

A47 Wansford to Sutton Dualling

Scheme Number: TR010039

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6.3 Environmental Statement Appendices

Appendix 7.1 – Planning policy context

APFP Regulation 5(2)(a)

Planning Act 2008

Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed
Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009

July 2021

Infrastructure Planning

Planning Act 2008

**The Infrastructure Planning
(Applications: Prescribed Forms and
Procedure) Regulations 2009**

A47 Wansford to Sutton
Development Consent Order 202[x]

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT APPENDICES
Appendix 7.1 – Planning policy context

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Appendix 7.1 Planning Policy Context

1. Planning policy context

1.1. Introduction

- 1.1.1. The following provides a summary of relevant landscape related policy.

1.2. European policy

- 1.2.1. The UK is a signatory to the European Landscape Convention (ELC), which seeks to achieve improved approaches to the planning, management and protection of landscapes throughout Europe. The ELC and its definition of landscape underpins the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Standard LA 107 Landscape and Visual Effects (Revision 2, 2020) and the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA 3, 2013) which have been followed by this assessment.

1.3. National policy

National Planning Policy Framework

- 1.3.1. The National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are applied. Part 15 of the NPPF sets out the framework with respect to conserving the natural environment. Paragraph 170 states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.

National Policy Statement for National Networks

- 1.3.2. The National Policy Statement for National Networks (NPS NN) was published in 2014 and sets out the government's policies to deliver development of nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIP) on the national road network in England. The Secretary of State (SoS) uses the NPS NN as the primary basis for making decisions on such development consent applications.
- 1.3.3. Regarding good design, the NPS NN identifies that applicants should include design as an integral consideration from the outset of any proposal (paragraph 4.28) and that there may be opportunities for the applicant to demonstrate good design in terms of siting and design measures relative to existing landscape and historical character and function, landscape permeability, landform and vegetation (paragraph 4.34). Applicants should be able to demonstrate how the proposed design has evolved (paragraph 4.35).
- 1.3.4. Regarding the applicant's assessment, the NPS NN requires that where a development is subject to an environmental impact assessment (EIA), an assessment of any likely significant landscape and visual impacts should be

undertaken including reference to any landscape character assessments that have been locally published (paragraph 5.144). The assessment should consider any relevant local development plan policies, significant effects during construction and operation (on both landscape components and landscape character), and visibility and conspicuousness (paragraphs 5.145-148). The assessment of visibility and conspicuousness should include consideration of potential light pollution effects and effects on tranquillity.

- 1.3.5. Regarding decision making, the NPS NN identifies that projects need to be designed carefully and the aim should be to avoid or minimise harm to the landscape, providing reasonable mitigation where possible and appropriate (paragraph 5.149). For development located away from nationally designated landscapes, the NPS NN states that where a local development document in England has policies based on landscape character assessment, these will be given particular consideration. More specifically, local designations will be given consideration in decision making by the Secretary of State (SoS) but are not be used in themselves to refuse consent (paragraph 5.156). In taking decisions, the SoS will consider whether the Proposed Scheme has been designed carefully, taking account of environmental effects on the landscape and siting, operational and other relevant constraints, to avoid adverse effects on landscape or to minimise harm to the landscape, including by reasonable mitigation (paragraph 5.157). The SoS will also judge whether visual effects on sensitive receptors outweigh the benefits of the development (paragraph 5.158).
- 1.3.6. This assessment of the Proposed Scheme considers the matters raised by the NPS NN and provides the relevant landscape and visual information that is required by it to enable appropriate decision making.

1.4. Highways England Policy

Highways England Licence

- 1.4.1. The Highways England Licence outlines the commitments, duties, and obligations of Highways England to the Department of Transport. Environmental commitments related to the LVIA are detailed in section 5.23:
- 1.4.2. *“In complying with 4.2(g) and its general duty under section 5(2) of the Infrastructure Act 2015 to have regard to the environment, the Licence holder should:*
- a. Ensure that protecting and enhancing the environment is embedded into its business decision-making processes and is considered at all levels of operations;*

- b. Ensure the best practicable environmental outcomes across its activities, while working in the context of sustainable development and delivering value for money;*
- c. Consider the cumulative environmental impact of its activities across its network and identify holistic approaches to mitigate such impacts and improve environmental performance;*
- d. Where appropriate, work with others to develop solutions that can provide increased environmental benefits over those that the Licence holder can achieve alone, where this delivers value for money...;*
- e. Calculate and consider the carbon impact of road projects and factor carbon into design decisions, and seek to minimise carbon emissions and other greenhouse gases from its operations;*
- f. Adapt its network to operate in a changing climate, including assessing, managing, and mitigating the potential risks posed by climate change to the operation, maintenance, and improvement of the network;*
- g. Develop approaches to the construction, maintenance and operation of the Licence holder's network that are consistent with the government's plans for a low carbon future;*
- h. Take opportunities to influence road users to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions from their journey choices."*

1.5. Local Planning Policy

Introduction

- 1.5.1. The Site is located within the Peterborough City District. The River Nene forms the southern boundary of Peterborough in the vicinity of the Site within approximately 100m of the Proposed Scheme. All of the Proposed Scheme; the countryside to the north and east; and the villages of Wansford and Sutton are located in Peterborough. The village of Stibbington, to the south of the river, and the valley floor between Stibbington and the river is located within the adjacent authority of Huntingdonshire. The following policy review focuses on Peterborough but also includes brief consideration of relevant policies from Huntingdonshire where these relate to the potential landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Scheme just outside of the authority area to the north (the Proposed Scheme extends to within approximately 100m of the border where it passes close to the River Nene approximately halfway between Wansford and Sutton).

The Peterborough Local Plan

- 1.5.2. The Peterborough Local Plan (2016 to 2036) was adopted in July 2019. The following policies are relevant.

Policy LP16 – Design and the Public Realm

- 1.5.3. Although this policy primarily applies to built development, it seeks to ensure that all development proposals positively contribute to the character and local distinctiveness of the area and create a sense of place. This is identified as including respecting the context of the site and surrounding area; responding appropriately to the local patterns of development and boundary treatments; the topography; existing natural, historic and built assets and features that contribute positively to local character and distinctiveness; existing landmarks and focal points; and existing views into, out of or through the site.

Policy LP24 – Nene Valley

- 1.5.4. The explanative text for Policy LP24 identifies that the Nene Valley runs west-east across the authority area. It has long been identified as an area of high amenity, landscape, ecological and heritage value and forms part of the Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area (NIA) (mainly focused on nature conservation and ecology). There are opportunities for development to positively support the aims of the NIA, to reverse the decline of biodiversity and restore and enhance the ecological network.
- 1.5.5. Policy LP24 therefore has a strong focus on landscape management and enhancement for recreational and biodiversity purposes. Under Policy LP24 the Nene Valley should not be regarded as a protected locally designated landscape (such as a Special Landscape Area). It is nevertheless the case that the landscape is described as being of high value.
- 1.5.6. It is relevant to quote the wording of the policy in full:

Within the area of the Nene Valley, as identified on the Policies Map, the council will support development that will safeguard and enhance recreation and/or bring landscape, nature conservation, heritage, cultural or amenity benefits. The proposal will need to be appropriate in terms of use, scale and character within its townscape or landscape setting. Development proposals will be particularly supported where they:

a. will enhance navigation along the River Nene for a wide range of recreational, cultural or transport purposes, without impacting negatively on wildlife or other land management activities. Development that creates new links with other

waterways within and/or surrounding the local authority area will also be supported;

b. will protect and enhance biodiversity, and contribute to linking surrounding habitats through habitat creation and improved green infrastructure;

c. will enable greater public access to the waterspace and the achievement of continuous publicly accessible paths and cycle routes through the valley;

d. will enhance the provision of ecosystem services within the Nene Valley NIA;

e. will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Nene Washes International site or other designated sites in line with Policy LP28.

There will be a general emphasis on development involving low-impact, informal activities in the rural area of the valley, and development involving more formal activities in the urban area. In all cases, new development beside the river will be required to be designed with a frontage or open space to the river which creates a more natural water's edge and enhances its character.

Development which would increase flood risk, compromise the performance of flood defences or existing navigation facilities, or restrict access to such facilities will not be permitted.

Policy LP27 – Landscape Character

- 1.5.7. The explanative text for Policy LP27 identifies that The Peterborough Landscape Character Assessment (2007) identifies six landscape character areas within Peterborough and eighteen sub-areas that sit within these. The Assessment provides guidance on the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape within these areas and assesses the landscape in terms of its sensitivity to change and ability to accept development. These Landscape Character Assessments are used in the determination of planning applications to ensure the diverse character of the area's landscape is respected, maintained and, where possible, enhanced.

- 1.5.8. The full policy reads:

New development in and adjoining the countryside should be located and designed in a way that is sensitive to its landscape setting; retaining, enhancing or restoring the distinctive qualities of the landscape character area and sub area in which it would be situated.

There are six landscape character areas (with associated sub-areas), which have been identified in the Peterborough Landscape Character Assessment. They are:

Nene Valley

Nassaburgh Limestone Plateau

Welland Valley

Peterborough Fens

Peterborough Fen Fringe

South Peterborough Claylands

For each Landscape Character Area and sub area, specific details of which are provided in the Peterborough Landscape Character Assessment, planning permission will be granted if the proposed development would:

- a. recognise and, where possible, enhance the character and special qualities of the local landscape through appropriate design and management;*
- b. reflect and enhance local distinctiveness and diversity;*
- c. identify, maintain and, where possible, enhance any natural or man-made features of significant landscape, historical, cultural, wildlife and geological importance. Where a proposal may result in significant harm, it may be permitted in exceptional circumstances, if the overriding benefits of the development demonstrably outweigh the harm: in such circumstances the harm should be minimised and mitigated;*
- d. safeguard and enhance important views and vistas, including sky lines in to, out of and within the development layout;*
- e. protect the landscape settings and separate identities of settlements; and*
- f. provide appropriate landscape mitigation proportionate in scale and design, and/or suitable off-site enhancements.*

In considering the impacts of a proposal, the cumulative as well as the individual impacts on the landscape will be considered, including the potential impacts on adjacent Landscape Character Areas.

- 1.5.9. The assessment of the effects of the Proposed Scheme on landscape character contained in Appendix 7.3 (**TR010039/APP/6.3**) is based on this assessment with a specific focus on the effects of the Proposed Scheme on the character of the Nene Valley and Nassaburgh Limestone Plateau landscapes.

Policy LP29 – Trees and Woodlands

1.5.10. Policy LP29 seeks to maintain, improve and expand tree and woodland cover.

Other relevant matters

1.5.11. It is also noted that the Peterborough Local Plan contains the following designations which have a bearing on the assessment of the landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Scheme and how they might be mitigated:

- The villages of Thornhaugh, Wansford and Sutton are designated as conservation areas
- The River Nene County Wildlife Site extends along the northern side of the River Nene between the petrol station and pumping station to the west, to the village of Sutton to the south-east – this includes the location approximately halfway between Wansford and Sutton where the Proposed Scheme extends to within approximately 50m of the river
- An area of land to the north of Heath House is a nationally designated Nature Conservation Area

Huntingdonshire Local Plan

1.5.12. The Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 was adopted in May 2019. The Proposed Scheme lies outside of the Plan area but, given the proximity of the boundary, some policies are relevant to the assessment of its landscape and visual effects. The policies map does not identify any specific protective landscape designations in the vicinity of the Proposed Scheme at Stibbington and across the valley floor between the village and the river. The area is, however, identified as a green infrastructure priority area and wildlife site.

Policy LP3 Green Infrastructure

1.5.13. This policy focuses on the connectivity of green infrastructure along the Nene Valley and nature improvement, rather than its landscape character and views from it to surrounding areas.

Policy LP10 The Countryside

1.5.14. This policy seeks to ensure that development in the countryside recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and does not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive light or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside.

Policy LP11 Design Context

1.5.15. This policy states that development will be supported where it is demonstrated that it responds positively to its context and has drawn inspiration from the key characteristics of its surroundings, including natural, historic and built

environment, to help create distinctive, high quality and well designed places. In order to achieve this the policy refers to the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPD (2007). A proposal should have regard to high quality design, and the quality or character of the area.

- 1.5.16. The Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPD (2007) has informed the landscape character assessment contained in Appendix 7.3 (**TR010039/APP/6.3**).

1.6. References

- Department for Transport (2014). *National Networks National Planning Policy Statement*
- Department for Transport (2015). *Highways England Licence*
- Highways England (2015). *Highways England Delivery Plan 2015-2020*
- Huntingdonshire District Council (2019). *Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036*
- Huntingdonshire District Council (2007). *The Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPD*
- Ministry of Housing, Communities, and local Government (2012 updated 2019). *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*
- Peterborough City Council (2019). *Peterborough Local Plan 2016 to 2036*

1.7. Glossary

Term	Description
DPD	Development Plan Document
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ELC	European Landscape Convention
GVLIA3	Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3 rd Edition
NN NPS	National Policy Statement for National Networks
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects
SoS	Secretary of State