

As requested, the following provides responses to ExA questions directed to IP's

LV.2.2 – Landscape and Visual. The plans which form Appendix LV.2 Trees to be Removed and Replaced at Coronation Avenue WQ LV.1.8 [REP1-044] are annotated 'Draft'. The Applicant is asked to explain how this relates to the requirement in R5(3) of the dDCO for the landscaping scheme to include a strategy for the replacement of trees which are to be removed at Coronation Avenue? IPs are asked to comment on the proposals for Coronation Avenue.

IP Comment

1. In reviewing this documentation again, I remain disappointed by the scale of tree loss inflicted by the scheme. Undoubtedly the biggest impact is on the distinguished Coronation Avenue of trees which line both sides of the single carriageway. I am not aware of any other A classed road in the country which can boast such an extensive configuration of mature trees, which are now approaching 70 years age. The main source of frustration stems from an underlying belief that more could have been done to protect the trees and improve the levels of mitigation. For example, most of the work carried out on the existing road is asymmetric which means that the eastern edge of the road has been spared some of the major works. Unfortunately, this does not appear to have provided any extra protection to the trees on the eastern edge.
2. In total it appears that circa 200 coronation trees are to be felled and replaced with young trees which I understand will take a minimum of 15 years to mature. Even then the visual impact and environmental contribution will remain well short of what we enjoy today.
3. In looking at the plans for the new arrangement of replacement trees the Avenue effect would appear to have been lost. The configuration of the trees is no longer linear and there are too many gaps in the flow to emulate the Avenue effect. Furthermore, the distances between the trees flanking each side of the road are over 50 metres in some cases.

LV.2.6 Landscape and Visual. Appendix LV3 Response to LV.1.13 [REP1-051] considers potential additional mitigation measures, their suitability and the prospect of potentially reducing significant effects to non-significant. What are the views of IPs in respect of these further potential mitigation measures?

IP Comment

1. Although the opening paragraph does make the claim that additional mitigation may reduce significant effects to non-significant, I could not find any example in the rest of the document which suggested that this had been achieved.
2. I was interesting to read that other properties which look out onto a noise barrier have been assigned a significant effects rating. In being consistent, I would have expected the same rating for Northgate Farm.

NV.2.5 Noise and Vibration. Paragraph 6.9.32 of the ES [APP-042] states that reflective noise barriers are proposed for two locations. What other mitigation measures are being considered if these were not provided? Why are these only proposed and not agreed? How has the assessment of environmental impacts accommodated the uncertainty surrounding the proposed barriers?

IP Comment

1. I understand from a meeting with the Applicant on the 11th February that the noise barrier at the south end of the scheme (PNB1) is now going ahead. However, it is very disappointing to be learn that there is no scope to extend the barrier to the full extent of my boundary leaving the majority of the property exposed to a significant increase in road traffic volume. This will be particularly noticeable at the point of entry to the property which will be totally exposed to the new carriageway. It is further disappointing to hear that “value for money” is the only reason for not considering an extension. Given the significant increase in noise levels I am struggling to understand how you make a value for money assessment when considering the impact on family health and enjoyment of the property.
2. The constraints on the barrier length leaves the majority of the north facing aspect of the house fully open to the new dual carriageway. This includes 11 windows (8 on the upper tier) which have a direct line of sight to the new carriageway with negligible benefit from the noise barrier. Furthermore, the barrier offers no benefit to those parts of the garden that we spend most of our time and enjoy the most.
3. As highlighted in the question I am equally confused as to how previous environmental assessments have been carried out given the uncertainty of the barrier. As the barrier was not guaranteed presumably the assessments had to assume that there was no barrier. As such the environmental assessments should be revisited in light of this. This should include reassessment of the visual effect.
4. In recognising that the barrier length was constrained by budget I understand that the Applicant did consider other mitigation measures but these were not taken forward. In considering an earth bund the applicant suggests that this is not feasible due to the lack of space. We are surprised by this conclusion as there is a sizeable area at the end of the noise barrier where a bund could have been accommodated.
5. I noted that Paragraph 6.9.32 included the following statement, *“The barrier would be constructed if it can be built meeting the value for money criteria in paragraph 6.9.29. If PNB1 can be built, Northgate Farm would not be eligible for compensation under the NIR”*. I do not understand why Northgate Farm has been singled out here and was not aware that partial mitigation action disqualified affected properties from compensation. Given the limitations of the barrier I do not accept this conclusion but will address this directly with the Applicant rather than responding here.