

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 This Environmental Statement has been prepared to accompany the application being submitted by 'Roxhill (Junction 15) Limited' (referred to as 'Roxhill' or 'the applicant') for a Development Consent Order for its proposal to build a strategic rail freight interchange on land to the west of Junction 15 of the M1 motorway. The Proposed Development is referred to as 'Northampton Gateway'.
- 1.1.2 The proposed development comprises:
- An intermodal freight terminal including container storage and HGV parking, rail sidings to serve individual warehouses, and the provision of an aggregates facility as part of the intermodal freight terminal, with the capability to also provide a 'rapid rail freight' facility;
  - Up to 468,000 sq m (approximately 5 million sq ft) (gross internal area) of warehousing and ancillary buildings, with additional floorspace provided in the form of mezzanines;
  - A secure, dedicated, HGV parking area of approximately 120 spaces including driver welfare facilities to meet the needs of HGVs visiting the site or intermodal terminal;
  - New road infrastructure and works to the existing road network, including the provision of a new access and associated works to the A508, a new bypass to the village of Roade, improvements to Junction 15 and to J15A of the M1 motorway, the A45, other highway improvements at junctions on the local highway network and related traffic management measures;
  - Strategic landscaping and tree planting, including diverted public rights of way;
  - Earthworks and demolition of existing structures on the SRFI site.
- 1.1.3 A more detailed description of the proposed development is provided in Chapter 2.
- 1.1.4 The development comprises a "nationally significant infrastructure project" (NSIP) and associated development which is the subject of an application to the Planning Inspectorate for a Development Consent Order (DCO). Following the submission of the application, it will be examined by an Examining Authority and ultimately decided by the Secretary of State for Transport. Further details of the process can be obtained on the Planning Inspectorate's website (<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk>).
- 1.1.5 The proposed development is subject to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process. Part of that assessment includes the production of this Environmental Statement (ES) which is submitted with the application. Drafts of the separate chapters as they evolved were made public as part of Stage 1 Consultation in December 2016 and the Stage 2 statutory consultation process held in Autumn 2017.
- 1.1.6 This Environmental Statement has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the 2017 EIA regulations). These regulations replaced the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2009 (the 2009 EIA regulations) under which this application was scoped. Reliance could have been placed on the transitional arrangements within the 2017 EIA regulations so that this ES could have continued to be prepared in compliance with the 2009 EIA regulations. Notwithstanding this, this final ES has been prepared in compliance with the 2017 EIA regulations and includes the additional elements required as a result of applying the 2017 EIA regulations (see para 1.2.4 below).

1.1.7 The aim of the proposal is to respond to the need for Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges identified by the Government to assist in the environmental imperative of increasing the amount of freight carried on rail rather than on the road, and to respond to an identified commercial need/demand for SRFI's including rail-served warehousing. The scheme is intended to generate significant economic advantages for the region as well as local communities, whilst managing and mitigating environmental effects and delivering an extensive package of highway infrastructure improvements.

## **1.2 SCOPE AND CONTENT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT**

1.2.1 A scoping opinion was received from the Planning Inspectorate, and this has informed the scope of the emerging ES. The topic areas to be covered in the ES are:

- Description of Development and Alternatives
- Socio-economic aspects
- Landscape and visual effects
- Ecology and nature conservation
- Geology, soil and groundwater
- Water resources and drainage
- Noise and Vibration
- Air quality
- Cultural heritage
- Lighting
- Transportation
- Agricultural land quality
- Waste
- Cumulative impacts

1.2.2 Appendix 1.2 identifies key comments and requests received from various consultees during the ES Scoping process and identifies how the application has responded, and where relevant information is found within the ES.

1.2.3 The chapter headings above collectively covered the scope of the ES as required by the 2009 EIA Regulations. Following the Stage 2 consultation process in late 2017 a decision was made to apply the 2017 EIA Regulations (see paragraph 1.1.6 above). Accordingly the ES has been expanded to cover the additional items.

1.2.4 The changes brought about by the 2017 regulations are summarised in the first and second columns of the table below and the section of this ES in which the subject matter of this change is addressed is referred to in the third column.

EIA Regulation Reference	Regulation requirement	Application response/details of how the requirement has been met
Reg 5 (2)(a)	'population and human health' (as opposed to the earlier reference in the 2009 EIA Regulations to 'human beings')	<p>This is covered by the scope of various assessments within thematic chapters of the ES. The main direct analysis regarding the local baseline for health and well-being is within Chapter 3 (Socio-Economic), however other human health issues (i.e. humans as direct potential 'receptors') are also found in the context of: Chapters 4 (Landscape and Visual), 7 (Water Resources and Drainage), 10 (Cultural Heritage), and 12 Transportation, and with regard to potential 'pollution' in Chapters 8 (Noise), 9 (Air Quality), and 11 (Lighting).</p> <p>The ES contains references to both health 'protection' issues in the context of mitigating potential harmful effects, but also health 'promotion' with reference to opportunities to help support and enhance healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>Issues relating to the likely effects on 'Population and Human Health' (protection and promotion) are summarised and cross-referenced in the Cumulative Effects chapter (Chapter 15).</p>
Reg 5 (2)(b)	'biodiversity' (as opposed to 'fauna and flora' in the 2009 EIA Regulations)	<p>Covered primarily in Chapter 5 (Ecology and Nature Conservation) and associated appendices.</p> <p>There are also direct links to the assessments provided in Chapter 4 (Landscape and Visual), Chapter 7 (Water Resources and Drainage), and Chapter 9 (Air Quality).</p>

EIA Regulation Reference	Regulation requirement	Application response/details of how the requirement has been met
Reg 5 (2)(c)	<i>'land, soil, water, air and climate'</i> ( the only change is addition of 'climate' since the 2009 EIA Regulations)	Addressed across a number of chapters of the ES including Chapter 6 (Geology, Soil and Groundwater), Chapter 7 (Water Resources and Drainage), Chapter 9 (Air Quality), and Chapter 12 (Transport), and their associated appendices. Also the 'Sustainability Strategy' which includes the Applicants commitment to deliver the buildings to BREEAM 'very good' standard which is directly related to energy efficiency and carbon reduction (a key element of measures to address climate change). The Sustainability Strategy is appended to chapter 2 (Appendix 2.2).  Also see paragraphs 1.5.1 - 1.5.4 below within Chapter 1.
Reg 5(2)(d)	<i>'material assets, cultural heritage and the landscape'</i>	Covered primarily by the scope of Chapter 4 (Landscape and Visual), and Chapter 10 (Cultural Heritage).
Reg 5 (4)	assessment of <i>'major accidents or disasters that are relevant to the development'</i>	Para 1.4.1 – 1.4.5 below
Reg 14(4)	Competent Experts	Para 1.3.1 – 1.3.3 below, and Appendix 1.1.
Sch 4 Para 2	An indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option including a comparison of the environmental effects	Section 2.4 of Environmental Statement Chapter 2

1.2.5 A non-technical summary has also been prepared and accompanies the ES (Document 5.3).

1.2.6 An assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of each topic referred to in paragraph 1.2.1 as expanded to cover the 2017 EIA Regulations, has been prepared and presented within the ES. Assessment methodology for each topic area broadly involves the following stages:

- Description of existing baseline environmental conditions formulated by site visits, surveys and other collected information.
- Introduction and adoption of appropriate criteria and conjecturing methods to enable the significance of change to the environment to be assessed.
- Reasoned prediction of the nature and significance of changes to the local environment as a consequence of the construction and operational activities of the proposed development.
- Identification of mitigation measures, if and where appropriate, which would eliminate or minimise significant effects.
- Reference to any residual effects that may occur after mitigation has been implemented.

### 1.3 TEAM EXPERIENCE AND COMPETENCE

- 1.3.1 Regulation 14(4) of the 2017 EIA regulations requires information to be provided within the ES regarding the ‘*relevant expertise or qualifications*’ of those who prepared the various chapters.
- 1.3.2 The table below contains further details about the consultancy and team involved in the preparation of the assessment for each topic. This confirms the expertise and specialisms of the companies involved as well as the individuals from those companies. Further details are also provided in Appendix 1.1 of this Chapter.
- 1.3.3 As indicated in Appendix 1.1 much of the consultancy team was also directly involved in the earlier East Midlands Gateway SRFI project in Leicestershire. The Development Consent Order for that project was approved by the Secretary of State in 2016, and is now under construction. That expertise is of direct relevance to the current proposals.

<b>Consultant/Team</b>	<b>Discipline(s) and Chapters</b>
Oxalis Planning - Ben Holmes & Steve Harley;	Overall lead in compilation of ES (and lead authors of <b>Chapters 1, 2, and 15</b> )
Savills - Peter Traves	Ch 3 <b>Socio-Economic</b>
FPCR - Tim Jackson, and Peter Hoy	Ch 4 <b>Landscape &amp; Visual Effects</b> ; Ch 5, <b>Ecology &amp; Nature Conservation</b>
BWB - Iqbal Rassool, Chris Dodd, and George Bagley	Ch 7 <b>Water resources &amp; Drainage</b> ; Ch14 <b>Waste</b>
RSK - Darren Bench	Ch 6 <b>Geology, soil and groundwater</b>
Vanguardia - Chris Goff, Anne Thompson, Stephen Turner; Tony Price	Ch 8 <b>Noise and Vibration</b> ; Ch 9 <b>Air Quality</b> ; <b>Ch 11 Lighting</b>
CgMS – Nick Cooke, Richard Smalley, Florence Maxwell, Jessica Jones	Ch 10 <b>Cultural Heritage</b>
Phlorum - Dr. Paul Beckett, Nigel Jenkins, Harley Parfitt	Ch 9 <b>Air Quality</b>
ADC Infrastructure - Stuart Dunhill, Mark Greaves BWB – Simon Hilditch	Ch 12 <b>Transportation</b>
Land Research Associates - Mike Palmer	Ch 13 <b>Agricultural Land</b>

## 1.4 MAJOR HAZARDS RISK

- 1.4.1 In accordance with Regulation 5(4) of the 2017 EIA regulations, consideration has been given to the identification and assessment of '*major accidents or natural disasters relevant to the development*'.
- 1.4.2 This component of the amended regulations is applied to all forms of NSIP project, including nuclear power stations and other forms of infrastructure where there are a range of potential risks which would have major implications for the environment, public safety and/or national economic performance and resilience. With regard to this proposed Rail Freight Interchange there are considered to be no such major vulnerabilities or major risks.
- 1.4.3 The only types of disaster or accidents foreseeable would include such events as train crashes, terminal container safety related issues, or building fires. All of these operational risks are exceedingly rare. These types of major risk apply commonly to many other forms of large-scale distribution or industrial development sites, and are also experienced at many ports. They can be properly managed through standard health and safety activity, building and other relevant regulations regarding the operation of a rail freight terminal and large-scale warehousing, and through following operational best practice.
- 1.4.4 Any risks associated specifically with the rail component of the intermodal terminal will be managed with regard to the relevant regulations/guidance imposed by Network Rail and the Health & Safety Executive (HSE). Both Network Rail and the HSE have been consulted as part of the statutory (Section 42) consultation process, and their responses have been taken into account. No specific or unusual 'major hazards' or risks have been identified or raised by either party during the dialogue to date.
- 1.4.5 Regulation 5(4) seeks risks to be assessed arising out of vulnerability of the development to major accidents or disasters only "*where relevant*". In light of the fact there is no identified vulnerability to any major risk or disaster it is not considered necessary to take the assessment any further. .

## 1.5 CLIMATE CHANGE

- 1.5.1 As indicated in the table above, issues associated with the assessment of potential impacts on 'climate' are interwoven throughout several Chapters of the ES. As an assessment of the likely significant environmental effects, and as part of the consideration of the contribution the Proposed Development would make to delivering sustainable development, climate and climate change issues are intrinsic to much of the ES and other aspects of the application documentation.
- 1.5.2 The main assessment regarding potential impacts on 'climate' is found in Chapters relating to *Water Resources and Drainage* in connection with flood-risk and surface water issues, *Air Quality* in terms of emissions issues, and *Transportation* in connection with the likely impacts on accessibility and overall travel patterns on carbon and energy efficiency, including encouraging and enabling use of sustainable modes (and reduced reliance on private car travel). Less direct issues of relevance are also found in Chapters relating to *Landscape*, and *Ecology* associated with the habitats created on-site, including with regard to protection of existing woodland, and additional tree and other planting proposed.
- 1.5.3 In more general terms as an application for a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (see Chapter 2 for details) the policy context for the Proposed Development has direct and explicit links to national efforts to reduce the contribution made by transport to climate change. The National Policy Statement for National Networks is explicit about the environmental benefits and goals associated with enabling a shift of freight from road to rail. There are numerous references to the importance of reducing emissions with regard to air quality, human health, and climate change. For example, the NPS includes a vision which has four components including "*networks which support the delivery of environmental goals and the move to a low carbon economy*" (NPS, page 9), and states: "*Modal shift from road and aviation to rail can help reduce transport's carbon emissions, as well as providing wider transport and economic benefits.*" (NPS, paragraph 2.40). This is one of many explicit references to the contribution such a shift would make to reducing carbon dioxide (and other emissions) from the logistics and distribution sector, and forms part of a national vision for a low carbon national transport system which explicitly has climate change, and improved energy efficiency, as its heart.
- 1.5.4 In addition, Chapter 2 (Appendix 2.2) also includes details of the site-specific measures proposed to help deliver high-levels of sustainability and resource efficiency. Therefore, in addition to the macro-level contribution through modal-shift and reducing reliance on road transport in favour of more carbon efficient rail, the application also incorporates a range of measures at the local and site level to ensure that the proposals make a positive contribution towards addressing the causes of climate change.