NORTHAMPTON GATEWAY
STRATEGIC RAIL FREIGHT INTERCHANGE

# SHORT EXPLANATORY DOCUMENT (OCTOBER 2017)

# DOCUMENT 6.5B

The Northampton Gateway Rail Freight Interchange Order 201X

Regulation No: 5 (2) (q)

SHORT EXPLANATORY DOCUMENT | OCTOBER 2017

www.northampton-gateway.co.uk

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# Northampton Gateway – Short Explanatory Document

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## 1. Introduction and purpose

1.1 This document, referred to as 'the Short Explanatory Document', or 'Short Document', is intended to provide a straight-forward and helpful non-technical summary of the Northampton Gateway SRFI proposals. It has been prepared by the promoters and applicant for the proposals, Roxhill (Junction 15) Ltd (referred to as 'Roxhill', or 'the Applicant').

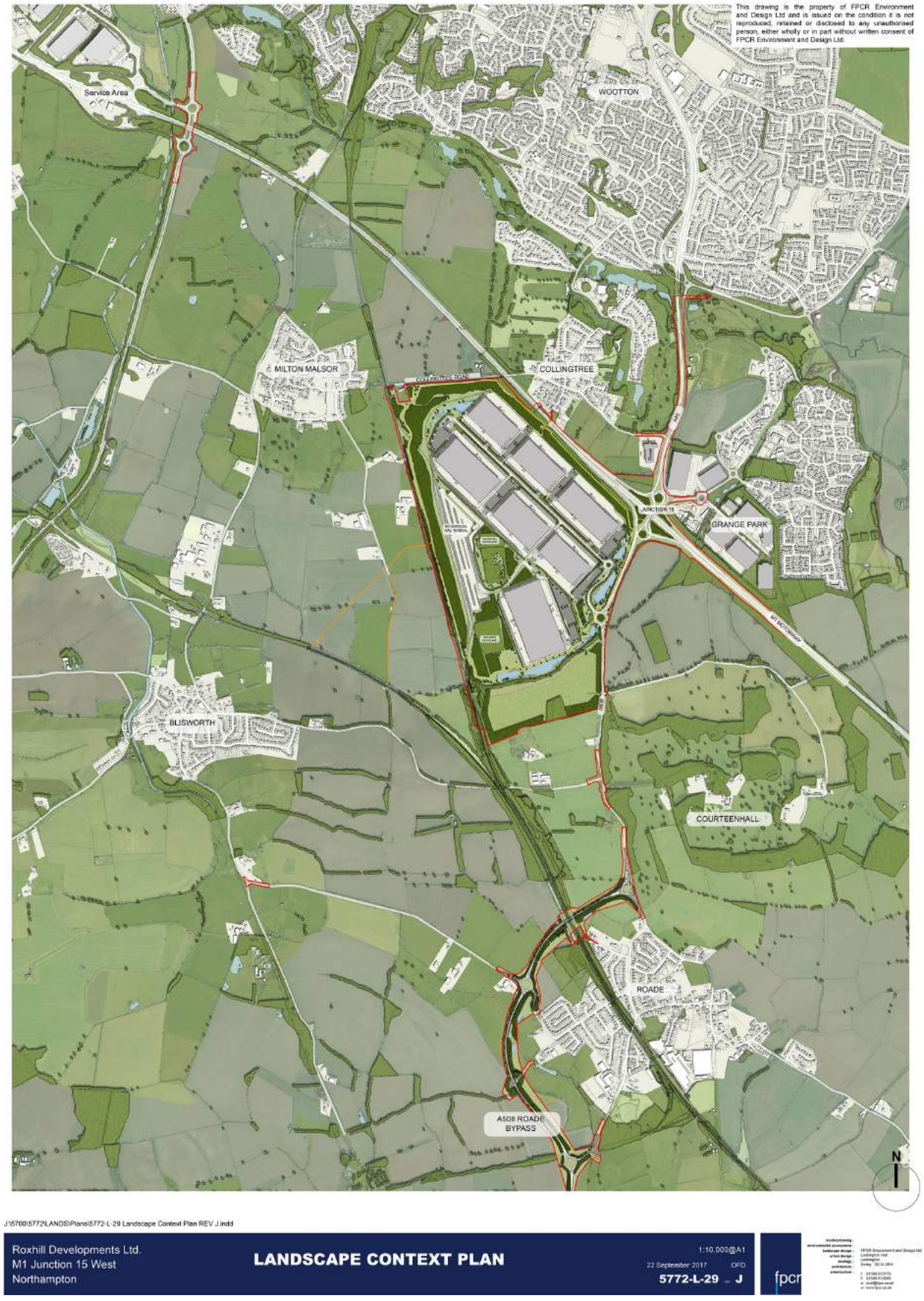
1.2 It has been prepared to support the Stage 2 public consultation process being held from 9th October until 24th November 2017. The intention is that reading this Short Document alone will provide a good overview and summary of the proposals, explain the policy context for them, and set out the main elements and programme for the consultation process.

1.3 The Northampton Gateway proposals meet the definition of a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). This means that, rather than preparing a planning application for determination by the Local Planning Authority (the District Council), an application for a Development Consent Order is being prepared. This will be examined by the Planning Inspectorate before being determined by the Secretary of State for Transport. Section 2 of this document includes further details about the process (and Section 5 gives information about the timetable).

1.4 Section 3 provides an overview of the main features of the policy and market context for the Proposed Development.

1.5 Some of the assessment and other information from which this document is drawn remains 'work in progress' and by definition may change as the process of preparing the application for a Development Consent Order continues. There is also the potential for changes as a result of public consultation, and ongoing consultation with a range of statutory and other consultees who are also reviewing and discussing components of the recent and ongoing technical work. However, technical information is available in draft form via the project website (www.northampton-gateway.co.uk), with the same information - draft Environmental Statement (ES) chapters and other draft documents - located in local libraries and other places. Section 4 of this report contains more information about the ES, and Section 5 for consultation details.

**Figure 1 – Proposed Development Site Context Plan (Proposed Development outlined in red)**



## 2. Description of the Northampton Gateway proposals

### The Site

2.1. The Northampton Gateway SRFI is proposed to the east of the Northampton Loop railway and to the west of the A508. The SRFI site (or 'main site' – see below) has an area of approximately 210 ha (520.9 acres). The villages of Milton Malsor, and Blisworth, are located further to the west and south-west of the site respectively, both beyond the West Coast Main Line (WCML) railway. The village of Courteenhall is located to the east, with the village of Roade further south along the A508.

2.2. A site location context plan is included as Figure 1 and shows the Main Site adjacent to Junction 15 of the M1 as well as the Roade Bypass and other highway mitigation works also outlined in red.

### Description of the proposed development

2.3. The Proposed Development is described below (and as shown on Figures 1 and 2) includes a number of distinct but related elements which involve land on several sites. The SRFI (proposed rail terminal and warehousing) is located on land to the west of Junction 15 of the M1 to the south of Northampton. This proposed site (referred to as the 'main site') is located within South Northamptonshire District. However, some of the works to improve Junction 15, the A45, and Junction 15a include land within Northampton Borough.

2.4. The proposed development which is the subject of the application for a Development Consent Order comprises:

- An intermodal freight terminal including container storage and HGV parking, rail sidings to serve individual warehouses, and with the capability to also provide a 'rapid rail freight' facility as part of the intermodal freight terminal;
- 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;
- 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, and other highway improvements at junctions on the local highway network;
- Strategic landscaping and tree planting, including diverted public rights of way;

- Earthworks and demolition of existing structures on the SRFI site.

2.5. The number and precise location of the proposed buildings, and their detailed appearance, are not yet known or fixed. However, key characteristics and details regarding the proposed buildings, including the maximum building heights and plateau levels, will be fixed as part of the application process, and defined on a 'Parameters Plan'. The Parameters Plan forms the basis of the Environmental Impact Assessment.

2.6. The Illustrative Masterplan (Figure 2) shows one potential form of development which would be in accordance with the proposed parameters.

2.7. The proposed Roade Bypass (also referred to as the 'Bypass corridor' or 'Bypass site') is located around the western side of the village, and runs across the WCML before rejoining the A508 to the south of the village. The Bypass forms part of a package of transport improvements (referred to as 'Highway Mitigation Works') in addition to the improvements to Junction 15 and 15a of the M1, and the A45, and include relatively small-scale improvements to junctions associated with the A508 corridor close to the site.

**Figure 2 - Illustrative Masterplan**

**Why is Northampton Gateway a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project?**

2.8. Whether or not development is a "Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project" (NSIP) and needs a development consent through the Planning Act 2008 ("the Act"), rather than planning permission, depends upon whether or not development comes within the description of NSIPs set out in the Act.

2.9. Rail Freight Interchanges (often abbreviated to 'RFI' or 'SRFI') are considered to be NSIPs, and defined in Section 26 of the Act. Northampton Gateway is an RFI and meets the definitions set out in legislation and Government guidance. Key characteristics of the definition of an RFI in the Act include:

- *The Site must be at least 60 hectares in area.*
- *The rail freight interchange must be capable of handling—*
    - *consignments of goods from more than one consignor and to more than one consignee, and*
    - *at least 4 goods trains per day.*
- *The rail freight interchange must be part of the railway network in England.*
- *The rail freight interchange must include warehouses to which goods can be delivered from the railway network in England either directly or by means of another form of transport.*

(Planning Act 2008, Part 3, Section 26)

2.10. As an NSIP the application is made to, and determined by, the Secretary of State for Transport rather than by the local planning authority. The Planning Inspectorate will receive the application on behalf of the Secretary of State, and will undertake a thorough examination process. As part of the examination they will seek input from a range of consultees and other interested parties, including the local authority. On completion of the examination the Planning Inspectorate will issue a report and make a recommendation to the Secretary of State.

2.11. Further details about the process are available at: https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/

**What is a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange? Why do we need it?**

2.12. In simple terms SRFIs and RFIs operate like ports, with goods arriving and transferred from train to lorry, or vice versa, as part of the supply chain and distribution of freight and goods to, and within, the UK. The activity related to the movement of goods is often referred to as 'distribution' or 'logistics', and is an important economic sector and employer in its own right both in Northamptonshire but also nationally.

2.13. Distribution activity directly supports the economy at both the national and local levels, and Government policy recognises its importance (see below regarding national policy). The emphasis of Government policy is on encouraging a shift of distribution activity from road to rail to both help deliver environmental improvements, such as air quality and climate change objectives, and to remove HGVs from the roads to help reduce congestion.

2.14. Goods and products are transported to and around the UK as part of retail and commercial supply chains and transactions on a constant basis, and an increasing use of on-line retailing forms part of an increasing use of often complex and extensive distribution networks. In this sense, the distribution sector is not only important to the economy, but also to the day to day lives of a large proportion of the UK population on a regular basis. Many common household goods as well as many types of food and clothing arrive from overseas in containers at sea ports before then being transferred by train or lorry to freight interchanges or distribution hubs to continue their journey on to the end customer.

2.15. Some goods will come to an SRFI and be stored before being collected or sent somewhere else at a later date, while others will only be at the SRFI long enough to be moved from one vehicle to another before continuing their journey. Some goods might be processed or packaged at, or close to, an SRFI before being moved again. The freight and goods which will use Northampton Gateway could come from, or be sent to, destinations around the UK via the road and/or rail network, including via one of the UK's key sea ports, many of which are connected to the rail freight network.

**Aims and Objectives of the Proposal**

2.16. The Northampton Gateway proposal seeks to respond to the increasing market demand for rail freight interchanges in the UK, and to the nationally significant strength of the distribution and logistics sector in and around Northamptonshire. The proposals respond directly to national policy which recognises there is a need for a network of SRFIs across the UK to support economic and environmental objectives.

2.17. Northampton Gateway would provide rail-connected warehousing and freight interchange facilities at a strategic location on the national rail and road networks. It would deliver

opportunities to increase the proportion of freight moved by rail which could deliver environmental and congestion benefits locally and across the wider region and beyond.

2.18. The scheme would deliver a rail terminal in advance of first occupation of any building.

2.19. The proposals are adjacent to Junction 15 of the M1 and would significantly improve what is currently a major congestion 'black spot' with the existing junction regularly operating at around 27% above capacity causing major delays for local and strategic users of the highway network. The proposed improvement scheme would see both journey times and congestion improve substantially in the future, catering for traffic as a result of the SRFI but also from the development committed or planned locally by the West Northamptonshire Core Strategy.

2.20. A package of other highways improvements would ensure that the anticipated changes to traffic would not have significant effects on nearby communities. A key focus has been potential additional traffic and transport issues along the A508, and the Proposed Development would deliver a Roade Bypass which would remove significant levels of through traffic from the village centre.

2.21. In summary, the objectives of Northampton Gateway are to:

- Play a direct role in meeting the need for a network of SRFIs as defined by national policy in the NPS (see Section 3 of this Document);
- Respond to the market demands and opportunities for strategic distribution development in and around Northampton, and enable an increased shift towards rail freight;
- Contribute towards realising economic as well as environmental objectives at the local and national level through sustainable design, construction, and operational stages of the development;
- Deliver substantial transport infrastructure improvements (to both national and local infrastructure);
- Offer opportunities to attract new inward investment, business growth, and new employment in a key and growing economic sector.

## 3.0 Policy and Market Context

3.1. This Section provides a summary of the policy and market context for the Proposed Development. Much of this content will form the basis of a Planning Statement which will be submitted as part of the final application for Development Consent.

3.2. This Section aims to help explain the rationale for the proposals and for the choice of site, with reference to key planning policies, but also the market context.

3.3. Northamptonshire is well known as a strategically important area for the Logistics and Distribution sector. This is a consequence of a number of accessibility related characteristics which, in combination, have established the area as part of what is sometimes referred to as the 'Golden Triangle' of distribution activity. Essentially, this is an area centred around the main strategic road corridors in the centre of the country which provide excellent connectivity to the vast majority of the UK population within a 4 hour drive. This, and the market context for the proposals, is explained further below.

3.4. The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) for Northamptonshire, and the Local Authorities, recognise the area's strengths in logistics and distribution due to its accessibility to national road and rail networks, and to national markets. The LEP has identified Logistics as one of its priority sectors, and South Northamptonshire District Council recently published a report focused on the contribution the sector makes to the local economy.

### National Policy

3.5. The Government published the National Policy Statement for National Networks ('the NPS') in December 2014. This is available via the Department for Transport's website, and a link is also provided in the project website (www.northampton-gateway.co.uk).

3.6. The NPS recognises the importance of SRFIs in terms of both economic development and addressing climate change. The Statement makes explicit references to their role in facilitating the movement of freight from road to rail. This is seen as central to Government's vision for transport which is described as:

> *'Government's vision for transport is for a low carbon sustainable transport system that is an engine for economic growth, but is also safer and improves the quality of life in our communities. The Government therefore believes it is important to facilitate the development of the intermodal rail freight industry. The transfer of freight from road to rail has a part to play in a low carbon economy and help to address climate change.'*
>
> (NPS 2014, paragraph 2.53)

3.7. The NPS describes the aim of an SRFI as:

> *'…to optimise the use of rail in the freight journey by maximising rail trunk haul and minimising some elements of the secondary distribution leg by road, through co-location of other distribution and freight activities. SRFIs are a key element in reducing the cost to users of moving freight by rail, thereby reducing trip mileage of freight movements on both the national and local road networks'*
>
> (NPS 2014, paragraph 2.44)

3.8. The NPS describes the main drivers of demand and need for SRFIs, summarising them as:

- *The changing needs of the logistics sector*
- *Rail freight growth*
- *Environmental*
- *UK economy, national and local benefits – jobs and growth*

3.9. It is explicit in the NPS that Government has identified a '*compelling need for an expanded network of SRFIs'* (para 2.56), and places SRFIs in the context of national economic and environmental objectives and priorities.

3.10. The NPS makes reference to key trends in the freight and distribution sector, as well as to environmental objectives and outcomes which Government is keen to deliver. For example, it says

> "*Rail transport has a crucial role to play in delivering significant reductions in pollution and congestion. Tonne for tonne, rail freight produces 70% less $CO_2$ than road freight, up to fifteen times lower NOX emissions and nearly 90% lower $PM_{10}$ emissions. It also has de-congestion benefits – depending on its load, each freight train can remove between 43 and 77 HGVs from the road.*" (NPS 2014, paragraph 2.35)

3.11. Separate to the NPS, Network Rail and the Department for Transport (DfT) have published a number of relevant documents which provide an evidential context for the Government's policy to encourage and enable more freight being moved by rail. These include the Department for Transport's *Rail Freight Strategy* of 2016 which forecasts that the volume of containers moved by rail will double by 2030.

3.12. Underpinning the Freight Strategy was a report prepared by AECOM and Arup for DfT entitled '*Future Potential for Modal Shift in the UK Rail Freight Market'* (2016). The report details the changes over recent years in key sectors of the rail freight market, and identifies the prospects for further growth, including current network capacity constraints and the actions required to overcome them and realise the potential for increasing shift from road to rail. In the context of intermodal (port and domestic) traffic the report identifies a key to unlocking the expected growth as "*the creation and linking of a network of rail-connected distribution concentrations*" which are SRFIs and regional terminals.

3.13. The report also states that the current lack of sufficient SRFIs generates more trunk haul distances by road, and recognises that the retail and logistics sectors are demanding new terminals, which is stimulating private sector to offer additional SRFIs. The report identifies the environmental and economic gains which could be delivered from an increase in the use of rail freight, and the gains which will develop as the critical mass of market activity grows, concluding that "*rail-connected National Distribution Centres are fundamental to creating this virtuous circle of growth*".

3.14. The NPS does not seek to identify specific sites or locations for SRFIs, and expects this to be driven by 'the market' who will also deliver SRFI. However, the NPS does include a number of generic criteria or characteristics to describe the type of locations in which they are expected to be developed. These can be summarised as locations which:

- *have good connectivity both with the road and rail network, in particular the strategic rail freight network (para 2.54);*
- *are near the business markets they will serve – major urban centres, or groups of centres – and are linked to key supply chain routes (paragraph 2.56); and*
- *are located alongside the major rail routes, close to major trunk roads as well as near to the conurbations that consume the goods (para 2.45).*

**Local and Planning Policy Context**

3.15. The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy covers the local authorities of Northampton Borough, South Northamptonshire District, and Daventry District.

3.16. The strategy plans for significant and ambitious growth over the period to 2031. The strategy focuses growth and development on locations in and adjacent to Northampton as the main centre for economic and population growth. Smaller settlements, such as Daventry and Towcester, play a supporting role in accommodating development of new homes and jobs across West Northamptonshire.

**Distribution Market Context**

3.17. The following section is in advance of the completion of research being undertaken by Gerald Eve and which will form part of the application in the form of a Market Report. That report when finished will provide an overview of the market context for the proposals and will explore the commercial and economic opportunities associated with the Northampton Gateway. Whereas the NPS identifies a national need for a network of SRFIs (see above), the work by Gerald Eve will help to provide a more locally specific assessment of the need and requirements for a new SRFI in this location.

3.18. In recent history rail has played a relatively limited role in distribution in the UK, with operators focusing on road-based movement. This has in part been due to the limited number of rail terminals (where logistics could be transferred from road to rail) and a relative shortage of logistics space on sites with direct access to the rail network (SRFIs or RFIs). In addition, it seems distribution companies have not considered rail as an efficient, sustainable and potentially more cost-effective alternative for the movement of goods than the more traditional road based options.

3.19. However, evidence is clear that where warehouse space has been provided at recently-built rail-served sites it has attracted significant market (occupier) interest. The provision of SRFIs in locations close to established concentrations of logistics warehousing has resulted in an increase in the use of rail, as some of the businesses in existing warehouses take the opportunity to incorporate rail into their logistics operations, encouraged by the terminal operators.

3.20. Intermodal (container) traffic is now the biggest rail freight sector, having experienced growth of 93% in the last 18 years. DfT and Network Rail expect intermodal traffic to continue to grow considerably over the next 30 years and at least double in volume again. Existing SRFI terminals will not be able to cope with this market growth and additional SRFIs and regional terminals will be required. DfT makes it clear that the availability of SRFIs will be a constraint to rail freight growth if not adequately satisfied. Therefore the UK government has, in its National Policy Statement for National Networks, recognised that there is a 'compelling need' for the provision of new SRFIs in order to respond to the changing needs of the logistics sector, to meet and stimulate growth in the use of rail, respond to national environmental objectives and to help stimulate economic growth.

3.21. The Northampton Gateway site is situated in the 'Golden Triangle', an area known for its concentration of existing major logistics operations. This location, and the Northampton Gateway site, will remain highly attractive to a range of occupiers keen to make use of its strong road and rail transport links and labour supply.

3.22. In this context, Roxhill is confident that there is both demand and a need for suitably-located strategic rail freight terminal and the provision of additional rail-served warehouse space.

3.23. Users of rail freight terminals are typically moving goods by rail to be sent to and from National Distribution Centres (NDCs) and Regional Distribution Centres (RDCs) within a reasonable catchment around the terminals to then be moved onwards to their next destination. The distance between terminals and warehouses is a crucial factor in the use of rail, with rail's cost benefits decreasing with distance from a terminal. Because of the dynamics of the logistics sector SRFIs must be located where the logistics sector is strongest (and demand greatest). Road distribution is required even when primary haul is undertaken by rail, but road transport will continue to be the prime mover of freight, and the market will not be attracted to use SRFIs, if they are in unsuitable, 'non-prime' locations.

3.24. The southern part of the Golden Triangle (Northampton and Milton Keynes) is an exceptionally strong logistics area as a result of its advantages and benefits as a location from which for NDCs can serve the whole of the UK. There is an existing concentration of logistics space in the area, and a relatively high proportion of NDCs or RDCs) (NDCs and RDCs are more likely to utilise rail in their logistics operations given their central role in the supply chain). Research undertaken by Gerald Eve has found that 60% of the floorspace within the Northampton Gateway catchment is already occupied by businesses with either an existing use of rail freight as part of their overall supply chain or an interest in doing so in the future. Northampton Gateway will provide the opportunity for these businesses to increase the use of rail freight in their logistics operations.

3.25. Demand also remains exceptionally high and take-up of space in the area is expected to grow. The quality of Northampton Gateway's location and the high level of NDC and RDC warehouse stock in the region suggest a large potential pool of occupiers who could utilise the Northampton Gateway SRFI.

3.26. For these reasons it is considered there will be strong demand for rail freight services and rail-serviced and rail-connected warehousing at Northampton Gateway. Roxhill has undertaken independent work regarding the current capacity and availability of freight paths and is confident that more than sufficient capacity exists on this part of the network (and beyond) to accommodate the Northampton Gateway. A Rail Capacity Report is published as part of the consultation exercise. Roxhill is also working with Network Rail, with dialogue ongoing.

3.27. The Northampton Gateway site is close to another existing SRFI (DIRFT), but serves a different core catchment area. It will also provide additional capacity to serve future market demand for warehouse and intermodal terminal space. Commercially successful rail freight terminals already exist close to each other in the West Midlands, and despite some overlap of core catchment areas they continue to increase the volume of goods handled by rail year-on-year.

The impact of the Northampton Gateway SRFI will therefore be to further increase the market for rail freight and trigger additional demand from occupiers outside existing terminal catchments further south.

3.28. As the internet retail market and consumer expectations continue to grow and evolve, there will be an increased pressure on retailers to deliver goods to consumers quickly. Many retailers see road congestion as an obstacle, and the punctuality of the train network means that occupiers are increasingly looking at rail as a more reliable means of delivering goods than road.

3.29. The incorporation of a rapid rail freight terminal at Northampton Gateway would help future proof the scheme and build in a capability to respond to potential future markets as the distribution sector evolves. The movement of freight overnight into cities via conventional trains, responding to consumer demand for next day delivery and the growth of internet retailing, has the potential for significant growth if appropriate infrastructure is put in place. The increasing cost of congestion in urban areas, the restrictive curfews on road freight movement and the continuing erosion of land allocated for industrial and logistics uses in conurbations will contribute to the pressure on occupiers to seek alternative logistics platforms – where rail will play a key role.

3.30. The use of rail in the logistics sector is expected to continue to grow as the benefits of utilising rail compared to purely road-based logistics increases and awareness grows. The provision of additional Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges is essential if the potential growth in take-up an adoption of rail freight is not to be frustrated by a lack of appropriate infrastructure to facilitate this modal shift.

3.31. Furthermore, new SRFIs must be located where demand is greatest, in particular in locations where there is a concentration of logistics space, particularly National Distribution Centres and where demand for logistics space will continue to grow. Without the provision of new SRFIs in these locations, logistics operators will be forced to continue to utilise road as their only method of freight distribution.

**Concluding remarks regarding the policy and market context**

3.34. In light of all of the above, it is clear that the location of the Proposed Development is well aligned to the expectations of national policy.

3.35. The site of the proposed Northampton Gateway is a strategically important location on the national road and rail network: the site is adjacent to the M1, the main north-south motorway in England, and also sits adjacent to the strategic rail network.

3.36. The site is located to the immediate south of Northampton which forms part of a nationally renowned area for national and regional distribution and logistics activity due in large part to the

central location with excellent access to national markets, and also connectivity to (and distance from) the Ports. Northampton has long been associated with the distribution and logistics sector, and is well represented by National Distribution Centres (NDCs) or Regional Distribution Centres (RDCs) operated by international and national companies.

3.2. It is therefore an obvious and viable location for an SRFI, with a strong and growing market for distribution space, and with optimal access to the national transport infrastructure networks. These conditions create significant opportunity and potential for encouraging significant flows of rail freight traffic to and from NDCs and RDCs in and around Northampton.

3.3. Furthermore, the site is close to a large number of communities, including the large urban areas of Northampton and Milton Keynes, with a network of other towns and villages nearby which are expected to provide a supply of labour to fill the vast majority of jobs created.

## 4. Likely impacts associated with Northampton Gateway

4.1. The Proposed Development will have a range of potential effects including economic and social effects and impacts as well as physical and environmental effects or impacts. As with any large development scheme, the Proposed Development will provide a mixture of potentially very positive as well as some potentially adverse effects. Through a high-quality design which considers the context of the site and the proposals from the outset many potentially adverse effects can be successfully minimised, or even eliminated altogether, and mitigation measures can be incorporated into the design of the development.

4.2. The application will be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). As part of that process an Environmental Statement (ES) will be submitted alongside the application for development consent. The ES will ensure that decisions are taken having considered the likely significant environmental impacts. Government has described the purpose of an EIA as a means of drawing together, in a systematic way, an assessment of a project's likely significant environmental effects. This helps to ensure that the importance of the predicted effects, and the scope for reducing or mitigating them, are properly understood.

4.3. A draft ES has been prepared and published for the consultation period to help the public and others understand the likely impacts and effects of the proposal. The draft ES chapters remain 'work in progress' and will be completed and finalised in due course, but are intended to help local people and others understand the assessment work that is underway. This draft ES follows a Preliminary set of draft Chapters which were shared in late 2016 as part of the initial consultation process, and reflect the considerable amount of data gathering and additional assessment undertaken since December 2016.

4.4. The updated draft ES was placed onto the project website to coincide with the start of consultation on 9th October 2017.

4.5. An important component of the ES is explaining the ways in which the proposal has been designed or will be delivered in order to minimise, or mitigate, any likely negative effects, and to maximise any likely positive effects or benefits. Work will continue on the ES following the consultation period, and it will be finalised in advance of the formal submission to the Planning Inspectorate (planned for the first quarter of 2018).

4.6. The ES will comprise a number of themed chapters, each dealing with a different aspect of the proposals and its likely significant effects:

- Socio-economic aspects
- Landscape and visual effects

- Ecology and nature conservation
- Geology, soil and groundwater
- Water resources and drainage
- Noise
- Air quality
- Cultural heritage
- Lighting
- Transportation
- Agricultural land quality
- Waste
- Cumulative Impact.

4.7. While the ES itself will contain a full chapter on each of the above, the summary below contains the principal elements of the ES expected to be of most interest to the public. This is informed directly by the comments and discussions had earlier in the public consultation process, including at public meetings hosted by various Parish Councils.

**Socio-Economic issues**

4.8. The completed development in operation could directly support around 7,544 full time equivalent jobs based on standard national densities of an average of one job per 77 sq.m. of floorspace. The socio-economic assessment which forms part of the ES concludes that around 60% of Travel to Work trips will originate from within the Northampton area. 90% of these jobs are likely to be taken by people within the core 'study area' for the analysis of South Northamptonshire, Northampton Borough, Daventry District Council, the Borough Council of Wellingborough, Kettering Borough Council, and Milton Keynes Council, with only 10% from further afield.

4.9. Skills and qualification levels amongst the workforce would be improved through in-house and external training provision. Indeed, the Proposed Development would generate a range of jobs, requiring a range of skills and qualifications – while around half of the jobs would be 'warehouse' jobs, the other half include a diverse range of roles including IT and other technical support roles, and managerial and administrative roles. More details are included in the draft Socio-Economic Chapter of the ES. The construction process would generate approximately 120 permanent jobs, with many times more temporary construction jobs over the likely (approximate) 5 to 5 and a half year construction period.

4.10. The Gross Value Added is estimated to be in order of £348 million annually. This is a measure of the economic value the development will add to the economy, and the vast majority of this

benefit is expected to be seen in and around Northampton and South Northamptonshire. In addition, the scheme would generate significant additional Business Rate revenue every year which could play a direct role in supporting the service and investment priorities of the Local Authority.

4.11. The planned level of future housing growth in the area would be adequate to meet any additional demand associated with new staff required for the proposal. Taking into account the future increase in housing supply, impact on housing demand is considered to be negligible. Northampton Borough and the surrounding Districts are planning for significant growth through the adopted Core Strategy, and the Proposed Development, if approved, would begin generating jobs no earlier than 2021/22, with the levels of employment created increasing gradually over-time.

4.12. Northampton has strong strengths in the distribution and logistics sector, with well-established commercial supply-chains and networks, as well as skills profiles, of direct relevance to the Proposed Development. This sectoral specialism creates market opportunities for further investment in the delivery of a new SRFI, with a large pool of existing labour, and local skills and training providers aware of the needs and requirements of logistics and distribution companies. The 'market' context is described in further detail in Section 3. While unemployment is not a particular issue locally there are areas of unemployment and in August 2017 within the Study Area there was a total of some 8,400 people claiming benefits but otherwise theoretically available to work. Most significantly, NOMIS official labour market statistics show approximately 2,655 claiming in Northampton and 2,660 in Milton Keynes.

4.13. The Public Transport Strategy and Framework Travel Plan (referred to below in further detail) propose to increase the availability of bus access to the Proposed Development through an extension to existing bus services, provision of a new express bus service, and improved or new foot and cycle routes to the site. These measures will directly connect the site to the town centre and other parts of the Northampton urban area, enabling access to the site from a range of neighbourhoods, including by those without access to a car.

**Landscape and visual effects**

4.14. A Landscape and Visual Impact assessment is being prepared as part of the Environmental Statement to consider the likely effects of the proposals as a whole, including the proposed Roade Bypass. There are no specific statutory landscape designations that cover any part of the Northampton Gateway proposals. The Roade Bypass extends into the edge of a locally designated Special Landscape Area which is largely located to the south-east of Roade.

4.15. The landscape of the proposed SRFI site comprises arable farmland, with the surrounding area mixed in character with existing major transport and development infrastructure, including the urban area of Northampton and the M1 motorway particularly apparent in the east and north of the site, and with railway infrastructure to the immediate west. Further to the west and south of the site the site is surrounded by village settlements, farmland and woodland. The Main Site contains two mature woodlands, Highgate Wood and Churchill Wood as well as some other mature trees and vegetation which are predominantly in the central and southern parts of the site. These main woodland areas and many existing mature trees are to be retained. The registered park and garden of Courteenhall is to the east of the A508, although largely screened and distant from the site as a result of tree planting and topographical changes.

4.16. Variations in ground levels create an important part of the Main Site's immediate landscape, with a ridge of ground extending along the western side, with the land generally falling back towards the urban edge of Northampton and Junction 15. The eastern edge of the site (close to the A508) is some 15-20m lower than the top of the ridge in the west. Only the far north-western corner of the Main Site falls away from the motorway towards Milton Malsor. Therefore, the Main Site sits in a shallow but enclosed landform setting, with a general aspect away from the nearest villages and towards the urban area, and separated in localised terms to the west and south. The village of Blisworth sits on higher ground, with most of the village on land falling away from the Main Site. Collingtree on the eastern side of the motorway sits at a similar level to the eastern part of the site, and generally falls away from the motorway and away from the Main Site.

4.17. The Roade Bypass is relatively more elevated and varied than the Main Site in terms of levels, with varying slopes and falls around the western side of Roade. The Bypass corridor stretches across two small dips and ridges in the landform to the north and west of Roade. The more rolling nature of the landscape provides scope for the Bypass to be relatively enclosed where it lies closer to the edge of the settlement.

4.18. The Proposed Development would clearly represent a change to the existing landscape, both through the earthworks and landscaping to create the bunding and other 'green infrastructure' areas, and through the proposed built development (rail terminal, buildings, and infrastructure).

4.19. At the local level, the effects vary on different receptors at different stages of the development process. The scheme includes a range of mitigation measures, many of which are incorporated or embedded into the scheme design and layout. These include siting and heights of the Proposed Development, as well as the earthworks and ground modelling proposed.

4.20. Construction effects, which are temporary, will be minimised through best practice measures relating to the management of site activities. This will include protection of retained trees and woodland areas through the construction process, and the phased but early delivery of the

outer landscaping and earthwork bunds. Also, temporary screen fencing where relevant will be used.

4.21. Once the Proposed Development is operational the residual landscape and visual effects will reduce over time as the landscaping and planting matures, and this will be managed and maintained over the longer-term through a Landscape Management Plan.

4.22. The emerging conclusions regarding the residual effects of the Proposed Development show that receptors will experience, at worse, moderate long-term landscape or visual effects, with many likely to see negligible or minor effects after mitigation. The closest receptors with direct views of the site will experience the largest effects, but in the majority of cases the landscaping and bunding will be effective in minimising the worst of the effects. The introduction of additional planting and woodland areas will result in some beneficial residual landscape effects.

**Ecology and Nature**

4.23. The area of the Proposed Development is dominated by arable farmland and boundary hedgerows, with some areas of grassland, scattered woodland blocks, mature trees and ponds. There are no statutory designated sites within or adjacent to the application site, but the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (SPA) / Ramsar site is located approximately 5km from the west boundary of the Main Site. The Roade Cutting Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which is a site of geological (not ecological) interest, falls within the boundary of the Bypass Corridor. There are no non-statutory Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) within the boundary of the Proposed Development, the closest being Collingtree Golf Course LWS and Roade Quarry LWS.

4.24. There are a number of non-statutory potential LWSs (pLWSs) within the boundary of the Proposed Development, including 236/Unnamed pLWS of Highgate wood, Roade Cutting pLWS and Roade Field pLWS. Protected or notable species present include badgers, roosting and foraging bats, farmland and woodland birds, great crested newts (GCN), invertebrates, common lizard, grass snake and otter.

4.25. Good design of the extensive areas of green infrastructure within both the Main Site and the Highway Mitigation Works, including the Bypass Corridor, will include the retention, protection and stand-off from notable habitats and the provision of extensive areas of habitat creation. A Biodiversity Management Plan will also be adopted detailing the conservation-led prescriptions for the retained and created habitats. These measures will be sufficient to address the possible adverse effects to sensitive habitats, including designated sites that may be brought about by the Proposed Development, such as habitat loss and disturbance.

4.26. Adverse construction effects upon habitats and fauna will be managed by best practice measures, including the protection of retained features, the control of site drainage, management of accidental pollution events and suppression of construction dust. Where appropriate, the use of Natural England protected species licences, e.g. for bats, GCN and badgers, will both ensure legal compliance and shall also maintain the conservation status of faunal species. The appropriate timing of clearance, supervision of works and / or sensitive management of vegetation and features will avoid disturbance to other protected fauna, including birds and reptiles.

4.27. Significant habitat losses during each phase of the Proposed Development will be off-set through the re-creation and favourable management of hedgerows, trees, grassland and wetland features. Where appropriate the most sensitive habitats (hedgerows & neutral grassland) will be retained by translocation into part of the sites green infrastructure. These measures and the retention or replacement of features used by fauna, such as bat roosts or terrestrial habitat used by GCN, will avoid significant effects upon the majority of dependant fauna.

4.28. The loss of arable fields will lead to the unavoidable displacement of some specialist farmland birds, including grey partridge, linnet, skylark, yellowhammer and yellow wagtail. In order to address some of these potential effects a number of measures will be introduced to benefit breeding birds, including the enhancement of nesting opportunities for a broad range of species.

4.29. Overall, the majority of adverse effects associated with the Proposed Development will be off-set in the mid- to long-term through the creation and favourable management of existing and new ecological features. Sensitive management of the hedgerow network will benefit this habitat type and the wildlife that relies upon it, particularly bats. Further gains will be achieved through the establishment of woodland and wetland features will also provide improved habitat for local fauna, including amphibians and invertebrates.

4.30. Overall the proposed development provides an opportunity to establish new habitats of nature conservation interest and to deliver net gains for wildlife in the locality.

**Water and Drainage**

4.31. The application will include a Flood Risk Assessment, as well as a Sustainable Drainage Strategy, and Water Framework Directive statement. At this stage, a draft ES chapter regarding Water Resources and Flood Risk is available, with a draft of the proposed Drainage Strategy.

4.32. The Proposed Development is located entirely within Flood Zone 1. Flood Zone 1 is defined as land assessed as having a less than 1 in 1000 annual probability of river or sea flooding in any

year (<0.1%) and is the lowest defined category of flood risk. However, existing data and hydraulic modelling shows that there have historically been some issues with flood-risk further downstream associated with the Wooton Brook.

4.33. The Main Site includes the Courteenhall Brook which flows through Grange Park to the north-east of the M1 before joining the Wooton Brook. The proposed bypass crosses a small un-named ordinary watercourse.

4.34. There would inevitably be an increase in the volume of surface water runoff post-development prior to mitigation. The surface water drainage strategy will ensure that surface water will be managed appropriately to ensure that the rate of surface water emanating from Proposed Development site is not increased and the water quality not compromised.

4.35. The drainage strategy for the Main Site will use SuDS to provide betterment (i.e. an improvement compared to existing conditions) at higher return periods by restricting runoff from the site to the greenfield QBAR for all events up to and including the 1 in 200 year + 20% climate change event. The bypass will also use SuDS measures to attenuate and store surface water run-off, and to prevent any adverse impacts off-site or nearby.

4.36. Pollution control methods will supplement the use of SuDS on site to provide pre-treatment to surface water from higher risk pollution areas such as highways and car parking areas.

4.37. The assessment considers both construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development. As the construction period of a development is short when compared to the overall life of a development any residual impact including pollution of a watercourse through an increase in suspended solids, oil, fuel, cement etc. and subsequent change quality would be considered short term.

4.38. The overall conclusion of the assessment is that any potential impacts likely to arise as part of the construction or operational phase would be negligible in nature once mitigation has been incorporated into the development. There are likely to be off-site (downstream) benefits in the form of a reduced risk of flooding in more extreme events as a result of reduced rates of discharge from the site into local watercourses and as a result of the drainage strategy which will store and hold water in basins before controlled release from the site. In particular a beneficial impact will be delivered, with better controlled and predicable discharge into the Wootton Brook with benefits for Collingtree village in terms of reduced likelihood of local flooding in the future.

4.39. Work is ongoing to compete the Sustainable Drainage Statement and Water Framework Directive Compliance Assessment, but the main evidence required to prepare the ES and Drainage Strategy confirms that no significant adverse effects will remain as a result of the proposed development.

**Noise**

4.40. The noise assessments work to date as part of the Environmental Statement, including noise surveys undertaken around the proposed site (Main Site and Bypass), have provided a picture of the current noise levels and sources (known as 'the existing ambient levels', or baseline).

4.41. The noise survey data shows that locations surrounding the site currently experience a wide range of existing noise conditions, with some parts of the proposed development site and nearby locations regularly exposed to relatively high levels of noise throughout the day, and at night. This is a direct consequence of proximity to the M1 motorway and other transport infrastructure, including both the West Coast Main Line, and Northampton Loop railway lines. The centre of Roade currently sees high levels of traffic noise from the A508.

4.42. The Proposed Development will introduce a number of new sources of potential noise. This includes additional road traffic, additional rail traffic (train movements), and noise associated with the operation of the rail terminal and new warehouse buildings. Temporary effects from the construction process are also likely, and are being assessed. However, the relationship of the Proposed Development to existing sources of noise, and to existing receptors (homes and other places) means the likely effects will vary.

4.43. This is not only a consequence of the distances between the site and some key receptors, but is also directly influenced by the presence of existing noise, and by the predicted effects of the mitigation measures proposed. The landscaped bunding proposed around the Main Site will play a direct role in helping screen many existing communities or properties from noise, as will the siting and design of some new sources of noise.

4.44. Overall, the assessment work to date of operational noise from the SRFI (Main Site) shows impacts would be negligible, with no significant effects on any receptors. The assessment shows that operational noise levels do not exceed the background sound levels during the day or night at all receptors considered (details of the receptor/survey locations are included within the draft ES Chapter). This is due to the mitigation provided by the landscaping but also the generally higher ambient or background noise levels that exist at receptors closest to the M1. Properties to the west of the M1 have generally lower ambient noise levels , but the assessment shows that the development would result in at worst 'low' impacts on receptors in either side of the M1.

4.45. All receptor locations are predicted to have either no change in noise level or, at worse, a negligible impact magnitude from rail noise, with no significant effects predicted as a result of additional freight train movements associated with the Proposed Development during the day time period. Those currently affected by rail noise may notice the increase in rail movements

over time as a result of the Proposed Development, but no significant additional effects are likely. A similar pattern is evident in the night time assessment where the highest change in noise level is an increase of 0.8 decibel at one receptor on Ashton Road (and in the very long-term once the site is at full capacity in terms of rail volumes). This small-scale increase is higher than the change expected during the day due to a greater level of rail activity expected during the night time period. However, this level of change is negligible.

4.46. During the day time period the change in road traffic noise exposure at the receptor locations close to the Main Site is expected to be relatively small, resulting in negligible impacts at worse in 2031. Several receptors would be expected to experience a small decrease in road traffic noise with minor beneficial impacts predicted due to the screening that will be provided by the Main Site between some receptors and the M1. As the magnitude of impact at all receptor locations is negligible at worst, no significant effects are expected during the daytime as a result of traffic associated with the Main Site.

4.47. Similarly, the change in road traffic noise during the night time period is also negligible at worse. Minor beneficial impacts are anticipated at several receptor locations, especially those where the development at the Main Site will provide screening against road traffic noise from the M1. The change in night-time road traffic noise associated with the proposed development would have no significant adverse effects.

4.48. The Roade Bypass will result in notable noise reductions in the centre of Roade (of almost 10 decibels). Due to the current very low ambient noise levels potentially major relative increases are predicted at several properties on the western edge of Roade. However, the vast majority of properties in Roade will see change of between a 3 decibel reduction and a 3 decibel increase – this level of change is considered negligible and in most cases would not be readily noticeable. However, work to refine and improve the mitigation measures associated with the Bypass is ongoing to further reduce the likely levels of change for those properties currently predicted to be most affected. Consideration is being given to the use of additional bunding, and targeted use of acoustic fencing at the bypass site. Therefore, the effects presented above are likely to be worst-case in the absence of further specific mitigation measures.

4.49. Overall, the assessment has identified that no significant adverse effects are anticipated from operational rail noise or vibration, or road traffic associated with the Main Site and the proposed Roade Bypass. Work is ongoing with regard to the likely (temporary) construction noise and vibration effects and finalising some detailed elements of the operational noise assessment. If this final stage of detailed work indicates that mitigation is required to minimise any adverse impacts, appropriate measures will be proposed.

**Air Quality**

4.50. There are two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) close to the site, and the primary focus of air quality monitoring is nitrogen dioxide ($NO_2$). Other pollutants, such as $PM_{10}$, are known to be well below set standards and limits. $NO_2$ is closely associated with major roads, and the closest AQMA is on the M1 adjacent to the site and is focused on a stretch of the motorway running north-west from Junction 15 and is associated with Collingtree to the east of the M1. The other AQMA of direct relevance is on the A45 at Wooton to the north of Junction 15 within the urban area of Northampton Borough.

4.51. Monitoring data shows that air quality in and around the Proposed Development is generally very good, including on the Main Site. With the exception of Roade where there is some ongoing monitoring by the local authority, the surrounding villages are shown to have no air quality issues with levels well within set standards or limits. The data also shows that pollution from the M1 disperses quickly with distance resulting in air quality in Collingtree being good overall. Air quality is therefore a current issue associated with proximity to the M1 motorway, and one which currently creates adverse impacts for a small number of properties closest to the motorway in Collingtree. This trend is supported by the data gathered by the Applicant over a 12 month period, as well as that collected by Northampton Borough Council.

4.52. As discussed in the Transport section below, as an SRFI the Proposed Development has a range of effects and impacts ranging from the very strategic level to the very local. By enabling and encouraging a shift away from road to rail freight, the Proposed Development will reduce the mileage of HGVs on the national network. Based on an example of the possible changes in HGV patters and distances travelled as a result of the Northampton Gateway SRFI once fully operational, this is shown to deliver reductions of over 100 annual average daily total (AADT) movements in or adjacent to at least 57 AQMAs across the UK, mostly located on the strategic road network and close to key Ports. This translates into a notable (moderate or major) beneficial impact at the strategic level, and a direct contribution towards national efforts to reduce the air quality impacts from transport.

4.53. At the local level, the Proposed Development will generate additional traffic. However, as a result of the improvements to the local highway network, the impact on air quality overall is anticipated to be minor. The local impacts vary, with notable improvements in air quality through the village of Roade as a result of the proposed bypass, as well as improvements in other villages nearby (including Milton Malsor and Blisworth) which will see reduced through traffic following delivery of the highways mitigation works.

4.54. However, mitigation measures associated with seeking to reduce total emissions and minimising the air quality effects are being designed. This is ongoing, but will be centred

around a Low Emissions Strategy (LES) to guide and manage construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development. This covers a range of issues from building design to public transport, and some of the likely and proposed elements of the LES are:

- generous (above standard) provision of electric vehicle charging points on-site for employees;
- provision of LPG fuelling, and battery storage of solar energy on-site to encourage and enable alternative fuels for HGVs (both on and off-site) – the feasibility of a range of such measures is under active investigation;
- provision of a new express bus service linking the site to the town centre, and an extension of Service 7 to serve the site, plus a bus shuttle service within the site to transport staff and visitors to the site;
- provision of pedestrian and cycle routes for easier site access, and provision of secure cycle parking facilities on-site;
- provision of real time information on public transport on-site;
- appointment of a travel coordinator to oversee the development and implement the Travel Plan and associated schemes to encourage and facilitate use of non-car modes and car-sharing.

**Transport**

4.55. A Transport Assessment is being prepared as part of the application and will explain the predicted transport and traffic impacts of the Proposed Development. It will also explain the mitigation measures to minimise or eliminate adverse impacts, and any expected benefits or improvements as a result of the proposals. The TA uses the Northamptonshire Strategic Transport Model (NSTM) which is run and maintained by the County Council as Local Highways Authority. The model allows Roxhill to understand the impacts of the Proposed Development, and also to model and test potential mitigation measures to understand their likely effects on traffic distribution. The work to date has been overseen by a Transport Working Group including Highways England and the County Council.

4.56. The proposed SRFI is located adjacent to Junction 15 of the M1. This junction suffers with a constrained physical design with tight radii on the roundabouts and a somewhat confusing layout, and it sees very high traffic demand at peak hours. The Junction is regularly operating well over its design capacity (27% above on a regular basis), resulting in significant queuing

and congestion, with poor journey times and reliability. Queues on the A508 can often be in excess of 400m long, and the junction is well known locally as a regular c*ongestion 'hot-spot'.*

4.57. The Northampton Gateway proposals includes a substantial upgrade to Junction 15 as part of a comprehensive package of highways works and improvements. The Junction 15 improvements would see works including:

- Enlargement of both northern and southern roundabouts;
- Realignment and widening (to 5 lanes) of the A45 southbound approach to the roundabout, and A45 northbound widened to 3 lanes to beyond Watering Lane;
- Provision of 3 full lanes over the M1 bridge;
- Signalisation and widening of the Saxon Avenue approach;
- Dualling of the A508 approach from the south, with 5 lanes provided at the entry to the roundabout;
- Improved routes for pedestrians and cyclists

4.58. In addition, the Proposed Development would also deliver improvements at Junction 15A to the north along the M1. Works including lane widening and new signals at both the northern and southern roundabouts would prevent predicted queuing onto the M1 in the longer-term.

4.59. A key component of the highways works would see a number of improvements focused on the A508 corridor heading south from Junction 15. This includes a number of small-scale junction and other improvements at existing junctions already known to create problems or safety concerns.

4.60. At the heart of this package is a new bypass to the village of Roade. The Bypass would be a single carriageway road (60mph speed limit) around the western side of the village, and would include tree planting and landscaping, including earthwork bunding to help mitigate visual and noise effects, and drainage swales and attenuation features. In summary the bypass would comprise:

- A new highway linking the A508 Northampton Road to the A508 Stratford Road;
- The provision of roundabout junctions between the Roade Bypass and the A508 Northampton Road, A508 Stratford Road and Blisworth Road;
- Drainage swales and attenuation features;
- A bridge over the west coast mainline railway;
- An underpass for bridleway RZ1;
- The alteration and diversion of existing public rights of way;
- The construction of a shared use footway and cycleway; and
- Environmental mitigation bunds.

4.61. Roxhill is committed to delivering the bypass, and will agree to specific and binding triggers or deadlines for its delivery. The intention is to agree the details of these triggers with SNDC and Northamptonshire County Council.

4.62. Detailed plans showing the wider route A508 upgrade are included as part of the consultation material and includes:

- Alteration to the A508/Courteenhall Road T-junction to become a left-in left-out only junction which would include the relocation of the existing bus stop currently located to the south of Courteenhall Road approximately 70 metres further south;

- Alterations to Stoke Road/Knock Lane (Blisworth Road) priority T-junction to widen the carriageway and improve the highway drainage;

- A capacity and road safety improvement scheme at the A508/Rookery Lane/Ashton Road staggered crossroads;

- Alteration to the A508/Pury Road ghost island T-junction to increase the storage area for traffic turning right from the A508;

- A new pedestrian refuge on the A508 at Grafton Regis to assist with crossing to the northbound bus stop, and provision of a right turn harbourage facility for northbound traffic from the A508 turning in to Church Lane.

4.63. While not yet finalised, the emerging total package of works has been tested in the NSTM. While it may be refined further, the modelling shows that this package of works would remove existing congestion 'bottlenecks' on the highway network, particularly at M1 Junction 15 and 15A, and at Roade. As a result, existing traffic is shown to 'reassign' to the principal road network consisting of the A508 between the A5 and M1 Junction 15, and at M1 Junction 15 and 15A. This is a desirable outcome, as the A508 is a primary route, and this reassignment is shown to lead to a consequential reduction in traffic on many of the surrounding local roads and the villages of Milton Malsor, Blisworth, Roade and Ashton. In simple terms, as a result of the package of highways improvements which the Proposed Development would deliver, the villages would see less through-traffic in the future than they do now, with beneficial impacts in terms of congestion reduction, noise reduction, and improved air quality. This is in a future scenario where the new homes and other development planned by the West Northamptonshire Core Strategy is delivered, and the traffic associated with that additional development is also on the highway network.

4.64. In addition to these important local beneficial impacts, the rail terminal at Northampton Gateway could make a significant contribution towards removing HGVs from the national road network. Once fully operational it accommodate an average maximum through-put of around 1384 containers a day, which would equate to a mode shift from road freight to rail freight of 928 HGV loads or 1,856 two-way HGV movements per day. The draft TA includes (at Appendix 12.30) an example of how this could translate to a specific set of changes in HGV transport patterns associated with this modal shift to rail freight. The example demonstrates that, annually, the proposed development could remove over 92 million HGV miles per year from the highway network. This would help generate not only congestion and journey time benefits, but also contribute towards efforts to reduce the impacts of road transport on air quality in the UK.

4.65. As well as providing improvements to the reliability of car travel the Proposed Development would also enable and encourage travel by a range of alternative modes. A Framework Travel Plan has been prepared in draft to encourage and enable access by a range of modes, and the proposals include new walking and cycling routes to (and within) the site as part of the wider infrastructure provision. In addition, a Public Transport Strategy has been prepared which would see extended existing bus services, and a new service to serve the site, as well as new stops on the A508 to serve the site.

4.66. However, to ensure a robust assessment which makes worst-case assumptions about the likely levels of car traffic, the Transport Assessment does not assume any shift of travel by employees away from the car to these other modes. This ensures that the highways mitigation works and improvements are designed to cater for the highest likely levels of car traffic.

## 5.0 Consultation issues and process, consultation programme, and project contacts

5.1. Informal and non-statutory consultation and engagement about the Proposed Development has been underway for some time, and following an earlier planning application on part of the same site there has been a general public awareness of the potential for development here for several years.

5.2. The applicant has been holding discussions with a large number of local partners and bodies, including discussing technical work to advance the Transport Assessment and to better understand the rail infrastructure issues associated with the proposals. This, and the wider discussions with a range of local groups and communities has helped shape and inform the project and the detailed proposals.

5.3. Following informal consultation and dialogue the project is now at the statutory stage of consultation and engagement as defined by Government guidance and legislation (principally the Planning Act 2008).

5.4. Roxhill has prepared a Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC), with input from the local authorities of South Northamptonshire, Northampton Borough, and Northamptonshire County Council. The SoCC explains the ways in which we will consult with the public, and is available via the project website. It is also at the libraries and Council Offices referred to below.

5.5. Initial public consultation on Northampton Gateway was undertaken in 2016, culminating in a series of three consultation exhibitions held in early December 2016. Consultation documents and material were made available in libraries, Council Offices, and via the project website (see website address below) at that time, and have remained available since online.

5.6. A second round of consultation exhibitions are being held in October 2017. During the period to 24th November comments can be made via the following methods:

- At the consultation exhibitions:
    - **Hilton Hotel, Collingtree – Monday 9th October, 1.30pm – 7.30pm**
    - **The Royal Oak pub, Blisworth - Wednesday 11th October, 1.30pm – 7.30pm**
    - **Milton Malsor Village Hall - Friday 13th October, 2pm – 7-30pm**
    - **Roade Primary School – Saturday 14th October, 12 noon – 5pm**
    - **The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester (SNDC Council Chamber) – Friday 20th October, 2pm – 7pm.**
- By hand (or post – see below) via a printed comments form available at the public exhibitions;

- Online via the comments form on the project website: www.northampton-gateway.co.uk
- By email to **contact-us@northampton-gateway.co.uk**
- By telephone using the project phone message line: **01788 538440**;
- By post to: Northampton Gateway SRFI
  PO Box 10570
  Nottingham
  NG2 9RG

5.7. In addition to the exhibitions referred to above, key project information can be viewed at:

- **South Northamptonshire District Council** offices, Moat Lane, Towcester – documents held in the **library** (ground floor);
- **Northampton Borough Council** offices, St Giles' Square, Northampton
- **Northamptonshire County Hall**, One Angel Square, Northampton
- **Roade Library**, High Street, Roade, NN7 2NW – open Wednesday: 10am to 2pm, Thursday: 2pm to 6pm, Friday: 10am to 2pm, Saturday: 10am to 2pm, Sunday: 11am to 2pm.
- **Hunsbury Library**, Overslade Close, Northampton, NN4 0RZ - Monday – Friday: 9am to 6pm, Saturday: 9am to 5pm, Sunday: 11am to 2pm.
- **Wootton Library**, Wootton Community Centre, Curtle Hill, Northampton, NN4 6ED - Monday: Closed, Tuesday: 2pm to 5pm, Wednesday: 10am to 1pm, Thursday: 2pm to 5pm, Friday: 2pm to 5pm, Saturday: 10am to 2pm, Sunday: 11am to 2pm.
- **Blisworth Parish Council** – by arrangement with Parish Clerk.
- **Collingtree Parish Council** – by arrangement with Parish Clerk.
- **Milton Malsor Parish Council** - by arrangement with the Parish Clerk.
- **Roade Parish Council** - by arrangement with the Parish Clerk.
- **Courteenhall Parish Meeting** - by arrangement with the Clerk.

5.8. In addition, other consultation and engagement activity is also underway and ongoing with a wide range of statutory consultees and other bodies, including the Environment Agency, Highways England, Natural England, Network Rail, as well as the local authorities.

5.9. The final submission to the Planning Inspectorate will include a Consultation Report which will provide a description of the range of consultation and engagement activity throughout the evolution of the project. This will include a full and detailed description of the statutory consultation and engagement, including a summary of issues raised by local people and other consultees, and the Applicants responses to them.

5.10. The expectation is that the final submission will be made in the first quarter of 2018.