Hempton Roundabout Informal Consultation

Common Land comments

There will be a loss of common land green space.	
Comment: The new roundabout will lead to a loss of greenbelt grass land and trees.	**Response:** As part of the proposal, there will be a small increase in common land for Hempton. The area surrounding the junction and new roundabout will be reinstated as grassed verges to blend the development in with the existing landscape. The scheme will necessitate the loss of a single tree. All other trees will be retained and at present (as of 24 June 2021) four new trees are proposed to be planted as part of the scheme. Publicly accessible footpaths and routes will remain accessible and although change will be noticed from the local surroundings, the sight of an upgraded road junction to be replaced with a roundabout will have minimal impacts on these users where sight of a road junction is already part of the existing visual experience.

It impacts on the village feel.	
Comment: The roundabout will ruin the village feel and it will have a negative visual impact.	**Response:** The impact of the roundabout on the village from a heritage perspective was considered in our Heritage and Archaeology Statement. This concluded that the proposed scheme would result in substantial harm to the conservation area through visual and setting impacts and would also have an impact on other designated heritage assets in the village. Paragraph 196 of the NPPF states that 'where a development will lead to harm to the significance of a designated asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use'. The impact of the roundabout on the visual amenity of users surrounding the area was considered in our Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment. This concluded that although there would be a change within views from a localised area surrounding the site, including from sensitive users of recreational routes such as the public rights of way within Hempton Green County Wildlife Site, that the change would only be minor as it would occur

	within a visual experience whereby users already experience sight of the existing road junction. The main impacts on visual amenity identified related to the construction of the roundabout. The roundabout scheme has been designed to retain a semi-rural appearance with minimal urbanising features used to respect the character of this southern periphery of the village.

It will lead to a loss of historic space.	
Comment: Hempton priory have charter to hold 3 fairs each year. Also, historical meeting place for armies to meet up before going off to war. It was used for fairs and cattle markets the essence of which are trying to be returned. There is a lot of history associated with Hempton and the green spaces going back to the early 14th century.	**Response:** The proposal is for a relatively small roundabout of the sort seen on minor road junctions across the country, but which can handle the volume of traffic and HGVs required at this location. It would take a small parcel of land, while releasing land currently used for the crossroads. The roundabout is of a scale and size appropriate to the location and will be an effective method to improve safety and relieve congestion. The area surrounding the junction and new roundabout will be reinstated as grassed verges to blend the development in with the existing landscape. The scheme will necessitate the loss of a single tree. All other trees will be retained and at present four new trees are proposed to be planted as part of the scheme.

The village will lose its community feel.	
Comment: The green is used as a community hub for residents to meet up on, have picnics and let children play close to their houses.	**Response:** Publicly accessible footpaths and routes will remain accessible and although change will be noticed from the local surroundings, the sight of an upgraded road junction to be replaced with a roundabout will have minimal impacts on these users where sight of a road junction is already part of the existing visual experience

It will lead to a loss of wildlife.	
Comment: Adverse Impact on Nature Conservation Interests and Biodiversity - Endangered wildlife is located around the site, including Corncrakes, which have nested on the site for the second year in succession. These are an endangered species, together with owls, hawks and bats, amongst other wildlife, and the footprint of these plans would encroach upon the wildlife's natural habitat. Pensthorpe Nature reserve monitor the site. The location of the proposed new roundabout is within Hempton Conservation Area in a prominent area of open grassland and close to numerous public rights of way which traverse this open land. Hempton Green County Wildlife site lies directly to the south and is a valuable complex mosaic of scrub, short acidic grassland and tall herb with open access which is frequently used by	**Response** **<u>Habitats:</u>** While the Dereham Road / Hempton Road junction is surrounded by notable habitat areas, the habitat falling within the boundaries of the proposed works is not similarly exceptional. The dominant habitat to be impacted by the road junction works is classified as species-poor semi-improved grassland. One mature tree (sycamore Acer pseudoplatanus), a small number of immature trees and a few gorse shrubs are expected to require removal. The areas of grassland permanently lost (replaced by road) are expected to be ultimately compensated by new areas created after the lengths of decommissioned road are removed the new road alignment is complete. A temporary minor negative impact on the local abundance of species-poor semi-improved grassland is predicted. **<u>Mammals:</u>** A neutral impact on roosting and foraging bats is predicted, but a minor negative impact on commuting bats might occur if works were carried on under artificial lighting outside daylight hours. The works will affect small fields surrounded by vehicle traffic and frequent public use or else just the northern margin of a very large field (south of Dereham Road). The presence of brown hares is not believed to be likely, and so a neutral impact is predicted. Although not considered overly likely, impacts to harvest mice are at least conceivable. However, any harvest mouse presence in the works area would then almost certainly be replicated in the extensive surrounding CWS grassland habitats. Individual negative impacts are possible, but a neutral impact on any local population is expected. A minor negative impact on a local hedgehog population is possible during the construction phase of the development, primarily through entrapment in excavations. A neutral impact is expected for polecats, being a species considered a lot less vulnerable to entrapment in an excavation. **<u>Birds:</u>** Site works starting within the main breeding season (March to end August) could result in nest disturbance/destruction affecting a small number of

walkers. In addition, the proposal has the potential to affect the River Wensum Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC).	common, farmland-variety species. The impact is predicted as minor negative to local populations, and would be temporary. The legal protection given to nesting birds obliges mitigation. **Reptiles:** The species-poor semi-improved grassland habitat is not without some reptile potential, but a lack of reptile records for an area which is reasonably well recorded (especially Sculthorpe Moor Nature Reserve) does suggest their absence. A neutral impact on reptiles is predicted. **Amphibians:** The nearest pond, north of the site, is estimated as having low great crested newt potential. The Hempton Pools cluster and the pond to the south have better great crested newt potentials, but are at more considerable distances. No great crested newts or common toad records were returned by the data search with NBIS. Occasional very small numbers of common toads Bufo bufo (Species of Principal Importance) or great crested newts transiting though the road works area is rated as a very low risk (reasonably unlikely). A very minor negative impact on any local common toad and/or great crested newt population