



NORTHAMPTON
GATEWAY
STRATEGIC RAIL FREIGHT INTERCHANGE

**ECOLOGY AND BIODIVERSITY
STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND BETWEEN
THE APPLICANT AND NATURAL ENGLAND**

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The Northampton Gateway Rail Freight Interchange Order 201X

Regulation No: 5 (2) (q)

ECOLOGY AND BIODIVERSITY STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND BETWEEN
THE APPLICANT AND NATURAL ENGLAND | 6 NOVEMBER 2018

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ROXHILL



Roxhill (Junction 15) Ltd

Northampton Gateway, Northampton

Statement of Common Ground – Natural England

November 2018

FPCR Environment and Design Ltd

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SOCG) has been prepared by FPCR Environment and Design Ltd in respect of Roxhill (Junction 15) Ltd application to the secretary of state for Transport under the Planning Act for powers to construct a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange.
- 1.2 This statement sets out the matters of interest to NE on which there is agreement between the Applicant and NE.
- 1.3 It seeks to assist the Examining Authority in making its recommendation on the Application.
- 1.4 This SOCG relates to Ecology and Biodiversity – specifically the elements under the remit of NE. Documents relevant to this SOCG include:
- 1) Northampton Gateway ES Chapter 5: Ecology and Nature Conservation; and appendices:
 - a. Habitat including Phase-1 (Appendix 5.1) & Phase-2 botanical surveys (Appendix 5.2);
 - b. Badger Mitigation Strategy and Badger Survey Report including a bait- marking exercise (Appendix 5.3);
 - c. Bat survey report (Appendix 5.4) including Tree Inspection (Ground), Tree Aerial Inspection, Tree Nocturnal, Building Nocturnal and Activity Transects and Static Monitoring;
 - d. Birds survey reports including Breeding Birds Surveys (Appendix 5.5) & Wintering Bird Surveys (Appendix 5.6);
 - e. Great Crested Newt Mitigation Strategy and Great Crested Newt survey report including Pond Assessment, Aquatic Surveys and eDNA Survey (Appendix 5.7);
 - f. Invertebrate survey report (Appendix 5.8);
 - g. Reptile survey report (Appendix 5.9);
 - h. Otter & Water Vole survey report (Appendix 5.10); and
 - i. Crayfish survey report (Appendix 5.11).
 - 2) Revised Report on European Sites: Information to Inform Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA Report) (FPCR August 2018);
 - 3) Advice note eleven: Working with public bodies in the infrastructure planning process, Annex C – Natural England and the Planning Inspectorate
 - 4) Natural England Standing Advice on Protected Species (GOV.uk)

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Application is for a Development Consent Order (DCO) under the Planning Act 2008, for a proposed strategic rail freight interchange (SRFI) in South Northamptonshire District (the Site).
- 2.2 In summary, the development proposals include the following:
- 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.

2.3 The Site comprises approximately 290.5 hectares (ha) of land.

2.4 The 'Main Site' area is bound to the north by Collingtree Road, to the east by the M1, to the south by the A508 / Northampton Road and to the west by arable fields. The site itself comprises arable fields bisected by hedgerows of varying ages and structures, with areas of woodland, tree belts, grassland, ponds, wet ditches and several abandoned buildings (central grid reference SP 748 547).

2.5 The Bypass Corridor encompasses the majority of the Highway Mitigation Measures. This area is bound to the north by arable fields and woodland, to the east by Roade and to the south and west by a mix of arable and grazed field compartments. The site itself comprises areas of grassland, a mix of arable and grazed fields bound by hedgerows and standard trees, with scrub, grassland, running water, dry ditches. The surrounding landscape consists of arable farmland with woodland blocks, pasture and scattered urban areas.

2.6 Additional sections encompassed by the Highway Mitigation Measures are located to the north, west and south of the main site and Roade Bypass as detailed in Chapter 2 of the ES.

2.7 The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA / Ramsar was the closest statutorily designated site of International importance, being located approximately 5km north-east of the site. The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA / Ramsar is a discontinuous series of water bodies stretching over 35km from Clifford Hill on the edge of Northampton to the north of Thrapston. The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA / Ramsar is designated for the population of wintering and breeding birds that it supports.

2.8 There are no other statutorily designated nature conservation sites of international importance within 10km of the site.

3.0 AREAS OF AGREEMENT ON TECHNICAL MATTERS/AREAS OF COMMON GROUND

Designated Sites

- 3.1 Natural England agrees that the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (SPA), SSSI and Ramsar site; and Roade Cutting SSSI are the designated sites relevant to the application.

European Sites

- 3.2 On 31 July 2018 Natural England gave non-statutory advice to FPCR Environment and Design Ltd, a consultant of Roxhill (Junction 15 Limited), through its Discretionary Advice Service on the acceptability of a draft Habitats Regulations Assessment.
- 3.3 Roxhill (Junction 15) Ltd and Natural England, as statutory Nature Conservation Body, agree to the scope and methodology as set out in the draft Habitats Regulations Assessment report and carried through to the Revised Report on European Sites: Habitat Regulations Assessment (August 2018) (HRA) (DCO reference Doc 6.3A) used to identify Likely Significant Effects. It is agreed that:
- 1) the scope of the assessment, including study area and single site (Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA/Ramsar) scoped in to the assessment;
 - 2) the scope of impacts used in the HRA is appropriate;
 - 3) the NSER appropriately considers in combination effects with respect to the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA/Ramsar.
 - 4) the HRA is appropriately evidenced in determining the effects concluded in the HRA.
- 3.4 Roxhill (Junction 15) Ltd and Natural England agree that the evidence demonstrates beyond reasonable scientific doubt that there would be no likely significant effect on the integrity of the European site as a result of the construction and operation of the site and an appropriate assessment is not required.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

- 3.5 Roxhill (junction 15) Ltd and Natural England agree that no significant detrimental impacts would occur which would detrimentally or substantially impact upon the Geological SSSI – Roade Cutting; advising that its protection could be handled through a CEMP, provided that Natural England are a signatory to the agreed document and the DCO contains a statement that requires compliance.

4.0 AREAS NOT IN AGREEMENT

Effect on Protected Species

- 4.1 The proposed habitat retention and creation will compensate for habitat losses for fauna of interest. Further mitigation for protected species will also occur to ensure that relevant legislation is complied with. To that end full draft protected species licence applications in relation to great crested newts (GCN), bats and badgers have been submitted to Natural England in line with Planning Inspectorate Advice Note 11, Annex C.
- 4.2 Natural England received draft licence applications as part of their Pre-submission Screening Service (PSS) on the 8th August 2018 and will be assessing the applications in line with PINS Advice Note 11, Annex C – Natural England and the Planning Inspectorate. We will update the Inspector on the outcome of these draft licences.

<p>Signed on behalf of Roxhill (Junction 15) Ltd</p>  <p>Peter Hoy</p>	<p>Signed on behalf of Natural England</p> 
<p>Date:</p>	<p>Date: 02/11/2018</p>
<p>Position: Director</p>	<p>Position: Manager</p>