

BELA PARTNERSIP LTD

Corby Northern Orbital road

Amended
**Supplementary Environmental
Information**

March 2007September 2007

APPENDIX 15A

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BELA PARTNERSIP LTD
Corby Northern Orbital Road

Supplementary Environmental Information

APPENDIX A

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Supplementary Environmental Information (SEI) ~~is~~ was supplemental to the Environment Statement Volume 3: Corby Northern Orbital Road Planning Application November 2006. This document accompanied a planning application by Northamptonshire County Council for the development of a dual carriageway link between Steel Road Roundabout (Junction with A43 and A427) and Mitchell Road on Phoenix Parkway (A6116).

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1.2 The planning application was submitted and relevant consultation received by Wardell Armstrong from The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough (The Wildlife Trusts), Natural England, Corby Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council. Only the Wildlife Trusts ~~are held an holding~~ objection to the scheme whilst the others only ~~apply~~ applied conditions to the proposal.

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1.3 Corby Borough Council have no objection to the scheme providing that re-survey for protected species, in particular water voles and great crested newts are carried out prior to site clearance. Comprehensive landscaping design and implementation along the road length was also raised.

1.4 Natural England supported the council by agreeing that the re-survey proposed for water voles should be a planning condition. They also added that it is essential that an ecological mitigation/management plan be produced that includes the provision of a net gain. These measures should then be implemented by an experienced environmental clerk of works who will be present to ensure that the measures set out in this plan are carried out appropriately.

1.5 The Wildlife Trusts ~~are holding~~ objection to the scheme. ~~The objection is~~ was based on a number of points detailed below:

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- No mention within the Environmental Statement (ES) of the principals of the Green Infrastructure (GI) Initiative;
- The principals of the GI have not been applied to Willow Brook and more could be done to recognise its potential;
- An apparent lack of commitment to delivery of biodiversity enhancements which they believe should be clearly identified and committed to being carried out on the ground;
- The invertebrate fauna within terrestrial habitat and aquatic habitat have not been quantified or addressed in the ES;
- The scheme could deliver more options to enhance the counties Species and Habitats Action Plans.
- The scheme should have an appropriate Ecological Management Plan to detail mitigation measures and future monitoring strategies.

- The document does not take into consideration a potential Wildlife Site (pWS) which stretches between Mitchell Road and Genner Road extending east and encompassing the Willow Brook as far as Gretton Road.

- 1.6 This document aims to discuss all of the recommendations and objections by the various bodies and deliver suitable measures to satisfy the objections and show commitment to the proposals and enhancements.
- 1.7 It has been decided voluntarily to adopt the procedures set out in Regulation 19 of the Town and County Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) regulations 1999. This Regulation enables us to bring this Supplementary Environmental Information to the attention of ~~both~~ the consultees on the ~~original~~ planning applications.

2 UPDATED BIODIVERSITY MEASURES

- 2.1 Detailed below are the actions and further measures to be undertaken by Wardell Armstrong to ensure that all objections and queries are addressed effectively.

Ecological Management Plan

- 2.2 Wardell Armstrong have produced an Ecological Management Plan (Appendix **16 B**) that outlines the further ecological works required before construction commences, mitigation for protected species and habitats, any enhancements measures to the surrounding habitat of the road and further surveys, monitoring and management which is to be carried out upon completion of the scheme.
- 2.3 The management plan is to be agreed by all parties involved in the scheme and will therefore act as a show of commitment by all parties to carry out measures to protect wildlife conservation in the area.
- 2.4 The management plan aims to address the issue of re-surveying prior to works discussed by Corby Borough Council and Natural England. It also aims to give certainty to the amount of commitment to the mitigation and after care measures for biodiversity which was questioned by The Wildlife Trusts.

Ecological Clerk of Works

- 2.5 An ecological clerk of works will attend the site on a regular basis prior to construction and during the scheme. The role is clearly defined within the Ecological Management Plan. The main duties will be to oversee the mitigation proposals to ensure they are being implemented correctly and ensure the welfare of species on site during the works.
- 2.6 This measure satisfies Natural England's call for an experienced ecologist or environmental clerk of works on site and also further shows our commitment to ensuring the protection of biodiversity whilst the scheme is undertaken.

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Invertebrates

- 2.7 The consultation received when writing the ES did not offer any records of invertebrates within the area. However, it was noted in section 6.7.12 of the **November 2006** ES that areas of the road route do 'offer suitable habitat for a range of invertebrates including species such as butterflies, dragonflies, damselflies, spiders and beetles'.
- 2.8 The areas thought to have the most potential to hold this variety of species are the ponds and other aquatic habitats and the Morrison's land which comprises semi-improved rough grassland.
- 2.9 Aquatic invertebrates will not be affected by the road as there are no aquatic habitats to be lost or disturbed and best practice will be used to ensure that there is no contamination of the water bodies. In addition, the Ecological Management Plan details additional aquatic habitat that is to be created which comprises a suds pond adapted for biodiversity benefit. Therefore, we do not anticipate an impact on these species.
- 2.10 The terrestrial species may be impacted upon. However, it must be noted that the area being taken for the road route is a linear strip through a larger area of grassland. Therefore, habitat surrounding the road upon completion will continue to have the potential to support these animals.
- 2.11 To minimise harm to terrestrial invertebrates within the grassland areas the following measures will be undertaken in conjunction with the great crested newt mitigation.
- 2.12 Working areas of the road will be strimmed to 150mm with arisings left for 24hours. This is to allow for invertebrates to leave the area and re-colonise the unaffected areas. Arisings will then be removed and the area left for a further 24hours. The area will then be strimmed to ground level following the procedure already outlined. These measures will ensure that invertebrates have sufficient time to move into unaffected areas.
- 2.13 In addition to safeguarding invertebrate species present, landscaping on completion of the scheme will be sensitive to planting grassland species and shrubs which support invertebrates (see section 2.17 of this report).

Net gain of Biodiversity

- 2.14 Both Natural England and The Wildlife Trusts commented that they would like to see more substantial evidence of biodiversity gain and not just mitigation for species and habitats. It was also noted that these enhancements could make more of a contribution to the biodiversity targets set out in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) for Northamptonshire.
- 2.15 The Ecological Management Plan sets out measures that can create new habitat in the vicinity of the road. The main addition is the creation of a suds pond which will be adapted for biodiversity with sensitive planting and grading. The pond will

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have a reeded area of wetland vegetation and areas of open water so as to be beneficial to a range of species. This will add to Northamptonshire's Biodiversity targets with regards to the creation of a new water body. In addition, the monitoring suggested within the Ecological Management Plan will be beneficial to the LBAP recording what species are present in the five years following the completion of the development.

- 2.16** The additional pond outlined above will also provide suitable habitat for the great crested newt which is a UK BAP species and the palmate newt (*Triturus helveticus*) which is also listed as a local BAP species.
- 2.17** The proposed landscaping will also aid with producing further habitats and allow for beneficial planting for species within the local BAP. The landscaping of the scheme is currently under review, however, it is agreed that blackthorn shrubs (*Prunus spinosa*) will be integrated into the design. This species is the food plant of a butterfly species which is listed in the local BAP, namely the Black Hairstreak (*Satyrrium pruni*), and a local BAP objective is to include blocks of blackthorn planting within the new schemes. Water vole are listed as a local BAP species. Records of presence were received for Willow Brook during the consultation exercise for the ES. Two records were established from 1995 and located over 500m away. The road scheme plans to build a bridge over the brook but not to disturb the banks. However, mitigation for the protection of water voles, if present, will be undertaken.
- 2.18** In addition, although no direct enhancement of the banks will be carried out, the planting under the bridge will be beneficial to water voles. It is proposed that there is a cycle / pedestrian route under the bridge. At present, the sides of Willow Brook contain short grass with little cover which is frequently disturbed due to the area being used as a 4x4 driving experience track. With the scheme, once the bridge is built grass planting underneath will be tailored to ensure that there is longer grass directly adjacent to the brook providing cover and a wildlife corridor for water voles and other species. The cycle / pedestrian path will be further from the edge to limit disturbance to the banks.
- 2.19** Landscaping along the road route is currently under review and will be set out in a subsequent report. However, it is anticipated that the roadside will be planted with a mixture of long grass and tall herbs, with the planting of shrubs and trees in certain areas, to provide habitat linkages for a range of species. The trees and shrubs to be planted will be of local provenance and sensitively chosen to reflect the natural surrounding habitats. This landscaping will mitigate for the loss of habitat and add biodiversity value due to the inclusion of specially selected species, such as the blackthorn.
- 2.20** The measures outlined above and further details in the Ecological Management Plan illustrate the habitat creation and net gain for biodiversity with regards to the

local BAP and therefore address the concerns raised by both Natural England and The Wildlife Trusts.

Green Infrastructure

2.21 The Wildlife Trusts commented that no consideration had been given within the ES to the principals of the Green Infrastructure (GI) guidance. The GI sets out recommendations to provide linkages for a range of different reasons, one being nature conservation, along linear routes. There ~~is~~ **was** concern that the scheme ~~does~~ **did** not recognise the potential for Willow Brook or the proposed road to provide such linkages.

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2.22 It is anticipated that the roadside verges will be planted with species of local provenance to provide the link between habitat along the road corridor where practicable and not to obstruct motorists visibility. The species used will be a mixture of long grass and tall herbs, with the possibility of shrubs and trees in certain areas. In addition, a hedgerow is planned to line the road at the northerly end of the route, lining the northern side of the road before it links to Phoenix Parkway. The highway scheme comprises a linear development with limited land available to the applicant to implement landscaping. However, the desirability that the project landscaping be integrated into a wider area landscaping strategy is recognised. JV partner Bee Bee Developments Ltd, the masterplanners and the delivery vehicle BeLa Partnerships Ltd, are key stakeholders in many of the major initiatives along the CNOR corridor including the Willow Brook Linear Park, Renewable Energy Facilities and the Priors Hall Development. They will commission the development of an area wide landscaping strategy and this shall be discussed with relevant stakeholders such as the Council. The principal objective and purpose of this strategy shall be to guide the planning of future developments along the corridor, but it shall also be used to inform a reassessment of the landscaping on this project. The adopted landscaping shall be commensurate with the establishment of appropriate habitat linkages for a range of species.

2.23 Willow Brook will undergo landscaping which will be sensitive to the issue of wildlife corridors. At present the area is frequently disturbed due to it being used as a 4x4 race track. The proposals for the scheme will allow for this disturbance to be removed and a functional corridor to be maintained.

2.24 Beneath the bridge, it is proposed that the area immediately adjacent to the brook will be planted with long grasses and herbs to provide a wildlife corridor and refuge for species found within the area. This planting will be adjacent to the cycle /pedestrian path that is also proposed.

Potential Wildlife Site

- 2.25** The Wildlife Trusts brought to light the fact that an area of land adjacent to the road scheme is planned to become designated as a Wildlife Site. The road scheme will be constructed using best practice to safeguard all habitats surrounding the works including this site. Planting will also be used to screen and buffer the area as detailed in a review of landscaping currently being produced.
- 2.26** The mitigation measures to include amphibian tunnels will link this pWS to other areas within the vicinity of the road

3 CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1** The measures set out above address the issues raised by the various bodies that have commented on the November 2006 scheme. These measures are also applicable to the submitted September 2007 scheme. In addition to the measures set out in the ES further actions have been detailed here.
- 3.2** An Ecological Management Plan has been produced and will be agreed with all parties involved in the scheme. This plan will detail mitigation and monitoring measures to protect and enhance biodiversity in the area.
- 3.3** Landscaping of the scheme will be sensitively detailed to allow for linkages between habitats where possible and to offer further biodiversity benefits to the area.

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