



30 April 2021

Community and Environmental  
Services Department  
Planning Services Floor 6  
County Hall  
Martineau Lane  
Norwich  
NR1 2SG

Dear Sir / Madam,

**Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017  
Request for a Screening Opinion: Construction of a Four-Armed Roundabout to Improve/Replace the Existing  
Crossroad Junction, Dereham Road, Hempton, NR21 7JY**

We are writing to request a Screening Opinion under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 ('the EIA Regs'), to support a detailed planning application for a roundabout development at the existing crossroad junction of the B1146 (Dereham Road) and the C550 (Hempton Road), approximately 850m south west of Fakenham town centre. The Proposed Scheme site is located in the parish of Hempton, in the administrative boundary of Norfolk County Council (NCC).

Further detail is provided below concerning the nature of the project and likely environmental impacts to inform your opinion and response.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT**

The purpose of the scheme is to improve highway safety and reduce congestion by replacing the existing crossroad junction of the B1146 with the Dereham Road and the C550 Hempton Road. The Proposed Scheme will incorporate the following:

- A four-armed roundabout;
- The realignment of the B1146 either side of the roundabout to the north west and south east;
- The realignment of the junction of Pond Road with the Hempton Road;
- Alterations to the bus stop layby on the north east bound side of the Hempton Road;
- The stopping up, removal of the existing pavement and reinstatement as landscaped areas, for the existing alignment of the B1146 either side of the existing junction and the existing alignment of Pond Road;
- New pedestrian crossings on the south east arm of the roundabout; and
- New directional road signs on the approach to the roundabout.

Construction activities are likely to include the following:

- General construction activities;
- Drainage including new soakaways;
- HGV movements for construction activities;
- Importing and exporting of fill / excavation material;
- The construction and use of a compound area to the south of the site.

A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) is proposed for this development setting out construction activities, environmental management, and best practice techniques proposed. This will be prepared by the appointed Contractor and submitted to NCC for approval prior to the works commencing.

Appendix A provides a location plan to identify the land.



## **EIA REGULATIONS**

The Proposed Scheme has been reviewed against the Town and Country Planning (IEA) Regulations 2017, i.e. based on the location, type and size. The site is 1.86 hectares which consists of common land to the north of Hempton Green and to the immediate south of The Green in Hempton. The size of the site exceeds the threshold and therefore a screening decision is required from the LPA on the need for an EIA. The Scheme has been classified as “10 (f) construction of roads” under Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations.

Given the nature of the Proposed Scheme being developed on an already existing road network, it is considered that an EIA is not required.

Should it be agreed that an EIA is not required, several environmental reports may be required to support the planning application which this screening letter will set out.

## **CONSULTATION**

The developers have engaged in pre-application discussions (ENQ/2020/0019) with NCC as the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and the proposals have been positively responded to in these discussions.

The developers are continuing to work collaboratively with the LPA to work towards a submission in the coming months which succinctly aligns with the clients' aims and brief and which suitably addresses and positively responds to the concerns of the LPA.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL BASELINE AND TYPE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS**

The following sections set out the environmental baseline and characteristics of potential impacts.

### ***Air Quality***

During the construction phase, the Proposed Scheme may have the potential to result in localised and temporary adverse impact from dust and vehicular particulate emissions to local receptors, such as The Green and Back Street. During the operational phase, the roundabout is anticipated to improve congestion in the local area which in response will improve the local air quality.

A review of the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) website has highlighted that there are no AQMAs within 1km of the site. The nearest AQMA is identified as Breckland AQMA is 1,690m to the south of the site which was declared in 2005 for particulate matter PM<sub>10</sub>.

Given that the proposed works will improve the flow of traffic at the junction it is suggested that the air quality should improve at the location as a result of the works. As the site is not within an AQMA it is proposed that an air quality assessment will not be required to support the planning application.

However, given the potential for impacts during the construction period, a CEMP will be produced and implemented by the contractor in line with their contractual requirements with NCC. Procedures may include setting up barriers around dust generating activities; avoiding storing stockpiles of loose material on site; installing wheel washes and vehicle cleaning facilities; ensuring not-in-use vehicle engines and plant motors are switched off; and ensuring all plant and vehicles are properly maintained. If temporary traffic management arrangements may be required for this development, these should also be considered in the CEMP.

### ***Noise and Vibration***

The site is not located within a Noise Important Area (NIA) and there is not an NIA within 1km of the site. Regarding sensitive receptors, there are no hospitals or GPs within 1km of the site. The nearest school is Fakenham Junior School which is located 840m to the north-east of the site which has a capacity of 300 pupils on role in years 3 to 6 which has a playground and playing field associated with the school. There are residential dwellings (including four listed buildings) located in close proximity to the site located along Bakery Close, Dereham Road, Back Street, The

Green and Raynham Road. The Holy Trinity church which is a Grade II listed building is adjacent to the north of the site. During construction work, sensitive receptors may be more susceptible to the effects of temporary adverse noise impacts. Potential impacts would be reduced by following best practice measures, to be specified in a CEMP and by undertaking a proportionate Noise Impact Assessment.

During operation, noise levels are anticipated to remain similar to, if not the same, as current noise levels generated from the existing road.

The environmental health department of NCC should be contacted to discuss and agree on the assessment methodology. Subject to this, baseline noise measurements at several locations on the site would be proposed. All key parts of the site will be covered to establish the range of existing noise levels. It is anticipated that the existing road will be one of the main sources of noise in the area, with the A1065 being another major source of noise.

Where necessary and feasible beyond the measures already incorporated into the scheme, noise control measures will be recommended with the aim of achieving suitable internal and external noise levels for a road development.

The results of the noise survey and design recommendations will be contained within a noise assessment suitable for submission with the planning application.

### ***Ecology, Nature Conservation, and Arboriculture***

The River Wensum is a Special Area of Conservation and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located 190m to the north east of the site. There are no other European designated sites within 10km of the site. There are no other nationally designated sites within 2km of the site. The Hempton Green County Wildlife Site (CWS) extends across the land to the south of the B1146 and to the east of the C550 Hempton Road.

A desk based study has identified that the south-east of the site intersects a Habitat of Principal Importance (HPI). The HPI identified as lowland fens extends northwards adjacent to the Dereham Road and eastwards towards the sewage works. There are further HPI parcels within 500m, including the following:

- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh;
- Good semi-improved grassland;
- Lowland meadows;
- Lowland fens;
- Deciduous woodland; and
- No habitat but additional habitat exists.

In the first instance, the Proposed Scheme should avoid negative effects to any HPI either directly or indirectly. There are no parcels of Ancient Woodland within a 2km study area of the site.

One tree is proposed to be felled, which is located between Dereham Road and Hempton Road. For construction works near trees, a Root Protection Assessment may be required which should be assessed through an Arboricultural Assessment. The Arboricultural Assessment should also identify any trees that are subject to a Tree Preservation Order. Woodland habitat within the site may also have potential to provide habitat or provide suitable foraging for bats with no assessment made at this point.

No phase 2 type assessments or surveys have been undertaken for species including: badgers, breeding birds, dormouse, grass snake, invertebrates, Great Crested Newt (GCN), and wintering birds amongst other species. It is recommended that a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) including Phase 1 habitat mapping is undertaken to assess the presence of these and other species which potentially lead to additional individual species surveys / reports to support the planning application process.

The Proposed Scheme should avoid negative effects to both statutory and non-statutory designated sites. This includes both direct (e.g. removal) or indirect (e.g. pollution effects during construction) effects. Careful consideration will need to be given to sensitive design to particularly ensure the Habitats of Priority Importance as identified through the HPI, are not negatively affected because of the Proposed Works, and attention should be given for incorporating ecological enhancements into the final designs.



For the topic of Ecology, it is recommended that a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) including Phase 1 habitat mapping is undertaken alongside an Arboricultural Assessment to support the planning application process. The recommendations set out in this letter are outline only and will be refined as part of the full PEA and as designs emerge and therefore may include additional considerations and surveys or assessments not set out currently.

### ***Cultural Heritage***

An appraisal of available online resources shows that the Remains of St Stephen's Priory Scheduled Monument is adjacent to the east side of the B1146 to the east of the proposed eastern limb of the new roundabout. There are two further Scheduled Monuments within a 2km study area, Fakeham Gasworks to the north-east and the site of a deserted village to the south-east. The northern area of the site is located within the Hempton Conservation Area.

There are no World Heritage Sites, Registered Parks and Gardens, or Registered Battlefields within a 2km study area.

There are multiple listed buildings within a 2km study area, the majority of which are located in Fakeham to the north-east of the site. Within 250m of the site, there are four listed buildings including: the Church of the Holy Trinity (Grade I) which is within 50m of the western end of the site; the Bell Inn (Grade II) which is 50m to the north of the site; The Green (Grade II) which is adjacent to the site; and Wensum House (Grade II) which is 60m north of the site.

An Historic Environment Desk Based Assessment (HEBDA) will be required to cover both buried heritage and above ground heritage. The HEBDA will assess the likely impact of the proposals on any known or potential heritage assets and consider the impact of the scheme on the historic character and setting of designated assets within and beyond the site (e.g. views to and from listed buildings / conservation areas) potentially affected. The report would put forward recommendations, if required, to mitigate any adverse effects.

### ***Geology and Soils***

A desk based review of the Agricultural Land Classification (Post 1988) identified no agricultural land within the site or 2km study area. Therefore, the potential loss of agricultural land will not exceed 20ha of Best and Most Versatile (BMV), the threshold above which consultation would be required with Natural England, and as such there is not considered to be the potential for significant adverse effects and so no further assessment will be required.

The anticipated likelihood of finding contaminated substances is anticipated to be low but a Preliminary Geo-Environmental Risk Assessment is proposed to support the Planning Application. A CEMP will include measures for the control of excavated and stored material as well as pollution prevention (e.g. spills) and other construction mitigation to reduce or eliminate risks to human health, controlled waters, and structural integrity. Therefore, no further assessment is required to support the planning application.

### ***Flood Risk, Drainage and the Water Environment***

The River Wesum is a statutory river, SSSI and SAC located 190m north-east of the site. There are further ordinary watercourses and other water features (e.g. ditches) within 2km of the Proposed Scheme from desk based study. Based on Environment Agency flood mapping, the site has a very low risk (less than 0.1%) of flooding from rivers and/or the sea. The River Wesum has a high to medium likelihood of river / sea flooding which extends north and south beyond the river banks but does not enter the site area. The site also is within Flood Zone 1 and therefore is at very low risk of flooding from surface water and reservoirs. A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been prepared (September 2020) and submitted to NCC.

During construction, the contractor should sign up to the Environment Agency's Flood Warning Service.

The Proposed Scheme will contribute to a very slight increase in impermeable land within the site which may result in an increase in the surface water flows from the development. A Surface Water Drainage Strategy will be prepared to show that the increase in runoff can be mitigated through SuDS measures, such as attenuation areas. Appropriate

mitigation should account for the effects of climate change. The underlying geology has not been assessed at this stage and therefore the level of infiltration potential is unknown.

There is potential for an adverse effect on water quality from contaminated run off during construction due to the pathways for run off to reach the River Wesum. Appropriate mitigation will be required, including pollution prevention and response procedures to control the risks and means of pollution which will be set out in the CEMP. The residual impact would be negligible.

In summary, it is considered that sufficient mitigation can be incorporated within the Proposed Scheme (including a Drainage Strategy), safe access, flood warning that builds on the FRA already submitted – such that there will be no increase in on and off-site flood risk and the development will be safe from flood risk over its lifetime, including an allowance for climate change.

### ***Materials and Waste***

An adverse impact would be anticipated in relation to the consumption of raw materials, generation of site arisings, and waste disposal during construction. The quantity and specification of materials, as well as maintainability and end-of-life, will be considered to minimise environmental impact and maximise the adaptability of the Proposed Scheme over the design life. A CEMP or a similar document will be prepared and followed during construction to minimise waste generated from the Proposed Scheme and improve waste management decisions. This will aim to result in a negligible residual impact.

Once the Proposed Scheme becomes operational, no further waste generation is anticipated due to the nature of the scheme.

There are no minerals sites present, so no sterilisation of minerals resources will occur.

Mitigation measures during construction mean that no residual significant construction impacts are anticipated. It is anticipated that the operation of the Proposed Scheme would result in negligible effect on materials and waste and so no further assessment is required.

### ***People and Communities (including Human Health)***

There are 3 footpaths (FP 4, FP 6, and FP 9) and 1 bridleway (BR 18) that intersect the site. No assessment has been undertaken of the number of non-motorised users (pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians etc.) using these paths. During construction, these footpaths / bridleway may be temporarily closed or re-routed which will have an adverse effect on the users. Once in operation, the public rights of way should not be adversely affected and potentially will benefit from improved amenity from the landscaping associated with the Proposed Scheme.

A review of the Sustrans national cycle network map identified an on-road route which crosses through the site along Dereham Road to the north and to the east. An on-road route and traffic-free route cycle route is located to the north of the site. Works may require the temporary closure or re-routing of the cycle route that crosses through the site.

Details of sensitive receptors including schools, GP practices and residential dwellings close the site have been previously set out in the Nosie Section.

HGV's and construction traffic numbers are not currently known but are likely to generate some temporary adverse effects; however, these will be mitigated through a Transport Statement and CEMP. The junction may be temporarily closed for construction work which will require road users to use alternative routes or temporary traffic management will be put in place which are anticipated to have adverse effects on road users. The operation of the roundabout is anticipated to improve congestion and the safety of the road, thus having a beneficial effect on road users.

To summarise, some temporary adverse effects may occur during the construction phase, particularly for road users and those who utilise the public rights of way, but operationally the scheme should have negligible – positive benefits



for the local community owing to the environmental enhancements associated with the roundabout. No further assessment is proposed for this topic.

### ***Landscape***

The site is not located within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or a National Park. The site is located within the National Character Area (NCA) of Mid Norfolk which is a rural landscape.

Temporary landscape effects are likely to occur during construction as a result of works within the site. Construction effects will be managed and mitigated within a CEMP. As the Proposed Scheme will be of the same use as the existing land use, it is not anticipated that significant adverse landscape effects will occur during operation. Negligible – positive effects are anticipated, particularly with regards to the landscaping of the Proposed Scheme. However, given the location of the works and the potential to affect the setting of historic buildings, it is proposed that a proportionate landscape assessment is undertaken, the scope of which will be agreed with the LPA.

### ***Major Accidents and Disasters***

The Proposed Scheme is not considered to be at risk from, nor would it increase risk to, major accidents or disasters. No significant construction or operational effects are anticipated.

### ***Climate Change***

Construction of the Proposed Scheme has the potential to have an adverse impact on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions during the construction phase owing to embodied carbon within construction materials and direct emissions generated during construction from plant, machinery and other site operations. To mitigate this, recommendations include engaging the supply chain to source materials locally with a high recycled content; all machinery will be selected for efficiency; and site operations will be managed efficiently using a CEMP and any additional recommendations as set out in the Energy Report, Sustainability Report others. A residual non-significant adverse impact is anticipated.

Effects of climate change on the water environment have been considered in the Flood Risk, Drainage and Water Environment section.

The operational impact on GHG emissions is associated with vehicle movements which are not anticipated to be higher than current vehicle movements. The impact is anticipated to be negligible given the existing land use.

### ***Conclusion***

Overall, it is anticipated that without mitigation, adverse effects could potentially arise during construction / operation of the Proposed Scheme although it is anticipated that these will be minimised through the incorporation of mitigation measures into the Proposed Scheme. The recommendations set out in this letter are outline only and will be refined as part of the supporting planning application reports and as designs emerge and therefore may include additional considerations not currently set out.

Residual impacts for most topic areas discussed in this Screening Letter are anticipated to be insignificant with this supported through a series of supporting planning applications reports, as set out below:

- Noise Assessment;
- Archaeology / Cultural Heritage Assessment;
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy;
- Landscape and Visual Assessment;
- Ecological Assessment; and
- Arboricultural Assessment.



Transport, civils and highway assessments are not discussed in this Screening Letter and will be assessed as part of a Transport Statement.

It is considered by WSP, based on the information available, that the Proposed Scheme does not constitute development for which an EIA would be required under the Town and Country Planning (EIA) Regulations 2017. The reason for this is that the Proposed Scheme will not generate greater environmental impacts than the current site use. Furthermore, the scheme will provide opportunities for environmental enhancement to parts of the site.

Considering the information provided above, I should be grateful if NCC would provide a Screening Opinion within three weeks of receipt of this letter, to confirm whether an EIA is required.

Should you require further information or have any other queries regarding this Proposed Scheme, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Heatley', written over a light blue rectangular background.

Alan Heatley, Technical Director

WSP – Environmental Assessment and Town Planning

Mountbatten House;

Basing View;

Basingstoke;

RG12 4HJ;

Phone: 012 5631 8842 / Mobile: 077 4764 8201

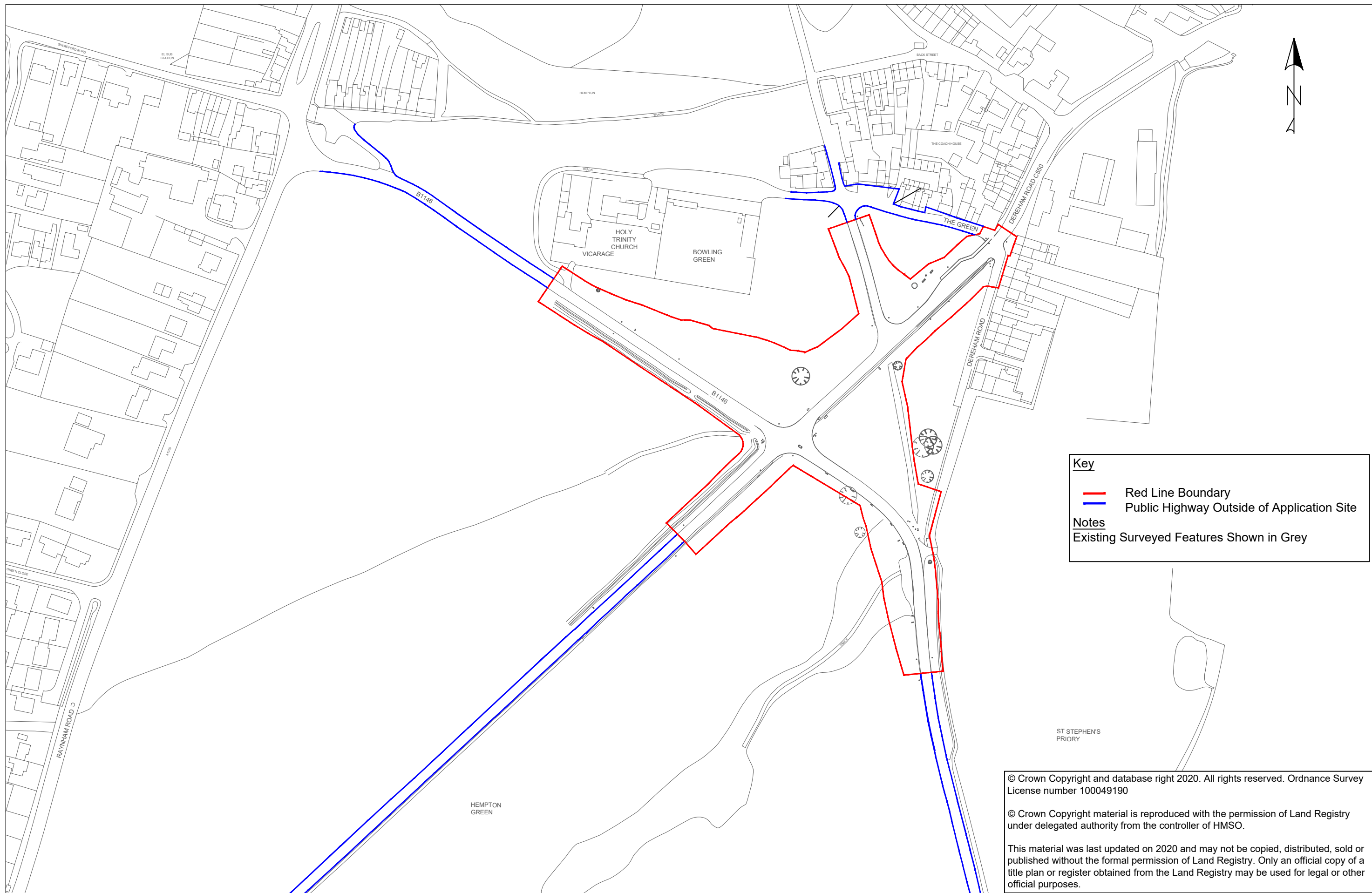
[Alan.Heatley@wsp.com](mailto:Alan.Heatley@wsp.com)



## **APPENDIX A – SITE LOCATION PLAN**

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**Key**

- Red Line Boundary
- Public Highway Outside of Application Site

**Notes**  
Existing Surveyed Features Shown in Grey

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**Tom McCabe**  
Executive Director of  
Community and Environmental Services  
Norfolk County Council  
County Hall, Martineau Lane  
Norwich NR1 2SG

**DRAWING TITLE**  
Hempton Junction Improvement Scheme  
Site Location Plan

REV.	DESCRIPTION	DRAWN BY	CHECKED	DATE

SURVEYED BY	INITIALS	DATE	DRAWING No.
DESIGNED BY	SN	08/2020	PKA012 - MP - 002
DRAWN BY	SN	08/2020	PROJECT TITLE
CHECKED BY	TW	08/2020	PKA012 Hempton Roundabout
SCALE			FILE No.
1:2000 @A3			