

This matter is being dealt with by:

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**Nottinghamshire
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By E-Mail Only

Dear Sir

8 November 2021

FOA Alex Maddox

Proposal: Request for Scoping Opinion

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Opinion for the A614/A6097 Major Road Network Improvement Project between Ollerton and East Bridgford in accordance with Regulation 15(1) of The Town and Country Planning (EIA) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 (as amended). This project consists of six schemes (namely Ollerton roundabout; Mickledale Lane junction (2 options); White Post roundabout; Warren Hill junction; Lowdham roundabout and Kirk Hill junction)

Location: Mickledale Lane Junction – the crossroads of A614 (Old Rufford Road), Mickledale Lane and Inkersall Lane (2 Options)

Applicant: Nottinghamshire County Council

I refer to your scoping request for the above development dated 7 June 2021 (A614/A6097 Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report – Rev 1) which relates to six highway improvement projects on the A6097/A614 corridor between Kirk Hill (East Bridgford) and Ollerton. This Scoping Opinion relates to the two options proposed for the improvement of the junction of the A614 with Mickledale Lane, and Opinions on the other junctions will follow separately. From previous discussions the schemes taken as a whole will be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment. While some of the schemes will have limited environmental impacts each junction in turn will need to be considered and assessed in the context of the overall project.

The Environmental Statement must contain the information specified in Regulation 18(3) of the 2017 EIA Regulations and must meet the requirements of Regulation 18(4). It must also include any additional information specified in Schedule 4 to the EIA Regulations which is relevant to the particular development proposal and to the environmental features likely to be significantly affected. These statutory requirements are set out in the Regulations and it is not necessary to repeat them here.

The specific characteristics of the particular development/the development of the type concerned

A scoping opinion is being sought of the County Planning Authority (CPA) with respect to a proposed planning application and accompanying Environmental Statement, as one of six applications, seeking permission for the reconfiguration of the junction of the A614 and Mickledale Lane/Inkersall Lane, Bilsthorpe. Two options have been put forward. The aim, in conjunction with the other projects along the transport corridor is to address existing congestion issues and to facilitate future traffic growth. Mickledale Lane junction is a priority crossroads with right-turn harbourages provided into each of the minor arms. A key issue at this junction is the ability of minor-arm traffic to safely judge gaps when entering the A614 and to do so without undue delay.

Four houses lie to the south-east corner of the junction, and a transport café (Limes Café) is in the north-west quadrant. Other than these buildings, the junction is surrounded by agricultural land. There are two proposals for consideration:

Option 1 would introduce traffic signals at the existing junction, with two entry lanes for both A614 approaches. This would require permanent use of a strip of land outside the highway boundary to the west, both north and south of the existing junction. A new road for the houses to the south-east of the junction accessed from Mickledale Lane, would be provided to the rear of the dwellings, requiring some permanent land take from the adjacent field. The area of land within the scoping boundary is approximately 2.4 ha.

Option 2 proposes the construction of a new three-arm roundabout on the A614 to the south of the existing junction. A new link road would connect the A614 and Mickledale Lane passing through a field to the south-east of the existing junction, running along the western boundary of commercial development (Strawson Limited). The new link road would tie into Mickledale Lane via a second three-arm mini-roundabout. Mickledale Lane would be closed off to vehicles leaving the A614 and become a cul-de-sac accessed from the east, from the new link road. Two junction stubs would be formed in to the Strawson site on the eastern side of the link road, with an access also formed on the western side providing access to approximately 2ha. of agricultural land to the south-east of the existing houses at the A614/Mickledale Lane junction. The area of land within the scoping boundary is approximately 9.6 ha.

The environmental features likely to be affected by the development

In accordance with the Planning Practice Guidance a number of organisations have been consulted for their expert advice regarding the likely environmental effects of the proposed development. Consultations have also taken place with specialists employed within the County Council and other interest groups:

- Newark & Sherwood District Council *
- Rufford Parish Council
- NCC Highways Development Control *
- Via Safer Highways *
- Via Countryside Access *
- Environment Agency *
- NCC Flood Risk *
- Historic England *

- NCC Archaeology
- NCC Built Heritage *
- Natural England *
- NCC Nature Conservation *
- Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust *
- Via Landscape
- Via Noise
- Via Land Reclamation
- Severn Trent Water
- Cadent (Gas)
- Western Power
- British Horse Society *

Where responses have been received they are marked *, copies of which are enclosed. Any responses subsequently received will be forwarded and could result in this scoping opinion being updated.

Comments in respect of the scoping request report

A list of potential environmental and socio-economic effects arising from the proposed development along with commentary of how effects are to be addressed should be included in the Non-Technical Summary.

The topics at 5.15 appear to cover most of the relevant subject areas applicable in this case and consideration is also to be given to alternatives and cumulative impacts (5,16) as is required under the Regulations. The CPA concur with the view reached on heat and radiation (5.1.9) and transboundary impacts (5.1.10). A specific consideration of risks and disasters will not be required (5.1.12).

The Environmental Statement should include a detailed description (2.3.9-2.3.12 and Option 1 - 8.3.34-8.3.62 and Option 2 – 8.3.63-8.3.92) of the site to provide context to the Mickledale Lane junction project.

The planning submission should incorporate an analysis of the proposed development against relevant planning policies (referenced at 8.3.1).

In terms of presenting the proposal for Mickledale Lane junction there will be elements of the overarching Environmental Statement that will be relevant and have related impacts, particularly with regard to transport, emissions and ecology (9.6.8) (unless it is proposed to provide ecological mitigation at each junction), climate and cumulative impacts. Whilst the format in the Scoping document deals with each topic with a commentary on each junction, where site specific issues at other junctions have no relevance or environmental impact on the Mickledale Lane junction they *can* be omitted from the Mickledale Lane submission. This will help with the focus of the Mickledale Lane junction application while providing all relevant information and context.

Unless otherwise expressly stated the following comments will apply to both Option 1 and Option 2. The consultation exercise undertaken by the CPA in connection with the scoping report has raised the following matters regarding the scope of information you propose to submit:

Highways

A Transport Assessment will need to consider in particular: any adverse effects of the redistribution of vehicles, which may have otherwise avoided the junction in question; the highway safety implications of the proposals, to include consideration of the roads and junctions where vehicles have redistributed; and consideration of the impact on vulnerable road users.

British Horse Society has identified the closure of a route providing connectivity between the bridleway (Rufford BW19) on Inkersall Lane and the multi-user route crossing the A614 on the former mineral line to the north. The provision of connectivity and safe crossing of the A614 by all non-motorised user groups should be considered.

Via Rights of Way has identified latent and growing equestrian use in the area with Inkersall Lane (Rufford BW 5) and Rufford BW19 linking Bilsthorpe to Sherwood.

Links to the National Cycle Network (NCN) 645 are used informally by equestrians. Whilst this is not an equestrian route it is advised that Sustrans are looking to formally include equestrians in the future. The closure of the link referred to by the British Horse Society is currently part of a claim for a footpath and may be upgraded to bridleway if there is evidence of equestrian use. However, this will take several years to be processed and there is no guarantee of success, and therefore must be discounted as a possible solution to the safe crossing of the A614. Horse riders can access NCN 645 from BW19 once they have crossed the A614. This will increase the likelihood of equestrians having to cross the A614 at grade.

A new bridleway dedication at the eastern end of Mickledale Lane linking Bilsthorpe to the Southwell Trail (also a bridleway) is a result of development in the area, and will provide a crucial link through new development increasing the potential equestrian traffic from further afield.

Option 1

A Road Safety Audit Stage 1 report has already been carried out for a similar proposal which makes recommendations to reduce the chance of collision scenarios. From the broader Road Safety point of view, this scheme has the potential to attract additional motor traffic to use Mickledale Lane and the wider routes available through Bilsthorpe. An increase in motor traffic in Bilsthorpe in particular is likely to increase the risk of collisions and injuries, not just at the junction but at all points on those additional journeys.

The draft design does not provide for crossing by non-motorized road users. The requirements of pedestrians, cyclists, and horse-riders need to be considered, including the provision of formal crossing points, or a layout capable of accommodating them in the future. There are rights of way accessed at the side of the café, as well as the café itself, which are very likely to attract local people to cross the A614 here.

Via Rights of Way identify the following matters that need to be considered:

- The safe crossing of the A614 with the additional traffic lanes taking account of the expected increase in use due to the informal link between BW19 and NCN 645 having been closed, with consideration of a Pegasus crossing and associated corral.

- The impact of safety of equestrians waiting to cross the A614 with additional traffic in the same vicinity of the Limes café new entrance/exit.

Option 2

A Road Safety Audit will be required for Option 2 and Via Road Safety Team have identified the need to consider the following matters:

- Improvements to access the private dwellings close to Mickledale Lane (perhaps these can be served from the side road rather than the A614)
- The small roundabout will need provision for pedestrians where there is an existing footway
- The existing safety camera installation will need to be revised to suit this new layout. This may force a full upgrade of the local equipment to the currently available products, as it forms part of the average speed enforcement system on the route.
- Mickledale Lane should be clearly and fully closed to motor traffic at the A614, but please ensure that provision for non-motorised road users is retained (pedestrians, cycles, possibly horses, too, to access the onward route to the west).

Via Rights of Way identify the following matters that need to be considered:

- The safe crossing of the A614 taking account of the expected increase in use due to the informal link between BW19 and NCN 645 having been closed.
- As the existing Mickledale Lane junction with the A614 would be closed appropriate access/gaps(1.5m)/corral would need to be provided for equestrian users. The provision of a Pegasus crossing should be considered.
- How equestrian users would navigate the new smaller roundabout on Mickledale Lane. Moving the footway/cycle way to the north side of Mickledale Lane would avoid the need to cross the new link road.
- The provision of good visibility for equestrians so as to be able to make sound decisions to cross the highway.

Ecology

Natural England has provided advice on the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), and without wishing to repeat it at length in this letter is included as Annex A to the attached consultation response.

With reference to the Sherwood ppSPA (Paragraph 9.6.5) in-line with the 'risk-based approach' set out in Natural England's Advice Note (March 2014), a consideration of potential impacts on the ppSPA should be undertaken as part of the HRA assessment (required due to proximity to the Birklands and Bilhaugh SAC).

With reference to Biodiversity Net Gain, the creation of habitat should be delivered as far as possible at each of the individual junctions comprising the overall combined scheme through the planting of native trees, shrubs and hedgerows and the seeding of native

wildflower seed mixes. Reference should be made to the species in the relevant Nottinghamshire Landscape Character Assessment.

Appropriate species surveys will need to be undertaken (Table 9-3).

Attention is drawn to Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (NWT) comment on Bio-diversity Net Gain, funding and management which should be addressed in the submission.

Noise

Noise change impacts on sensitive species (roosting and foraging bats and nesting birds) will need to be assessed depending on the outcome of surveys.

Emissions

As part of the greenhouse gas impact assessment consideration should be given to the impact of emissions arising from increased traffic growth and potential to ease congestion (15.1).

The need for accurate modelling of greenhouse gas emissions identified by NWT should be noted.

Historic Environment

The setting of heritage assets, impacts and mitigation will need careful consideration. Particular regard should be given to the recommendations of Historic England.

NCC Historic Buildings comments that the conservation area is not directly affected and where historic buildings fall within the influence of the scheme it is their setting that requires examination. Harm to designated heritage assets (including their settings) is in some cases avoidable through carefully considered design. For instance, noise and light pollution can be considered at the design stage to ensure that they do not impact adversely on these heritage assets. Early consultation with the NCC building conservation section and conservation officers at the local district council should take place before designs are fully developed, providing an opportunity to avoid adverse impacts and, where possible, introduce suitable enhancements to the scheme that can demonstrably mitigate these.

Flood Risk and Contamination

The Environment Agency draws attention to matters to be considered in the Flood Risk Assessment. A surface water drainage strategy will also need to be submitted.

Risks to Source Protection Zone 1 and associated groundwater abstraction need to be fully considered. Particular attention is drawn to the need for the drainage design to take account of the highly sensitive nature of groundwater beneath the site. A controlled waters risk assessment will be required.

Attention is drawn to the County Council's adopted Guidance Note on the Validation Requirements for Planning Applications which sets out national and local information requirements for planning applications:

<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/planning-applications/pre-application-advice/apply-for-planning-permission>

Should you wish to discuss any of the above matters further please do not hesitate to contact me as the case officer.

Subject to the matters above (and any subsequent matters that are raised through the submission of further consultation responses, the details of which shall be forwarded to you on receipt) the A614/A6097 Corridor Improvements Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report – Rev 1 proposed submissions and methodologies relevant to the overall scheme where there are synergies and proposals specific to the Mickledale Lane junction schemes are appropriate for the project and represents the County Council's formal scoping opinion.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Marsh', written in a cursive style.

David Marsh
Major Projects Senior Practitioner
Nottinghamshire County Council