

## Points from Issues Specific Hearings 3-7 of relevance for Gravesham Borough Council

(IP ref: 20035747)

Includes some points for other parties where we wish to make comment

### Deadline 4

ISH/No.	Party	Action	Response
<b>ISH3 Project Design (EV-41f)</b>			
1	All LPA's	Reflections on the Applicant's Additional Submissions – Visual Representations of Intersections for ISH3 Pursuant to Procedural Decision 37 by the ExA of 1 September 2023 [PD-033], on 5 September 2023 the Applicant introduced visual representations of the function of the three main proposed intersections A2/ M2/ LTC [AS-145], A13/ A1089/ LTC [AS-146] and M25/ LTC [AS-147]. Detailed written observations on that material is sought by Deadline 4.	Response to this item is picked up under comments on the applicant's response to the Gravesham Local Impact Report on transport matters GL3.12
<b>ISH4 Traffic and transportation (EV-42e)</b>			
4	Gravesham	<b>Request for Additional Sensitivity Testing</b> Please provide further details as to why additional sensitivity testing is required.	See Gravesham Action Points ISH4 Point 4
6	Gravesham	<b>Outline Traffic Management Plan: Traffic Management Forum</b> Please provide suggested wording for changes to the Outline Traffic	See Gravesham Action Points ISH4 Point 6

		Management Plan for Construction [ <a href="#">APP-547</a> ] to strengthen the Traffic Management Forum's role/influence including dispute resolution procedures.	
7	Gravesham	Outline Traffic Management Plan: Road Closure Minimisation Please suggest wording in the Outline Traffic Management Plan for Construction [ <a href="#">APP-547</a> ] which would seek to minimise periods of road closures as far as practicable.	See Gravesham Action Points ISH4 Point 7
<b>ISH5 Tunnelling (EV-44a)</b>			
		No comment	
<b>ISH6 Mitigation, Compensation and Land Requirements (EV-45a)</b>			
2	Natural England & AoNB Unit	Landscape Scale Strategy. Give consideration to providing comments as to whether the land within the Order Limits is sufficient to provide the proposed mitigation and compensation for the loss of habitats having regard to the proposed "landscape scale" strategy.	At this stage it is hard to say whether additional land is required as the missing element is a landscape strategy across all mitigation and compensation sites to see how the interrelated with each other and adjoining land. Issues have been raised by IP's on BNG and Nitrogen deposition sites and as indicated in Gravesham LIR and related submissions the impact on the Kent Downs AoNB is not mitigatable.
4	Kent CC	<b>Outline Landscape Ecology Management Plan (OLEMP)</b>  Suggest additional/altered wording within the OLEMP [ <a href="#">REP3-106</a> ] as to how the Council considers a co-ordinated delivery of the Landscape	Seeking KCC views but single plan south of the river would be a basic requirement with contractors made to co-operate

		and Ecological Management Plans (LEMPs) could be achieved, having particular regard to the likelihood that the LEMPs will be produced and then delivered by multiple contractors.	
5	Gravesham	Provide post hearing submission detailing comments provided by Ms Highland on Agenda Item 3.b) i – Extent and Type of Landscaping.	<p>The Applicant provides a number of documents that include the mitigation and compensation measures proposed. The documents are not easy to navigate. However, it is clear that the oLEMP (Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan) is informed by the suite of other documents and sets out the management requirements for areas of landscape and ecology required for mitigation. In this respect the oLEMP is concerned with landscaping.</p> <p>We consider that the documents<sup>1</sup> provide principles and objectives for achieving areas of mitigation planting, but the approach taken is not considered to be ‘landscape-scale’. Further, we question whether the approach is sufficiently joined-up across the whole Project area to ensure consistent treatment across the landscape.</p> <p>Landscape-scale can be used to describe the size of an intervention, and usually refers to a broader, more strategic approach. However, proposals for changing land cover type for ecological mitigation purposes will also have an effect on the landscape. A landscape-scale approach which is also landscape-led would be a much broader, more holistic approach that takes account of all components of landscape and would better integrate biodiversity issues with the effects on the landscape.</p> <p>This broader approach would help identify areas with similar characteristics to those lost as a result of the Project, or areas which have provide suitable</p>

<sup>1</sup> doc 7.5 Design Principles - which capture the key principles shaping the design;

doc 6.2 Environmental Statement: Environmental Masterplan Figure 2.4 Sections 1 – 4 - which outlines the spatial extent, layout and location of landscape and ecology elements required for mitigation purposes;

doc 6.3 Environmental Statement: Appx 2.2 (Code of Construction Practice including) the REAC (Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments); and

doc 6.7 oLEMP (outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan) (REP3 – 106) – which sets out the management and maintenance requirements for areas of landscape and ecology required for mitigation.

			<p>opportunities for a particular habitat to be developed. This approach would provide the potential for sites to be part of a much wider ecological network, which in turn helps build resilience.</p> <p>In addition, a landscape-led approach at a landscape-scale fits with other strategic environmental plans and networks eg the AONB management plan, landscape character areas, thus providing the potential for cross-benefits.</p> <p>There are limited opportunities to mitigate within the scheme area, so a broader approach may be needed, for example, to ensure that the location and amount of mitigation corresponds with the area suffering the losses areas (i.e. south or north of the river), and to ensure that the optimum sites have been selected for mitigation.</p>
11	Natural England	(Part 1 is for applicant) Comment on whether greater connectivity north-south (in association with that which exists over HS1) from the proposed green Thong Lane bridge over the A2 would result in an ecological benefit, even if this is not an ideal solution.	<p>These comments are additional to those made at the Hearing (ISH6) by V. Hyland for Gravesham Borough Council, under agenda items 4a) i and ii.</p> <p>The provision of green bridges is described in the documents as an embedded mitigation measure, designed to reduce and offset adverse environmental effects of the Project. GBC point would be Green Bridges serve multiple functions, viz:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highways</li> <li>• Access (walking, cycling, horse riding)</li> <li>• Landscape</li> <li>• Biodiversity</li> </ul> <p>Gravesham considers the two green bridges over the widened A2 (Thong Lane South and Brewers Road) as currently proposed will not provide the levels of mitigation and compensation necessary to address the negative effects of the Project. In addition, we request the Applicant to recognise the need - and opportunity - to provide visionary solutions at these key locations at entry points to the KDAONB. Their primary function should be for landscape mitigation, given their location, but the Council appreciates that different disciplines may have different preferences.</p>

			<p>We consider that the design criteria for the green bridges over the widened A2, as set out in document 7.5 Design Principles, are not sufficient to provide adequate mitigation of the adverse environmental effects.</p> <p>Further, the Management Requirements for the green bridges in the oLEMP<sup>2</sup> do not provide the landscape mitigation and enhancement that is needed at these key locations at the boundary of the KDAONB.</p> <p>The oLEMP (REP3 – 107) Section 5.6.2 describes ‘...<i>green bridges at Brewers Road and Thong Lane over the existing A2 are proposed as ‘lightweight’ green bridges, with the green bridge at Thong Lane over the A122 defined as a ‘heavyweight’ green bridge with tree planting.</i>’</p> <p>We consider the green bridges should be made as wide and deep as is necessary to ensure the bridges are fit for purpose and allow the full range of functions to be performed.</p> <p>To set this in context, the A2 corridor currently runs east-west through the KDAONB and forms a barrier across the AONB in this area. However, the effects of this ‘break’ in the landscape are reduced by the existing wooded character along the road corridor, and access is enabled via existing bridges.</p> <p>The central reservation plays a key role in providing areas of wooded planting that contribute to the landscape character and effectively reduce the real and perceived break in the landscape; softening the impact of traffic and reducing the scale of the road. Woodland planting extends along both sides of the A2 and along the HS1 route, extending into the woodland and parkland areas to the south.</p>
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<sup>2</sup> The Management Requirements for the green bridges in the oLEMP (REP3 – 107) section 5.6.6. include the provision of:

- habitat connectivity, including a connection into habitats adjacent to the ends of each bridge;
- a high-quality experience for bridge users;
- a visual connection between the woodlands north and south of the A2 corridor, to retain the wooded character of the landscape;
- focal points for road users, local landmarks, a wooded skyline and visually linking either side of the bridge;
- a closed canopy over the highway crossing the green bridge at Brewers Road and Thong Lane South as far as reasonably practicable;

			<p>The proposals for widening the A2 are difficult to accommodate, as they have to be made within a constrained corridor. As a result, the landscape will be dominated by the road and its hard infrastructure. The increased width of the road, its noise and visual intrusion, and the stripping-out of woodland planting will exacerbate the separation of the KDAONB and dramatically alter the landscape character.</p> <p><b>There are very few opportunities to mitigate or compensate for the effects of the Project in this designated landscape. In the absence of other mitigation measures, the proposed green bridges over the widened A2 are the only opportunity to address landscape severance, and reduce the impacts of the road on wildlife, people and the landscape.</b></p> <p>The A2 bridges should provide a number of important functions. We consider the landscape and access functions of the bridges have not been fully recognised or assessed, given the predicted negative effects of the Project, and the uses of the bridges.</p> <p>The bridges across the A2 are key elements in the recreation access network. They link across the KDAONB and provide connections to the suite of countryside recreation areas situated on both sides of the A2. They are used by walkers, cyclists and horse-riders. The proximity of the widened road, its visual intrusion and noise will be experienced at close quarters.</p> <p>The Design Principles<sup>3</sup> promise ‘<i>a high-quality experience for users...</i>’ but it is our opinion that the current proposals will not deliver on this promise. The bridges are too narrow to provide the protection and screening needed for the range of uses and users.</p> <p>In landscape terms, there is a need and an opportunity to reduce the apparent width of the transport corridor and provide a land bridge to connect the severed landscape at each end of the KDAONB along the A2 corridor. The proposed design principles for the bridges include ‘<i>To act as local landmarks and signal entry into the Kent Downs AONB for drivers... and... vegetation... visible on the horizon....</i>’ The bridges need to do more than</p>
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<sup>3</sup> Application Document Ref: TR010032/APP/7.5 Doc 7.5 Design Principles – Table 5.1 Section-specific principles: Section 1 – A2/M2 Corridor - Clause no S1.04

			<p>'signal entry' at these key locations where the landscape is undergoing change.</p> <p>In addition to the above functions, the bridges are part of the highway network, and provide road links across the A2. <b>It is our opinion that this combination of uses of the bridges has not been fully considered or assessed.</b></p> <p>In addition, the existing bridge at <b>Park Pale</b>, to the east of Brewers Road bridge, is located at the eastern boundary of the KDAONB. Given the location of this bridge, and the adverse effects reported for this LLCA<sup>4</sup> in the LVIA<sup>5</sup> for both landscape and visual receptors, we consider the Park Pale bridge should also be a green bridge.</p> <p>We consider the term 'green bridge' may be misleading, as the requirement for the bridges makes them multi-purpose and therefore multi-functional.</p> <p>The Applicant states they have considered the guidance for developing green bridges, provided by Natural England<sup>6</sup> and the Landscape Institute<sup>7</sup>. The starting point for the L.I. Technical Note is the NE Review, which is then built on to examine, inter alia, the wider benefits of green bridges.</p> <p>The guidance is an important tool in the development of green bridges, but it is not prescriptive. What is clear from the guidance and the examples provided, is that elements of the designs and lessons from the uses of other green bridges may be applicable in informing the design of the green bridges over the widened A2.</p> <p>The Summary of Findings from the NE guidance document recommends the planning of a green bridge should not be done in isolation, but should form part of a <b>wider mitigation strategy</b>. The Summary also states that the size and structure of the bridge should be based on the requirements of the expected use.</p>
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<sup>4</sup> West Kent Downs (sub area Shorne) LLCA

<sup>5</sup> Doc 6.1 ES Chapter 7 – Landscape and Visual – Schedule of effects

<sup>6</sup> Natural England (2015) report, Green Bridges: A Literature Review'

<sup>7</sup> Green Bridges - Technical Guidance Note 09/2015 (Landscape Institute, 2015)

			<p>In conclusion, it is clear that the consideration and design of these bridges is a complex area that needs careful analysis.</p> <p>We suggest a careful reappraisal is required to determine whether the designs of the Green Bridges meet the Applicant's proposed key functions; to ensure the proposals are fit for the purposes including, providing a gateway to the AONB, addressing landscape impact and severance mitigation, providing access for pedestrians, cyclist and equestrians that is a high-quality experience, as well as ecological connectivity.</p> <p>Further, we consider that the design of the bridges should be reviewed, and the principal of enhancement is included, at these critical and sensitive locations.</p>
13	Gravesham	<p><b>Adequacy of surveys</b> Provide comments on the adequacy of the surveys set out within the Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan [<a href="#">REP3-106</a>].</p>	<p>The oLEMP includes land parcels within the Order Limits that perform landscape and ecological mitigation and compensation functions. It is unclear to us what is meant by 'adequacy of surveys', but as the Hearing is concerned with terrestrial biodiversity, we suggest that Natural England are asked for comments on this point. The Nitrogen Deposition sites need to be fully surveyed for biodiversity, utilities (power line are obvious), archaeology and other features that may impact on the role they can perform.</p>
<b>ISH7 Draft Development Consent Order (EV-46e)</b>			
1	LA's	<p>Swansea Bay Judgment Can the local authorities provide a copy of the Swansea Bay case judgment in the Court of Appeal and cite the relevant parts it seeks to rely upon in any submissions in respect of the definition of 'begin' in the dDCO.</p>	<p>Copy provided. See the Council's Written Submissions following ISH7 for its views on the application of the Swansea Bay case.</p>