



DEADLINE 8 RESPONSE
KENT DOWNS AONB RESPONSE TO
ExA WRITTEN QUESTIONS 3

Interested party Ref no: 20035310

Q16.1.3

To - Applicant Gravesham Borough Council, Thurrock Council, Kent County Council, Essex County Council, Kent Downs AONB Unit, Natural England, Other IPs interested in the design, function and operation of Green Bridges

Green Bridges: serving multiple objectives

ExQ3 11.1.5 and 11.1.6 refer to the functions of the proposed Green Bridges in relation to biodiversity and habitat connectivity. However, evaluation of the proposed Green Bridges requires consideration of their performance in terms of multiple objectives and outcomes, including but not limited to: • Biodiversity • Habitat connectivity • The provision of non-motorised user (NMU) routes for people • Landscape and landscape mitigation, in general terms and (with reference to the Kent Downs) to AONB landscapes. With reference to these objectives but also to such other functions and outcomes as are considered relevant, please provide your summary assessment of the effectiveness of each Green Bridge proposed within your area of interest. If objectives and outcomes appear to be in competition or to pull in different directions, please indicate the particular objectives considered to be the most important and why.

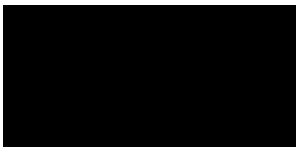
The AONB Unit set out its views on the effectiveness of the Thong Lane South and Brewers Road Green Bridges as providing landscape connectivity at ISH 11. Essentially, we are of the view the Green Bridges over the A2 would fail to serve this purpose due to their restricted width.

While we recognise that the landscape here is already severed to a degree, impacts are significantly reduced by the central reservation woodland, the mitigation planting associated with the high speed railway line, and the fact the existing woodland currently comes up to the

highway edge on the north side of the A2, all of which reduces the apparent scale of the transport infrastructure and provides wooded enclosure, limiting the apparent severance.

The loss of the woodland required as a result of the Project and the creation of a mostly 14-lane but up to 16 lane wide unbroken expanse of highway infrastructure in severing the northern tip of the AONB from the rest of it will be significant, as is demonstrated in photomontages included in Chapter 7 of the LVIA such as those provided from Viewpoint S05a ([REP6-036](#)) in Doc 6.2 Environmental Statement Figure 7.19 - Photomontages Winter Year 1 and Summer Year 15 (1 of 4).

However, despite acknowledgement of the need for the bridges to provide landscape connectivity, their current width falls far short of achieving any meaningful landscape connection. The planting requirements of 11.5 metres on the Brewers Lane Green bridge and 21.5 metres on the Thong Lane Green bridge falls far short of relevant design guidelines for green bridges that are seeking to achieve landscape connectivity. The severance would impact on a 2.1 km length of the AONB. The proposed Green bridge planting would amount to 33 metres which represents just 1.57 percent of the dissected landscape. It is the view of the AONB Unit that this in no way provides a fully functioning landscape linkage and falls far short of the scale of response needed.



Katie Miller

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5 December 2023