‘an outline of the alternatives studied by the applicant and an indication of the main reasons for his choice, taking into account the environmental effects. This aspect has been addressed in Section 2 - Proposals.