



Norfolk County Council

HEMPTON GREEN ROAD/ DEREHAM ROAD JUNCTION IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

Planning, Design and Access Statement





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Planning, Design and Access Statement

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1. This Planning, Design and Access Statement ('this Statement') has been prepared by WSP in support of a planning application made by Norfolk County Council ('NCC/Applicant') for the construction of a new four-armed roundabout to replace the current B1146 Dereham Road/C550 Hempton Green Road crossroads (also referred to as 'Hempton crossroads') and comprises the construction of the roundabout, realignments, bus stop improvements, new footways and crossings, new traffic signs and landscaping ('the Proposed Development').
- 1.1.2. The Planning Application will be submitted to NCC as an application for planning permission by an interested county planning authority ("CPA") to develop land of that authority, pursuant to Regulation 3 of the 1992 Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992¹.
- 1.1.3. Hempton Green Road/Dereham Road Crossroads is a 4-arm priority junction located approximately to the south west of the village of Hempton. The crossroads lies within a 40mph speed limit area and is situated on the B1146/C550 at the junction of the B1146 Dereham Road, B1146 Hempton Green Road, C550 Dereham Road and C550 Hempton Green Road, as is illustrated in **Figure 1-1** below.
- 1.1.4. The routes are considered an important part of the local road hierarchy in Norfolk. The B1146 being designated a 'Main Distributor' route and the section of Dereham Road towards Fakenham as an 'HGV Access' route and southern access to Fakenham.
- 1.1.5. The aim of the Proposed Development is to highway safety and reduce congestion at this location. The Hempton crossroads has emerged as an accident cluster site several times over at least the last 20 years. Over this period 32 personal injury accidents (pia's) (6 serious, 26 slight) have been recorded at an average of 1.6pia's per year. The long term accident record is a series of peaks and troughs whereby the site has emerged as a cluster site and received low cost safety measures (e.g., traffic signing enhancements) which have been successful in the short term but not treated the fundamental issue of a simple crossroads junction. Hence, the low cost measures lose effectiveness after a time as drivers become habituated to them and accidents return.
- 1.1.6. The simple crossroads junction form is not optimal at this rural site with a considerable level of traffic on all arms and consequently the long term accident record demonstrates a strong pattern of failure to give way collisions. In terms of the recent accident trend, after a period of no accidents between 2014 and 2017 another peak has occurred with 8 pia's recorded in the last 4 years.
- 1.1.7. A full description of the Proposed Development is found in Section 4 of this Statement. However, in summary, the Proposed Development comprises:
- Construction of a new roundabout immediately north east of the existing junction;
 - Realignment of the B1146 approaches to the roundabout;
 - Realignment of the junction of Pond Road (U14044) with C550 Dereham Road;
 - Relocation of the bus stop layby on the C550 Dereham Road towards Fakenham;

¹ http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/807/pdfs/ukxi_20150807_en.pdf

- New footways and pedestrian crossings on the south west and south east arms of the roundabout;
- New traffic signs, including advance direction signs, on the approaches to the roundabout; and
- Planting, including 4 larger trees and sowing of wildflower mix (grass seed).

1.1.8. The Applicant has been engaged in pre application discussions with the CPA since early 2020 comprising informal meetings and discussions. These culminated in the receipt of a formal Pre Application Advice letter (Ref: ENQ/2020/0019) on 20th September 2020 which concluded that the Proposed Development does not raise any significant issues in terms providing and improvement to the local road network.

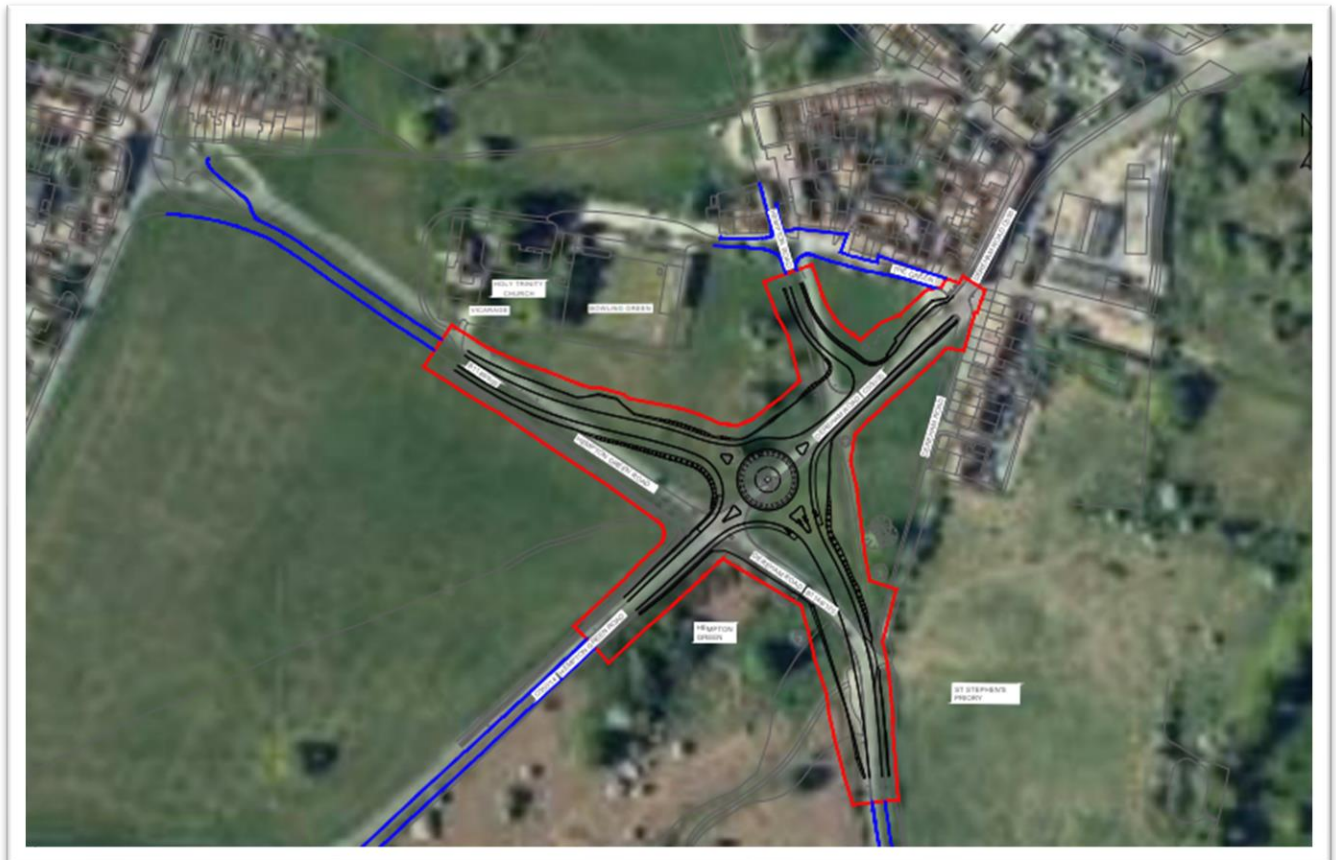


Figure 1-1 – Aerial Location of Crossroads

- 1.1.9. The Applicant has also engaged in pre application consultation with local residents and the Parish Council. A package of consultation materials including a consultation web page, brochure, and stakeholder emails, was developed in a style that was accessible to stakeholders and conveyed all the technical detail on the proposals required to make an informed response to the questionnaire.
- 1.1.10. The consultation ran from 17th May to 6th June 2021, with the information contained on the NCC web page and the questionnaire available at all times. Following representations from Hempton Parish Council, a public exhibition was held at the Church Rooms in Hempton on the 21st September 2021. These are discussed further in the Statement of Community Involvement prepared by WSP and submitted in support of this Planning Application.

1.1.11. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Request was submitted to the CPA on 30th April 2021. A formal Screening Opinion (Ref: SCR20211004) was received on 2nd September 2021 confirming that the Proposed Development did not constitute EIA development.

1.2 ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS

1.2.1. This statement provides a detailed description of the Proposed Development and assesses the development against the policies of the development plan and any relevant material considerations. It also deals with site-specific technical issues to be dealt with through the planning process and draws from the conclusions of several environmental and technical documents which accompany the Planning Application. It also considers the environmental impacts of the scheme that are identified in the documents submitted with this application, and assesses them against the policies of the development plan.

1.2.2. In addition to this Statement, the supporting documents submitted to accompany the Planning Application comprise of the following:

- Transport Statement including a Safety Audit;
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal;
- Sustainability Statement;
- Flood Risk Assessment & Surface Water Drainage Strategy;
- Noise Assessment;
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment;
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment;
- Outline Construction & Environmental Management Plan;
- Statement of Community Involvement; and
- Heritage and Archaeology Statement.

1.2.3. A schedule of application drawings that form part of the Planning Application is set out in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1-1 – Application Drawing Schedule

Ref.	Title	Scale	Status
70065269-WSP-HGN-ZZ-DR-CH-0005	Site Location Plan	1:1250 @ A3	For Approval
70065269-WSP-HGN-ZZ-DR-CH-0006	Existing Site Block Plan Sheet 1 of 3	1:500 @ A3	For Approval
70065269-WSP-HGN-ZZ-DR-CH-0007	Existing Site Block Plan Sheet 2 of 3	1:500 @ A3	For Approval
70065269-WSP-HGN-ZZ-DR-CH-0008	Existing Site Block Plan Sheet 3 of 3	1:500 @ A3	For Approval
70065269-WSP-HGN-ZZ-DR-CH-0009	Aerial General Arrangement Plan	1:3000 @A3	For Information
70065269-WSP-HGN-ZZ-DR-CH-0010	Construction Compound Plan	1:1250 @A3	For Information
70065269-WSP-HGN-ZZ-DR-CH-00101	Proposed General Arrangement Plan	1:1000 @A3	For Approval
70065269-WSP-HGN-ZZ-DR-CH-00111	Typical Cross sections	As Shown @A3	For Approval

70065269-WSP-GEN-ZZ-DR-CH-3001	Landscape Proposals Plan	1:500 @A3	For Approval
70065269-WSP-HDG-ZZ-DR-CH-0501	Proposed Drainage Design	1:500@A1	For Approval

1.3 REPORT STRUCTURE

1.3.1. This Statement is structured as follows:

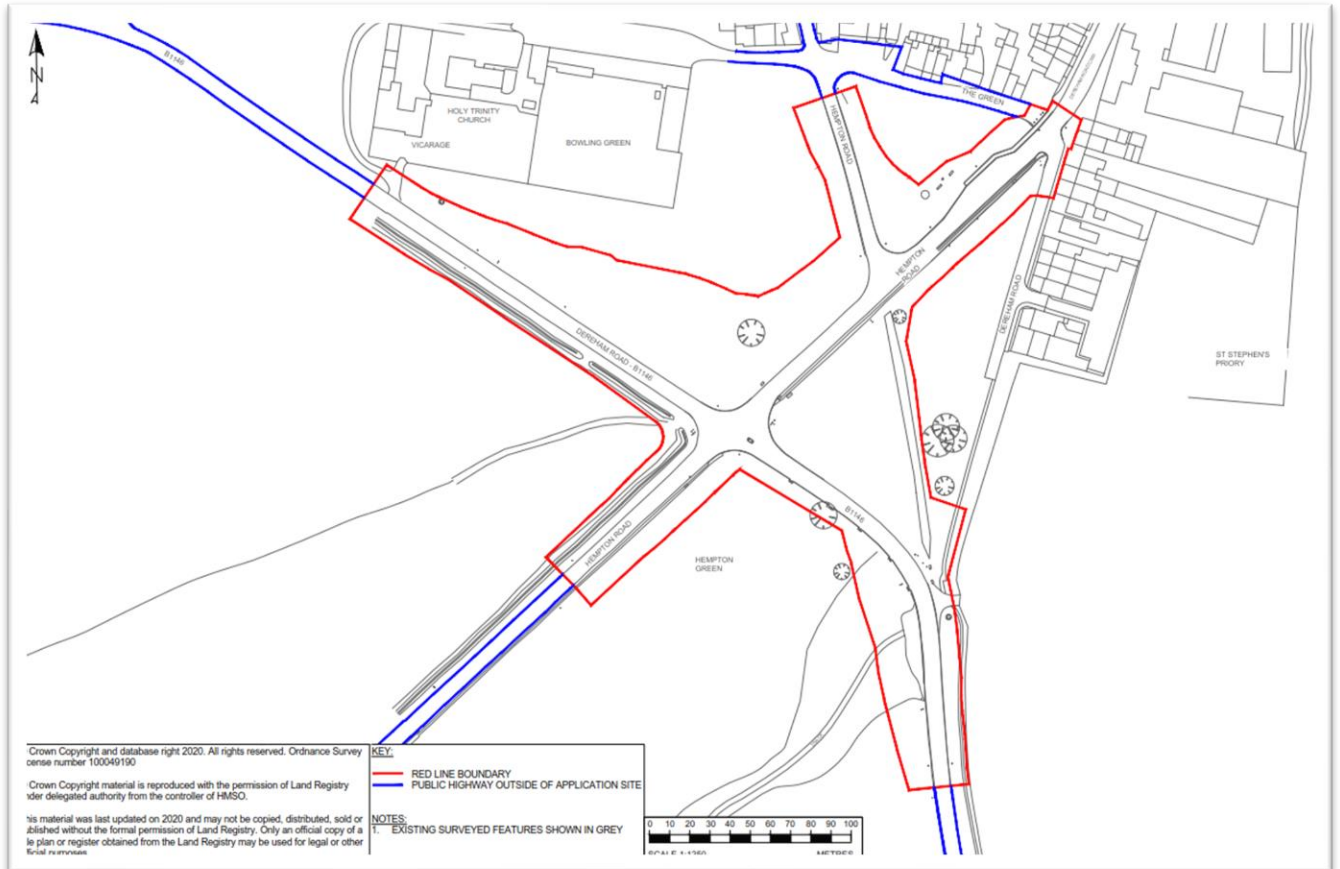
- **Section 2:** describes the Application Site and surrounding;
- **Section 3:** provides a description of the Proposed Development;
- **Section 4:** provides a summary of the relevant planning policy context;
- **Section 5:** sets out the planning case, in particular, outlines how the Proposed Development responds to policy as well as other material considerations; and
- **Section 6:** sets out the benefits of the Proposed Development and provides a summary and overall conclusion.

2 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

2.1 THE APPLICATION SITE

2.1.1. The Site is shown on the Site Location Plan drawing no. 70065269-WSP-HGN-ZZ-DR-CH-0005 and in **Figure 2.1** below.

Figure 2-1 - Application Site Boundary



- 2.1.2. It is approximately 2.07 hectares (ha) in size, and comprises the Hempton crossroads; a 4-arm priority junction of the B1146 Dereham Road, B1146 Hempton Green Road, C550 Dereham Road and C550 Hempton Green Road, as shown in **Figure 2.2** below.
- 2.1.3. The Site is located approximately 1km to the southwest of Fakenham and lies within a 40mph speed limit. Majority of the Site is located within the Hempton Conservation Area which covers the village centre of Hempton, just south of Fakenham in Norfolk. The area is of a landscape dominated by open grassland and surrounding the site is a mix of rural and residential uses.
- 2.1.4. To the north and immediate south of Hempton Green is common land. This area includes limited features with approximately a dozen scattered broadleaf trees located within and immediately to the north and east of the Site boundary.

Figure 2-2 - Hempton Crossroads



2.1.5. The routes leading to the Hempton crossroads are considered an important part of the local road hierarchy in Norfolk. The B1146 being designated a 'Main Distributor' route and the section of C550 Dereham Road towards Fakenham as an 'HGV Access' route and southern access to Fakenham. This is demonstrated in the local road network **Figures 2-3 and 2-4** below.

2.1.6. The area to the south of the existing junction is a County Wildlife Site (CWS) that is designated in the North Norfolk Core Strategy (NNCS). This area comprises an extensive area of bracken, trees, and woodland. Land immediately to the north, west and south is open fields.

2.2 LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

2.2.1. The Application Site extends over the following land use designations as identified in the adopted Core Strategy plan:

- The Hempton Conservation Area, which includes most of the Site including all of the new roundabout. The southern boundary of the Conservation Area broadly runs along the line of the B1146 Hempton Green Road/Dereham Road, with all the land to north lying within the Conservation Area and including almost all of the built-up area of Hempton to the north

Figure 2-3 - Classified Road Network



2.2.2. The map above shows the classified road network: - A roads - red, B roads - amber, C roads - blue



Figure 2-4 - Local Road Hierarchy

- 2.2.3. This map above shows the local roads hierarchy adopted by NCC as Highway Authority. These show the road networks functional importance.
- 2.2.4. The constraints affecting or within 250m of the site including the following:
- The River Wensum Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which are located approximately 190m north east the site (at its closest point to the north eastern limit of the proposed application site boundary adjacent the junction of the Dereham Road and The Green;
 - Four Listed Buildings, that are all located within 250m to the north of existing crossroads and include;
 - the Church of the Holy Trinity which is Grade II Listed, located within 50m of the western end of the western limb of the proposed roundabout;
 - the Bell Inn which is Grade II Listed, located approximately 50m to the north of the proposed application boundary on Pond Road;
 - The Green which is Grade II Listed and located immediately adjacent to the Site boundary at the junction of the Green and the Dereham Road; and
 - Wensum House which is Grade II Listed and located on Back Street approximately 60m north of the Site boundary at the junction of The Green and the Dereham Road.
 - The Remains of St Stephen's Priory Scheduled Ancient Monument, which adjoins the east side of B1146 Dereham Road to east of the proposed eastern limb of the new roundabout (although it is not proposed to include any of the area of Scheduled Monument with the proposed planning application Site boundary).

Site Access and Rights of Way

- 2.2.5. The network of Public Rights or Way (PRoW) including a number of footpaths and bridleways, particularly to the south of the B1146 Dereham Road include Hempton Footpath 6, Hempton Footpath 9, and Hempton Bridleway 18, all of which cross the Site.

Trees & Habitat

- 2.2.6. All trees within the Site boundary are protected by the Conservation Area designation. The Hempton Green County Wildlife Site (CWS) extending across the land to south west of the B1146 Dereham Road and to the south east of the C550 Hempton Green Road.

Flood Risk

- 2.2.7. The Site lies wholly within Flood Zone 1.

2.3 PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.3.1. We have reviewed the planning decisions on the North Norfolk District Council's (NNDC) and NCC websites and there are no relevant planning decisions relating to the Proposed Development.

3 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1.1. This section provides a description of the Proposed Development and describes how the design has evolved to the preferred option.

3.1.2. Planning permission is sought for:

“The construction of a four-armed roundabout with associated landscaping at the existing crossroad junction of the B1146 Hempton Green Road/Dereham Road/C550 Hempton Green Road/Dereham Road (Hempton Crossroads) .”

3.2 AIM OF THE PROPOSED SCHEME

3.2.1. The aim of the Proposed Development is to highway safety and reduce congestion at this location. The Hempton crossroads has emerged as an accident cluster site several times over at least the last 20 years. Over this period 32 personal injury accidents (pia's) (6 serious, 26 slight) have been recorded at an average of 1.6pia's per year. The long term accident record is a series of peaks and troughs whereby the site has emerged as a cluster site and received low cost safety measures (e.g., traffic signing enhancements) which have been successful in the short term but not treated the fundamental issue of a simple crossroads junction. Hence, the low cost measures lose effectiveness after a time as drivers become habituated to them and accidents return.

3.2.2. The simple crossroads junction form is not optimal at this rural site with a considerable level of traffic on all arms and consequently the long term accident record demonstrates a strong pattern of failure to give way collisions. In terms of the recent accident trend, after a period of no accidents between 2014 and 2017 another peak has occurred with 8 pia's recorded in the last 4 years.

3.3 BACKGROUND AND DESIGN EVOLUTION

Accident Investigation & Prevention (AIP) Study

3.3.1. The AIP study at Hempton Road Crossroads (B1146/C550) was carried out in July 2003. The study identified a rise in accidents in the year compared to a previously years. The main cause for accidents at the crossroads was identified to be failure to give way. The study recommended low cost measures for improvement of the junction, with accident records monitored with the view of more comprehensive junction improvement measures required if the rise in accidents persisted at the junction.

Hempton Parish Council Consultations

3.3.2. Following a series of accidents, Hempton Parish Council conducted their own local consultation in 2004. The residents were asked to identify areas of concern in the village. The results indicated that the safety at the Hempton Green Road/Dereham Road Crossroads was one of the main causes of concern for local residents.

NCC Additional Highways Investment

3.3.3. At the NCC's Policy & Resources Committee on 27th November 2017, Members noted that one of the priorities for the administration was a commitment to invest an extra £20 million in Norfolk's roads. This funding would be allocated to the delivery of major projects, junction improvements, market town schemes, etc.

- 3.3.4. In 2018, the investment funded nine feasibility studies undertaken on County A and B road junctions to determine cost, priority, and future programme. As most sites require land acquisition, NCC made initial enquiries with landowners to determine their support for the Council's proposals.
- 3.3.5. Of those with a supportive response, the Hempton Green Road/Dereham Road Crossroads produced the best combined cost benefit ratio for congestion and safety. A proposal to build a roundabout at this location was added to the Capital programme for design in 2019-20.

Feasibility Study

- 3.3.6. As mentioned above, in 2018 a feasibility study for improving Hempton Green Road/Dereham Road Crossroads was carried out. As part of this study, the following 4 options were considered:
- Option 1: PKA012-HP-001 - 4 Arm Normal Roundabout
 - Option 2: PKA012-HP-002 - 4 Arm Compact Roundabout
 - Option 3: PKA012-HP-003 – 3 Arm Normal Roundabout
 - Option 4: PKA012-HP-004 – 3 Arm Compact Roundabout
- 3.3.7. Option 2, a 4-arm compact roundabout with an Inscribed Circle Diameter (ICD) of 33 metres (now proposed at 40.6m), was considered the most appropriate type of junction due to the current traffic levels of the junction. In addition, this layout will require less land purchase than a normal roundabout and won't require diverting traffic and therefore increasing journey times, unlike the 3-arm roundabout options.
- 3.3.8. A signalised junction was not considered appropriate as this would create unnecessary queuing.

3.4 THE PROPOSED SCHEME

- 3.4.1. The Proposed Development is shown on the Proposed General Arrangement Plan drawing no. 70065269-WSP-HGN-ZZ-DR-CH-00101 and on the Typical Cross sections Plan drawing no. 70065269-WSP-HGN-ZZ-DR-CH-00111.

New Roundabout and Road Network

- 3.4.2. The proposed new four-armed roundabout will be located on the north east arm of the C550 Dereham Road, some 30m north east of the existing crossroads junction. The roundabout road will measure some 5.6m and the roundabout island will measure approximately 29m wide in diameter and finished as a soft landscape verge.
- 3.4.3. From the north-west on the B1146 Hempton Green Road, the new realigned section of road will begin some 140m from the existing crossroads. It will have an average width of 7.3m and extend east for approximately 160m to the new roundabout forming its north western arm.
- 3.4.4. The new realigned section of road on the existing southern arm of the B1146 Dereham Road will also begin some 140m from the existing crossroads. It will have an average width of 8.5m and will extend some 150m north west to the new roundabout forming its south-eastern arm. 3.25m wide uncontrolled pedestrian crossing points are proposed on this arm of the roundabout. Hazard markers are proposed along the south west side of this new section of road and the existing layby will be retained but made good.
- 3.4.5. The north eastern and south western arms of the new roundabout will be formed by widening the existing C550 Hempton Green Road/Dereham Road at those points. The road width will remain as

existing however 2.5m wide footways are proposed along the south east side of these sections of road and roundabout.

- 3.4.6. A section of Pond Road will be realigned resulting in the repositioning of its junction with the C550 Dereham Road some 10m north east of its current position.
- 3.4.7. The new road itself will be finished in asphalt. NCC standard conservation style kerbs are proposed throughout, and cellular soakaways are proposed in locations around the new road network. NCC standard Conservation style timber bollards are proposed along the west side of a section of the Hempton Green Road as it enters Fakenham.

Trees and Landscaping

- 3.4.8. The proposed Landscape details are shown on the Landscape Proposals Plan drawing no. 70065269-WSP-GEN-ZZ-DR-CH-3001. Essentially all new landscaping will comprise grass seeding and managed as hay meadow, with cutting minimised to allow growth of meadow species.
- 3.4.9. Two no. trees will be removed to accommodate the new roundabout, however, 4no. additional trees (2 No. Quercus robur & 2 No. Acer pseudoplatanus) are proposed as replacements.

Surface Water Drainage

- 3.4.10. The Proposed drainage design is shown on the Drainage Design Plan drawing no. 70065269-WSP-HDG-ZZ-DR-CH-0501. It is proposed that runoff from the Proposed Development will be largely dealt with by sustainable drainage measures which allow the water to infiltrate into the ground locally. This will be achieved by using cellular storage units to both attenuate and discharge surface water runoff to ground on site. The exception to this is the paved area, the C550 Dereham Road, northeast of Pond Road, where it is not possible to achieve suitable clearance from the groundwater level. In this location, it is proposed to retain the existing drainage, which is currently of kerb and gully design.
- 3.4.11. To ensure effective clearance of surface water and improve redundancy of the system, it is proposed to replace and provide two new gullies spaced out over the length of each catchment. This will provide additional silting room and capacity to ensure effective drainage of the carriageway.

Construction Compound

- 3.4.12. The location of the construction compound is shown on the Construction Compound Plan drawing no. 70065269-WSP-HGN-ZZ-DR-CH-0010 which has been submitted for information only as it does not form part of the Planning Application. It will be brought forward under permitted development pursuant to Part 4 (Temporary Buildings and Uses), Class A of the General Permitted Development Order 2015 (as amended), should planning permission be granted.
- 3.4.13. The construction compound area will measure approximately 0.25 hectares and will include:
 - General office's with space for the various management staff;
 - Mess rooms with Hot and cold-water supplies, Refrigerator' microwave, tables and seating;
 - A Ladies and Gents Toilet block with hot and cold running water, cleaning aids and hand drying facilities;
 - A drying room suitable for the storage and drying capacity for employee's work wear;
 - On Site a mobile "Porta loo" will be provided with hand washing facilities; and
 - Vans are fitted with wipes, cleansers, creams, first aid kits.



3.4.14. Further details can be found in the Outline Construction and Environmental Management Plan which accompanies this planning application.

4 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1. This section sets out the planning policy context for the Proposed Development. We first consider the Development Plan policies contained within the North Norfolk Core Strategy (NNCS) 2008. We then consider other material considerations in the form of national planning policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021), the emerging NNDC First District Local Plan (FDLP), and finally the Norfolk Transport Plan.

4.2 THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

North Norfolk Core Strategy (NNCS)

- 4.2.1. The NNCS was adopted in September 2008. It sets out the key elements of the planning framework for North Norfolk that will be used when considering individual planning proposals. It sets out the long-term vision, objectives, and guides development in North Norfolk until the year 2021.
- 4.2.2. Of relevance is Policy SS 1 'Spatial Strategy for North Norfolk' which states: *'The majority of new development in North Norfolk will take place in the towns and larger villages, dependent on their local housing needs, their role as employment, retail and service centres and particular environmental and infrastructure constraints.'*
- *Cromer, Holt, Fakenham, and North Walsham are defined as Principal Settlements where the majority of new commercial and residential development will take place (approximately 75% of new employment land and 50% of new homes).*
- 4.2.3. Policy SS 2 'Development in the Countryside' is also relevant as the Proposed Development lies within a countryside setting. It states *'In areas designated as Countryside development will be limited to that which requires a rural location and is for one or more of the following:*
- *transport;*
- 4.2.4. Policy SS 4 'Environment' states *'All development proposals will contribute to the delivery of sustainable development, ensure protection and enhancement of natural and built environmental assets and geodiversity and be located and designed so as to reduce carbon emissions and mitigate and adapt to future climate change.'*
- 4.2.5. Policy SS 6 'Access and Infrastructure' states that: *'The transport strategy for North Norfolk is to maximise the use of non-car modes, within the context of a rural area where, for many trips, there are limited alternatives to the car. This will be achieved through promotion of walking and cycling for local trips, particularly within towns and villages, through traffic management schemes and parking regimes to reduce the impact of traffic on the rural and urban environment, and by promoting public transport and sustainable tourism. Walking and cycling networks and Public Rights of Way will be protected, enhanced and promoted. New development should create convenient and attractive links within development and to the surrounding area, assist with creation of a network of accessible greenspace and provide links to public transport and walking and cycling networks.'*
- 4.2.1. The role of Fakenham in the Spatial Strategy is confirmed in Policy SS 8 'Fakenham': *'Fakenham is designated as a Principal Settlement with a Large Town Centre. Provision will be made for a major urban expansion to the north of the town, including housing, employment land, community facilities*

and open space. Between 2001-2021 a total of between 1,300 and 1,400 dwellings will be built. This will include 800-900 dwellings on newly identified development sites, including a mixed use urban expansion scheme on a greenfield allocation to the north of the town suitable for approximately 800 dwellings.'

- 4.2.2. The impacts of the Scheme on Landscape need to be assessed against Policy EN 2 'Protection and Enhancement of Landscape and Settlement Character'. This policy states that: *'Proposals for development should be informed by, and be sympathetic to, the distinctive character areas identified in the North Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment and features identified in relevant settlement character studies.'*
- 4.2.3. Policy EN 4 'Design' requires that: *'All development will be designed to a high quality, reinforcing local distinctiveness. Innovative and energy efficient design will be particularly encouraged. Design which fails to have regard to local context and does not preserve or enhance the character and quality of an area will not be acceptable.'*
- 4.2.4. The impacts of the Scheme on the Conservation Area should be assessed against Policy EN 8 'Protecting and Enhancing the historic environment'. This policy sets out that: *"Development proposals, including alterations and extensions, should preserve or enhance the character and appearance of designated assets, other important historic buildings, structures, monuments and landscapes, and their settings through high quality, sensitive design. Development that would have an adverse impact on their special historic or architectural interest will not be permitted."*
- 4.2.5. Policy EN 10 ('Development and Flood Risk') states: *'The sequential test will be applied rigorously across North Norfolk and most new development should be located in Flood Risk Zone 1.'*
- 4.2.6. On Transport, Policy CT 5 is relevant. It states: *"Development will be designed to reduce the need to travel and to maximise the use of sustainable forms of transport appropriate to its particular location. Development proposals will be considered against the following criteria:*
- *the proposal provides for safe and convenient access on foot, cycle, public and private transport addressing the needs of all, including those with a disability;*
 - *the proposal is capable of being served by safe access to the highway network without detriment to the amenity or character of the locality;"*

4.3 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 4.3.1. The NPPF was first published on 27 March 2012 and updated on 24 July 2018, 19 February 2019, on and 20 July 2021. It sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- 4.3.2. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 4.3.3. NPPF Section 2 – '**Achieving sustainable development**', Paragraph 8 states *"Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):*

- **An economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- **A social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and
- **An environmental objective** – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy”.

- 4.3.4. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of Sustainable Development. Paragraph 10 states *“So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development”*.
- 4.3.5. Paragraph 11 indicates that *“plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.”*
- 4.3.6. Regarding the status of the Development Plan, Paragraph 12 advises that the *“presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.”*
- 4.3.7. At Section 4 **‘Decision-making’**, the NPPF advises Local planning authorities at Paragraph 38 that they *“should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.”*
- 4.3.8. On determining applications, Paragraph 47 advises that *“Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible, and within statutory timescales unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing.”*
- 4.3.9. At Section 6 **‘Building a strong, competitive economy’**, paragraph 85 states *‘Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are*

physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.'

4.3.10. Section 8 '**Promoting healthy and safe communities**', advises local planning authorities at Paragraph 91 that "*Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:*

c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure."

4.3.11. Section 9 sets out the Government's policies on '**Promoting sustainable transport**'. Paragraph 104 states that: '*Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that:*

(a) the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed;

(b) opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated;

(c) opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued;

(d) the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains; and

(e) patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes and contribute to making high quality places.'

4.3.12. In considering development proposals, the Government advises Local Planning Authorities at Paragraph 111 that: '*Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.'* Paragraph 112 further states that:

'Within this context, applications for development should:

a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;

b) address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;

c) create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards;

d) allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles; and

e) be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.'

4.3.13. Section 12 of the NPPF relates to '**Achieving well-designed places**' and states at Paragraph 126 that "*Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective*

engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.”

4.3.14. This design quality theme is continued in paragraphs 132, 134, and 135 which advise the following:

132: *“Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.”*

134: *“Permission should be refused for “Development that is not well designed, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:*

a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes;”

135: *“Local planning authorities should also seek to ensure that the quality of approved development is not materially diminished between permission and completion as a result of changes being made to the permitted scheme (for example through changes to approved details such as the materials used).”*

4.3.15. Section 15 of the NPPF ‘**Conserving and enhancing the natural environment**’ advises at Paragraph 174 that *“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan) decision, whilst

b) recognises the wider benefits including the economic and other benefits of trees and woodland;”

4.3.16. Section 16 of the NPPF deals with ‘**Conserving and enhancing the historic environment**’. Paragraph 191 states *“When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.”*

4.3.17. Paragraph 194 states *“In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning*

authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.”

- 4.3.18. Paragraph 195 states *“Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.”*
- 4.3.19. Paragraph 199 states *“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.”*
- 4.3.20. Paragraph 202 states: *“Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*
- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
 - b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
 - c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
 - d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.”*

First Draft Local Plan (Part 1)

- 4.3.21. NNDC is producing a new Local Plan, the First District Local Plan (FDLP). The FDLP reviews and updates the currently adopted Core Strategy. The new Plan will cover a twenty-year plan period commencing from 2016 to 2036 and includes policies which the Council will use to determine planning applications.
- 4.3.22. The main policies that are considered to be relevant to the determination of the planning application are set out below.
- 4.3.23. Policy SD 1 ‘Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development’ states that: *‘When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of Sustainable Development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will work proactively with applicants to find joint solutions which mean that proposals which accord with this plan can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental well being of the area. Planning applications that accord with the policies in the Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in Neighbourhood Plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.’*
- 4.3.24. Policy SD 3 ‘Settlement Hierarchy’ confirms that: *‘The majority of new development in North Norfolk will take place in and close to the towns and larger villages, dependent on their local housing and other development needs, their role as employment, retail and service centres, and identified environmental and infrastructure constraints. New development sites will be allocated close to the*

defined selected settlements in accordance with the following hierarchy: North Walsham, Fakenham, and Cromer are defined as Large Growth Towns where the majority of new commercial, residential and other types of development will take place.'

4.3.25. Policy SD 10 'Flood Risk & Surface Water Drainage) sets out that:

'All new development will:

- *be located to minimise the risk of flooding, mitigating any such risk through avoidance, design of mitigation and include sustainable drainage (SuDS) principles;*
- *not materially increase the flood risk to other areas and incorporate appropriate surface water drainage mitigation measures to minimise its own risk of flooding;*
- *have regard to climate change, the NNDC Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, 2017 and subsequent updates.'*

4.3.26. Policy SD 14 'Transport Impact of New Development' confirms: *'Development will be designed to reduce the need to travel and to maximise the use of sustainable forms of transport appropriate to its particular location. Development proposals will be considered against the following criteria: 1. the proposal provides for safe and convenient access on foot, cycle, public and private transport addressing the needs of all, including those with a disability; 2. the proposal is capable of being served by safe access to the highway network without detriment to the amenity or character of the locality; 3. outside designated settlement boundaries the proposal does not involve direct access on to a Principal Route, unless the type of development requires a Principal Route location.'*

4.3.27. Policy ENV 2 'Protection & Enhancement of Landscape & Settlement Character' requires that: *'Proposals for development should be informed by, and be sympathetic to, the distinctive Landscape Types and Character Areas, strategic objectives and considerations identified in the North Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Assessment and features identified in relevant settlement character studies.'*

4.3.28. Policy ENV 8 'Public Rights of Way' sets out that: *'Public Rights of Way and access will be protected, enhanced and promoted. New development should create convenient and attractive links within development and to the surrounding area, assist with creation of a network of accessible greenspace and provide links to public transport and walking and cycling networks.'*

4.3.29. Policy ENV 9 'High Quality Design' requires that: *'All development proposals should seek to make efficient use of land, but reflect the characteristics of the site and local area in their layout, landscaping, density, mix, scale, massing, character, materials, finish and architectural details. All development proposals should respond to current best practice and demonstrate that they are in conformity with the design principles set out in established urban design guidance, any subsequently produced design Supplementary Planning Document adopted by the Council or other design guidance endorsed by the Council and/or through neighbourhood planning.'*

4.3.30. Policy ENV 11 'Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment' is relevant to assessing the impact of the Scheme on the Conservation Area. This policy sets out that: *'The Council will protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance heritage assets throughout the District through the special protection afforded to Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, and Scheduled Monuments and through careful control of development that might adversely affect non-scheduled, nationally important archaeological remains; other areas of archaeological potential or importance; historic features and their settings; non-designated heritage assets; and areas of historic landscape or parkland (including, but not limited to, those on the Historic England Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest).'*

Norfolk Local Transport Plan for 2026

- 4.3.31. The Norfolk Local Transport Plan (NLTP): 'Connecting Norfolk' was adopted in April 2011. It sets the longer-term strategy for transport delivery up to 2026. The NLTP provides the policy framework for improvements to transport as well as being a guide for other agencies, like local planning authorities, when considering future development or delivery. Transport activity will be delivered under six areas. They include:
- Managing and maintaining the transport network;
 - Sustainable growth;
 - Strategic connections;
 - Accessibility;
 - Emissions; and
 - Road safety.
- 4.3.32. Paragraph 1.6 highlights in the transport white paper 'Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon', the government states its vision for: *'transport system that is an engine for economic growth but one that is also greener and safer and improves quality of life in our communities.'* Government states that it wants to encourage sustainable local travel and economic growth by making public transport, cycling and walking more attractive and effective, promoting lower carbon transport and tackling local road congestion.'
- 4.3.33. The NLTP notes they are facing significant challenges in maintaining the network to an appropriate standard. The level of investment in recent years has kept the overall condition of the network in a relatively stable condition, but there has been some deterioration of B and C road and bridges.
- 4.3.34. The main relevant policies are:
- Policy 1: Maintenance: *'To bring about an improvement in the condition of Norfolk's highway network, maintaining the current asset should be a key priority for funding. Works should be targeted to ensure A and urban / inter-urban routes are in good condition. In market towns and urban areas footways and cycleways of local importance should be kept in good condition to enhance use.'*
 - Policy 2: Traffic Management: *'Measures to increase journey time reliability, particularly for public transport, should be pursued on Norfolk's main roads. This should include demand management where it does not disadvantage rural communities.'*
 - Policy 4: Protecting the Environment: *'Transport decisions should take account of the character of the historic environment, landscape and local biodiversity.'*
 - Policy 5: Growth: *'New development should be well located and connected to existing facilities so as to minimise the need to travel and reduce reliance on the private car or the need for new infrastructure. Local planning authorities should implement policies as part of their Local Development Frameworks to help achieve this.'*
 - Policy 6: Transport Infrastructure to Support Growth: *'To bring about sustained growth priority should be on enabling public transport, walking and cycling from new development sites. Recognition should also be given to required improvements on the highway network at bottlenecks. These should be matched with sustainable travel packages or measures to encourage regeneration. Contributions should be secured to help mitigate any adverse effects of new development on the transport network.'*

5 PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

- 5.1.1. Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This section identifies the main planning considerations arising from the development plan applicable to this planning application as well as the material considerations warranting the grant of planning permission for the Proposed Scheme.

5.2 NEED & PRINCIPLE OF THE DEVELOPMENT

Need Case

- 5.2.1. The primary objective of the Proposed Development is to facilitate the flow of motorised traffic on the highway network south of Fakenham. It is noted in **Policy SS 8** ('Fakenham') (NNCS 2008) that *"provision will be made for a major urban expansion to the north of the town, including housing, employment land, community facilities and open space"*. In addition to which, that between 2001-2021 a total of between 1,300 and 1,400 dwellings will be built.
- 5.2.2. NNDC's Five Year Housing Land Supply Statements are prepared annually to help predict the amount of housing that will be built in the District over the next five years. The statement identifies how many dwellings already have planning permission but have not yet been built and makes allowances for some sites which have not yet secured planning permission but where the likelihood of development taking place in the next five years is high.
- 5.2.3. The latest Five Year Housing Land Supply Statements (April 2020) confirms that during the year commencing April 2019 to March 2020, 408 additional dwellings were completed in the District. Since April 2014 over 2,900 dwellings have been built in North Norfolk. Completion rates in each of the preceding three years exceeded the requirement for new dwellings as identified in the national Housing Delivery Test (HDT) with the result that the District delivered 115% of its housing requirement over the period.
- 5.2.4. The Hempton crossroads has emerged as an accident cluster site several times over at least the last 20 years. Over this period 32 personal injury accidents (pia's) (6 serious, 26 slight) have been recorded at an average of 1.6pia's per year. The long term accident record is a series of peaks and troughs whereby the site has emerged as a cluster site and received low cost safety measures (e.g., traffic signing enhancements) which have been successful in the short term but not treated the fundamental issue of a simple crossroads junction. Hence, the low cost measures lose effectiveness after a time as drivers become habituated to them and accidents return.
- 5.2.5. The simple crossroads junction form is not optimal at this rural site with a considerable level of traffic on all arms and consequently the long term accident record demonstrates a strong pattern of failure to give way collisions. In terms of the recent accident trend, after a period of no accidents between 2014 and 2017 another peak has occurred with 8 pia's recorded in the last 4 years.
- 5.2.6. Given the increase in new homes / increase in population in North Norfolk, many of which will likely be car owners, the current highway safety issues at this junction is likely to continue to exacerbate if nothing is done.

5.2.7. The Proposed Development will deliver the following benefits:

- Improve the current highway safety issues;
- Improve NMUs facilities, providing improve footways (north and south) on Hempton Green Road and on Dereham Road; and
- Minimise traffic congestion that currently backs up on the Dereham Road (east and west) of Hempton Green Road whistling queuing for entry.

Principle of the Proposed Development

5.2.8. There exists overwhelming policy support at all levels exist which establishes the principle of the Proposed Development. This is discussed below.

National Policies

NPPF

5.2.9. As mentioned in the preceding section, Section 2 of the NPPF ‘**Achieving sustainable development**’ sets out the government’s overarching Economic, Social and Environmental objectives to achieve Sustainable Development’. The Proposed Development is considered to constitute sustainable development as it will help to deliver these objectives. In particular:

- **An economic objective** – the Proposed Scheme will help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, as it will provide infrastructure that will support growth in the local area;
- **A social objective** – the Proposed Development will provide infrastructure to support the building of new homes that will create new, vibrant and healthy communities; and
- **An environmental objective** – the Proposed Development will make effective use of land. It will maintain existing levels of biodiversity.

National transport objectives

5.2.10. The national transport objectives, set by government, are:

- To ease congestion and provide upgrades on important national, regional, or local routes;
- To unlock economic and job creation opportunities; and
- To enable the delivery of new housing developments.

5.2.11. The Proposed Scheme will contribute to these objectives.

Moving Britain Ahead – the Government’s Transport Investment Strategy (TIS)

5.2.12. The Government’s strategy for transport investment, published in July 2017, sets out the case for continued investment in Britain’s transport infrastructure. Through this investment, the government seeks to:

- Create a more reliable, less congested, and better-connected transport network that works for the users who rely on it;
- Build a stronger, more balanced economy by enhancing productivity and responding to local growth priorities;
- Enhance our global competitiveness by making Britain a more attractive place to trade and invest; and
- Support the creation of new housing.

5.2.13. The Proposed Development will reduce congestion and will help create a better connected, more reliable transport network for those who depend on it.

- 5.2.14. It will also help to support local economic growth, development, and connectivity, making Fakenham more attractive to investment, and will connect planned employment and housing development to markets and jobs.

Regional and Local Policies

- 5.2.15. The NLTP 2026 notes NCC are facing significant challenges in maintaining the network to an appropriate standard. Therefore, the Proposed Development is the product of this challenge; it will maintain and improve the existing Hempton Road crossroads.
- 5.2.16. The NNDC adopted Core Strategy 2008 identifies Fakenham (Policy SS 8 Fakenham) as a Principal Settlement with a Large Town Centre, with provision being made for a major urban expansion to the north of the town including housing, employment land, community facilities and open space. The Proposed Development is therefore in accordance with Policy SS 8 as it will provide additional infrastructure to support the proposed level of growth in Fakenham during the Local Plan period. The upgrading of the junction from a crossroad to a roundabout will ensure the junction operates safely and within capacity as future development comes forward in Fakenham and the surrounding region.
- 5.2.17. The Proposed Development also accords with the NPPF Section 2 (Achieving Sustainable Development); and Core Strategy Policies Policy SS 1 - Spatial Strategy for North Norfolk, Policy SS 6 Access and Infrastructure, and Policy SS 8 Fakenham.
- 5.2.18. It is also worth noting that as demonstrated above at paragraph 5.2.9 above that the Proposed Development will constitute sustainable development and accord emerging FDLP policy SD 1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development).
- 5.2.19. In conclusion, there is a clear and established need and policy support for the Proposed Development, as identified in the national, regional, and local plan policies and documents.

5.3 HIGHWAYS AND SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

- 5.3.1. An assessment of the highway effects of the Proposed Development has been carried out to support the Planning Application. Full details of the assessment are found in the Transport Statement (TS).
- 5.3.2. The Proposed Development has been designed following the DMRB standards and it has a favourable Road Safety Audit. It is intended to improve junction safety, as there are safety issues with the existing junction arrangement identified through a series of studies mentioned above. In addition, the Proposed Development is expected to solve the congestion issues associated with the existing layout.
- 5.3.3. The Proposed Development will involve the construction of new four-armed roundabout off-set to the north of the existing alignment of the B1146 at its junction with the C550. In addition, it will provide new facilities for NMUs, including pedestrian crossings on the southwest and southeast arms of the roundabout.
- 5.3.4. The junction capacity assessments undertaken as a part of this TS have demonstrated that the existing layout would operate close to capacity in 2021 and over capacity in 2026 in the PM Peak. Without intervention this would result in significant delays and queueing on the B1146 Dereham Road approach to the junction and may encourage drivers to take increased risks.
- 5.3.5. Junction capacity assessment results with the Proposed Development provide significant capacity improvements in both 2021 and 2026. The proposed roundabout is also considered to provide significant road safety improvements compared to the existing priority junction arrangement. It is considered that reductions in queueing and delay times will reduce the likelihood of drivers performing

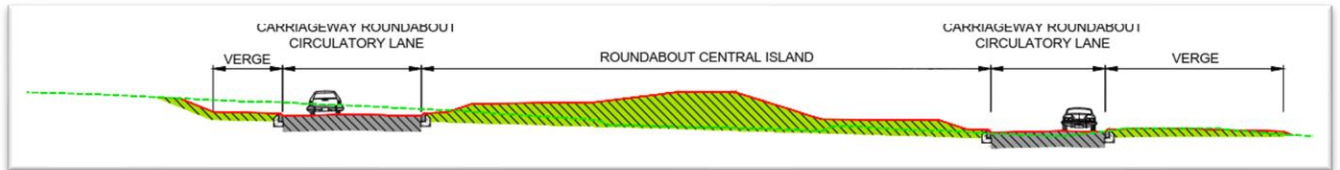
un-safe movements into the junction as they will not be aggravated by time spent waiting at the give-way lines.

- 5.3.6. The Proposed Development is therefore considered to provide a significant improvement to the existing junction operation and as a result improve highway safety, as well as delivering safety improvements for NMUs.
- 5.3.7. For these reasons, it is considered that the Proposed Development accords with Policy CT 5 (Transport Impact of New Development) of the NNDC Local Plan and SD 14 (Transport Impact of New Development) of the emerging FDLP.

5.4 DESIGN QUALITY & ACCESS

- 5.4.1. The Proposed Development is utilitarian – it is based mainly on its need, function, and purpose, rather than on aesthetics. As previously mentioned, the Proposed Development will deliver much needed safety improvements.
- 5.4.2. The layout of the Proposed Development is primarily dictated by the function of the scheme. It will include adjacent footways on the northeast, southeast and southwest quadrants of the roundabout which will connect with the existing PRoW (footway and bridleway) thereby improving NMUs. In addition, there will be new pedestrian crossings on the southwest and southeast arms of the roundabout, thereby improving pedestrian safety.

Figure 5-1 - Typical Cross Section



- 5.4.3. Figure 5-1 above shows the typical cross section of the Proposed Development taken from the Typical Cross Sections Plan drawing no. 70065269-WSP-HGN-ZZ-DR-CH-00111. The Proposed Development has also been designed to future adoptable standards and therefore it is of a scale which is no larger than is necessary to accommodate the predicted traffic flows.
- 5.4.4. The design seeks to ensure that it minimises adverse effects on views; adopts an appropriate scale, layout, and density necessary for efficient operation but is sympathetic to prevailing site and surrounding characteristics, in accordance with NNCS Policy EN 4 and emerging FDLP Policies ENV 2 and ENV 9. Where appropriate, the Proposed Development incorporates sustainable design principles such as selecting environmentally friendly building products, and sustainable drainage design. This is discussed further in the Sustainability Statement and Flood Risk Assessment both submitted in support of this planning application.
- 5.4.5. A comprehensive landscape scheme forms an integral part of the overall design proposals and are shown on the Landscape Proposals Plan drawing nos. 70065269-WSP-GEN-ZZ-DR-CH-3001. The proposed landscape scheme meets the criterion contained within NNCS Policy EN 2, through providing a design that is in keeping with the existing landscape character, and where possible, protecting existing landscape features. Additional tree planting will manage the transition between built form and adjacent fields. The proposed landscaping will visually soften the impact of the urban

road feature. Such landscape design measures lessen the visual impact and will ensure the proposal is sympathetically assimilated into the surrounding countryside and settlement character.

- 5.4.6. Overall, it is considered that the Proposed Development will comply NPPF (Section 12. Achieving well-designed places), NNCS Policies EN 2 (Protection and Enhancement of Landscape and Settlement Character) and EN 4 (Design), and emerging FDLP Policies ENV 2 (Protection & Enhancement of Landscape & Settlement Character) and ENV 9 (High Quality Design).

5.5 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.5.1. Notwithstanding the clear demonstrable need for the Proposed Development, environmental considerations have been examined throughout the preparation of this planning application. The main findings of these assessments are summarised below.

Noise and Vibration

- 5.5.2. The NPPF (2021) Paragraph 185, states that planning decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects). It should also mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impact resulting from noise from new development and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life.
- 5.5.3. The Noise Assessment submitted in support of this planning application, defines the following eight receptors as having potential to be susceptible to noise emissions during construction and operation phases.
- Vicarage;
 - Holy Trinity Church;
 - Hempton Memorial Hall;
 - 1-2 Bakery Court;
 - 4-10 Bakery Court;
 - 3-5 Dereham Road;
 - 11 Dereham Road; and
 - 4-20 Dereham Road.
- 5.5.4. During the construction phase, receptors are most likely be subject to noise arising from activities associated with, earth works, the removal of old road surface, construction of new road and weekend work. As a result of construction activities, the following receptors are most likely to experience increased noise emissions:
- 3-5 Dereham Road;
 - 1-2 Bakery Court; and
 - Hempton Memorial Hall.
- 5.5.5. It is not anticipated that earth work operations will have an impact on these receptors. The removal of the existing highway network is likely to increase noise emissions at all three receptors and only the construction of the new roundabout will have an impact on properties in Dereham Road.
- 5.5.6. Similarly, vibration affects from construction activities are not predicted to extend beyond 25m from the site boundary. Noise and vibration during the construction phase is considered unlikely to cause disturbance to nearby receptors.

- 5.5.7. During the operational phase, noise levels are predicted to increase at a small number of receptors close to the proposed roundabout, by a small degree, predicted as 1.7dB at Hampton Memorial Hall being the largest change. Three receptors will experience small reductions in current noise level (below 1dB change) whilst a further three will experience insignificant increases, also less than 1dB. This variation would be barely perceptible to nearby receptors. Therefore, operational noise as a result of vehicles using the proposed roundabout is considered unlikely to cause any additional disturbance at nearby sensitive receptors.
- 5.5.8. In accordance with Best Practice Means (BPM), as defined in the Control of Pollution Act (1974) the most effective means of controlling noise from construction sites, are as following and defined in the OCEMP:
- Any compressors brought on to site to be silenced or sound reduced models fitted with acoustic enclosures;
 - All pneumatic tools to be fitted with silencers or mufflers;
 - Deliveries to be programmed to arrive during daytime hours only. Care should be taken when unloading vehicles to minimise noise. Delivery vehicles to be routed so as to minimise disturbance to local residents. Delivery vehicles to be prohibited from waiting within or in the vicinity of the site with their engines running;
 - All plant items to be properly maintained and operated according to manufacturers' recommendations in such a manner as to avoid causing excessive noise. All plant to be sited so that the noise impact at nearby noise sensitive properties is minimised;
 - Where possible, construction equipment should be selected which produces lower noise levels; and
 - Local hoarding, screens, or barriers to be erected as necessary to shield particularly noisy activities.
- 5.5.9. The Proposed Development will deploy mitigation outlined above and limit construction operations during evening and weekends. It is anticipated that the majority of construction works will be undertaken during standard construction working hours (07:30 – 17:00 hours). Where works are required outside of these hours an application for Section 61 consent under the Control of Pollution Act (1974) will be submitted to NNDC.
- 5.5.10. The Proposed Scheme will have minor emission impacts operational in accordance with the guidance outlined in NNCS Policy SS 4 (Environment).

Ecology

- 5.5.11. The NPPF (2021) sets out the planning policy approach to habitats and biodiversity in Paragraphs 179 – 182 (Habitats and Biodiversity). In particular, Paragraph 182 advises that a presumption in favour of sustainable development should not be given if the project is likely to have significant effects on a habitat site unless appropriate assessment has concluded that the project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitat site. The accompanying Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) been undertaken to determine the likelihood of such effects.
- 5.5.12. There are two designated sites within 5km of the development site, both 190m from the site, including the River Wensum SAC and the River Wensum SSSI. There are five County Wildlife Sites (CWS) within 1km of the site, this includes Hempton Green and Fakenham Sewage Works that are adjacent to the site.
- 5.5.13. The following species types have been assessed as part of the ecological assessment subject with this application.

Mammals

- 5.5.14. There are no trees on site that currently contain bats roosts. The trees that are present are of sufficiently low quality that future bat roosting is unlikely. Additionally, the site also rates poorly as bat foraging habitat, as a result of being open and containing only poor grassland adjacent to roads. Polecats and hedgehogs are unlikely to reside in the development site, only interacting with the highway for crossing purposes. Harvest mice could be present in the semi-improved grasslands, including the roadside verges however recording is unconfirmed.

Birds

- 5.5.15. The application site predominantly comprises the existing road network and as a result, there are limited opportunities for ground nesting and could only support one pair of birds. The trees requiring removal (see arboricultural assessment) are similarly poor in quality and would only support common species such as pigeons.

Reptiles

- 5.5.16. The open and essentially homogenous poor-quality grassland habitat has been assessed as having limited reptile potential.

Amphibians

- 5.5.17. The nearest pond is 200m from the Site, with a total of three ponds within 300m of the Site boundary. As a result, the site lacks permanent amphibian habitat features, thus any presence within the site is more likely to be as a result of transient amphibians moving through the site. The site has the potential to support common toad but unlikely to possess Great Crested Newts.
- 5.5.18. The PEA concludes that there will be no impact on any designated nature conservation sites or valued habitats. Although the presences of the species are not confirmed, there is potential for impacts on the movements of harvest mouse and hedgehog populations during the construction phase. As defined by the OCEMP, the construction phase will also avoid any clearance works prior to the main nesting season.
- 5.5.19. Given the above, the Proposed Development is unlikely to alter the type, quality, or quantity of habitats currently in situ. As a result, it will have a limited impact of biodiversity in accordance with Policy SS 4 (Environment) of the NNCS (2008).

Trees & Landscape

Trees

- 5.5.20. As part of the Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) submitted in support of this planning application, the trees were surveyed on 18 June 2020 in accordance BS 5837:2012 which provides recommendations on “trees in relation to design, demolition and construction recommendations”.
- 5.5.21. There are ten trees on the proposed Site that have been assessed as part of the AIA. Of these, there are two Category C trees that have been noted as requiring removal to implement the Proposed Scheme. Category C trees are small or in poorer condition and do not form a significant part in the local landscape.
- 5.5.22. As part of the Proposed Development, the mitigation measures propose the replacement of these trees with four new species. These would comprise 2no. Oak and 2no. Sycamore trees. They will be of a minimum size as stipulated by the AIA and maintained to ensure survival. Maintenance measures

includes, 0.5m clearance of weeds and support and trunk guards for a period of five years. The maintenance measure ensure conformity to Paragraph 131 of the NPPF 2021, which seeks “*that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible*”. All other trees in the vicinity will be retained and work will not commence until protective fencing is in place.

- 5.5.23. The Proposed Development has sought to ensure a consistent level and character of landscape in accordance with Policy SS 4 ('Environment').

Landscape

- 5.5.24. The NPPF (2021) sets out guidance on the potential for development to impact the natural landscape. Paragraph 174 states that “*planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

- a) *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- b) *recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
- c) *maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*
- d) *minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*
- e) *preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*
- f) *remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate”.*

- 5.5.25. The site currently comprises the existing road network and adjacent grass verges. The landscape immediately surrounding the site consists of:

- Semi-improved grassland to the north, with a small number of scattered trees. A bowling green, the Hempton Memorial Hall and Holy Trinity Church lie to the north-west;
- Semi-improved grassland to the east beyond which lies a row of housing and the Hempton Green County Wildlife Site (CWS) as well as the site of the St Stephens Priory remains (Scheduled Ancient Monument);
- An area of bracken, trees, and woodland to the south which forms part of the Hempton Green CWS; and
- A large open field of semi-improved grassland to the south.

- 5.5.26. The site is not situated within a designated landscape.

- 5.5.27. The residential receptors identified include:

- Properties on Dereham Road immediately adjoining the north-eastern extents of the site;
- Properties on Bakery Court and The Green to the north of the site;
- Properties on Raynham Road to the west of the site; and

- Properties on Horns Row to the west of the site.

- 5.5.28. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been prepared and submitted to support this planning application. It notes that all of these properties are expected to have views of the construction of the proposal, and of the signage associated with the completed development. However, visibility of the proposed roundabout and junction improvements is only likely to occur all the properties on Dereham Road, Bakery Court and The Green.
- 5.5.29. The Site is predominantly flat topographically and therefore remains unintrusive against the surrounding landscape. The existing road junction is not visible beyond the 1km. Within 1km of the site, views from beyond the site boundary are restricted road signage only.
- 5.5.30. As set out in the OCEMP, the mitigation proposes to reinstate the construction area with grassed meadow seeding, and four new trees to replace the two trees being removed (*see Arboricultural Section*), is deemed appropriate to the character of the site, the surrounding landscape, and the village edge to the north. Additional tree or shrub planting to screen visibility of the roundabout has not been proposed given the current open location of the site, as it would be discordant with the existing landscape character. The proposed landscaping is shown on the Landscape Proposals Plan drawing nos. 70065269-WSP-GEN-ZZ-DR-CH-3001.
- 5.5.31. It is acknowledged that there will be adverse visual impacts during the construction phase however this will be short term as the proposed landscape design will ensure that the resultant landscape will relate satisfactorily with the existing conditions resulting in a neutral visual impact post construction.
- 5.5.32. As such, it is considered that the Proposed Development would comply with Policy SS 4 (Environment), Policy EN 2 (Protection and Enhancement of Landscape and Settlement Character) of the NNCS, and Policy ENV 2 (Protection & Enhancement of Landscape & Settlement Character) of the emerging FDLP.

Flood Risk

- 5.5.33. NPPF 2021 Paragraph 159 states that “*inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk*”. A Flood Risk Assessment & Surface Water Drainage Strategy has been prepared in support of the planning application.
- 5.5.34. A review of the EA flood risk zones for rivers has shown that the Site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is considered to be at low risk of flooding. The Proposed Development is considered to constitute ‘Essential Infrastructure’ and is located within Flood Zone 1 under NPPF, is appropriate in this location, and the Exception Test therefore does not need to be undertaken. This is in accordance with Policy EN 10 (Development and Flood Risk) ensuring “new development should be located in Flood Risk Zone 1.”
- 5.5.35. The ‘River Wensum’ is situated some distance to the north east of the Site. It is considered a ‘Main River’ and is managed by the Environment Agency. The 2010 King’s Lynn Surface Water Management Plan indicates there is are no Ordinary Watercourse within 3km of the site.
- 5.5.36. Based on information provided by Anglian Water, foul sewers and portable water run along Bakery Court and Dereham Road serving the existing residential area to the north east of the site. The portable water continues south along Dereham Road. There are no buildings on the Site with existing access to water and sewer utilities.

- 5.5.37. The site is identified at being of low risk with an annual probability of surface water flooding of less than 1 in 1,000 (0.1%). The Proposed Development will increase the impermeable area onsite by approximately 800m² and therefore increase surface water runoff as depicted in Table 1 of the Flood Risk Assessment submitted in conjunction with this application. As a result, it is proposed that runoff from the Site will be managed using sustainable drainage measures and infiltrate to ground locally. This will be achieved by using storage units to both attenuate and discharge surface water runoff to ground on site.
- 5.5.38. In terms of mitigation, surface water runoff will be extracted from the carriageway by use of gullies and transferred to the cellular soakaways (locations of which as shown on the General Arrangement Plan drawing no. 70065269-WSP-GEN-ZZ-DR-CH-0101) using a subsurface carrier network. Catchpits, penstocks, and oil baffle chambers are also included to provide additional resilience against surface runoff pollution.
- 5.5.39. An allowance for climate change has been included in the design of the proposed surface water drainage system of 20% (up to 1 in 30yr) and 40% (1 in 100yr flooding check). Such an allowance ensure compliance with NPPF (2021) Paragraph 154 ensuring “*new development should be planned for in ways that avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change*”.
- 5.5.40. The Proposed Development supports the three requirements of Policy EN 10 (‘Flood Risk & Surface Water Drainage’) of the NNCS and Policy SD 10 (Flood Risk & Surface Water Drainage) of the emerging FDLP.

Heritage

- 5.5.41. Section 16 of the NPPF (2021) deals with ‘Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment’. In accordance with Paragraph 194 of the NPPF, a Heritage Assessment has been undertaken by WSP defining the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.
- 5.5.42. The heritage assets potentially affected by the Proposed Development include:
- St Stephen’s Priory Scheduled Monument: - the constraint area lies adjacent to the Site to the east but extends partially into the very south-eastern edge of the site. It is also designated as a Grade II listed building.
 - Hempton Conservation Area: - the Site is located within the conservation area, which is characterised as a small rural village with a preserved medieval street layout, areas of common land and 19th century character.
 - The Green (Grade II): - former public house constructed in the mid-19th century. The building lies adjacent to the north boundary of the Site.
 - Church of the Holy Trinity (Grade II): - the 19th century church lies 50m to the north of the Site boundary.
 - Historic quarrying: - earthworks within the application site boundary on Hempton Green are associated with historic quarrying.
(Several additional listed buildings are assessed in the accompanying Heritage Statement; however, they are unaffected by the Proposed Development).
- 5.5.43. There is potential for previously unrecorded archaeological remains from the prehistoric period onwards within the area of the Proposed Development, but the potential impact is considered low due to intrusion from existing road construction and historic quarrying.

- 5.5.44. Following consultation with Historic England (HE), the design of the Proposed Development has been revised to remove street lighting. HE advised that the implementation of lighting would adversely affect the conservation area and neighbouring listed and registered assets.
- 5.5.45. The Heritage Assessment notes that there would be no harm to the physical nature or setting of the following receptors: The Bell Inn, Wensum house and The Old Post Office. There is anticipated to be minor impacts on the setting of the Church of the Holy Trinity, The Green, and St Stephen's Priory.
- 5.5.46. The Heritage Assessment also considers that the Hempton Conservation Area would be subject to change, due to the loss of historic landscape features such as areas of common land and historic road layouts and this impact are likely to result in Substantial harm to the heritage asset.
- 5.5.47. NPPF Paragraph 201 advises *“Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*
- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
 - b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
 - c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
 - d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.”*
- 5.5.48. It is considered that the substantial harm to the designated heritage asset is necessary to tackle the identified highway safety issues at this junction. The Hempton crossroads has emerged as an accident cluster site several times over at least the last 20 years. Over this period 32 personal injury accidents (pia's) (6 serious, 26 slight) have been recorded at an average of 1.6pia's per year. The long term accident record is a series of peaks and troughs whereby the site has emerged as a cluster site and received low cost safety measures (e.g., traffic signing enhancements) which have been successful in the short term but not treated the fundamental issue of a simple crossroads junction. Hence, the low cost measures lose effectiveness after a time as drivers become habituated to them and accidents return.
- 5.5.49. The simple crossroads junction form is not optimal at this rural site with a considerable level of traffic on all arms and consequently the long term accident record demonstrates a strong pattern of failure to give way collisions. In terms of the recent accident trend, after a period of no accidents between 2014 and 2017 another peak has occurred with 8 pia's recorded in the last 4 years.
- 5.5.50. The Proposed Development will deliver the following public benefits which on balance are considered to outweigh the harm caused to the designated heritage asset:
- Improve the current safety issues;
 - Improve NMUs facilities, providing improve footways (north and south) on Hempton Green Road and on Dereham Road; and
 - Minimise traffic congestion that currently backs up on the Dereham Road (east and west) of Hempton Green Road whistling queuing for entry.
- 5.5.51. In conclusion, whilst the Proposed Development will result in substantial harm to the designated heritage asset – the Hempton Conservation Area, the resultant landscape design will ensure that it



would maintain the integrity of the local landscape and settlement character. This, together with the overwhelming public benefits that the proposal will deliver, it is considered that on balance the Proposed Development will outweigh the identified harm to the designated and undesignated heritage assets.

- 5.5.52. Given the above conclusions, it is considered that the Proposed Development will comply with the NPPF and the requirements of NNCS Policy EN 8 (Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment) and Policy ENV 11 (Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment) of the emerging FDLP.

6 CONCLUSION

6.1.1. Planning permission is sought for:

“The construction of a four-armed roundabout with associated landscaping at the existing crossroad junction of the B1146 Hempton Green Road/Dereham Road/C550 Hempton Green Road/Dereham Road (Hempton Crossroads).”

6.1.2. This Planning, Design & Access statement clearly demonstrates the need for the Proposed Development. In particular, the highway network improvement is necessary to support Policy SS 8 (‘Fakenham’) that Fakenham will be given “provision will be made for a major urban expansion to the north of the town, including housing, employment land, community facilities and open space”. The development of 1,400 dwellings since 2001 has placed greater pressure on the current highway network in the area.

6.1.3. As mentioned earlier, the AIP study at Dereham Road Crossroads identified a rise in accidents with the main cause being a failure to give way. Hempton Parish Council also conducted their own local consultation in 2004. The residents were asked to identify areas of concern in the village. The results indicated that the safety at the Hempton Road Crossroads was one of the main causes of concern for local residents.

6.1.4. The Hempton crossroads has emerged as an accident cluster site several times over at least the last 20 years. Over this period 32 personal injury accidents (pia’s) (6 serious, 26 slight) have been recorded at an average of 1.6pia’s per year. The long term accident record is a series of peaks and troughs whereby the site has emerged as a cluster site and received low cost safety measures (e.g., traffic signing enhancements) which have been successful in the short term but not treated the fundamental issue of a simple crossroads junction. Hence, the low cost measures lose effectiveness after a time as drivers become habituated to them and accidents return.

6.1.5. The simple crossroads junction form is not optimal at this rural site with a considerable level of traffic on all arms and consequently the long term accident record demonstrates a strong pattern of failure to give way collisions. In terms of the recent accident trend, after a period of no accidents between 2014 and 2017 another peak has occurred with 8 pia's recorded in the last 4 years.

6.1.6. The results of the recent pre application consultation together with the aforementioned policy support at all levels of government show that there is overwhelming support for the Proposed Development. It is undoubtedly a positive intervention at the Site and one which brings with it an appropriate solution to the concerns relating to highway safety at this junction. The proposal also represents a sustainable form of development, in accordance with Paragraphs 8, 10 and 11 of the NPPF, as it will improve the economic, social, and environmental conditions for Fakenham. In particular:

- **Economic:** the Proposed Development will help build a strong, responsive, and competitive economy, as it will provide infrastructure that will support growth in the local area;
- **Social:** the Proposed Development will provide infrastructure to support the building of new homes that will create new, vibrant, and healthy communities; and
- **Environmental:** the Proposed Development will make effective use of land. It will maintain existing levels of biodiversity.

6.1.7. The Proposed Development will also deliver public benefits:

- Improve the current safety issues;

- Improve NMUs facilities, providing improve footways (north and south) on Hempton Green Road and on Dereham Road; and
- Minimise traffic congestion that currently backs up on the Dereham Road (east and west) of Hempton Green Road whistling queuing for entry

6.1.8. Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning Act 2004 states that development proposals should be determined with reference to the Development Plan unless any relevant material considerations indicate otherwise.

6.1.9. This Statement undertakes an assessment of the proposals against a series of national and local development plan policies, with due regard to relevant material considerations. As an overview, it is clear that the overarching conclusions set against the policy context for the Proposed Development creates a compelling case for the approval of this Planning Application.

6.1.10. With this in mind, and in accordance with paragraph 10 and 11 of the Framework, and the presumption in favour of sustainable development running through the Framework, the Proposed Development should be approved without delay.



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