

A43 Moulton Bypass Phase 1b

Statement of Community Involvement Final

March 2015



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A43 MOULTON BYPASS STATEMENT
OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Northamptonshire County Council

Final

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1 INTRODUCTION**1.1 Introduction**

1.1.1 This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has been prepared in support of the planning application for the first phase of a new bypass to improve the A43 between Northampton and Kettering, and is referred to hereafter as the 'proposed Bypass'.

1.1.2 The purpose of this document is to demonstrate the level of community and stakeholder consultation undertaken to support the planning application for the proposed Bypass. Public consultation is now an essential element of the planning and development process. It is about engaging with local communities to shape a proposal so that subsequent application takes into account, as far as is appropriate and possible, local views and opinions.

1.2 The Proposed Bypass

1.2.1 The proposal is to construct a new dual carriageway 2.5km in length to bypass the existing A43 near the village of Moulton. The new road forms part of the wider A43 Kettering to Northampton congestion improvement scheme.

1.2.2 The proposed Bypass will also serve as the main access for a proposed new housing development (referred to as the "Overstone Leys Development") to the north of Northampton. Barratt Homes (supported by Pegasus Group Ltd) have submitted an outline planning application (LPA Ref: DA/2013/0850) for the residential development (2000 houses), including a new Bypass. This site is also allocated in the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) as the North Northampton Sustainable Urdan Extension area. The decision on the Outline planning application had been delayed until the JCS is adopted, but since it was adopted in December 2014, is expected in the near future.

1.2.3 The applicant for the proposed Bypass is Northamptonshire County Council (NCC).

1.2.4 For further information on the proposed Bypass please refer to the application Planning Statement.

1.3 Policy Context

1.3.1 This SCI has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Statement of Community Involvement for NCC 2012.

1.3.2 The NPPF provides advice to local authorities on how they should encourage applicants to participate in pre-application engagement with stakeholders and the public as follows.

1.3.3 "Local planning authorities have a key role to play in encouraging other parties to take maximum advantage of the pre-application stage. They cannot require that a developer engages with them before submitting a planning application, but they should encourage take-up of any pre-application services they offer. They should also, where they think this would be beneficial, encourage any applicants who are not already required to do so by law to engage with the local community before submitting their applications." (Para.189, NPPF, 2012)

1.3.4 The NCC SCI describes how the Borough Councils will encourage community and stakeholder consultation when preparing their own Local Plans. The SCI also provides advice to applicants on how to undertake their own community and stakeholder consultation before submitting a planning application. The SCI recommends, for 'significant', that applicants implement community involvement techniques such as local exhibitions.

1.3.5 The SCI states the following:

Where a proposal/application is deemed to be significant by the planning authority, developers/applicants (and this includes the county council or its agents in relation to county council development) will be expected to undertake community engagement and involvement in drawing up their proposals. Developers/applicants will need to submit with their planning application a 'Statement of Local Engagement' showing how they have engaged in the community in their proposals and how it has changed as a consequence.

1.3.6 *Various methods may be used by developers/applicants in seeking to involve the community at an early stage in drawing up their proposals. The following methods, and others, could be used to engage the community:*

- *Letters and leaflets that together with easily readable plans and diagrams explain proposals in a clear and straightforward manner.*
- *Public meetings.*
- *Public exhibitions.*
- *Citizens workshops.*

1.3.7 The following methods have been implemented for the proposed Bypass:

- Letters;
- Leaflets;
- Public meetings / Exhibitions;
- Workshops;
- House visits; and
- Press releases.

2 ORIGINAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN - KEY STAKEHOLDERS**2.1 Introduction**

2.1.1 It is considered that early engagement with key stakeholders will allow for site constraints to be addressed. It will also allow design principles to be set to mitigate any potential issues associated with proposed Bypass.

2.1.2 NCC's aim is to encourage any developer which buys the site to design a scheme in keeping with the existing surrounding development. Setting design principles at an early stage will help to achieve this goal.

2.1.3 Stakeholders have been given the opportunity to directly comment upon and influence the outline planning application. This was achieved via a combination of meetings, telephone conversations, letters, public exhibition and circulation of emerging documentation for comment and review.

2.1.4 All original stakeholders will be consulted again by the local planning authority as part of the proposed bypass planning application.

2.2 West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit

2.2.1 The Joint Planning Unit (JPU) is comprised of local government officers engaged in the task of preparing the documents required by the Joint Strategic Planning Committee. The first of these documents was the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy which was adopted in December 2014. The JPU are the driving force behind the Northampton North SUE which forms a land-use planning designation in the Joint Core Strategy.

2.3 Northamptonshire County Council

2.3.1 NCC have been consulted as part of the development proposals for the Overstone Leys planning submission but will be the determining authority for the planning application for the proposed bypass

2.3.2 NCC planning Authority Officers have been consulted prior to the submission of the proposed bypass and formal pre-application meetings and site walkovers have also taken place.

2.3.3 A site walkover took place on 12th August 2014, when the project Ecologist met the County Ecologist on-site to discuss the project's impact on the local biodiversity and possible mitigation measures which could be implemented through efficient design.

2.3.4 The County Archaeologist visited site to inspect the trial trenching which was undertaken in November 2015. The Written Scheme of Investigation was agreed with the County Archaeologist before commencing the trial trenching.

2.4 Daventry District Council

2.4.1 The majority of the proposed Bypass sits within the borough of Daventry. A series of meetings have taken place since 2011 to discuss the Overstone Leys development and the proposed Bypass:

- November 2011 – Meeting with Director of Development to discuss the proposal at a corporate level.

- January 2012 – Meeting with DDC Officers to discuss SUE masterplanning. Issues surrounding density, connectivity, public open space, education and phasing.
- December 2012 – Member presentations were made to elected members at DDC. The aim of the presentation was to explain the context for the SUE.
- May 2013 – Meeting with DDC Officers to discuss the format of the required planning application along with the extent of the Environmental Statement.
- September 2013 – Meeting with DCC Officers to discuss the assessment of noise as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment.

2.5 Northampton Borough Council

2.5.1 The southernmost section of the proposed Bypass sits within the authority of Northamptonshire Borough Council (NBC). Along with DCC a series of meetings have been held to discuss the proposed SUE and Bypass.

- December 2012 - Member presentations were made to elected members at NBC. The aim of the presentation was to explain the context for the SUE.
- May 2013 – Meeting with NBC Officers to discuss the format of the required planning application along with the extent of the Environmental Statement.
- September 2013 – Meeting with NBC Officers to discuss the assessment of noise as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment.

2.6 Other Statutory Stakeholders

2.6.1 Through the planning and environmental assessment process, a wide variety of different stakeholders have been consulted. The Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England have been consulted throughout the planning process.

2.7 Stakeholder Workshops

2.7.1 The next stage of the original consultation took the form of two workshops for invited stakeholders, Parish, District and County Councillors, community representatives and officers from DDC, NBC and NCC. The workshops were run by Barratt Developments and Pegasus Group.

2.7.2 The principle of holding workshops had been to discuss and agree firstly with officers of DDC, NBC and the JPU as an effective means of engaging stakeholders. They also had input into the list of invitees compiled by Pegasus.

Workshop 1

2.7.3 This first workshop was based on an “Enquiry by Design” type approach and was split into four sessions focussing on; the type of place the new development should be and its relationship to the existing settlement; movement and connection priorities;

community and social infrastructure; and the potential benefits that new development could bring. A prompt sheet was provided to facilitators to help ensure that each group was given the same directions. Each table was also provided with a pack of information, including a plan of the site.

2.7.4 The first session was devoted to consideration of place shaping and debate was focussed around the following three questions. The outcomes of each table's discussions were then fed back to the whole group.

- What sort of place or places are we creating?
- Thinking about the proposal to provide a new A43 link road from Round Spinney roundabout to north of Moulton – what do you think of the preferred option?
- How can green infrastructure support the shape of this development?

Outcomes

2.7.5 Taking into account the physical constraints on the site and the requirements of the Council's emerging core strategy policy, strong themes emerged from the feedback in relation to a need to create a new place with its own identity, whilst still respecting the distinctive characters of the surrounding existing communities.

2.7.6 There was also a clear desire for strong cycle/footpath links between the new and existing communities. Participants were clear that facilities should be accessible to new and existing residents and that public transport should be improved, particularly into Northampton.

2.7.7 There was also an encouraging level of endorsement for the proposed route of the new stretch of A43.

2.7.8 The need to improve road infrastructure was the key issue that emerged during the day.

Workshop 2

2.7.9 Following the first workshop, a masterplan was developed that sought to recognise the requirements of the Council's draft Core Strategy policy for the Northampton North Sustainable Urban Extension (now adopted) whilst also recognising the feedback gained from the first stakeholder session.

2.7.10 A key issue raised by attendees at Workshop 1 to be addressed through the draft masterplan was the creation of well thought out pedestrian/cycle links. Attendees were keen to avoid the new A43 becoming a barrier between Moulton and Overstone and preventing east-west movements. The resulting masterplan therefore proposed a series of pedestrian/cycle connections seeking to retain links between existing settlements and establish new links with the proposed settlements.

Outcomes

2.7.11 There was a general consensus at workshop 2 that the masterplan reflected the discussion and suggestions made at the first workshop. Feedback to the masterplan was centred on issues of phasing and delivery of physical and social infrastructure, particularly the new stretch of A43 and the improvements to Round Spinney

Roundabout. In addition to this, the impact of the proposals on the existing village characters of Moulton and Overstone continued to be emphasised.

3 PUBLIC CONSULTATION**3.1 Public Exhibitions**

3.1.1 Originally two rounds of public exhibitions were undertaken, the first presented the masterplan for the Overstone Leys Development which included the proposed alignment of the bypass but not in any detail. These two exhibitions were conducted in 2013.

3.1.2 In December 2014, two exhibitions were undertaken to formally present the proposed Bypass alignment and design.

3.2 First Round - Overstone Leys Development

3.2.1 Pegasus Group and Barratt Developments arranged a consultation event for local residents and businesses in accordance with the approach to consultation. The public exhibition was arranged for Thursday 23rd May 2013 at Moulton Football Club from 1pm to 8pm.

3.2.2 A leaflet was designed which set out information about the site and explained the rationale behind the consultation. Circa 8,800 leaflets were delivered to homes and businesses in the surrounding area. The leaflet included the concept plan developed at the second workshop and set out details of the public exhibition, venue, and website. The aim of the leaflet was to provide initial information about the proposal and invite engagement. In addition to providing information on the proposals and details of the exhibition date and the website, the leaflet contained a pre-paid postage response form for comments.

3.2.3 Exhibition boards explaining the proposals and showing a concept plan were on display at the exhibitions. Representatives from the project team were on hand to discuss the proposals and answer specific questions.

3.2.4 Comments forms were available for completion at the exhibition. Visitors were invited to make general comments on all aspects of the proposals.

3.2.5 A total of 246 were recorded as having visited the exhibition on Thursday 23rd May 2013. The overwhelming majority (87%) of those visiting the exhibition recorded themselves as local residents. The remaining attendees were business owners, local councillors or members of community groups.

3.2.6 In light of some concern expressed by Overstone Parish Council about the venue for the exhibition being too far for some Overstone and Sywell residents to travel, a second public exhibition event was scheduled for between 6pm and 8pm on the evening of Thursday 6th June 2013 at Overstone Village Hall. Approximately 800 additional leaflets were sent out to Overstone and Sywell residents inviting them to attend the additional exhibition.

3.2.7 73 people were recorded as attending the second exhibition; however, the actual number was estimated to be slightly higher.

Response

3.2.8 38% of the comments received related to the Overstone Leys Development highways design. Several of the comments related to the proposed bypass and a summary is provided in table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Overstone Leys Development Summary of issues raised relating to Bypass

Summary of Issue Raised
A43 is ready for dualing and should be done instead of more talking, public inquiries and even longer delays.
Proposals for A43 will make traffic situation worse with rat runs through the villages.
The northern A43 approach to Northampton which runs adjacent to the site is already badly congested, with regular queues as far as the Holcutt roundabout. Especially in the rush hours the western A43 boundary of the site is already an established traffic black spot. This causes existing traffic to use Overstone village and Billing Lane as rat runs. This will only be made worse. 2,000 extra households trying to get to work is just not sustainable without significant road improvements. These have not been proposed.
A roundabout needs to be created where Moulton, Sywell Rd, crosses A43, as there is at present/ Putting in traffic lights will simply create a bottleneck and traffic jams backing up into Moulton/Sywell roads.
Delighted with the new A43. Bring it on! Only thing we want is access to our street.
Old A43 /transport corridor will become cut through.
Whilst I am in favour of the dual carriageway and the new location and route for it. The access to the current routes for residents of Thorpeville needs to be given more consideration. With a left turn for access from the dual carriageway the route will be far too inconvenient to go all the way round and access to the Round Spinney roundabout needs to be possible without making the current route a 'rat-run'.

3.3 A43 Moulton Bypass - EXHIBITIONS

3.3.1 Although the Bypass formed part of the Overstone Leys Development exhibitions, it did not include the detailed road design. The second round of exhibitions aimed to showcase the details of the Bypass alignment for the first time.

3.3.2 The first exhibition took place Wednesday 10th December 2014 at Moulton Village Hall 2.00pm to 7.00pm. The second took place Thursday 11th December 2014 at Overstone Village Hall 2.00pm to 7.00pm.

3.3.3 As for the first round of exhibitions, an information leaflet was produced and distributed to the following local residence two weeks before the event: This can be viewed in Appendix 1. The leaflet was distributed in the following areas:

Moulton

- 1-59 Thorpeville
- 1-4 Glengary

- 1-12 the Avenue
- 1-97 Park View
- 1-4 Park View Close
- Almscliff, Rydale House and Park House
- Cotswold, Duran House, Langaerne, Mathon, Byways and Vardo
- 1-61 Ashley Lane
- 50-80 Overstone Road
- 1-12 Siddons Way
- 1-41 Tarrant Way
- 1-20 Tarrant Close

Overstone

- Richmond
- Pychley Gate Lodge
- All properties at the Overstone Farm
- 1-178 Sywell Road Overstone
- 1-101 Woodland Avenue

Sywell

- 2-134 Overstone Road
- 1-14 Pie Corner
- 1-12 Bembridge Close
- 1-18 Park Close

3.3.4 The exhibitions were advertised on the NCC website (See Appendix 2) and posters were put up at both venues.

Moulton Village Hall Exhibition

3.3.5 Comments forms were available for completion at the exhibition. Visitors were invited to make general comments on all aspects of the proposals.

3.3.6 Approximately 285 people attended the Moulton Village Hall exhibition. The majority of which lived within the surrounding settlements of Moulton, Overstone and Sywell.

3.3.7 Local councillors and residents association heads were formally invited to the exhibitions.

3.3.8 The exhibition information boards are can be viewed in Appendix 3. The photograph below was taken at the Moulton Village Hall exhibition.



3.3.9 Table 3.2 below summarises the main issues raised by the public at the exhibition.

Table 3.2: A43 Moulton Bypass Summary of issues raised (Moulton Village)

Summary of Issue Raised
Thorpeville left turn onto Televera Way will become a “rat run” from Moulton Village
General concerns that the Bypass will not help to relieve traffic
Support for the Bypass
Properties along the existing A43 will be subject to increased traffic noise levels at the rear
General concerns with the proposed housing development
Should consider connecting the old A43 with Park Road
Safety concerns regarding the position of the pedestrian crossings along the proposed Bypass

Overstone Village Hall Exhibition

3.3.10 Comments forms were available for completion at the exhibition. Visitors were invited to make general comments on all aspects of the proposals.

3.3.11 Approximately 150 people attended the Overstone Village Hall exhibition, the majority of which lived in Sywell and Overstone.

3.3.12 The photograph below was taken at the Overstone Village Hall exhibition.



3.3.13 Table 3.3 below summarises the main issues raised by the public at the exhibition.

Table 3.3: A43 Moulton Bypass Summary of issues raised (Overstone Village)

Summary of Issue Raised
General concerns that the Bypass will not help to relieve traffic
Support for the Bypass
Concerns about increasing traffic volume on Billing Lane
Concerns about increased traffic travelling through Overstone Village
Safety concerns regarding the position of the pedestrian crossings along the proposed Bypass
Consider implementing a mini roundabout at Sywell / Billing Lane junction to improve traffic flow
General concerns with the proposed housing development

4 HOW THE SCHEME HAS RESPONDED

- 4.1.1 This section of the report looks at how the comments received during the consultation period have been taken on-board and incorporated into the proposals for the Bypass. Given the depth and range of comments received, the comments below highlight some of the key issues and is not intended to be comprehensive.
- 4.1.2 A popular issue raised at the exhibitions especially that held at Moulton Village Hall, was the proposed Thorpeville left turn onto Televera Way. Concerns were raised about this route becoming a “rat run” from Moulton Village. In response to concerns expressed about how traffic would circulate within this area, NCC undertook some further design work. As a result of this work it was found possible to offer a left turn on to Talavera Way as an appropriate solution to this concern. Having this additional route within the overall road design scheme has the additional bonus of offering a diversionary route should the realigned A43 become blocked in the future.
- 4.1.3 It should be noted that additional supplementary and appropriate traffic calming measures, including a reduction in the speed limit, would also be introduced to mitigate ‘rat-running’ and persuade drivers to use the new road.
- 4.1.4 A high proportion of residents along the existing A43 were concerned about increased noise levels behind their properties. Particularly, the residents at Number 10 Thorpeville where the proposed Bypass alignment runs close to the rear garden fence.
- 4.1.5 As a result, baseline noise monitoring was undertaken in the rear garden of number 10 Thorpeville. The data was then used to design suitable noise mitigation for the Bypass. This consists of specifically design noise barriers which will help shield the existing properties for increased traffic noise. A meeting with the residents of number 10 Thorpeville was then arranged and the findings for the noise monitoring and proposed noise barrier design were presented. The residents were reassured that baseline noise levels would not increase dramatically once the noise barriers have been constructed.
- 4.1.6 A number of local residents expressed concerns that the proposed Bypass would not reduce traffic levels along existing roads. Prior to the planning submission additional detailed traffic flow analysis has been undertaken and the results are explained in the Transport Assessment which accompanies the planning application. Link flow analysis has shown that the impact of the Bypass on the existing road network is an overall reduction in traffic on local roads.
- The Bypass has been designed to mitigate against the issues of congestion that are already present on the A43 and its local highway network. In addition, the Bypass is designed to cope with the increase in traffic flows that will be introduced to the local highway network by the proposed North Northampton SUE.
- 4.1.7 Safety concerns were raised about the positioning of the toucan crossings along the proposed Bypass. The crossings have been positioned to support the existing pedestrian routes and to accommodate the future housing development. Toucan crossings utilise traffic lights to stop traffic to allow a safe crossing for both cyclists and pedestrians. The crossing designs meet all current health and safety standards. The speed limit for the dual carriageway will be limited to 40mph and not the national standard of 70mph.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1.1 NCC recognised from the outset the importance of public consultation and the fact that this should take place as early in the design stage as possible when comments received could be properly taken on board, enabling the emerging plans to be shaped in response to local suggestions.
- 5.1.2 For the Overstone Leys development it was agreed with the Council that the consultation approach should essentially comprise of two elements; structured stakeholder workshops which could draw on the local expertise of stakeholders and which could inform the preparation of a masterplan for the site and a later public consultation event. This latter element involved a number of consultation activities including awareness raising leaflets, a public exhibition and the setting up of a project website.
- 5.1.3 NCC undertook an additional two more public exhibitions to focus on the proposed Bypass alignment and the work undertaken to support the planning application.
- 5.1.4 The approach taken has not only raised awareness of the proposals for the Bypass and Overstone Leys development amongst a wide range of statutory bodies, local representatives and members of the public but has also given an opportunity for meaningful engagement and input into the evolution of the development proposals.
- 5.1.5 The process of consultation is considered to have been an effective and a positive one. The response rate to the various public consultation response methods demonstrates that we have succeeded in engaging with local people with a wide range of views being captured.
- 5.1.6 The outcomes of the stakeholder workshops and the public consultation have had a key input to the design and development process.

APPENDIX 1 – A43 Moulton Bypass Information Leaflet

APPENDIX 2 – NCC website Press Release

APPENDIX 3 – Public Exhibition Boards