

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

JUNE 8 2021

COUNCILLOR RESPONSIBLE FOR ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT, HIGHWAYS AND WASTE: COUNCILLOR PHILL LARRATT

Report Title	Northampton North West Relief Road – progress update, funding approvals and approval of procurement of utility works
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List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – North West Relief Road Route Plan

Appendix 2 – North West Relief Road phase 2 General Arrangement

Appendix 3 – Budget breakdown

Appendix 4 – SEMLEP conditions on funding **CONFIDENTIAL**

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To update Cabinet on progress with the North West Relief Road project;
- 1.2. To seek approval of the funding commitments required to proceed to construction;
- 1.3. To gain delegated authority for the Executive Director of Place and Economy to progress with a bid to the Levelling Up Fund for £20 million
- 1.4. Requests that Cabinet note the conditions proposed in relation to the Local Growth Deal funding by SEMLEP.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The purpose of this report is to secure agreement on the final aspects related to the North West Relief Road, which will enable this scheme to be implemented. This report updates on the current position of the Northampton North West Relief Road project, our updated understanding of the cost to deliver the scheme going forward, the funding contributions committed to date and the current funding shortfall. The report also identifies how the shortfall can be managed via a combination of a bid to the Levelling Up Fund for £20 million and Capital funding of £1.95m. The £1.95m capital requirement would be required subject to risk and contingency outcomes.
- 2.2. The North West Relief Road helps to unlock delivery of the Northampton Northern Orbital Road which is the next scheme connecting the A5199 to the A43 north of Moulton as without the North West Relief Road the benefits of the Northampton Northern Orbital Road would be significantly reduced. Along with other key highway infrastructure projects, consideration will be given to how the Northampton Northern Orbital Road can be progressed and this is expected to be the subject of a future Cabinet Paper setting out the proposals and funding requirements for consideration.
- 2.3. Northampton North West Relief Road was granted planning consent in September 2020 following extensive consultation with the public and stakeholders, including other Authorities, and consideration of all views received by the project team and the Planning Authority. Design work has been completed by the Design and Build Contractor, Balfour Beatty, and the contractual target cost received. The target cost is currently being scrutinised and challenged where necessary prior to agreement. Land acquisition discussions are ongoing with draft Heads of Terms agreed or substantially agreed with all landowners. A Compulsory Purchase Order was published in March 2021 to act as a safeguard in case the land negotiations do not come to a satisfactory conclusion for any reason.
- 2.4. Scheme estimates have risen significantly since the March 2020 report to Northamptonshire County Council Cabinet, which sought a total funding commitment of £32.532 million with committed funding contributions of £27.13 million. Since March 2020 the cost to deliver the scheme has risen to £54.533 million whilst committed funding has risen by £5.453m to £32.583 million. The current budget is a scenario including contingency sums which, along with our risk strategy and allowances, will result in the Authority approving a budget which is robust and appropriate for this stage of project development. Whilst the committed funding includes a significant proportion of S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (£20.453m), this money will be made available as development progresses and trigger points are met and up to £18.953m of this money will require forward funding by the Authority.
- 2.5. A revised funding business case has been submitted to SEMLEP for £7.93 million of Local Growth Deal funding. An independent review of the business case confirms that the scheme continues to offer high value for money when assessed in accordance with DfT guidance in terms of the benefits delivered including; improving journey time reliability and reducing delays at key locations, supporting planned development including Dallington Grange, supporting economic growth, reducing the number and severity of accidents at hotspots in the north-west of Northampton including the A508 and reducing emissions and improving air quality at a number of Air Quality Management Areas. However, SEMLEP are proposing to make continued financial support to the scheme conditional on a number of factors discussed in 5.2 below.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. It is recommended that the West Northamptonshire Council Cabinet:
- a) Note continued progress to deliver the Northampton North West Relief Road;
 - b) Supports the capital investment required to complete this scheme as set out in Section 6.1 of this report and required to proceed to construction including forward funding against future S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy payments;
 - c) Agrees to progress a bid to the Levelling Up Fund for £20 million;
 - d) Note SEMLEP's proposed conditions on the continued financial support from the Local Growth Fund as set out in Section 5.2.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- (i) The scheme is identified within the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy as being required to support anticipated additional growth, much of which is already consented requiring the additional highway capacity the scheme provides to mitigate their impacts.*
- (ii) The Levelling Up Fund provides an opportunity to gain the additional financial support the project requires and the project is a very good fit to the aims and requirements of this funding opportunity.*
- (iii) The £7.93 million Local Growth Deal funding administered by SEMLEP provides an essential contribution to the project funding.*

5. Report Background

- 5.1. The Northampton North West Relief Road will be a single carriageway road (with land secured for future dualling through the development site) linking the A428 Harlestone Road with the A5199 Welford Road. A plan showing the location of the scheme is at Appendix 1. The road will improve the highway network and help to address traffic problems in parts of northern Northampton and surrounding villages. By providing additional capacity the road will help to enable development including the major Sustainable Urban Extensions at Buckton Fields, Dallington Grange and Northampton West.
- 5.2. Phase one of the scheme is the section from the A428 to a roundabout near Grange Farm, just south of the railway line and will be constructed by the developers of Dallington Grange. The first section of phase 1 has already been constructed as part of the Harlestone Gate development.
- 5.3. West Northamptonshire Council will be responsible for building phase two of the scheme which is the section of road across the railway line to join with the A5199 Welford Road together with a short link road crossing the river.
- 5.4. Following the designation of additional growth sites, the need for the scheme was identified in the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy as being required to support anticipated additional growth. Much of this growth is already consented and the additional highway capacity the scheme provides will help to mitigate their impacts. Northamptonshire County Council

Cabinet decided in January 2016 that the scheme should be one of the County Council's next priorities for major road schemes.

- 5.5. A preferred route was agreed by the Northamptonshire County Council Cabinet in October 2018 following which work commenced on the preparation of a planning application and Environmental Statement which were submitted to the County Council's planning service in May 2019. Following requests for revised and additional information the scheme was granted consent on September 22nd 2020 and it is the consented scheme which has been progressed for delivery and which is the subject of this report.
- 5.6. As part of the preparation to secure planning permission, the detailed design process has included consideration of many aspects of the scheme's design including the junction types, sizes, locations and layouts. The connection to the A5199 Welford Road was the subject of extensive design and modelling work with many options considered and discounted due to the physical constraints created by existing features, in particular the existing structure on the A5199 and the traffic modelling results. Different junction types and layouts were found to offer insufficient benefits in terms of capacity and journey time savings to support the planned growth as well as providing reduced air and noise quality benefits compared to the consented layout. The proposed solution at the northern end of the scheme was considered to be optimum junction type and location in terms of being both viable to construct and providing the benefits required to mitigate development. The new causeway connection to the A5199 is required as upgrading the existing causeway to provide the capacity needed would have required the A5199 Welford Road to be closed for up to a year to demolish the existing structure and replace with a wider one. The existing structure is currently being considered for listed status due its heritage value and both the old causeway and structure will be retained as a walking and cycling corridor as part of the scheme.
- 5.7. In March 2020 the Northamptonshire County Council Cabinet gave approval to underwrite the cost of the scheme at £32.532m as well as approving the work necessary to secure the land required for the project and to appoint the contractor on a Design and Build basis with a break clause if a target cost cannot be agreed or if the scheme could not continue for any reason.
- 5.8. The current West Northamptonshire Council Capital Programme includes funding over the next four years to support the costs identified in the Northamptonshire County Council Cabinet Report of March 2020.
- 5.9. Delivery of the North West Relief Road scheme helps to unlock the Northampton Northern Orbital Road which is the next scheme linking the A5199 Welford Road to the A43 north of Moulton as without the first scheme the benefits of the Northern Orbital Road would be significantly reduced.

6. Project Update

6.1. Funding and forecast costs

- 6.1.1. The current Cabinet approval is to underwrite the cost of the scheme at £32.532m. This was agreed by Northamptonshire County Council at their Cabinet meeting of March 2020. This decision will be carried forward into the West Northamptonshire Capital Programme for 2021-22.
- 6.1.2. The revised budget forecast based on Balfour Beatty's final target cost dated April 2021 and including all risk, contingency, off-site junction works and Boughton traffic calming is £54.533m. A total increase of £22.001m compared to the previously approved figure of £32.532m
- 6.1.3. However, it should be noted that £54.533m is not a direct comparison to the previously approved value of £32.532m as it includes works conditioned through planning in September 2020, which are, in part, separately funded, as well as additional contingency sums. This revised approach to the presentation of the project costs was adopted when revising the SEMLEP business case to ensure that the benefit to cost ratio calculation within the economic assessment represented the full costs associated with the project.
- 6.1.4. The revised budget forecast of £54.533m is therefore considered to be a very robust assessment including £4.414m of costs not included within the costs used for the previous March 2020 Cabinet approval and not previously reported. This £4.414m includes £2.38m of contingency allowance and £2.034m for works associated with off-site junction mitigation and Boughton traffic calming which were identified through the planning process which concluded in September 2020.
- 6.1.5. At the time of the March 2020 Cabinet the committed funding contributions totalled £27.13m and were as follows:
- (i) £4.2m from Northampton Borough Council
 - (ii) £7.93m from SEMLEP (Local Growth Deal)
 - (iii) Assumed £15m of S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy income from the following developments; Dallington Grange, Buckton Fields West and Northampton West. The values for Buckton Fields West and Northampton West were calculated on the basis of £2800 per dwelling but the exact numbers of consented dwellings were still subject to the planning process at the time so a conservative estimate was used.
- 6.1.6. As noted above, the £15m of S106 and CIL funding was a conservative estimate as the amount could not be guaranteed with some S106 agreements not then signed, and being dependent on the planning permissions being implemented. Only the £4.2m Northampton Borough Council funding and the £7.93m SEMLEP funding were therefore fully committed and Northamptonshire County Council Cabinet agreed to underwrite £20.402m of the £32.532m total as at March 2020.
- 6.1.7. The previously committed funding remains valid although some of the values have increased as certainty over the numbers of consented dwellings is now available and indexation has been received for contributions already collected. The estimated £15m of S106 and CIL funding is now fixed and has increased by £3.953m to £18.953m. The previously excluded off site junction mitigation works is partially funded by other S106 funding from Buckton Fields totalling an additional £1.5m contribution towards the overall £54.533m funding requirement.

- 6.1.8. Whilst there is £18.953m of committed S106 and CIL funding, the timescales for receiving these funds is dependent on the build out rates of the various contributing developments contributions and could be up to 15 years. The Authority will therefore need to forward fund against these S106 and CIL contributions. It is difficult to predict the borrowing costs with any degree of certainty as the Authority cannot predict when these developments will come forward or at what rate of house construction.
- 6.1.9. The total value of funding secured has therefore risen from £27.13m to £32.583m leaving a funding gap of £21.95m against the overall requirement of £54.533m
- 6.1.10. To address the funding shortfall, it is the intention to submit a bid for funding from the Levelling Up Fund. This funding mechanism permits bids of up to £20m for a wide range of schemes, or more than this figure for major transport schemes such as the North West Relief Road. However, bids above £20m are expected to be subject to additional approvals which may create delay and our intention is therefore to submit a bid for £20m by the June 18th deadline with the outcome of the application process expected in Autumn 2021.
- 6.1.11. The North West Relief Road scheme is considered to be a strong contender for a bid to the Levelling Up fund given the high levels of support for the project, the status of the project in terms of design, planning consent, contractor appointment and land deals meaning we can commence on site in the current financial year, the strong Benefit to Cost ratio which is classified as being in the “high value for money” category as well as the availability of match funding.
- 6.1.12. Should the Levelling Up Fund bid be unsuccessful, then the alternative would be Council borrowing to fund the shortfall through prudential borrowing with associated revenue implications for repayment of the loan and interest. Borrowing £21.95m would cost the Authority £32.8 m over 40 years with average repayments of £819k per annum including interest (annual payments range from £1.05m in year 1 to £570k in year 40). A further Cabinet Report would be submitted setting out the details of how the repayments associated with this borrowing could be funded.
- 6.1.13. If the Levelling Up Fund bid for £20m is successful, there will still be a shortfall of £1.95m. However, this sum is under the value of the authority’s contingency allowance (£2.38m) included in the total forecast budget and would therefore only become a capital funding requirement should unknown issues arise.
- 6.1.14. A breakdown of the current project costs is contained within Appendix 3. The main cost increases since March 2020 are explained below:
- **Fees** - design, planning and project management fees have increased due to the delay to the project, additional planning work required, preparation of a revised business case to SEMLEP, inclusion of costs prior to 2018 which were previously excluded from the budget figures.
 - **Archaeology** - costs have increased by more than £2 million due to requirements raised through the planning process. However, archaeology costs are very dependent on findings and we expect that this figure will decrease as we are not anticipating any significant findings.

- **Land** – costs associated with acquiring the land have increased by around £700k including costs to purchase land plus legal and land agent fees and estimated sums for future compensation payments.
- **Construction** – the construction costs have increased by more than £10 million since the March 2020 estimates because the design process had not commenced and the latest figures are now based on a completed design. In particular costs associated with the structures and drainage have increased significantly as well as programme related costs and the contractors risk allowances. There is also an increase due to inflation caused by the overall delay to the project programme.
- **Utilities** – early estimates were based on initial discussions which suggested that utility companies, in particular Anglian Water Services Ltd, would accept a “light touch” approach due to the age and vulnerability of their apparatus. Their position has now changed and they are exercising their rights to require extensive diversion works increasing costs by approximately £2.8m.
- **NCC/WNC direct costs** – excluded in the March 2020 costings but these costs include staff salaries, fees for planning, traffic orders, legal advice, land agent’s fees, Midlands Highways Alliance costs for procurement etc.
- **Client Risk** – a review of the risk strategy and risk register has resulted in the authority’s risk allowance increasing by £720k
- **Off-site Junctions** – the planning process identified that mitigation would be required at a number of junctions around Northampton as a direct result of the redistribution of traffic created by the North West Relief Road as well as traffic calming in Boughton village. There is an allowance of just over £2.03m for these items. £1.5m of funding towards these works has been secured via S106 contributions from Buckton Fields and is separate to the S106 contributions committed to the main works because this funding is effectively separate it was excluded from the March 2020 Cabinet figures but is now included for completeness and transparency.
- **Client Contingency** – on construction projects of this type it is not possible to identify every possible risk and there will always remain the possibility of something occurring that was not foreseen. The budget now includes a client contingency allowance of £2.38m to ensure that the total budget is robust.

6.1.15. The table below summarises the increased costs and funding since the County Council’s report in March 2021.

	NCC Cabinet Report March 2021 £m	Current Estimate £m	Increase(+) or Decrease (-) since March 2020 £m
Total Expenditure	32.532	54.533	22.001
Funded by:			
Contribution from NBC	(4.200)	(4.200)	0.000
Contribution from SEMLEP	(7.930)	(7.930)	0.000
S106/CIL	(15.000)	(20.453)	(5.453)
Capital contribution	(5.402)	(1.950)	3.452

Levelling up fund*	0.000	(20.000)	(20.000)
	<u>(32.532)</u>	<u>(54.533)</u>	<u>(22.001)</u>

6.1.16. Whilst the additional funding required to deliver the scheme is significant, the implications of not progressing with the scheme are similarly challenging. The planning consents for both the North West Relief Road and a number of significant development sites have been considered as part of an overall strategy for growth in the area. Failure to deliver such an important element of this strategy could result in the following impacts;

- Potential loss of part or all of the £18.953 committed S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy monies,
- Consented development taking place without the required mitigation of the transport impacts,
- Loss of the £7.93m Local Growth Deal funding and reputational damage with funding bodies,
- Consented development not proceeding due to viability concerns resulting in a failure to meet growth targets.

6.2. SEMLEP Funding Conditions

6.2.1. The scheme benefits from £7.93m of Local Growth Deal funding which is administered by SEMLEP. Due to the increased costs to deliver the project and the delays in the overall delivery programme, SEMLEP requested a revised business case to confirm that the project still represents good value for money. The revised business case was submitted at the end of March 2021 and SEMLEP's independent reviewer has confirmed that the scheme still represents "high value for money" when measured in accordance with Department for Transport guidance.

6.2.2. SEMLEP has expressed concerns around a number of issues and has proposed to make the continuing financial support of the North West Relief Road subject to a number of conditions or stipulations. More details of these conditions are contained in Appendix 4 which is to be treated as confidential on the basis that the content has the ability to impact on the Authority's financial or business affairs.

6.2.3. Cabinet are asked to note SEMLEP's conditions on the funding which will have been presented to the SEMLEP Board in late May 2021.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources and Financial

	16 – 20 (£m)	20/21 (£m)	21/22 (£m)	22/23 (£m)	23/24 (£m)	24/25 (£m)	25/26 (£m)	26/27 (£m)	27/28 (£m)	TOTAL (£m)
TOTAL SPEND in Year(s)	3.685	2.804	6.884	22.300	15.517	1.000	0.900	0.500	0.943	54.533
NBC	3.685	0.515								4.200
WNC (S106/CIL)		1.243		2.300	14.017	1.000	0.393			18.953
SEMLEP		1.046	6.884							7.930
WNC (Levelling Up Fund / borrowing)				20.000						20.000
Other (Buckton Fields S106)					1.500					1.500
Required Capital contribution							0.507	0.500	0.943	1.950

7.2. Legal

7.2.1. Significant work has been carried out on the North West Relief Road and substantial progress made. The Authority is now close to being able to deliver this important scheme. However, to overcome the remaining obstacles to delivery e.g. placing orders for construction to proceed, the acquisition of the required land, undertaking advance archaeological works, commissioning utility diversions etc. now requires a commitment to fund the project in line with 6.1 above. Until funding is confirmed we are unable to complete those arrangements which, whilst in an advanced state, cannot yet be finalised and remain residual risks to the Authority in terms of project delivery and final outturn costs. The risks associated with the project are set out in Section 6.3 below.

7.3. Risks

7.3.1. The contract with Balfour Beatty has been let on a Design and Build basis in order that the contractor owns design related risks (with the exception of any client led design changes). The contract also includes a break clause in the event that we are unable to reach agreement on the target cost or if the scheme should not proceed for any reason.

7.3.2. Within the contract arrangements careful consideration has been given to the allocation of risk with risks being allocated to the most appropriate party. West Northamptonshire Council will retain financial responsibility for a number of identified risks where it was agreed that doing so would represent the best value for the Authority as client organisation.

7.3.3. These risks have been assessed in terms of their probability and the possible financial impacts and a Client risk allowance of £3.7 million has been included within the overall budget forecast for the project of £54.533m. Client owned risks will be carefully managed by the project team where possible although some client owned risks are outside of the project team’s control for example, changes in legislation, Covid 19 impacts etc. Whilst the risk strategy and budget allowance has been carefully planned, large construction projects are high risk undertakings, often with potential unknown issues which can arise during the construction period and therefore a £2.4m contingency sum has also been included within the total budget figure.

7.3.4. As risks are to be shared between the Authority as client and the contractor, both parties have their respective risk allowances included within the overall project budget. In the contractor’s case, this is within their target cost. The way the contract has been set up makes it in both parties’ interests to ensure that risks are carefully managed and mitigated and the joint WNC / Contractor project team will work collaboratively to manage risks.

7.3.5. It should be noted that a key risk to the project is delay to the delivery programme. On large construction projects such as the North West Relief Road, delays in delivery often result in significant increases in costs to the promoting Authority.

7.3.6. Key risk(s) associated with the proposal

Risk	Mitigation	Residual Risk
Development and phase 1 of the road not constructed or delayed and not open to traffic when WNC section of NWRR is completed. The WNC funded road would serve no public benefit until connected to the developer section to create a usable through route	<p>Section 106 Agreement contains clause requiring developer to agree programme for completion of phase 1 of NWRR with the Authority.</p> <p>This will be dependent on securing the necessary Rights of Way diversion order which WNC officers are escalating with the Planning Inspectorate</p>	Amber
SEMLEP element of funding required to be spent by March 2022	Spend profile shows that a commencement of works at or before January 2022 would still enable the SEMLEP funding to be used by end of March 2022. This deferred start would still enable completion by September 2023 as per current programme due to a January start date offering programme advantages. Meeting the SEMLEP spend conditions will	Amber

	require a commitment to purchasing land and placing orders for utility works and construction in advance of the developers programme being agreed.	
Land not acquired by Agreement or delayed	Heads of Terms agreed or close to agreement with all landowners. The Compulsory Purchase Order process is being run in the background in case any of the negotiations break down.	Amber
Delays in placing orders with utility companies for asset diversion works results in significant costs for delay to contractor's programme payable by WNC	Any required procurement waivers will be sought early so orders can be placed to align with the delivery programme as this is being agreed with the contractor	Amber

7.3.7. Risk(s) associated with not undertaking the proposal

Risk	Risk Rating
Development happens without mitigation of traffic growth impacts.	Red
Development considered unviable and does not proceed resulting in West Northamptonshire housing targets not being met.	Red
Committed S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy funding totalling £18.953m may have to be returned in part or in full.	Amber
Failure to deliver the North West Relief Road will undermine the benefits and business case for the future delivery of Northampton Northern Orbital Road and would prejudice delivery of this much needed highway scheme.	Amber
SEMLEP funding allocated would not be used, resulting in reputational damage to West Northamptonshire Council with funding bodies.	Amber

7.4. Consultation

7.4.1. Consultation on the route of the road was undertaken between June and August 2017 alongside consultation for the Northampton Northern Orbital Road. The results of this consultation were reported to the Northamptonshire County Council Cabinet in October 2018.

- 7.4.2. 64% of those responding to the consultation supported the need for the North West Relief Road. A number of respondents commented on potential flooding, noise and visual impacts and the severance of rights of way or thought that the road should be built as a dual carriageway from the outset. There was also significant concern expressed about possible traffic impacts due to the road opening before the Northampton Northern Orbital Road and it was suggested that the two roads should be built at the same time. However, there were very few suggestions that an alternative route would be more advantageous.
- 7.4.3. Further consultation was undertaken as part of the planning process between May 2019 and July 2020 and the results of this consultation were considered by the Northamptonshire County Council Development Control Committee which resulted in a number of planning conditions being imposed including requirements for mitigation works to a number of junctions around the surrounding network and traffic calming proposals in the village of Boughton.
- 7.4.4. The planning process included consideration of the impact of the new causeway link to the Welford Road and Brampton Lane on both the Brampton Valley Way cycle route and the emerging aspirations to re-open the Northampton to Market Harborough railway line. In terms of its current use as part of the National Cycle Network the scheme includes provision of crossing facilities for cyclists and pedestrians which have been the subject of consultation and agreement with Sustrans.
- 7.4.5. With respect to the re-opening of the Northampton to Market Harborough railway line, the impact of the North West Relief Road on this was considered by the highways project team and was not felt to significantly affect the viability of the proposal. The re-opening of the Northampton to Mkt Harborough line will face many such issues where roads and development have now encroached close to or on to the old route. The existing Welford Road already crosses the route of the railway line so a road crossing in this location will be required irrespective of the North West Relief Road. The new road scheme does not prejudice re-opening of the line any more than the existing Welford Road already does as each would require a road being raised above, or lowered beneath the railway line and the construction of a new bridge or tunnel. This is because at grade level crossings are no longer supported on safety grounds. Lifting or lowering either the existing or new road to cross the line of the railway will be difficult given the proximity of adjacent development including the Windhover public house and telephone exchange. Lifting the existing road over the railway, or lowering it and tunnelling underneath, will both require such extensive engineering measures, and possibly acquisition and demolition of property, that the changes associated with North West Relief Road are expected to make little or no difference to the costs and viability of re-opening the railway line. The matter was also considered by planning officers and determined as not constituting a significant material consideration in determining the application as the proposal was emerging and, in planning terms, had no status at the time.

7.5. Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.5.1. N/A

7.6. Climate Impact

- 7.6.1. The impacts of the proposed road on climate change (e.g. greenhouse gases) have been assessed, as well as the vulnerability and resilience of the scheme to climate change (e.g. extreme weather). The assessment reported limited effects on the climate, with the scheme not being vulnerable to climate change.
- 7.6.2. The scheme impacts on the flood plain and to mitigate this and to satisfy the Environment Agency, a planning condition has been imposed requiring a scheme for flood defence and resilience for a residential dwelling identified at risk.
- 7.6.3. In order to minimise impacts of the road on notable habitats and protected species, the design has been developed (assisted and conditioned by consultation) to include measures such as mammal ledges within culverts (e.g. Brampton Beck), tall screening vegetation along the majority of the route and attenuation ponds with reedbed vegetation to reduce run-off into watercourses. The measures, together with maintenance and monitoring strategies for the future, all of which are covered by planning conditions (that are currently being discharged), and approved by Natural England, include appropriate monitoring requirements of species such as Barn Owls.

7.7. Community Impact

- 7.7.1. Analysis of the Northamptonshire Strategic Transport Model (traffic model) as part of the Transport Assessment indicated that the proposed scheme provides journey time and congestion benefits to many of Northampton's road users and residents. It will relieve current traffic issues on road corridors used for east-west trips in Northampton and provide benefit along the minor roads. These benefits are spread across the town and key areas and include A43 Lumbertubs Way, A5076 Red House Road, A428 Harlestone Road, A4500 Weedon Road, A508 Harborough Road, Harlestone Road (The Bramptons) and Mill Lane.
- 7.7.2. The proposed scheme will also provide additional infrastructure capacity to support movements generated by forecast development and growth in the area.
- 7.7.3. Modelling identified junction capacity issues (together with associated increased journey times) were likely to occur without further mitigation at a number of locations, such as through the villages of Moulton and Boughton, at the A508 Harborough Road / Pitsford High Street Priority Junction, at the A508 Harborough Road / Brampton Lane priority junction, and at the A508 Harborough Road / Brampton Lane / Vyse Road existing roundabout. To mitigate these problems, the Transport Assessment identified appropriate mitigation measures for each location, and stated when each measure should be implemented.
- 7.7.4. Overall, the Transport Assessment concluded that the proposed scheme provides an overall net benefit to the highway network and any negative localised impacts caused as a result of the scheme can be satisfactorily mitigated. The Highways Development Management team, who thoroughly reviewed the Transport Assessment, accepted that the proposed scheme is acceptable in terms of highways and transport impact. The proposed mitigation measures were incorporated into the planning conditions to ensure they are delivered when trigger points are met.
- 7.7.5. Increased noise levels from road traffic are predicted at a number of receptors (including residential properties and recreational facilities) located to the east of the proposed scheme, to

the west of the A5199 Welford Road and along Brampton Lane. However, following the assessment and consultation with the relevant Environmental Health authorities, the changes did not meet intervention requirements and mitigation was not considered necessary, other than for the use of low noise road surfacing which is conditioned through planning.

- 7.7.6. The Proposed Scheme will introduce an improvement in exhaust gas (either nitrogen oxide or particulate matter or both) concentrations for residential properties in Chapel Brampton and Church Brampton adjacent to Sandy Lane, Harlestone Road and Pitsford Road due to a reduction in traffic flows. There will be improvement in nitrogen oxide concentrations for residential properties within Northampton town centre, including in the three Air Quality Management Areas. However, residential properties located near the proposed scheme will experience a worsening in nitrogen oxide and particulate matter concentrations due to an increase in traffic flows on the local road network close to, and along, the new road.
- 7.7.7. With respect to local air quality in the opening year there is a predicted minor improvement, whereas in the future year (2031) the improvement was predicted to be negligible. At one receptor (Boughton Crossing) the assessment predicted a substantial worsening of air quality, although not predicted to be an exceedance of the Air Quality Standards Regulations which sets maximum limits in the interests of protecting human health.
- 7.7.8. The traffic, noise and air quality impacts described will be significantly reduced should the Northampton Northern Orbital road be delivered in the future.
- 7.7.9. Population and Human Health was also assessed as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment and considered impacts on physical assets and land use, community amenity and access, economy and employment, and human health. Once the road is opened, it is predicted that residential receptors in the local area will experience a reduction in visual amenity due to proximity to the proposed scheme. It is anticipated however, that the expected positive impacts include an increase in pedestrian, cyclist and horse rider numbers due to increased provisions of shared-use pathways along the route of the new road.
- 7.7.10. Impacts during construction works will be set out and controlled by the provision of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), this document has been submitted to the planning authority for consideration and discharge of the relevant planning condition.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1. More detailed breakdowns of the cost increases that have occurred since the March 2020 Cabinet Report can be made available to Members upon request.