

This document forms part of Deadline 8 response from Northgate Farm. The Response is directed at the Deadline 7 submission made by the Applicant referenced by 7.27 Applicant's Response to Deadline 6

Reference Table 1-3 – D6 Submission

In responding to Deadline 6 the Applicant has provided detailed responses to each of the issues raised. As with previous submissions there are a number of responses which are inaccurate or out of context. For example, in the loss of benefits section, point 8, we highlight the loss of our private bridleway access leading south from the property but the Applicant has interpreted this as public bridleway access despite raising this a number of occasions in the past.

As with previous responses there is no material change and none of our issues are addressed by the responses. Although the natural inclination is to respond to each of the points we have decided, as with deadline 6 submission, to refrain from doing so here. We do not believe the continued exchange of recursive iterations are helpful to the examination process. In this instance we prefer to address the points directly with the Applicant outside of the Examination process. To this end, we had a constructive meeting with the Applicant on the 13th May to walkthrough the list of issues providing extra detail and context. It is unfortunate that this meeting occurred after the deadline 7 was submitted. As part of the walk through we did identify a handful of issues which could, potentially, be addressed by detailed design. Unfortunately, this will not be available until after the Examination process has completed. In the same meeting an update was provided by the Applicant on the status of the PMA access road which highlighted that discussions were ongoing and that a final decision had not been made.

Although the meeting on the 13th was helpful, we were not able address any of the issues at this stage, with exception to issue number 73 Combined Effect, which has now been removed. We now understanding that even though the referenced scheme did overlap with this project it cannot be considered in the combined effect assessment as it is now complete.

Unfortunately, all the other issues remain outstanding but we will continue to work with the Applicant to try to reduce the list.

In reviewing the responses from the Applicant to the hearings which took place on week commencing 19th April 2021 there are some points which require a response.

Table 1-4 – Written Summary to hearings.

Wednesday, 21st April 2021 – Issue Specific Hearing 3

Point 2.1 – The original point was specific to the PMA leading to Northgate Farm only.

Point 2.4 – Whilst we understand that powers granted will become legal rights it is not particularly reassuring to have to rely upon the court system to enforce rights of access. Furthermore, even if access is begrudgingly accepted, it does not make for a harmonious arrangement or a long-term sustainable solution. Hopefully this can be resolved with a mutually acceptable outcome.

Wednesday, 22nd April 2021 – Issue Specific Hearing 3

Agenda: Landscape and Visual Impacts

The Applicant continues to place great store in the masking capabilities of the trees along the western edge of the boundary. Unfortunately, this is misplaced for the following reasons:

1. The trees are at an age where they are “leggy” with very little undergrowth and even in the summer the road can be seen through the trees. In the winter the road becomes even more visible.
2. By the time the construction is completed the limited masking offered by the trees will be further reduced as they continue to grow leaving only intermittent trunks to mask the worse of the visual effect.
3. Some of the trees may be removed to facilitate the new point of access, exposing the new carriageway further.

The response provided by the Applicant appears to suggest that the Noise Barrier will further improve the visual effects by also masking the worst impacts of the scheme. Again, we are struggling to understand the logic behind this for the following reasons:

1. Whilst the shortened noise barrier will mask at ground level some of the visual impact directly west of the property it does not provide any protection from a Northerly aspect which is where most of the changes will occur. The noise barrier provides no screening from the upper floor of the property.
2. The vast majority of the 70-metre noise barrier will be visible from the property with only 10 metres of overlap with vegetation, which as highlighted above provides minimal screening. As such the Applicant statement “The visual impact arising as a result of the presence of the noise barrier would also be offset by the retained vegetation in the foreground of the view from the northern elevation of the property” is not correct on a number of fronts.
3. The barrier will be clearly visible from the property. Although the barrier will screen some visual effects, the view of the barrier only represents a marginal improvement on what it is hiding. At the time of writing the design of the noise barrier is not available and as such we are not able to fully assess impact the barrier will have on the visual effect. Given this uncertainty we are surprised that the Applicant can be so confident of the visual effect.

Combined and Cumulative Effects

Cumulative effects. Having read the referenced technical note document (ref 7.26.3) we remain unconvinced by the outcome and conclusions of the document for the following reasons

1. Although the document provides additional detail and makes reference to individual properties the analysis is still carried out with groups of properties. The level of granularity is still high with very little distinction made between properties and how they are individually impacted by the scheme. Throughout the analysis Northgate Farm is grouped alongside Warreners House. Even though the circumstances and impact upon the two properties are very different they both have the same outcome. For example, Warreners house is set back

away from the road and is protected by the new carriageway by other properties, including Northgate Farm, it is assessed as having the same visual effect (and combined effect) as Northgate Farm, which I do not accept.

2. As part of the Population and Human Health category I was expecting some recognition of other key benefits lost.
3. The cumulative effects analysis does not appear to recognise the aggregated impact for properties which are impacted by each category.
4. The analysis is very much dependent upon the accuracy of the other category findings which feed into the model. All of which have are being questioned. There appears to be no contingency for margin of error.
5. There is no recognition that the partial noise barrier that is proposed will have a negative impact on visual effect for Northgate Farm.
6. Although the Applicant makes reference to mitigation measures, they provide minimal benefit in this analysis. This includes:
 - a. The applicant states the following for Northgate Farm; “ *is to provide a boundary hedgerow and trees to the northern and eastern boundaries to provide screening to the proposed PMA*”. Although I am not sure why this is referenced in this context the statement is misleading. There are no plans to provide hedgerow along our boundary as suggested. I understand from the previous meeting with the Applicant that the hedgerow referenced here is the Hedgerow that follows the PMA road which will only form part of our boundary where it cuts through the property and existing trees and hedgerow are removed. This still leaves the vast majority of the property exposed.
 - b. The applicant makes reference to the introduction of low noise surfacing to help offset the increase in noise. As the current surface was also categorised as a low noise surface, I am doubtful that it will make the significant improvements forecast. Furthermore, it is generally recognised that the noise reduction properties will reduce with wear and use. We understand that the composition of the road surface has yet to be ratified and as such the impact of the new surface cannot be predicted with certainty.
 - c. The Applicant continues to place a high degree of confidence to the noise reduction provided by the Noise barrier even though it does not extend to the full boundary and leaves the majority of the northerly facing windows with a direct line of sight to the carriageway.