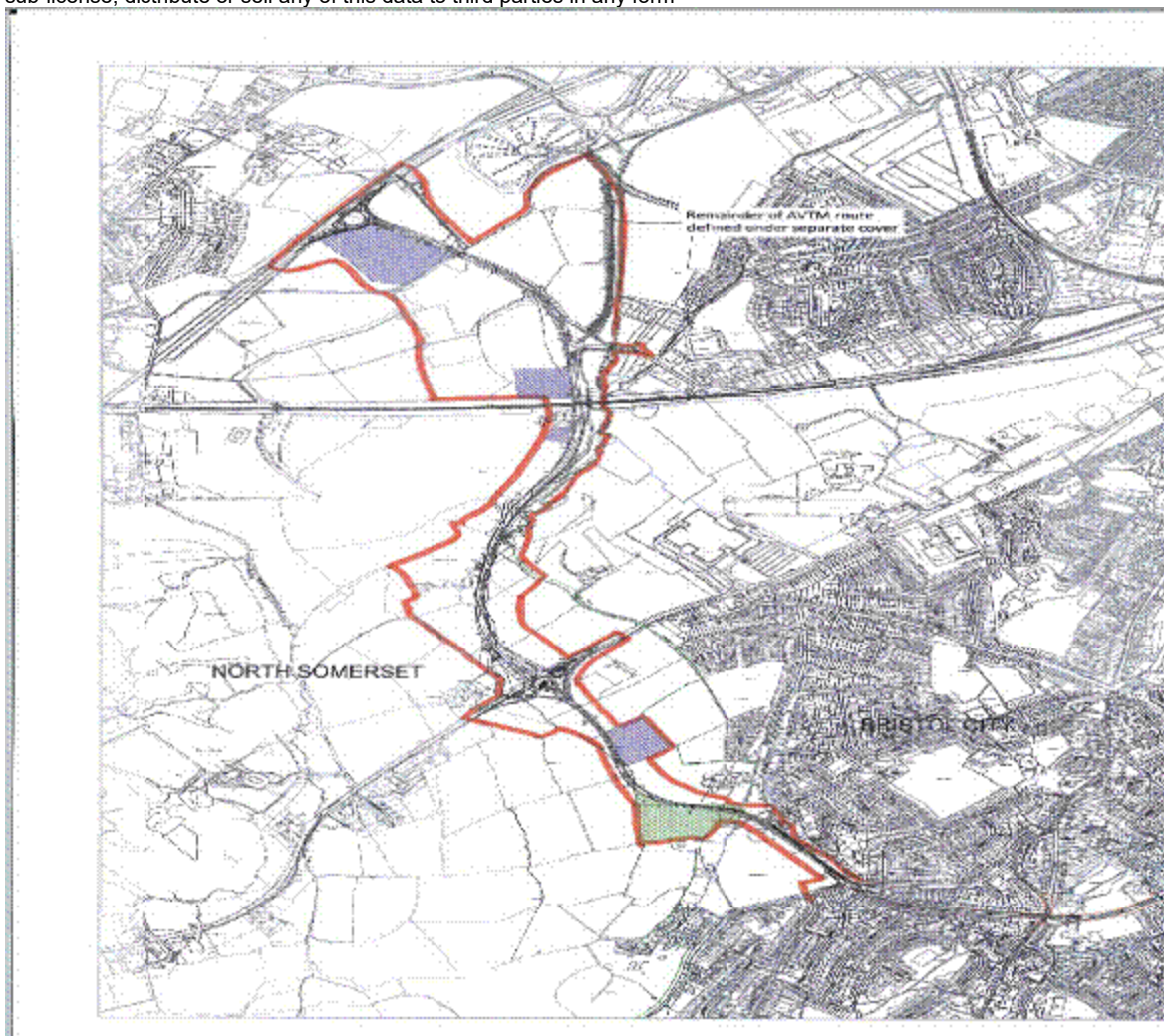


APPLICATION NO: 13/P/1204/F2	CASE OFFICER David Tate
APPLICANT: North Somerset Council and Bristol City Council	RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY: Approval
PARISH/WARD: Wraxall and Long Ashton, Winford WARD COUNCILLOR(S): Cllr Cave, Cllr Gregor and Cllr Cook	TARGET DATE: 30/11/2013
APPLICATION: South Bristol Link: Proposed highway and bus only link including bridges, structures, construction compounds, drainage and landscaping; Traffic signs, lighting and bus shelters; Shared cycleway and footway; Works to existing highways and provision of replacement Highridge Common Land	
SITE ADDRESS: Land between the A370 Long Ashton Bypass in North Somerset and the Cater Road Roundabout in Hartcliffe, South Bristol	

LOCATION PLAN: The following plan shows the general location of the site only and is for illustrative purposes. The circle identifies the location of site and is not a representation of the site boundaries. The site boundaries and other details submitted with the application can be viewed on the website at www.n-somerset.gov.uk. This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright and database rights 2013 Ordnance Survey 100023397. You are not permitted to copy, sub-license, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form



1. **13/P/1204/F2 SOUTH BRISTOL LINK: PROPOSED HIGHWAY AND BUS ONLY LINK INCLUDING BRIDGES, STRUCTURES, CONSTRUCTION COMPOUNDS, DRAINAGE AND LANDSCAPING; TRAFFIC SIGNS, LIGHTING AND BUS SHELTERS; SHARED CYCLEWAY AND FOOTWAY; WORKS TO EXISTING HIGHWAYS AND PROVISION OF REPLACEMENT HIGHRIDGE COMMON LAND, ON LAND BETWEEN THE A370 LONG ASHTON BYPASS IN NORTH SOMERSET AND THE CATER ROAD ROUNDABOUT IN HARTCLIFFE, SOUTH BRISTOL**

COUNCIL APPLICATION

Introduction

Members will be aware that the above application has been submitted jointly by North Somerset Council and Bristol City Council and is one of a package of transport schemes supported and promoted as a 'corporate priority' by the West of England authorities.

Members will recall that consultation comments were sent to Bristol City Council as a result of discussion at the NAC and CAC on 12 September 2013.

The part of the South Bristol Link (SBL) within the Bristol City boundary is due to be considered by South and East Development Control Committee on the 27 November 2013.

To date the Secretary of State has not offered a decision on the AVTM Transport and Works Act proposals.

The application is being reported to both North and Central Area Committees as the route crosses both committee areas. In the event that the Committees arrive at materially different resolutions on application the application will be referred to the Planning and Regulatory Committee for final decision.

The Site

The northern section of the SBL is bounded to the west by the A370, beyond Long Ashton and to the north by Long Ashton Park and Ride. To the east, is Brookgate Industrial Estate, which leads to the mixed residential employment area of Ashton Vale. The Bristol to Taunton Railway Line crosses the section of the route east-west, the track-bed being on a raised embankment. An area of floodplain is in the north of the section, which includes marsh and semi improved grassland.

Beyond the railway line the route passes through countryside which falls between Ashton Vale and south west Bristol. The route follows to the west of the steep wooded slopes of Colliter's Brook, and passes through the eastern flanks of South Bank Meadow and Hanging Hill Wood. The route crosses the former Yanley landfill site owned and managed by Viridor Ltd and ascends to reach the A38 to the east of Castle Farm. Public Rights Of Way (PROW) and the National Trail extends alongside and cross the route. The buildings of Yew Tree Farm are located to the east of the route, with the extensive Computershare office building situated further east, accessed from the A38. The urban edge of south west Bristol lies some 500 metres to the east of the route corridor.

The southern section of the route passes into the western boundary of Highridge Common. The proposed roundabout junction with the A38 will be centred over a Lime Kilns feature. Open fields continue to the south of the A38, with the wider landscape dominated by the backdrop of the residential properties forming the urban edge of Bristol lying east. The village of Dundry is located to the west on higher ground.

The proposed route in Bristol crosses established residential communities of Bishopsworth, Hartcliffe, Whitchurch Park and Hengrove.

The Application

This is a 'full' detailed planning application for the construction and realignment of a section of highway which is approximately 4.5 kilometres in length from the A370 Long Ashton bypass within North Somerset to the Cater Road roundabout within the Hartcliffe area of south Bristol.

The route will form part of the West of England rapid transit network (Metro Bus) and will be used buses. The bus only link will enable bus services to link with the Ashton Vale and Temple Meads (AVTM) close to the Long Ashton Park and Ride site. Within the south Bristol section, once buses have reached the Hartcliffe Roundabout, services will follow existing roads via Hengrove Way to Imperial Park and onwards to Whitchurch Lane and Hengrove Park, the southern terminus of the North Fringe to Hengrove.

The full extent of the scheme amounts to 81.4 hectares and is shown within the red line boundary plan. The scheme incorporates:

- New highway.
- New dedicated bus lanes and bus link.
- New cycleway/footway
- Two new roundabouts.
- A new railway bridge and two new pedestrian under-bridges
- New bus stops, bus shelters, street lighting and traffic signals.
- New road link into Brookgate Industrial Estate.
- Re-aligned of footpaths and new field accesses.
- Potential site compound areas.
- Exchange land for Highridge Common.
- New planting of trees and hederows
- Areas intended for environmental & landscape mitigation.
- Flood attenuation and drainage infrastructure.

The route starts on the A370 and moves south from the Long Ashton Park and Ride to a point where it will run under the Bristol to Taunton Railway Line.

The landscape within this section of the route is characterised by fields lined by mature hedgerows and scattered trees and forms part of the borrowed landscape of Ashton Court. Since the farmland is low-lying the track-bed of both the road and bus route will form two raised embankments.

The proposed roundabout on the A38 has been sited so as to accommodate a set of historic Lime Kilns. Open fields and gently undulating terrain continue to the south of the A38 into Highridge Common.

The application is supported by the following documents:

- Environmental Impact Assessment (Statement) (EIA)
- Transport Impact Assessment (TIA)
- Sustainability Statement (SS)
- Utilities Statement
- Economics Impact Report
- Options Appraisal Report
- Lighting Assessment
- Equalities Impact Assessment
- Air Quality Assessment
- Noise Assessment
- Health Impact Assessment
- Ecological Impact Assessment
- Tree Survey Report
- Green Belt Assessment
- Landscape Strategy and Visual Impact Assessment
- Heritage and Archaeology Assessment
- Flood Risk Assessment

- Design and Access Statement
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Drainage Strategy
- Recreation and Amenity Assessment
- Agricultural and Equestrian Assessment
- Plans and Drawings

Relevant Planning History

There is no relevant planning history along the route of the road.

Policy Framework

The site lies outside the settlement boundaries of all surrounding towns and villages in North Somerset and the route of the road within North Somerset is designated Green Belt

The main relevant policies are as follows:

Development Plan

Core Strategy

CS1	Addressing climate change and carbon reduction
CS2	Delivering sustainable design and construction
CS3	Environmental impacts and flood risk management
CS4	Nature conservation
CS5	Landscape and the historic environment
CS6	North Somerset's Green Belt
CS9	Green infrastructure
CS10	Transportation and movement, identifies the SBL as a major transport scheme.
CS11	Parking
CS12	Achieving high quality design and place making
CS20	Supporting a successful economy
CS23	Bristol Airport

Core Strategy - High Court Challenge

In March 2013 a judgement following a legal challenge to the Core Strategy concluded that the Inspector who undertook the examination was found to have 'failed to give adequate or intelligible reasons' for his conclusion that the North Somerset *housing* requirement made sufficient allowance for latent demand i.e. demand unrelated to the creation of new jobs. Policy CS13 which relates to the housing requirement was remitted back to the Planning Inspectorate for re-examination. In addition Policies CS6, CS14, CS19, CS28, CS30, CS31, CS32, CS33 were also remitted on the grounds that should the housing requirement be increased, then this may have consequences for one or more of these policies. The judge was clear that there is nothing unlawful about these policies per se and they can still be accorded appropriate weight in decision making. All other policies remain adopted.

It is considered that the above proposal is not materially affected by this re-examination.

North Somerset Replacement Local Plan (NSRLP)

Three NSRLP policies were not saved in March 2010. The Core Strategy supersedes some but not all of the remainder. It does not supersede the following policies which are relevant to this proposal:

ECH/4	Listed buildings
ECH/5	Historic parks and gardens
ECH/6	Archaeology
ECH/9	Forest of Avon
ECH/11	Protected species and their habitats
ECH/12	Wildlife Sites
ECH/14	Wildlife Sites and local nature reserves
RD/3	Development in the Green Belt
T/7	Protection, development and improvement of the rights of way network and other forms of public access
T/8	Strategic cycle routes
T/9	Highway Schemes. The SBL is one of these safeguarded highway schemes
T/10	Highway safety and provision of infrastructure associated with development.
T/12	Bristol International Airport

Other material policy guidance

National Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other guidance is relevant as follows:

Relevant NPPF policy includes the following:

Para. 14 – For decision-taking, the presumption in favour of sustainable development normally means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay.

Para. 30 – Encouragement should be given to solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion.

Para. 31 – Local authorities should work with neighbouring authorities and transport providers to develop strategies for the provision of viable infrastructure necessary to support sustainable development.

Para. 41 – Local planning authorities should identify and protect, where there is robust evidence, sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice.

Para. 87 – Inappropriate development is harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in 'very special circumstances'.

Para. 90 – Certain forms of development are not inappropriate in Green Belt provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt. These include:

- engineering operations;
- local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location

Regional Guidance

Joint Local Transport Plan

Strategic transport policies are prepared in the context of the third Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP3) for the West of England. The SBL is a key proposal of JLTP3 with the objectives of:

- facilitating regeneration and growth in South Bristol;
- reducing congestion in South Bristol and adjacent areas of North Somerset; and
- improving accessibility from South Bristol to the city centre and to strategic transport links, including the trunk road network and Bristol Airport.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Development Plan Documents (DPD)

Sites and Policies Plan (Consultation Draft)

The Consultation Draft of the Sites and Policies Plan was published in February 2013 and carries appropriate weight as an emerging plan.

Policy DM13 deals with development in the Green Belt but has no specific guidance relevant to the proposal. Policy DM20(vi) repeats the Replacement Local Plan and Core Strategy proposal for a South Bristol Link, linking the A370 with the A38 and Hengrove Way, safeguarding land for the link.

Travel Plans SPD (adopted November 2010)

North Somerset Landscape Character Assessment SPD (adopted December 2005)

Biodiversity and Trees SPD (adopted December 2005)

Other Guidance

North Somerset Local Economy Plan 2013

Consultations

The consultation report is set out in Appendix 1 and contains summaries only.

Principal Planning Issues

The principal planning issues in this case are:

1. The principle of development
2. Transport and highway considerations
3. Economic Benefits
4. Landscape Assessment
5. Cycle, footpath, equestrian and agricultural issues
6. Ecology
7. Heritage assets
8. Flood Risk and drainage
9. Environmental issues
10. Replacement Highridge Common land

Issue 1: The principle of development

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the 2004 Act) requires that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In Development Plan terms, the proposal for a South Bristol Link has a long planning history and evolution dating back to the 1960s. More importantly, up-to-date policies contained in the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan and the North Somerset Core Strategy (adopted 2012) continue to support the development of the SBI.

Policy CS10 of the strategy is the overarching policy for Transport and Movement in North Somerset which seeks to support and encourage *“an integrated transport network and allow for a wide choice of modes of transport as a means of access to jobs, homes, services and facilities...”* To achieve the policy objective, transport schemes should:

- Enhance the facilities for pedestrians, including those with reduced mobility, and other users such as cyclists;
- Deliver better local bus, rail and rapid transit services in partnership with operators;
- Improve road and personal safety and environmental conditions;
- Mitigate against increased traffic congestion;
- Improve connectivity within and between major towns both within and beyond North Somerset.

The South Bristol Link is identified under CS10 as a major transport scheme.

Policy T/9 of the Replacement Local Plan ‘Highway Schemes’ safeguards a South Bristol Ring Road as a major highway scheme.

Policy T/10 of the Replacement Local Plan entitled ‘Safety, traffic and the provision of infrastructure etc. associated with development’, states that development will only be permitted if it would not prejudice highway safety or emergency vehicle access. It adds that development giving rise to a significant number of travel movements will only be permitted if it is not likely to lead to an unacceptable degree of traffic congestion or to generate traffic that cannot be accommodated without seriously affecting the character of the surrounding area; and can readily be integrated with public transport, cycleway and footpath links, and bridleways where appropriate.

In connection with transport policy, the NPPF in Section 4 (*Promoting Sustainable Transport*) identifies a number of Core Planning Policies which are directly related to the SBL scheme. These include supporting sustainable transport modes that give people a real choice and contribute to the reduction of green house gas emissions and congestion as well as making provision for sustainable modes of transport that reduces impact on the environment.

Policy T/9(iv) of the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan is a specific proposal for the SBL. The current proposal is referred to as the ‘red’ route, with the Barrow Gurney bypass referred to as the ‘orange’ route. The colours of the two alternative routes derive from a study carried out in 2001. The alignment of the chosen ‘red’ route is shown on the adopted Proposals Map within the Local Plan. The policy states that the lack of a modern road link between the A38 and A370 has led to increasing traffic problems on the B3130 through Barrow Gurney. The policy also adds that as well as relieving the village, the new road will improve access to Bristol Airport so as to reinforce its status as a regional facility and major local employer.

The SBL transport objectives in the Local Plan are also reinforced in Policy CS10 of the Core Strategy as a specific proposal for the South Bristol Link, which is identified by reference to the West of England major transport schemes programme set out in the JLTP. The general location of the link is illustrated on the Key Diagram attached to the Core Strategy. Policy CS10 is a locational strategy that aims to place new jobs, services and facilities where they are easily accessible by public transport, walking and cycling and give existing and future residents a choice of how to travel. The policy adds that development proposals that encourage an improved and integrated transport network, such as the SBL, will be encouraged and supported.

The SBL also needs to be seen as part of the wider West of England major transport schemes programme set out in the Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP3). The JLTP3 is produced under the requirements of the Transport Act 2000 as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008 and sets out the strategy and delivery plans for improving transport in the sub-region for the five years from 2006 to 2011.

The JLTP3 represents a material consideration in the determination of this planning application. It states that *“the Rapid Transit network is essential for sustainable economic growth, by providing a deliverable, cost effective, reliable and attractive alternative to the car.”* The JLTP3 also acknowledges the regional importance of SBL, indicating that it will support regeneration and economic growth, reduce congestion and improve accessibility. Without SBL, it concludes, that *“congestion will increase and investment could go elsewhere”*.

In order to achieve the scheme’s objective the route must cross the Green Belt. There are no suitable alternative routes that do not involve Green Belt land.

Supporting information submitted with the application sets a brief history leading to this route selection. The detailed alignment and format of the proposed development has been subject to an options appraisal process, commencing in 1992 with the Avon Ring Road Options Report (MVA, 1992) and has included options appraisal in 2008 and public consultation in 2009 and 2010. The ‘South Bristol Link, Options Appraisal Summary Report’ (Atkins, November 2012) details the full options appraisal process that led to the chosen SBL and its alignment partly within the Green Belt. The options appraisal process culminated in the preparation of the Major Scheme Business Case (MSBC) which identified local objectives, confirmed the scheme options and appraised the scheme against the guidance. Two options appraisal workshops were undertaken in 2009 to identify and appraise options against a set of agreed objectives which were to:

- facilitate regeneration and growth in south Bristol;
- reduce congestion in south Bristol and adjacent areas of north Somerset; and
- improve accessibility from south Bristol to the City Centre and strategic transport links.

The appraisal process led to an alignment being taken forward to the MSBC and then an amended scheme taken to the Best and Final Bid (BAFB) stage. The process has identified and formally tested a large number of alignments and the one selected is considered the most appropriate with the least environmental impact in comparison with the alternatives.

It is considered that this options appraisal process provides justification for the requirement for the development in the Green Belt in order to achieve the above objectives. In planning terms, the alignment has been defined through a lengthy plan led process and has been set out in the adopted Local Plan (NSRLP) for a number of years. The current application accords with the Local Plan alignment and is therefore acceptable as a matter of principle.

Notwithstanding this, the issue of Green Belt policy should also be addressed.

Policy RD/3 of the Local Plan states that development in the Green Belt is restricted unless it is for certain purposes, which include *‘the carrying out of engineering or other operations or for changes to the use of land which maintain openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt’* (RD/3(vi)). The NPPF also states that local transport infrastructures are not inappropriate in the Green Belt. The proposed development constitutes a ‘local transport infrastructure’ as it is not a trunk road or motorway and is designed to improve and benefit the local area in both transport and economic terms. It therefore complies with this element of the NPPF.

Whilst the proposal is identified as a form of development which is not inappropriate in the Green Belt, the NPPF paragraph 90 caveats this with *‘provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt’*. In terms of openness, it is accepted that the development will have some impact on openness, particularly where the carriageway is raised. However it is considered that any impact would be localised and that the process of route selection and assessment has ensured that any impact on openness is minimised given the established need for the scheme identified through the development plan process. Once constructed the land form together with new trees and hedgerows would soften the appearance of the development to a large extent such that any limited intrusion of the route would be acceptable and in

general terms the existing field pattern would be undisturbed. Longer views around the site would be filtered through trees and hedgerows which follow existing field boundaries and many public rights of way. There is no current danger of an unacceptable cumulative impact of similar development in the area that would significantly impact on the landscape.

In respect of not conflicting with the five purposes of including land in the Green Belt, these are considered in turn:

(i) To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.

The construction of the road will not itself result in any change to the existing built-up area of Bristol and Long Ashton. No new development has been proposed inside the road line, and land between the road and Bristol will remain as Green Belt. The Development Plan framework will continue to protect the countryside from unplanned development or sprawl. The SBL alignment means that any potential for additional development in the future would be minimised. Once constructed, the road would also arguably act as a barrier to additional pressure for development sprawling out into the Green Belt.

(ii) To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.

The proposed road alignment is considered to provide long-term protection to any pressure for the merging of Long Ashton with Bristol by in effect providing a clearer urban edge. No new built development is proposed in association with the SBL.

(iii) To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

Again, given the established need for the scheme, the road alignment is considered to minimise encroachment, and there are no proposals for additional built development or amendments to the Green Belt boundary.

(iv) To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.

It is considered that the proposed road alignment and landscaping proposals will minimise the impact and have no serious impact on the setting and character of historic towns.

(v) To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

The regeneration of south Bristol is a priority objective for both Bristol City and the West of England Partnership and it is considered that the delivery of this local transport infrastructure will make a significant difference in terms of improving accessibility and by increasing commercial attractiveness of the area and enhancing the potential for urban regeneration projects.

The proposal is therefore not considered to be in conflict with any of the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. It is accepted that, having regard to these local and national policies, the proposal is an 'engineering operation' and 'transport infrastructure' that is intended to improve the functioning of Bristol and North Somerset in sustainable transport terms and is therefore not inappropriate in the Green Belt.

However, if it was concluded that the proposal was inappropriate development, the applicant has suggested a number of factors which are regarded as 'very special circumstances' which would outweigh any harm by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm. The very special circumstances are as follows:

1. The location of the development is part of the wider West of England major transport scheme programme set out in the adopted Local Plan and Core Strategy and the Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP3).
2. The location of the proposal will facilitate economic regeneration and reduce congestion in North Somerset and south Bristol. The scheme will also improve accessibility to the city centre and wider transport networks.
3. The only possible location for the SBL on the edge of Bristol is through the Green Belt

4. The scheme will unlock the economic potential of south Bristol through improved accessibility and attractiveness to the business community.

It is considered that these are very special circumstances and would outweigh any harm by reason of inappropriateness, if for any reason it were concluded that the development was inappropriate in the Green Belt.

In summary, the alignment for the scheme is safeguarded in the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan and Core Strategy and there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development that is in accordance with the Development Plan and NPPF. In addition, the proposed development is not 'inappropriate' development in the Green Belt and fully complies with adopted planning and transport policies. Notwithstanding the conclusion that the proposed development would not be 'inappropriate' development in the Green Belt, if a different view is taken then the requirements and justification for the road would nevertheless constitute 'very special circumstances' sufficient to outweigh any harm by reason of inappropriateness or any other harm.

Issue 2: Transport and Highway Consideration

The transport considerations of this scheme need to consider:

- The acceptability, in highway and transport terms, of the proposed development of the application site at the scale and type proposed;
- The overall effects of the scheme and a focus on the traffic and transport impact within North Somerset;
- The suitability of the proposed means of access/ connections with existing strategic highway links to serve the proposed development, particularly proposed junctions with the A370 and
- The suitability of proposed walking and cycling infrastructure and potential sustainable travel severance impacts.
- The suitability of any proposed mitigation needed to accommodate and regulate the development.

The application is supported by an extensive Traffic Assessment (TA) that outlines the method of identifying, forecasting and assessing the transport impacts of the proposed development. The modelling approach used in the TA is an appropriate methodology that uses a robust worst case scenario and is regarded as compliant to industry standards. The SBL traffic modelling has been undertaken in accordance with the appropriate guidance and best practice, and the LPA is satisfied there is information to determine the planning application.

The overall Traffic Assessment is as follows:

A370 Roundabout

The proposal shows a new roundabout to be constructed on the A370 near Long Ashton. The layout shown proposes a dedicated left turn lane to be provided in a southbound direction on the A370 enabling traffic to access the SBL route without passing through the new roundabout junction, enhancing capacity of the junction. It is noted that the proposed design will result in northbound traffic travelling towards the Cumberland Basin on the A370 from the south to give-way to right turning traffic exiting the SBL to travel north. This will change the current flow of traffic north and southbound along the A370 and require existing drivers to navigate the new roundabout layout.

The applicant has confirmed that the option of a segregated northbound lane on the A370 was considered at options appraisal stage. The option was discounted following a highway safety assessment which concluded that such a design would result in fast-moving traffic heading northbound on the A370 being required to give-way or merge with traffic exiting the SBL and joining the A370 from the right. This is considered to be a reasonable justification and is acceptable subject

a condition requiring the submission of a revised plan showing the road markings and signing at the roundabout.

The modelling shows that during the AM peak hour in the 2016 and 2031 following construction of SBL traffic flows northbound on the A370 between the A370 roundabout and Brunel Way (Cumberland Basin) are forecast to increase by 39% and 32% respectively when compared to a 'without SBL' scenario. The TA states that despite this increase the impact on the Cumberland Basin is "negligible" equating to 6% and 2% increases in the 2016 and 2031 'with SBL' scenarios respectively. The impact is shown to be negligible because similar traffic volumes to current levels continue to arrive at the Cumberland Basin during the morning peak hour but the flows have reassigned to the SBL and strategic road network (A370).

The results of the TA also indicate that the roundabout is forecast to operate within capacity in 2016 during both peak periods and in 2031 during the PM peak period. During the 2031 AM peak period the SBL approach to the roundabout operates at near to capacity resulting in queue lengths of up to 16 vehicles. In addition, the proposed design of the junction has been future-proofed to enable the roundabout to be signalised to mitigate traffic impacts in the scheme should mitigation be required. It is accepted that the proposed A370/SBL roundabout can accommodate forecast traffic flows in opening year and that an appropriate mitigation measure can be implemented to maintain capacity in design year. The proposed development is therefore compliant with Policy T/10 of the NSRLP and Policy CS10 of the Core Strategy in this respect.

Overall, the TA demonstrates that as a result of the proposed development, traffic flows transfer from routes not intended to carry significant volumes of vehicles (such as Barrow Street and Yanley Lane) to higher capacity routes more appropriate for higher volumes of traffic. This has a result of increased traffic flows on some routes and significantly reducing traffic flows on others. However, where increases in traffic flows occur, this is generally on the more strategic highway network of higher capacity and more appropriate for accommodating such flows.

Brookgate/SBL Signalised Junction

The results of the TA indicate that the junction is forecast to operate well within capacity for both peak periods in both scheme opening and design year and it is accepted that the junction can accommodate forecast traffic flows in opening and design year without the requirement for further infrastructure works. The proposed development is therefore compliant with Policy T/10 of the Local Plan and Policy CS10 of the Core Strategy.

A38/SBL Signalised Roundabout

The results of the capacity assessment indicate that the roundabout is forecast to operate within capacity in 2016 during both peak periods and in 2031 during the AM peak period. By the 2031 PM peak period the northbound SBL approach to the roundabout is predicted to reach design capacity; however, the maximum queue length equates to only 16 vehicles spread across three approach lanes and this is not considered to be severe. In reality the impact will dissipate quickly after the peak and the network will return to normal operating conditions.

B3128/A370 Junction (Long Ashton)

The SBL Forecasting Report indicates that the average delay time at this junction exceeds 4 minutes in the 2016 AM peak period *with the SBL in operation*. Further scrutiny of delay times by the applicant confirmed an average delay time of approximately 2.5 minutes in the 2016 AM peak period *without the SBL* scheme and approximately 4.5 minutes with the SBL scheme.

Observed journey time and delay data in this location shows that current delay times are longest during the 30 minute period of 8.15am and 8.45am. Before and after this peak within the morning peak period, the average delay dissipates and the network quickly returns to normal, and more acceptable operating conditions. It is considered reasonable to assume a similar pattern of increased delay during the peak period would occur with the SBL scheme.

The increase in delay is shown in the link analysis to be due to traffic rerouting south of the SBL from less appropriate routes before proceeding along the SBL and northbound along the A370. Further scrutiny of the modelling indicates that there is an increase of vehicles travelling northbound on the A370 in this location during the 2016 AM peak period.

The link capacity analysis presented in the TA indicates that the SBL will have a negligible impact on capacity along the A370 and its approaches. For the B3128 on-slip, the modelling forecasts no change in link capacity during the AM peak period with the proposed scheme and an improvement of 2% additional capacity during the PM peak period with the SBL. At 2031 the link capacity of the B3128 on-slip increases slightly for both peak periods with the proposed SBL scheme. This is likely to be due to vehicles re-routing to avoid the increase in delay exiting the junction as outlined above.

In reality, the operation of the merge lane in this location is greatly affected by driver behaviour and the driver perception of the role of the bus lane. Road safety audit findings are addressed in the TA and have confirmed the likely road safety impact is likely to be negligible. North Somerset Council and the Highway Authority, will continue to monitor the junction between the B3138 and A370.

Road Safety Audit

A stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA1) of the proposed development has been undertaken on behalf of the applicants. This has identified the relevant road safety issues raised by the proposed development and made appropriate recommendations to be incorporated at detailed design/technical approval.

Bus Services within the SBL

It is accepted, as suggested by some objectors, that new road systems generate an increase in road traffic, however, one of the main features of the SBL are the dedicated bus lanes that are intended to facilitate more effective operation of bus services that provide a more sustainable alternative to the car. Nevertheless, a number of objections have been raised about the new bus facilities provided within the SBL. The objectors suggest that:

- 1) The orbital route will be of limited demand.
- 2) The low number of passengers projected for the bus service is unworkable.
- 3) The bus link from Hartcliffe to the City Centre and Temple Meads is unrealistic.
- 4) The forecast of bus passenger volume is low.
- 5) The Airport Bus, on a longer shared SBL-AVTM route will be subject to similar delays as the current route at present.

Although some suggest that the orbital nature of the bus route would not significantly reduce journey times to the airport, this is not evidenced. Bristol Airport (BA) in contrast, believes that the SBL is vital to the future of the airport and its ability to provide improved international connectivity. BA further suggest that the most important component of the SBL is to provide improved accessibility to the city centre in conjunction with the AVTM and add that at present the Flyer's journey to Bristol is timed at up to a third longer in rush hour as a result of congestion in Bristol. The SBL will reroute the Flyer into the city via a new bus priority system that will improve journey times and reliability and thus attractiveness.

The applicant confirms that the economic benefits from time savings on the proposed bus link have been calculated in line with Department for Transport criteria and are considered to be robust. The SBL business case was accepted as being robust by the Department for Transport when it was submitted as part of the 'Best and Final Funding Bid' in September 2011. Although there are some suggestions that the SBL may have an adverse impact on existing bus routes, this is not the case. A number of existing bus services could access the Metro Bus Network via the Long Ashton Park & Ride site. The bus services from Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon and Nailsea could access the Metro Bus Network direct from the A370 on B3128 via the Park & Ride site. The Bristol-based companies also

A370 will have access to an off-slip road from the new roundabout thus minimising any delays and providing a direct access. The applicants have also ensured that within the SBL design, provision has been made for modification to be made to the Brookgate Junction to accommodate left turning of buses onto the bus only route to the Park & Ride. This provision includes ensuring additional land requirements are made within the current scheme and that no utilities are placed within that land. Bus Services from Portishead would be required to use the A370 (westbound) to access the Park & Ride site and access the Metro Bus Network and thus avoid the congestion along Hotwells Road.

In many cases bus access can be directed onto the AVTM route and thus onto the Metro Bus Network and this affords a priority bus route that is protected from general traffic congestion, offering service reliability into the city centre. Whilst not all bus services can access the Metro West network, the network is one of a number of proposed improvements which sits within an overall public transport strategy as outlined in the Local Transport Plan.

In summary, based on the information provided in the planning application it is considered that the proposed development should not be of material detriment to the safety or operation of the surrounding highway and transport network. Furthermore, the proposed development itself is considered to operate within acceptable and satisfactory operational conditions. As a consequence there is no objection to the proposal subject to a number of highway conditions being applied to any consent that may be granted.

Issue 3: Economic Benefits

Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy supports a successful economy and seeks to provide additional employment opportunities up to 2026. The policy seeks to increase sustainability, self-containment, decrease out-commuting, provide for a range of local jobs and reduce carbon emissions from unsustainable car use but recognising that Bristol is a major economic centre. According to the “Unlocking Our Potential: The Economic Benefits of Transport Investment in the West of England” study, South Bristol has the potential for generating some 10,000 new jobs by 2030. However with transport improvements that include the SBL it is considered unlikely that this potential will be realised.

The submitted Economic Benefits Study 2013 states that, following the delivery of the SBL, it is estimated that 2,500 jobs could be unlocked by 2030. Furthermore, the scheme is expected to have unlocked a further 800 jobs in the Temple Quarter growth area. This brings the total number of jobs unlocked by the scheme by 2030 to 3,300. These estimates are based on a number of assumptions including the following:

- that all other requirements for development are already in place and that transport provision is the only constraint to the delivery of the employment;
- that there would be a balance of representation from different employment sectors benefiting from the SBL;
- the scale of development that could be accommodated in south Bristol; and
- on the scale of accessibility challenge for south Bristol with and without the SBL in place.

A number of objectors to the scheme suggest that there is no convincing evidence to show that the SBL will result in employment generation and that the number of jobs claimed to be generated by the scheme has no sound basis.

In contrast, a number of businesses and property agents have stated that, since the existing commercial and industrial markets in south Bristol are weaker compared to the wider Bristol area and to historically inadequate transport links and concerns about increased congestion, a transport solution is long overdue. The applicants have met with a wide range of commercial stakeholders

businesses and property agents who indicate that the SBL is the biggest single economic driver to business growth and expansion in the area and if transport investment does not proceed there will be real limitations on businesses ability to grow and develop. Employers have indicated that an improved, frequent and reliable public transport system is also beneficial to their businesses.

A significant number of business organisations have expressed their support to the scheme. For example:

- Bristol Airport supports the SBL as the route will compliment their plans for the airport expansion. The proposed airport development is projected to increase passengers numbers year on year and the SBL will help service this demand. Substantial S106 contributions were secured from the airport expansion towards the cost of a link road.
- Airbus Operations support the development of the SBL as it will reduce the existing congestion in the area and the difficulty of travelling to and from the airport.
- The Local Enterprise Partnership supports the application as it will deliver growth.
- South Bristol Business supports the SBL providing a multi modal approach giving better access to south Bristol.
- Brookgate Industrial Estate supports the provision of a new vehicular access sufficient to improve connectivity and business growth.
- Chew Valley Chamber of Commerce supports the scheme since it will improve connectivity and make businesses more accessible.

It is considered that the SBL will have a direct bearing on economic activity within the North Somerset area and will ease movement in the South Bristol area with consequential economic benefits both to the immediate and adjoining areas. These benefits have been quantified in the economic studies produced in support of the proposal and the policy context from which it is derived. The projections of the economic benefits of the scheme are now underpinned by an extensive consultation programme with local stakeholders.

The application also accords with the North Somerset Local Economy Plan 2013 which serves as the economic strategy for the Council. The Plan's Key Ambition 2 is to: *"Improve infrastructure provision and development of key transport infrastructure improvements across the area to support delivery of jobs"*. By including provision for enhanced public transport the proposal also reduces barriers to employment which have also been identified as being important in the North Somerset Local Economy Plan; Key Ambition 2 *"Develop creative transport solutions to strengthen accessibility of employment sites to the labour market (including less well connected areas/communities)"*. This aligns with other policies of North Somerset and partner authorities within the West of England sub-region that identify congestion and *perception* of congestion as serious barriers to economic growth. Delivery of this scheme will greatly contribute to addressing perceived weaknesses in the connectivity of south Bristol for residents and businesses alike. Residents and businesses (from both south Bristol and North Somerset areas) will benefit from enhanced transport connections, enabling them to fully access employment and business opportunities across the sub-region.

It is considered that poor transport links and congestion are a barrier to growth and the construction of the SBL will improve connectivity, business opportunities and job creation. The absence of this transport improvement will pose a significant challenge to the growth of the area, increasing the cost to local businesses and affecting competitiveness. Overall the development is in accordance with the economic policy objectives of the Local Plan and Core Strategy.

Issue 4: Landscape impact and green infrastructure

Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy 'Landscape and the historic environment' explains that the character, distinctiveness, diversity and quality of North Somerset's landscape will be protected and enhanced through careful, sensitive management and design of development. The policy requires that development should be designed to enhance the landscape and the historic environment.

will be paid to the character of National Character Areas in North Somerset and particularly that of the landscape types and character areas identified in the North Somerset Landscape Character Assessment 2005 SPD.

Policy ECH/11 of the Replacement Local Plan particularly relates to habitats protection and states that any development which could harm, directly or indirectly, the habitats used by such species will not be permitted unless that particular harm could be avoided or mitigated by the use of planning conditions or planning obligations.

The NS Biodiversity and Trees SPD 2005 is a document that seeks to further the actions of the national, regional and local Biodiversity Action Plans. Applicants must therefore satisfy the LPA that any development can be successfully reconciled with the interests of biodiversity as well as the amenity value of the trees on the site and its surroundings.

The applicant has produced a Landscape, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LTVIA) as part of this application. The assessment has concluded that the proposed development would involve a loss of agricultural land, largely comprising permanent pasture land, woodland and other non-agricultural land. The majority of the proposed development would be located in the urban fringe and therefore any proposed planting aims to integrate the scheme into the surrounding landscape with the primary requirement to reflect the character of the adjacent landscape.

As a result, compensatory tree planting is planned to exceed the level of tree cover lost and include gapping up of existing hedges and the provision of new hedge planting along the SBL corridor. Proposed compensation will involve the planting and translocation of 3km of native hedgerows together with over 400 new trees along the SBL corridor. It is also proposed to provide 2 hectares of native broadleaved woodland and hedging which will compensate for habitat loss and provide structural linkages between existing habitats designed to enhance the movement of wildlife. The new native tree and shrub planting will endeavour to tie the existing retained vegetation back into the fabric of the landscape.

The landscape of the SBL through NS can be divided into three sections. The character of the section between the Long Ashton Park & Ride and the railway is typified by level farmland with pasture fields being divided by mature hedges and hedgerow trees. As the proposed road and bus route is mainly on two embankments the choice of new trees will need to be carefully considered to ensure sufficient screening whilst at the same time preserving the open landscape character. There has been some objection to the introduction of new embankments designed for flood protection, however, it must be recognised that the landscape character in this area has historically changed as a result of similar engineering works. The Bristol to Exeter railway embankment runs through the centre of the site, the A370 Long Ashton bypass is elevated as indeed is the Park & Ride, and the land to the east of the SBL intended for village green is a former landfill site.

Since this elevated route will be more visible (as suggested by BCC) it is unlikely that new hedge planting will assist in screening the road. It is therefore important that groups of native trees are planted so as to soften the most sensitive views into and out of the site particularly from Ashton Court. Although the existing and new hedgerows may not provide significant screening, the linear hedge planting along the embankments are regarded as potentially important corridors for the dispersal and movement of wildlife and will contribute to the local landscape and compensate for hedging lost by forming the highway. The A370 roundabout and the bridges at Colliters Brook, Longmoor Brook and the Railway Bridge underpass can be visually enhanced by appropriate landscaping.

The second section of the SBL is largely distinguished by a wooded river valley running from the railway to the A38 which includes Colliters Brook and Hanging Hill Wood. Whilst the woodland has special legal protection it does have importance ecologically and is likely to have been woodland for more than 400 years and is protected by way of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). The construction

this section of route will result in the loss of some broadleaved woodland and hedging. It is nevertheless recognised that the use of the existing haul road along much of its length will minimise disruption to the local environment when compared to creating a new route over open countryside.

In addition to the on-site compensatory tree and hedge planting together with new woodland creation it is recognised that the adjoining Yanley Landfill site is also being restored to a combination of grassland and woodland. Restored grassland on the landfill site will also offer opportunities for cultivation for hay/silage or grazing alongside ecological enhancement. The landscape enhancements on both the SBL and landfill restoration projects will compensate for the recognised disturbance. Although the landowner/farmer has requested that the proposed location of the new broadleaved woodland be reviewed, it is considered that the chosen location of compensatory tree planting has regard to the continuity and enhancement of Hanging Hill Wood.

The remaining section from the A38 to Highridge Common is characterised by farmland fields divided by mature hedges and hedgerow trees. Although the SBL will result in some tree and hedge removal, new native belts of tree and hedge planting are proposed that will both re-create field boundaries as well as screening the road and associated highway infrastructure. Severed pockets in fields will also be planted with trees and new field hedgerows. As the road joins Highridge Common it is proposed to plant a semi formal arrangement of trees and mounding with appropriate signage to reinforce the change in landscape character of the scheme as it enters the city boundary.

Finally it is proposed to introduce a tree and hedge planting strategy for the two new roundabouts at the A370 and A38 so as to reinforce the existing screening vegetation between Ashton Court and Castle Farm respectively. The three new bridge structures along the route will also need a tree and hedge planting strategy sufficient to soften their impact on the landscape. It is accepted that the scheme would result in some visual impacts however landscape enhancements carried out through long term management will reduce these impacts over time.

In conclusion the content of the Landscape Assessment together with its landscaping proposals are generally acceptable although there are a number of planting areas that will require minor changes to the submitted plans. This will be controlled and managed by condition. Overall, the landscape proposals will deliver a number of different but acceptable functions once the SBL has been constructed. Therefore, the proposed landscape strategy is in accordance with the objectives of policies CS5 of the Core Strategy and policy ECH/11 of the Replacement Local Plan.

Issue 5: Impact on footpaths, cycling, equestrian activities and farmland

Since the proposed construction of the SBL will impact on a number of existing public rights of way (PROW) and farms between Long Ashton, A38 and Highridge Common, the usage and effects of the scheme have been assessed and the design has been adapted to accommodate for these effects. The scheme has also provided an opportunity to enhance the existing footpath and cycle provision.

Policy T/7 of the Replacement Local Plan relates to the protection, development and improvement of the rights of way network and other forms of public access. The policy states that development that would reduce, sever, or adversely affect the use, amenity or safety of public rights of way and other forms of public access, or prejudice the planned development of the network will only be permitted if acceptable provision is made to mitigate those effects, or divert or replace the right of way or other form of access, before the development commences.

In addition, Policy T10 of the Core Strategy adds that development proposals that encourage an improved and integrated transport network that allows for a wide choice of modes of transport and enhances the facilities for pedestrians and other users such as cyclists will be encouraged and supported. Policy CS9 'Green infrastructure' states that the existing network of green infrastructure be safeguarded, improved and enhanced by further provision linking in to existing provision where

appropriate, ensuring it is a multi-functional, accessible network which promotes healthy lifestyles maintains and improves biodiversity and landscape character and contributes to climate change objectives. Therefore the applicant has proposed a number of footpath diversions, improvement and mitigation measures resulting from the development.

Diversion and enhancements of existing footpaths

Although there is no proposed crossing provision for pedestrian or cyclists at surface level across A370 roundabout, near to the new roundabout a new section of footpath is to be provided connecting two existing Public Rights of Way (PROW) to the south of the SBL. The diversion will take the path under the new road in the form of a new underpass designed to take the footpath, agricultural access and the Longmoor Brook. This is acceptable.

Since the condition of the existing farm bridge over Longmoor Brook is sub-standard it will be necessary to improve the small river bridge to an agreed minimum standard. It is also important to ensure that a suitable footpath surface is installed on the north side of the Longmoor Brook under the bridge to carry the diverted public footpath together with access gates to stop cattle congregating under the bridge and blocking access. These requirements will be controlled by condition.

To the west of Yew Tree Farm, within the Colliters Brook valley, it is proposed to divert one of the PROW so as to pass under the SBL via a new under-bridge designed to take the footpath and Colliters Brook. The existing public footpaths cross the Colliters Brook at two locations and it is recommended that the existing stiles/barriers are removed and pedestrian gates installed at either end to prevent ingress and egress of stock. The proposed uncontrolled pedestrian crossing for the path through Hanging Hill Wood requires a pedestrian gate on the west side to prevent stock getting out onto the SBL.

The other diversion further up the valley (north/east of the new A38 roundabout) is proposed to cross the SBL via an at-grade crossing. It is proposed to divert two PROW routes so they can pass across the SBL together. A small stream bridge across designed to take the footpath and Colliters Brook.

The submitted plans show PROW LA 12/14 is to be stopped up and this would be subject to a separate diversion. The shared footway/cycleway shown as passing through the old brick tunnel under the railway is satisfactory. The tunnel currently floods in wet weather and the surface is covered in mud and therefore it is recommended that the level of the surface is raised to prevent water running from the adjacent fields and drainage is installed either side to link to the existing drainage system.

Pedestrians and Cycling enhancement.

A key feature of the scheme is the provision of a joint 3m wide cycle and footway along the length of the SBL. This will provide an orbital route directly linking Long Ashton, Brookgate, Hanging Hill Wood, Dundry and south Bristol. This will help to enhance urban and rural connectivity with new facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. In order, however, to provide a suitable defensible and safe space between vehicular traffic and the new cycle route grass verge of at least 0.5m in width is required to separate the cycleway/footway and the carriageway between the section north of the Longmoor Brook and spur to the new Brookgate access road. This requirement will be controlled by condition. Whilst it would be preferential for the shared use path to benefit from a wider degree of separation from the carriageway along its entire length, it is accepted that land and alignment constraints mean that this is not feasible in some locations along the SBL route.

This new cycleway/footpath will be joined by a similar provision that will be constructed on the east side of the bus only route linking cycle and pedestrian facilities to the AVTM and existing routes in the area and from Long Ashton and Bristol.

In the vicinity of the Park & Ride, as suggested above, the location of Public Rights of Way are as provided by the AVTM on completion of the works. This will be the 'existing' situation when SBL is implemented.

Controlled pedestrian/cycleway crossings points will need to be provided at the AVTM, Brookgate A38 signals junctions in order to provide safe access for pedestrians and cyclists. There is a suggestion that the 3m cycleway/footway crossing island on the new Brookgate Road could be realigned to a point further north to where the existing public footpath is located in order to improve visibility and connectivity to access routes on the south side of the road. This is likely to be considered under footpath diversion orders. In addition, the existing PROW to the west of Castle Farm will be affected by the SBL so it is intended to provide a crossing point with a 2m median island to accommodate movements across the A38. These access requirements will be controlled by conditions.

Some parties have suggested that there is no particular safety provision made for cyclists on the A38 using the new roundabout. The proposed design of the new A38 roundabout meets the required safety standards for all users, including cyclists. It is considered that the crossing provision at the roundabout will provide good connections to the proposed shared use cycle and pedestrian path on the north side of the scheme and the proposed bus stops. Given the volume, composition and nature of traffic/turning movements at the junction it is considered reasonable that pedestrian and cyclist safety is best safeguarded by controlled crossing provision.

Although it is suggested by some objectors that the SBL will reduce access to the countryside, the scheme will in fact increase access to the countryside by adding new footpath/cyclepath routes. The existing PROW that currently runs along the brook from Brookgate to the new Colliters Brook under the bridge is retained and enhanced with a new revised pedestrian bridge over the stream and parallel cycle and footway along the SBL.

It is concluded that although SBL may reduce the attractiveness of some existing footpaths by reason of traffic noise, the scheme will result in an overall net increase in public access and recreational use and this access will be of better quality in terms of all-year -round usage for pedestrians, walkers and cyclists. It is considered that acceptable provision has been made to mitigate the effects of the proposal which is consistent with local and national policy objectives to protect and enhance public rights of way and seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users.

Equestrian Use

Notwithstanding the comments from the British Horse Society, there are no existing bridleways in the vicinity of the SBL that are intersected by the proposed route although it is noted that the application site is surrounded by a number of paddocks and yards/fields with horses. To facilitate formal equestrian usage of the proposed footway/cycleway would require designation as bridleway. The 3m wide cycleway/footway is the minimum requirement for pedestrian and cyclist usage that is specifically designed to enhance public rights of way and maximise benefits to pedestrians and cyclists.

The use of horses within the cycleway/footway would be likely to generate a conflict between horses, cyclists and pedestrians in close proximity to a busy highway that may seriously impact on highway safety as well as causing potential for damage to the footway surface or at the very least increase the rate at which degradation is likely to occur. Under the circumstances it is not considered appropriate to formally designate the proposed footway/cycleway as a bridleway. Formal equestrian use of the shared footway/cycleway by designation as a bridleway is likely to reduce the attractiveness and perceived viability of the use of the route by pedestrians and cyclists as a consequence of adverse safety and maintenance impacts. Therefore, the proposal to formalise use by pedestrians and cyclists only and require equestrians to use the carriageway is considered compliant with national and local policy to facilitate and encourage sustainable travel and the overall scheme objectives. Equestrian usage of the main carriageway, in any event, is permitted under highway legislation.

Farming

- The development will result in the loss of 17.5 hectares of agricultural land to the SBL with a further 10 hectares of agricultural land taken to provide exchange land for development on Highridge Common and other areas of open space.

In addition, the SBL will result in the severance of a number of fields together with farmland lost as a result of the new roundabouts. It is nevertheless accepted that this loss is only a minor impact in terms of the national and local land resource and is outweighed by the transport and economic benefits attributed to the scheme. Whilst the effects of the SBL on severance and value cannot be fully mitigated the applicant will be required to provide new farm accesses, boundary treatment, appropriate drainage, replanting of hedging and trees and endeavour to minimise the overall impact on agricultural land and activities adjoining the new road especially during the construction phase. Farm access to all adjoining fields will be provided at all times during the construction and operation of the scheme.

Design

Surface materials throughout the SBL are yet to be agreed and therefore the overall visual appearance of the scheme will need to be considered in the interests of visual appearance and design. It is important that the non-vehicular user environment is not overly dominated by the engineered aspects of the scheme. The design of the pedestrian and cyclist environment needs to be of high quality, attractive, legible, and safe and aid traffic calming. Further information on the details of the scheme need to be provided though a number of conditions relating to key areas such as pedestrian/cycle routes, bridges, bridge abutments, underpasses, at grade-crossings along with the specification of materials, finishes, areas of hard landscaping in order to soften and help integrate the development into the landscape.

Issue 6: Ecological, Wildlife and Biodiversity Impact

- Policy CS4 of the Core Strategy seeks to meet local and national Biodiversity Action Plan targets and ensure that new development is designed to maximise benefits to biodiversity. This will incorporate measures to safeguard and enhance natural habitats where possible, particularly networks of habitats. The policy objective is also to protect designated sites, ancient woodlands and veteran trees and promote native tree planting and woodland creation with a view to enhancing biodiversity.

The National Planning Policy Framework states that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity and if significant harm results from a development cannot be avoided adequate mitigation will be required. It indicates that planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss.

There are no international or national designations for nature conservation assigned to the site, nor within its immediate environs. The site is, however, identified as being within the Forest of Avon Community Forest and there are 3 non-statutory designated sites that will be directly impacted by the scheme: Highridge Common SNCI, Colliters Brook SNCI and Hanging Hill Wood WS.

Two nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are within 2km of the scheme and 8 non-statutory designated sites are within 1km of the scheme (this includes the 3 sites that will be directly impacted by the scheme as mentioned above).

Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar Sites) before authorising the plan or project. One European designated site (Avon Gorge Woodlands SAC) is within 2km of the site. The Severn Estuary SAC/SPA/Ramsar site is linked to the scheme via a hydrological pathway and five SACs with bats qualifying features are within 30km of the site

A Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment has been submitted with this application and provides information sufficient to carry out a "Test of Likely Significant Effect". This screening assessment concludes that there will be no likely significant effects on any European sites, provided that the proposed mitigation measures are implemented. On the basis of this information, Natural England advised that the application will not adversely affect the integrity of any European protected sites and therefore an Appropriate Assessment is not required.

Bats are the only European Protected Species (EPS) that have been recorded within the site, although it is considered likely that otters will occasionally use parts of the site. A number of nationally protected species have been identified within the site including badger, breeding birds and reptiles (slow worms and grasssnakes). The site is also likely to support or has been shown to support Species of principal importance in England (under section 41 of the NERC Act 2006) including hedgehog and common toad.

There are three 'derogation tests' to be applied in relation to EPS.

Natural England also apply the three tests when considering whether to grant the developer a European Protected Species licence to allow it to proceed with a project, following the granting of planning permission. Even though Natural England, as the licensing authority, has to apply these tests in relation to a licence application, case law clarifies that these tests must also be considered by the Local Planning Authority when granting planning permission.

The tests are as follows:

1. There is *"no satisfactory alternative"*

This test has been met by the applicant's work to consider options and searching for alternative means of achieving the development whilst minimising the impact on the EPS. There are no other satisfactorily alternatives which meet the objectives of the proposed road

2. The proposal would *"not be detrimental to the maintenance of the populations of the species concerned at a favorable conservation status in their natural range"*

This test has been met by the proposed mitigation strategy. Mitigation, compensation and biodiversity enhancement measures include the creation and translocation of species rich grassland; planting species rich native hedgerows and translocating hedgerows and woodland and tree planting which provide corridors and foraging areas for bats. Under bridges will be designed to allow the passage of bats and bat boxes will be installed in trees to provide roosting opportunities for some species of bats. Mitigation for otters includes the provision of mammal ledges under bridge crossings and mammal underpasses.

3. The proposal is *"in the interests of public health and public safety, or for other imperative reasons overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment"*

This test has been met because the development is to provide much needed transport links that will support and enhance social and economic objectives for North Somerset and south Bristol. Natural England will take into account how the SBL will support the objectives of sustainable transport and comply with planning policies and guidance at a national level. The development proposal will also

contribute to meeting an imperative public interest, and that interest is regarded as sufficient to override any potential impact on EPS.

To ensure the development accords with the three tests conditions are required to provide suitable mitigation as set out in the recommendations of this report.

Hanging Hill Wood

It is estimated that construction of the SBL will result in a permanent loss of approx 0.1ha which relates to 2% of the site. Although small, this loss is regrettable as ancient woodland is irreplaceable. The ES found that the area of woodland to be lost (largely on the east side of the road) is considered to be of lower quality than the rest of the woodland due to high levels of disturbance. As compensation for this loss it is proposed that 1ha of native broadleaved woodland is created contiguous with the south of Hanging Hill Wood (accompanied by a management and monitoring plan). A mammal underpass has been proposed at this location as mitigation for the severance between the two areas of woodland. It is also highlighted that the benefit of choosing this route on an existing haul road is a more appropriate alignment when compared to alternative routes through the valley that would have resulted in the fragmentation, severance and loss of 2ha of habitat from Colliters Brook SNCI.

Colliter's Brook Site of National Conservation Interest (SNCI)

The SNCI lies adjacent to SBL for approx 600m and impacts have been identified during the construction phase. In view of the proximity of the Colliter's Brook SNCI mitigation and protection measures need to be employed to mitigate impacts to the SNCI, such as fencing the woodland during construction and, once operational, surface water will need to be directed to interceptor ponds, reducing level of suspended sediments and hydrocarbons discharged into the SNCI.

Trees

Approximately 161 trees will be lost. Trees to be removed that have been identified as being potentially suitable for roosting bats should be felled under the supervision of an experienced and appropriately licensed bat worker. In terms of ecological mitigation, compensatory planting of native trees will include 200 heavy standard native trees and 200 feathered trees. Tree planting will be controlled by condition.

Hedgerows

Approx 900m of hedgerow will be lost including 'ecologically important' hedgerow. Proposed compensation is the planting and translocation of 3km of native hedgerow. Hedgerows should connect with the wider landscape and provide new wildlife corridors. All new hedges planted should be species-rich (5+ species) as a biodiversity enhancement.

Grassland

Construction will result in the loss and fragmentation of a variety of grassland communities of varying quality. This will be compensated by the provision of approx 5ha of species rich neutral grassland at a number of locations within the road verge and adjacent habitats.

Woodland and scrub

Approximately 0.4ha of broadleaved plantation woodland and 1.5ha of scrub will be lost. There is likely to be additional disturbance to small areas of woodland during construction from vehicle traffic and associated construction activities. Proposed compensation/mitigation is the provision of 2ha of native broadleaved woodland and scrub which will compensate for habitat loss and provide structural linkages between existing habitats of value, enhancing the movement of wildlife.

Highridge Common. Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) (not within NS boundary)

As a result of the loss of 0.6ha high quality species rich grassland, compensatory grass land together with the existing turf will be translocated to suitable land within the compensation/exchange area within North Somerset.

Ponds

Two surface water attenuation ponds within Viridor landfill will be removed. As compensation two surface attenuation ponds are to be created together with 6 water attenuation basins to control surface water collected from the road surface. These ponds will be designed for the benefit of wildlife by incorporating variable bank profiles, seasonal and permanent ponds and native marginal planting. Although these ponds will be designed to enhance biodiversity, their primary purpose is for intercepting pollution, which means they may not always be suitable for a range of wildlife. Therefore as a more permanent feature for wildlife (especially amphibians) it would be of value to create additional small ponds or scrapes with the primary purpose of wildlife enhancement. The opportunity for this will be considered through the detailed landscaping scheme. Where possible, ponds should be planted with a suitable marshy grassland seed mix to compensate for marshy grassland that will be lost elsewhere.

Bats

The applicant's Bat Activity and Roost Surveys recorded bat activity across the majority of the SBL area. The SBL is situated within 2 km of two large lesser horseshoe roosts at Barrow Hospital and Clarkencombe Lodge. Radio tracking data has shown that Colliters Brook, Hanging Hill Wood, and the railway corridor are considered important foraging sites and commuting routes for lesser horseshoe bats from these roosts. Due to the distance between these roosts and the SBL and the presence of alternative habitats, only a proportion of bats within these roosts are likely to use habitats within the SBL area. There will be no direct impacts on the two large roosts.

Impacts on commuting and foraging bats have been identified as loss of habitats, severance of commuting/foraging routes, fragmentation of habitats, disturbance from lighting and collision with traffic. There will also be the loss of one mature tree with a common pipistrelle bat roost. Since Bats are a European protected species work must not commence until a Natural England European Protected Species licence has been obtained for the works.

Mitigation and compensation is proposed through the creation of species rich grassland, native tree planting and translocation, woodland and tree planting using native species, provision of under bridges and provision of bat boxes in trees. It is recommended that other bat roosting opportunities are considered, for example by incorporating features into the new pedestrian underpasses at Longmoor Brook and Colliter's Brook crossings. These road bridges have been designed to allow passage of bats underneath along existing flightlines and the landscape planting in these areas will need to be designed to funnel bats commuting along the watercourses through the underpass.

Badgers

Evidence of badgers was found throughout the survey area with 5 setts identified. Impacts identified are loss of foraging habitat and severance of corridors/pathways. No main setts will be directly affected by the scheme (as identified at the time of survey). Currently two under bridges and 6 mammal underpasses have been proposed. It is understood that in the few cases where mammal paths were located north of the railway line, underpasses are located as close to these paths as possible. For the remainder of the scheme (where mammal paths were not identified) underpasses have been located in relation to suitable habitat e.g. woodland and hedgerows. The proposed soft landscaping scheme will also mitigate impacts on badgers as it will provide suitable foraging habitat once mature.

Breeding birds

A total of 53 species were recorded during surveys, 24 of which are considered to be notable due to their conservation status. Kingfisher is the only Schedule 1 species which was thought to be breeding within survey area. Suitable breeding habitat was identified along Colliter's Brook. Reedbunting and farmland birds were also identified, including skylark, song thrush, bullfinch, dunnock, house sparrow and barn owl. To mitigate the impact on birds, it is recommended that 20 bird boxes are installed

trees. The applicant has also agreed to fund, with the assistance of the Avon Wildlife Trust, the provision of a number of barn owl boxes. Site clearance will take place outside of bird nesting season or only after a check by a suitably qualified ecologist and a pre-works survey for Kingfisher will be undertaken. These provisions will be controlled by condition.

Otters

No evidence of otters was recorded during the surveys although it is considered likely that otters may occasionally be using Colliters's Brook and Longmoor Brook for commuting and potentially foraging and resting. Impacts have been identified as damage and disturbance to habitats potentially used by otter and collision with traffic. Further monitoring and mitigation has been agreed with the applicant and will include the provision of mammal ledges under bridges and mammal underpasses.

Reptiles

The survey area supports a low population of slow worms and grass snakes. Habitats present within all transects were considered to have suitability to support reptiles and it is unlikely that reptiles are totally absent from any area of the scheme. Impacts have been identified as loss, damage and disturbance of habitats used by reptiles and collision with traffic. Mitigation will include a programme of translocation to suitable habitats adjacent to scheme, vegetation clearance and careful dismantling of rubble piles. Reptile friendly curbing will allow safe passage of reptiles off road surface. Grassland and scrub provided on verges will compensate for habitat loss. Refugia are also proposed as a biodiversity enhancement at 10 locations.

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Amphibians

Mitigation proposed includes amphibian friendly gully gratings, wildlife underpasses/underbridges and the landscaping scheme (which includes surface water attenuation ponds designed to be wildlife-friendly) which will provide habitat for breeding, foraging, resting and hibernating amphibians.

Hedgehogs

Approximately 20ha of habitat was assessed as being suitable for hedgehogs which are included on the England Biodiversity List as a priority species for conservation. The mitigation/compensation proposed for other legally protected and Section 41 (priority) species will reduce impacts to hedgehogs e.g. clearance methods to reduce impacts to reptiles, provision of mammal underpasses and underbridges and landscaping scheme including the provision of grassland and scrub on verges and hedgerows connecting with the wider landscape which will be of value to hedgehogs and compensate for habitat loss.

Terrestrial invertebrates

The proposed scheme of hedgerow, grassland and native woodland planting will mitigate the loss of habitat. Habitats within scheme will be managed to conserve biodiversity interest.

In summary, the applicant has demonstrated through the submitted Ecological Impact Assessment the ways of avoiding, mitigating and compensating the impacts on the ecological receptors identified to the extent that the impacts will not be significant in the majority of cases, however there are 2 exceptions:

1. Impacts on foraging and commuting lesser horseshoe bats have been assessed as significant in the short term (less than 10 years), but not in the long term once habitats created by the scheme are mature.
2. Impacts on Highridge Common SNCI have been assessed as significant unless the compensation/exchange land is managed appropriately and nominated as a non-statutory designated wildlife site. This will be controlled by condition.

minimised through the provision of detailed mitigation including a monitoring and conservation management plan and have been assessed as not significant.

Other developments in the surrounding area have also been considered in assessing the effects which could become cumulatively significant in combination with other projects. These cumulative impacts have been assessed as not significant. A number of biodiversity enhancements will be incorporated into the scheme including the careful design of surface water interceptor and attenuation ponds and provision of bird and bat boxes.

Since the development of the SBL will incorporate, safeguard and enhance natural habitats where possible, particularly networks of habitats, the development is in accordance with Policy CS4 and overall ecological objections set out in the NPPF.

Issue 7: Impact on Heritage and Archaeological Assets

Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy 'Landscape and the historic environment' explains that the Council will conserve the historic environment of North Somerset, having regard to the significance of heritage assets such as conservation areas, listed buildings, buildings of local significance, scheduled monuments, other archaeological sites, registered and other historic parks and gardens.

Policy ECH/4 in the Local Plan further states that development proposals affecting a Listed Building and/or its setting will only be approved if the historic interest and its setting are preserved and Policy ECH/5 adds that development affecting historic parks and gardens or their setting, will only be permitted where its historic character, appearance and importance will not be unacceptably harmed and where the development enables features of historic interest to be conserved, enhanced or restored.

With regard to archaeology, Policy ECH/6 suggests that development will not be permitted where it would involve significant alteration or cause damage to nationally-important archaeological remains and where it would have a significant impact on the setting of such remains.

The development of the SBL will have an impact upon a number of designated heritage assets and their settings in the area around the site. Therefore, the planning application is accompanied by a Historic Environment Assessment in line with the advice in the National Planning Policy Framework designed to evaluate the likely impact. The NPPF guidance states that when determining planning applications, LPA's should require applicants to set out the significance of any heritage assets (and their setting) affected by the proposed development with a level of detail that is proportionate to the asset's importance.

The study area for the historic environment assessment comprises all known heritage assets within the linear corridor, 500m either side of the red line boundary of the application. Consideration has also been given to the wider locality to provide archaeological and historical context and to assess impacts on views from Yanley Conservation Area. Further consideration has been given to the setting of the Ashton Court Estate, the boundary of which lies just north of the northern end of the SBL.

Archaeology

The SBL alignment is acceptable in that a percentage of the road runs through land which has been sterilised in archaeological terms by for example, the Yanley landfill site, or appears to be of low archaeological potential. Much of the area has been previously studied in some detail however, the slopes of Dundry Hill have had virtually no previous archaeological study. For example, a very recent find of a Bronze Age hoard lies very close to the line of the SBL.

While no further evaluation or pre-commencement mitigation is required, a precautionary approach is required when ground-breaking takes place in what is a previously unstudied area. In accordance with this, it is standard procedure to ensure a 'watching brief' on areas that have had little or no previous study.

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Heritage Assets

Overall, the environmental impact of the SBL on recognised heritage assets is determined through a combination of the value of the asset and the scale of the change. This does not provide a formulaic assessment and therefore a professional judgement has been used at all stages in the preparation and submission of the application. The more specific NS heritage assets along the route of the SE and their assessment are as follows:

Ashton Court

The area to be developed is visible from Ashton Court and forms an historic 'borrowed landscape' of Ashton Court, a Grade I listed building and its park which is registered Grade II* on English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. The views from the Court are currently being restored.

The register entry mentions the importance of the views out to the south-west, one to the church and roofs of Long Ashton and the other to the 'borrowed landscape' of Ashton hill (this is a term used to describe a view out to the landscape beyond the boundary of a designed landscape). This is the view that will be impacted by the proposal. Views out are an important part of a historic designed landscape and were often, as at Ashton Court, deliberately incorporated as part of a design often to some degree of annexation through the building of "eyecatchers". This appears to have happened at Ashton Court as the register entry notes that a feature marked as "The Folly" appears on Ordnance Survey maps at the summit of Ashton Hill until the 1980s although no trace remains today. As a result of the route traversing through the 'borrowed landscape' towards the railway any development here would have a negative impact on the registered park and garden which provides the setting for the principal building, Ashton Court.

This landscape impact however, needs to be viewed in the context of the existing A370 Long Ashton bypass and the Park & Ride facility with their associated highway structures and street furniture that has already impacted on the views and setting of Ashton Court. Views out of the park are also screened in many vistas by mature tree cover and localised topography. Although it is recognised that in the short term the SBL will be visible, its long term impact and appearance as a result of landscaping and design will not be significant. The wider views to the south, the prominent topographic features within the 'borrowed landscape' including Bedminster Down and Yanley Ridge and Dundry Slopes will remain unaffected.

Long Ashton Conservation Area

The Long Ashton Conservation Area was designated in 1988 as being an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The effect of the designation is that planning applications for development which would in the opinion of the LPA affect its character or appearance will be given due attention having regard to the preservation or enhancing the character or appearance of any buildings or the impact on the setting of buildings in the Conservation Area.

Impact on the listed buildings along the south eastern edge of village, particularly the Grade II* All Saints Church needs consideration. The area to be developed is partly visible from the Conservation Area and more particularly from the elevated All Saints Church and Parsonage Farm and users of the PROW in and around the churchyard. The immediate views of the SBL linking into the A370 are contained into the landscape to the extent that the effect it will have is limited. Although it is recognised that, in the short term the visual impact of sections of the proposal will be significant, its long term impact as a result of landscaping and design will not be significant.

The presence of the existing A370 Long Ashton bypass and Park & Ride facility with their associated highway structures and street furniture that have already impacted on the character and setting of the area.

Conservation Area.

Castle Farm

Castle Farm is a Grade II Listed 16th Century farmstead located on the north side of the A38 within 400 metres of the Bristol boundary. The proposed SBL and new A38 roundabout would be situated close to the farm and will have an impact by removing elements of rural landscape to the east of the Listed Building. Nevertheless, the retention of the Limekilns within the centre of the new roundabout has resulted in shifting the alignment of the A38 and roundabout away from the listed building as shown in the initial plans such that the impact is not significant. It is accepted that the setting of the farmhouse is largely defined by its immediate environs and this setting has deteriorated over the past 20 years as a result of the development of Yanley Landfill and increased traffic activity on the A38. The SBL will not further compromise this.

Triple Lime Kilns

This series of three conjoined lime kilns is of historic value and were used to manufacture lime. As a result, the applicant has repositioned the road to allow their retention within the new A38 roundabout. This is the only known example of triple limekilns in the south/west. The applicant recognises the importance of the limekilns and accepts the principle of their retention, basic measures to repair and stabilise the structures and incorporation within the new roundabout. Long term plans for their future maintenance will need to be explored through various channels as the scheme does not have a budget for their restoration.

Overall, it is concluded that the SBL route corridor would run through an area of limited heritage and architectural interest. There would be limited impact on the setting of listed and historic buildings identified within the study area due to the presence of intervening vegetation. The Heritage Assessment established that the effect of the proposed scheme on the Ashton Court Estate would be significant in the short term but will be mitigated in the long term through its alignment and use of sensitive screen planting along the route. There is no evidence to suggest adverse impacts on known or potential archaeological deposits where the proposed development passes through the rural area leading the Long Ashton Park and Ride to Highridge Common. The scheme has a short term impact on the setting of Long Ashton Conservation Area and Castle Farm, all of which will be reduced through implementation of mitigation measures, particularly the maturing of landscape planting.

Taking the route as a whole it is considered that the alignment of the scheme and proposed mitigation measures designed to reduce visual effects on the historic assets will comply with adopted planning policy intended to protect the historic environment.

Issue 8: Flood Risk Mitigation and Drainage

Policy CS3 of the Core Strategy 'Environmental impacts and flood risk assessment' requires that development that, on its own or cumulatively, would result in air, water or other environmental pollution or harm to amenity, health or safety will only be permitted if the potential adverse effects would be mitigated to an acceptable level.

Development in zones 2 and 3 of the Environment Agency Flood Map will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that it complies with the Sequential Test set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and associated Technical guidance and, where applicable, the Exception Test.

Flood Risk Assessment (FRA)

Whilst the majority of the SBL route lies outside of the floodplain within Flood Zone 1 there are no lengths of the route within Flood Zones 2 & 3. The areas in Flood Zone 2 include the river corridor of Colliters Brook and Ashton/Longmoor Brook and the areas in Flood Zone 3 include the floodplain south of the Park and Ride where the two brooks converge. 4% of the route is within Flood Zone 2 and 6% of the route is within Flood Zone 3. The FRA identifies the areas of the route that are at risk of flooding and the likelihood of flooding occurring. The FRA also identifies the areas of the route that are at risk of flooding and the likelihood of flooding occurring.

Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has demonstrated that the development with any necessary flood mitigation will be safe for its lifetime.

The Sequential Test

The onus is on the developer to provide the local planning authority with evidence that all reasonable available alternative sites have been assessed and discounted before pursuing development in areas of flood risk. The applicant's Sequential Test has acknowledged that part of SBL will be constructed within areas of flood risk however the test has demonstrated that no alternative route is available sufficient to satisfy the sustainable connectivity objectives of the scheme. The submitted FRA and Drainage Strategy sets out a detailed staged approach to the application in line with the Environment Agency Standing Advice. The FRA describes the origins and evolution of the South Bristol Link and explains each stage of the route alignment and selection process that concludes there are no reasonably available alternative sites which could be developed instead.

In developing the SBL, it is accepted that a wide spectrum of alternative transport options and route alternatives have been examined. Numerous configurations and alignments were considered against high-level assessment criteria. This included flood considerations. The 'area of search', in terms of the Sequential Test, encompassed the corridor from the A370 Long Ashton bypass south-eastwards to Bristol and B&NES boundaries and from Barrow Gurney in the west to Bristol in the east. A wider area would not have been appropriate, as the scheme has to be located within this corridor in order to meet strategic transport and regeneration objectives. The current route is therefore considered to be the best fit in comparison with the alternatives considered and it is accepted that the applicant has made every effort to minimise flood risk in the selection of the final route alignment, with just 4% of total scheme located within areas identified as lying within Flood Zone 3.

Whilst an alternative alignment for the bus link that avoids Flood Zone 3b appears possible, this would not provide a convenient connection with the AVTM route which is a requirement of the scheme. The bus link has to enter the P&R site at the angle proposed in order to join up with the bus loop and avoid significant changes to the layout of the P&R site. In considering alternative road alignment options it was concluded that the highway alignment could not entirely avoid Flood Zone 2 as a highway linking to the A370 is a function of the scheme. It is noted that during the detailed options appraisal process consideration was given to linking to the A370 at the existing 'P & R' junction. This proved unachievable in engineering and traffic movement terms. It is also noted that a connection to the A further west has significant disadvantages because of topography, greater journey-times, additional fuel consumption and increased carbon emissions.

In addition, the SBL is categorised as 'essential infrastructure' by the NPPF, which is defined as *"essential transport infrastructure (including mass evacuation routes) which has to cross the area of flood risk"*. According to the NPPF Flood Zone Classification, essential infrastructure is deemed appropriate in Flood Zone 1 and 2, subject to agreement of the Exception Test and design mitigation measures.

The Exception Test

The NPPF (paragraph 102) sets out two tests which must be met in order to pass the Exception Test. These are set out in the submission and have satisfactorily demonstrated that the development provides wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk, informed by an SFRA.

The NPPF acknowledges that in the case of essential infrastructure, there are strategic sustainability issues to be taken into account, which can justify locating development in areas of higher flood risk. It is accepted that the adopted Development Plan for the area jointly safeguard land for the delivery of the SBL and that the SBL is one of a package of transport schemes that together will create a rapid transport network across the sub-region, linking key employment, housing and leisure areas. It is also accepted that the scheme will facilitate regeneration and growth in North Somerset and Bristol, including Bristol Airport.

Overall it is considered that the development will be safe for its lifetime, taking account of the vulnerability of its users. The proposed mitigation works ensure that the route does not increase flood risk elsewhere. The route will be flood free at the 1% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) event (including an allowance for climate change), and therefore, to a large degree, outside of Flood Zone 1. The FRA has also demonstrated that compensatory storage can be provided to prevent an increase in tidal/fluviol flood risk.

Reservoir Flood Risk

The location of the Barrow Reservoir 3 is located above the site and therefore flooding from the Reservoir, however remote is a material planning consideration.

The Barrow Reservoir, located in the headwaters of Colliters Brook, is subject to regulatory control under the Reservoirs Act 1975 that requires the owner Bristol Water to inspect the reservoir on a regular basis. Bristol Water has raised no objection to the scheme. The applicant's FRA has concluded that it is unlikely the construction of the SBL will have a detrimental affect on the structural integrity of the reservoir but more importantly, any failure of the reservoir embankment, with the SBL in place, is unlikely to result in a significant impact on the floodplain or have any greater impact in terms of inundation without the SBL in place. The proposed new SBL embankments downstream of the railway are likely to provide some attenuation of flood flows and may also counter the potential increase caused by a new tunnel opening through the railway embankment. The SBL construction will not act to impede water flow since the existing rivers, new culverts and bridges will continue to provide free passage of water. Although actual breaches of reservoirs are rare, the risk still exists and should the development be allowed to proceed, consideration should be given for further consultation with Bristol Water and the Environment Agency.

Flood Mitigation Measures

The following measures are proposed to mitigate for fluviol flood risk as a result of the SBL:

- New bridge crossing with clear span structures.
- Road levels set above floodplain
- Compensatory storage areas to mitigate the loss of floodplain storage areas.
- Realignment of Colliters Brook designed to maintain current capacity
- Construction storage away from the floodplain

In consultation with the EA, the applicant will enable easement along the New Colliter's Brook culvert and a 10m undisturbed margin from the centre line of the culvert. This has been reflected in the proposed tree planting area. North Somerset Council will own and maintain the maintenance track adjoining Colliter's Brook and the railway for the benefit of the EA and Network Rail subject to successful compulsory purchase of the land.

Notwithstanding the flood mitigation measures proposed by the applicant, the EA have yet to confirm (at the time of writing) whether the submitted measures are satisfactory. Further information requested by the EA is as follows:

1. Clarification on long term storage and treatment.
2. The percentage of runoff that will enter the system.
3. Attenuation storage volume for catchment K.
4. Not all of the drainage calculations for the Brownfield catchments have been provided.

In conclusion, the environmental design and mitigation measures combine to ensure that the proposed use and site location are compatible in terms of flood risk and SBL will have no negative impact on flood risk elsewhere or have any adverse effects on water quality. SBL would therefore comply with the flood risk requirements under the NPPF, including the Sequential and Exception together with Core Strategy Policy CS3.

Issue 9: Environmental Considerations

The provision of the SBL needs to satisfy Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy relating to climate change and carbon reduction. The policy states that development should demonstrate a commitment to reducing energy demand through good design. Policy CS3 relating to living within environmental limits adds that development that, on its own or cumulatively, would result in air, water or other environmental harm will only be permitted if the potential adverse effects would be mitigated to an acceptable level by other control regimes such as the imposition of planning conditions.

The assessment of the scheme having regard to environmental impacts has considered the following issues:

Noise

The planning application is accompanied by a Noise and Vibration Assessment that examines the effects of the SBL on traffic noise and vibration levels and assesses the 'direct effects' of the introduction of new road traffic sources. Noise levels have been predicted both with and without the road at the scheme opening year (2016) and when the scheme was operational (design year 2031). The effect of sound transmission from the development has been anticipated during the construction and operational phases involving the likely noise that would be generated from soil removal, land profiling, engineering works, transport of stone during the construction phase and traffic noise during the operational phase.

The conclusion of the Noise Assessment has indicated that for all of the noise sensitive receptors located within North Somerset, there will be no perceptible change in noise levels along the route. With the support of conditions, the noise level generated by the proposal over and above existing noise levels will not have serious adverse impact on nearby residents during the construction and operational phases of the SBL. The hours of operation during the construction phase will be controlled through the Construction Management Plan.

Air

An Air Quality Assessment was submitted with the application and has established that the dust emissions may arise along the alignment of the SBL as a result of construction activities affecting a number of residential properties within 200m of the site boundary.

For the area that runs from the A370 at Long Ashton up to the A38 at Barrow Gurney, there are several potential receptors, primarily located around Long Ashton and Barrow Gurney. The report indicates that the air quality impact of the SBL has been predicted using dispersion modelling and then compared with existing background air pollutant levels (nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter). The results of the dispersion modelling have indicated that for Castle Farm on the A38 Bridgwater Road the impact on air quality would be slightly adverse. For Long Ashton the impact would be negligible. For all of the receptor sites there will be no exceedences of the air quality objectives.

The assessment proposes a broad programme of mitigation measures to be adopted within the Construction Environmental Management Plan to ensure that the risk of dust from construction operations is minimised. This is considered to be an acceptable approach.

Water Quality

The applicant has provided an assessment of the surrounding water environment that included the existing water conditions and determines the likely significance of effects the development will have on surface and ground water quality. The assessment is based on the requirement of Policy GDP/4 of the Local Plan and Policy CS3 of the Core Strategy that seeks to protect the water environment against the risk of pollution arising from development.

The disposal of surface water run-off from development both during construction and after completion requires careful consideration in order to minimise harm to the environment. The Council will seek to agree with the applicant to provide for water quality mitigation and to provide appropriate measures to mitigate the effects of water discharge and surface water drainage impact and provide appropriate long-term management.

The proposed water quality mitigation measures include:

- Treatment of contaminants;
- Dealing with spillage on the highway;
- Attenuating flows from additional impermeable areas of road;
- Preventing any increase flood risk in the area;
- Protecting and enhance wildlife corridors near watercourses.

With this mitigation in place it is accepted that there would be a negligible effect on water outfalls in the surrounding landscape from the construction and operation of the SBL so long as an acceptable water mitigation management plan can be agreed. This will be controlled by condition.

Health impacts from construction

The applicant's Environmental Statement & Health Impact Assessment (HIA) stated that the overall health impacts from construction of the SBL are generally minor or moderate and short-term, intermittent and/or temporary in nature although some temporary major impacts resulting from construction noise may occur. Many of the equalities impacts will be reduced and controlled by conditions.

Health impacts from operation

Health impacts from operation of the scheme in the long term are generally moderate in impact. Health determinants that experience positive changes are accessibility, active travel, access to green space, air pollution, quality of life, personal safety & perception of crime, social inclusion and community severance and employment. The mitigation measures described in the HIA if properly applied and monitored during the operation phase are likely to ensure that the majority of the negative health and wellbeing impacts are minimised and the positive health and wellbeing benefits maximised.

The HIA strongly supports the adoption of the mitigation that includes:

- Noise mitigation measures are adopted and implemented.
- Community development and travel activities should be undertaken along the route to ensure local people use the scheme fully.
- A plan showing existing cycle routes and how the SBL links in with them is developed.
- A commitment to the use of green (energy efficient/ low carbon energy) vehicle fleet during construction.
- A commitment to employ local unemployed people during construction
- Ensure that the bus service provides a physically accessible method of transport.

This programme of mitigation measures will ensure that the risk to health from construction and operation of the new highway is minimised.

The design of lighting will be important to minimise light spill and its effects on nocturnal wildlife including commuting and foraging bats. Paragraph 125 of the National Planning Policy Framework states: 'By encouraging good design, planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.'

An Obtrusive Light Assessment Report has been submitted with the application that has accepted the need to restrict street lighting to the A370, Brookgate and A38 junctions although it is recognised that the A370 and A38 is already lit at the proposed intersection of the SBL. It is not proposed to provide street lighting along the SBL links (except on the approach to the aforementioned junctions) as the links largely pass through rural hinterland. The proposed locations for street lighting accord with the primary purpose of its provision which is to promote safety and reduce the potential for road accidents.

The proposed lighting arrangements, with landscape mitigation, have been found to have no significant obtrusive lighting effects on the view from Ashton Court, residential properties on Ashton Drive, and Castle Farm. At these locations it is recommended that the GN01 guidelines are applied; full cut-off luminaires with no tilt are installed; and during the construction period a lighting curfew will be applied with the exception of at the A370 junction.

Contamination

A Ground Conditions and Land Contamination Assessment has been submitted with the application and has considered the effects arising from the construction and operation of SBL on existing ground conditions, including the assessment of potential contaminants. The assessment has established that the scheme will cross or pass adjacent to nine potential sources of contamination including traversing three landfills. Nevertheless, the assessment considered that the effect of the scheme with regard to land contamination is anticipated to be neutral. With regards to ground instability, the assessment found that the SBL would have a slight adverse impact on the ground stability associated with the landfills. However, with careful consideration of the landfill materials in the design of the slopes and the road through the landfills along with regular maintenance and inspections, the assessment concludes that the impact would be limited. A pre-commencement condition covering phase 2 ground investigations is recommended in order to refine the design and mitigation measures.

A Coal Mining Risk Assessment indicated that the route corridor is at low risk of ground collapse/movement because of historic coal mine workings and untreated shafts.

Construction Management

There are concerns from local residents regarding the potential implications of the construction phase and the potential effect they could have on the surrounding highway network and the environment. It is likely that a significant volume of material will need to be moved to construct the new road and, at present, there is no clear indication of the volume of material to be imported, redistributed within the site or removed from site for disposal elsewhere. This could potentially have transport and possible environmental implications.

The TA provides an overview of the likely highway impacts generated by the construction phase of the proposed development. The TA states that the construction impacts will be short-term and temporary and this assessment is considered reasonable in light of the proposed opening year. The conclusion that the impacts will mainly occur in close proximity to the proposed SBL route and away from residential areas is considered reasonable as construction traffic activity will be concentrated along the route.

The LPA needs to be satisfied that the applicant's construction plans measure and mitigate the impacts of the construction phase and therefore a Construction Management Plan will be required by condition prior to work commencing on site.

In addition, the proposed route of the SBL will pass close by or traverse a number of former landfills. The following will need to be submitted prior to construction:

- Method statement for the control of contamination and pollutant run-off, including the handling of encountered land filled waste.
- A monitoring plan to include ground gas, groundwater and surface water monitoring before, during and after construction.

In addition, a Traffic Management Plan will be required by condition and will include a Green Travel Plan to ensure a sustainable approach to travel to and from the construction site. This is to ensure the proposed development remains compliant with Policy T/10 of the NSRLP and Policy CS10 of the Local Plan Strategy.

Issue 10: Replacement Common Land

As a result of the plan to construct the SBL through part of Highridge Common there is a requirement to find alternative replacement common land, known as 'exchange land'. The land in question was broadly considered as part of consultation process for the selection of the Exchange Common Land.

Policy CF/4 'Safeguarding of existing and proposed sites and buildings' will be satisfied where acceptable alternative provision of at least equivalent community benefit is made available in the same vicinity and capable of serving the same catchment area so long as the following criteria is met:

- a) the new site is at least as accessible to pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles;
- b) the replacement facility is at least equivalent in terms of size, usefulness, attractiveness and quality to the facility it replaces; and
- c) in the case of a replacement for an existing facility, the replacement will be available for use before use of the existing facility is lost.

In addition, guidance is set out in Compulsory Purchase Circular 06/2004 (the Circular). Paragraph 25 of Appendix L to the Circular states the requirements for identification of suitable Exchange Land as being:

- no less in area than the order land; and
- equally advantageous to any persons entitled to rights of Common or to other rights, and to the public.

Paragraph 25 of Appendix L to the Circular goes on to say that in determining whether the offer land meets the criteria above the Secretary of State may have regard to the relative size and proximity of the exchange land when compared with the land identified for compulsory purchase (CPO).

Although the owner/farmer has objected to the land chosen, suggesting that it would prevent access to the majority of their holding, the exchange land was selected based on the following criteria:

1. The proximity to the land being lost to the scheme;
2. The capacity of providing sufficient replacement land taking into account the nature of the existing common and need to translocate grassland species;
3. The capacity of existing commoners and the general public to use a comparable area of open space;
4. The need to provide an area of comparable visual character.

It is considered that, although the land owner will be affected, the chosen exchange land has been generally supported through the public consultation exercise and offers the most appropriate solution in accordance with Policy CF/4 of the Local Plan. The land being offered in exchange will also be

subject to the same rights as the land being compulsorily acquired. The Council has agreed with Bristol City Council that following acquisition of the exchange land it will be transferred to Bristol Council.

Overall Conclusion

The evolution and development of the proposed SBL has been conducted over a number of years. This process has sought the views of local residents, planning and transport professionals, businesses and statutory consultees from a wide range of disciplines to determine the chosen route.

Although the proposal runs through the Green Belt its alignment has been agreed through the local plan process and known for some years. It is not regarded as inappropriate development and given the Local Plan designation does not conflict with the fundamental purposes of the Green Belt as set out in national guidance. Notwithstanding this assessment, even if a different view is taken then the applicant has demonstrated that very special circumstances exist to justify the use of land within the Green Belt in accordance with NPPF, NSC Core Strategy Policy CS6 and NSC saved Local Plan Policy RD/3.

Moreover, poor transport links and congestion are barriers to growth and the construction of the SBL will improve connectivity, business opportunities and job creation and will serve to unlock new business potential. It is estimated that the delivery of the road could unlock approximately 3000 jobs by 2030 and is supported by a number of business organisations as a result. By easing movement around south Bristol it will have economic benefits both for the immediate and wider areas and is in accordance with the economic policy objectives of the Local Plan and Core Strategy.

The proposal will provide a combination of improved public transport infrastructure with bus lanes on the SBL together with select vehicle detection at traffic signals. The scheme will provide new services between Bristol (city centre) and south Bristol and the airport, as well as a reduction in traffic on the highway network north of SBL. This facilitates improved journey times for the buses to/from south Bristol and buses between the airport and city centre will see improved reliability and a decrease in average journey times.

It is concluded that the proposed development is unlikely to be of material detriment to the safety or operation of the surrounding highway and transport network. Furthermore, the proposed development is considered to operate within acceptable and satisfactory operational conditions. As a consequence there is no objection to the proposal and the LPA are satisfied that the proposed development is consistent and compliant with the national and local transport planning policy referred to above.

In access terms, the proposal may reduce the attractiveness of some of existing footpaths by reason of traffic noise however the scheme will result in an overall net increase in public access and recreational land and this accessibility will be of better quality in terms of all-year-round usage for pedestrians, walkers and cyclists. It is considered that provision has been made to mitigate the effects of the SBL and is consistent with local and national policy objectives to protect and enhance public rights of way and seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users.

The applicant has demonstrated through the submitted Ecological Impact Assessment ways of avoiding, mitigating and compensating the impacts on the ecological interests and has introduced measures to enhance the natural habitats where possible, particularly networks of habitats. The development therefore is in accordance with Policy CS4 and the overall ecological objectives set out in the NPPF.

Whilst the SBL may have a visual impact on adjoining historical assets in the short term this will be mitigated in the long term through the use of sensitive planting along the route. Taking the route as a whole, the alignment of the scheme and proposed mitigation measures will reduce visual effects.

the historic assets and comply with adopted planning policy intended to protect the historic environment.

The environmental design and mitigation measures combine to ensure that the proposed SBL is compatible in terms of flood risk and will have no negative impact on flood risk elsewhere or have adverse effects on water quality. SBL therefore complies with the flood risk requirements under the NPPF, including the Sequential and Exception tests, together with Core Strategy Policy CS3. The potential environmental effects of the construction and operational phases of the scheme can be mitigated to an acceptable level.

Overall the SBL is a sustainable scheme offering significant benefits to the transport infrastructure the wider region and to the local economies. Its adverse effects have been mitigated and beneficial effects enhanced in terms of socio economics, transport, design and sustainability, health, recreation and amenity land, flood risk, water quality, agricultural land, ground and land contamination, amenity (air quality, noise and light), ecology and the historic environment in the proposal is considered to comply with the objectives of the NPPF and Core Strategy policies CS1, CS2, CS3, CS4, CS5, CS6, CS7, CS8, CS9, CS20 and CS23 and saved Local Plan policies GDP/3, ECH/4, ECH/5, ECH/6, ECH/9, ECH/11, ECH/12, ECH/14, T/7, T/8, T/9, T/10 and T/12.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

The proposed development will not have a material detrimental impact upon bio diversity as set out in the report.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998

The proposed development will not have a material detrimental impact upon crime and disorder.

Local Financial Considerations

The Localism Act 2011 amended section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, so that local financial considerations are now a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. However, it is considered that the development plan and other material considerations, as set out elsewhere in this report, continue to be the matters that carry greatest weight in the determination of this application.

RECOMMENDATION:

a) Subject to receiving any further comments from the Environment Agency the application be **APPROVED** (for the reasons stated in the report above) subject to the conditions set out below; and

b) That in the event that the North and Central Area Committees arrive at materially different conclusions to each other on this consultation the consultation is referred to the Planning and Regulatory Committee for a final response to be agreed

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiry of five years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

with the following approved plans: To Follow

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of proper planning.

3. No works, including any site clearance or demolition works, shall take place until a Works Programme, showing the subdivision of the scheme into defined work phases has been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the construction of the development hereby approved shall not proceed other than in accordance with the approved construction phasing plan.

Reason: It is necessary that the stages of development and the provision of associated infrastructure follow a co-ordinated sequence and in accordance with Policy CS2 of the North Somerset Core Strategy.

Materials

4. No development shall take place within an identified work phase approved under condition (3) until details of the following finished materials to be used in the development within that phase hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and shall include:
 1. Railway underbridge.
 2. Pedestrian underpasses.
 3. Road, bus, cycleway, tactile and footpath surfacing
 4. The layout and alignment, widths and levels of the hard surfacing.
 5. Bus stop infrastructure.
 6. Farm and Landfill site entrances.
 7. Gates, railings and fencing.
 8. All cycle/footway paths junctions to incorporate radii.
 9. Road lining and signage.
 10. Positions, sizes and gradient of sewers culverts and drains.

The development for that phase shall be completed in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority

Reason: To ensure the appearance of the SBL will be satisfactory in the interests of the visual appearance of the area and in accordance with section 7 and paragraph 17 of the National Planning Policy Framework, policy CS12 of the North Somerset Core Strategy and policy GDP/3 of the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan.

Highways

5. No development shall take place within an identified work phases approved under condition (3) until Safety Audits for that phase have been commissioned during the design and construction Stages 1 & 2 to

that part of the road is opened to traffic, and to propose any measures to eliminate or mitigate those problems.

The development shall be completed in accordance with the approved Safety Audits for that phase unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and in accordance with Policy T/10 of the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan.

Landscaping

6. No development shall take place within an identified work phase approved under condition (3) until a detailed landscaping scheme for that phase has been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include compensatory planting of native trees with no less than 200 heavy standard native trees and 200 feathered trees. The soft landscape works shall include planting plans; structural planting on the two new roundabouts; written specifications including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment; schedules of plants; noting species; plant sizes; tree pits; defined proposed numbers/densities where appropriate and an implementation programme. The scheme shall also show all existing trees and hedgerows to be removed and those to be retained together with the treatment for trees and hedgerows.

Reason: The Local Planning Authority wishes to see existing and new trees and hedgerows incorporated into the new development where possible and in accordance with Policy ECH/10 of the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan.

7. Trees, hedges, plants and species-rich grassland shown in the landscaping scheme to be retained or planted which, during the development works or a period of ten years following full implementation of the landscaping scheme, are removed without prior written consent from the Local Planning Authority or die, become seriously diseased or are damaged, shall be replaced in the first available planting season with others of such species and size as the Authority may specify.

Reason: To ensure as far as possible that the landscaping scheme is fully effective and in accordance with Policy GDP/3 of the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan.

8. No development shall take place within an identified work phase approved under condition (3) until a plan showing the location and design of tree and hedge protection fencing for that phase has been submitted and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the agreed protection has been erected around existing trees and hedging to be retained. The Local Planning Authority is to be advised that the tree/hedge protection measures are in place and available for inspection.

materials or any other activity takes place within these protective zone and in accordance with Policy GDP/3 of the North Somerset Replacement Plan.

9. All works comprised in the approved details of landscaping should be carried out in accordance with the approved details during the months of October to March inclusive following completion of the development, whichever is the sooner and unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that a satisfactory landscaping scheme is implemented and in accordance with Policy GDP/3 of the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan.

Archaeology

10. No development shall take place within an identified work phase approved under condition (3) until a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation for that phase has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The programme of archaeological work should provide a controlled watching brief during ground works on the site, with provision for excavation of any significant deposits or features encountered, and shall be carried out by a competent person(s) and completed in accordance with the approved written scheme of investigation.

Reason: So that records may be made before the archaeological remains are affected by the development and in accordance with paragraphs 128 and 169 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy CS5 of the North Somerset Core Strategy and Policy ECH/6 of the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan.

11. No works on the exposure and renovation of the limekilns shall take place until a Conservation and Management Plan has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The Conservation and Management Plan will need to include details showing a programme of clearance, repair and conservation of the conjoined limekilns and explaining their future maintenance. The approved Conservation and Management Plan shall be implemented in accordance with its recommendations.

Reason: To protect the site of archaeological interest during development work and in accordance with section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework, policy CS5 of the North Somerset Core Strategy and Policy ECH/6 of the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan.

Flood Risk and Drainage

12. No development shall take place within an identified work phase approved under condition (3) until a surface water drainage scheme for that phase together with a programme of implementation for that phase has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning

Authority. Such works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the development is served by a satisfactory system of surface water drainage and in accordance paragraph 17 and sections 10 and 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) and Policy CS/3 of the North Somerset Core Strategy.

Construction Works

13. No development shall take place within an identified work phase (described in condition 3) until a site specific Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) for that phase has been prepared, submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The CEMP must demonstrate the adoption and use of best practicable means to reduce the effects of noise, vibration, dust and other air borne pollutants and site lighting and include but not necessarily be limited to the following:
 1. Procedures for maintaining good public relations including complaint management, public consultation and liaison.
 2. Arrangements for liaison with the Local Planning Authority's Pollution Control Team and on site presence to enable appropriate responses to matters such as unforeseen contamination.
 3. The employment of an Environmental Clerk of Works.
 4. Hours of Construction.
 5. Green Travel Plan to include proposals for the sustainable movement and routing of construction traffic to the site together with the parking by construction personnel to ensure that movements and deliveries to, and removal of plant, equipment, machinery and waste from the site must only take place in a sustainable way and within the permitted hours detailed above.
 6. Mitigation measures as defined in BS 5528: Parts 1 and 2: 2009 Noise and Vibration Control on Construction and Open Sites shall be used to minimise noise disturbance from construction works.
 7. Procedures for emergency deviation of the agreed working hours.
 8. The use of a 'Considerate Contractors' or similar regime and arrangements for site induction for workforce highlighting pollution prevention and awareness.
 9. Control measures for dust and other air-borne pollutants include particular measures to protect any local resident who may have a particular susceptibility to air-borne pollutants.
 10. Measures for controlling the use of site lighting whether required for safe working or for security purposes.
 11. Site Security.
 12. Fuel oil storage, bunding, delivery and use and how both minor and major spillage will be dealt with.
 13. Containment of silt/soil contaminated run off, the control and removal of spoil and wastes and disposal of contaminated

- drainage, including water pumped from excavations and leachate from pitch drainage
14. The treatment and removal of suspended solids from surface water run-off during construction works and measures to prevent building material finding its way into a watercourse.
 15. Odour control measures.
 16. Measures for the prevention of tracking mud off site from vehicles.
 17. Proposals for the temporary movements and stockpiling of a soil and spoil and proposals for the testing of soils to be used in soft landscaping areas for contamination.
 18. All site clearance and construction works to be in accordance with the Environmental statement Volume 2, Chapter 2.13 Ecological Impact Assessment July 2013.
 19. Measures to protect badgers from being trapped in open excavations and/or pipes and culverts.
 20. Arrangements for briefing contractors and sub-contractors on the importance of the ecological features which are to be retained on site and the ecological value of the SNCIs in particular. Best practice pollution control measures and biosecurity (control of Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam)

The approved CEMP shall be implemented in full unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to ensure that the land is managed and environmentally protected in accordance with section 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy CS3 of the North Somerset Core Strategy.

14. No development shall take place within an identified work phase approved under condition (3) until an assessment of the nature and extent of contamination for that phase has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This assessment must be undertaken by a competent person, and shall assess any contamination on the site, whether or not it originates on the site. Moreover, it must include:

- (i) a survey of the extent, scale and nature of contamination;
- (ii) an assessment of the potential risks to:
 - human health,
 - property (existing or proposed) including buildings, crops, livestock, pets, woodland and service lines and pipes,
 - adjoining land,
 - groundwaters and surface waters,
 - ecological systems,
 - archaeological sites and ancient monuments.
- (iii) an options appraisal and remediation strategy if required.

The development shall be completed in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority

Reason: In order to ensure that the land is managed and environmentally protected in accordance in accordance with section 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy CS3 of the North Somerset Core Strategy.

Lighting

15. No development shall take place within an identified work phase approved under condition (3) until full details and specifications of highway lighting, including supplementary lighting at the bus stops within that phase have been submitted to and approval by the Local Planning Authority. The specifications should minimise light spill onto surrounding landscape and therefore a Lux level contour plan is required to cover all junctions. The street lighting shall thereafter be erecting and operated in accordance with the approved specifications.

Reason: The Local Planning Authority wishes to retain control over the matters referred to in the interests of visual and wildlife amenity and in accordance with Policy GDP/2 of the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan.

AVTM

16. The bus only link section of the SBL from Brookgate Junction connecting the Long Ashton Park & Ride, as shown on drawing: CTRAEB/730/HIG/110revPA, shall not be constructed until written evidence of a contractual commitment to construct the AVTM is provided to the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to ensure that the development is fully integrated with the surrounding transport network in accordance with section 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework and policy CS3 of the North Somerset Core Strategy.

Public Right of Way

17. No development shall take place within the relevant defined work phase approved under condition (3) until details and specifications showing how the existing farm bridge over Longmoor Brook will be repaired or replaced have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved works shall be carried concurrently with the development hereby permitted.

Reason: In order to ensure that the footpath and farm links are provided in accordance with Policy T/7 of the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan.

18. No development shall take place within the relevant defined work phase approved under condition (3) until details and specifications have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority to ensure that a suitable footpath surface is installed on the north side of the Longmoor Brook under bridge to carry diverted public footpath LA12/12C and pedestrian access gates are erected either side of the bridge embankment to control farm livestock. The development shall be completed in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to ensure that the footpath links are provided in accordance with Policy T/7 of the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan.

19. No development shall take place within the relevant defined work phase approved under condition (3) until details and specification showing the diversion of the footpath LA12/12c from ST5573570265 to ST5573670290. The development shall be completed in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority

Reason: In order to ensure that the footpath links are provided in accordance with Policy T/7 of the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan.

20. No development shall take place within the relevant defined work phase approved under condition (3) until plans and specifications are submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority showing the provision of a grass verge of not less than 0.5 metres in width between the 3 metre wide cycleway/footway and the carriageway between the section north of the Longmoor Brook and the spur to the new Brookgate access road. The development shall be completed in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority

Reason: In order to ensure that a safe and satisfactory footpath and cyclepath link is provided in accordance with Policy T/7 of the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan.

21. No development shall take place within the relevant defined work phase approved under condition (3) until plans and specifications are submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority showing the provision of a cycleway/footway from Festival Way to the approved highway and cycleway/footway junction. The development shall be completed in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority

Reason: In order to ensure that a safe and satisfactory footpath and cyclepath link is provided in accordance with Policy T/7 of the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan.

22. No development shall take place within an identified work phase approved under condition (3) until all diversion routes within that

accordance with plans and specifications that are submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to ensure that a safe and satisfactory footpath signs are provided in accordance with Policy T/7 of the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan.

23. No development shall take place within the relevant defined work phase approved under condition (3) until plans and specifications are submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority showing the relocation of the public footpath diversion route running midway between Colliters Brook and SBL. The development shall be completed in accordance with the approved details and an approved timetable unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority

Reason: In order to ensure that the footpath links are provided in accordance with Policy T/7 of the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan.

24. No development shall take place within the relevant defined work phase (as described in condition 3) until plans and specifications are submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority showing the details of the ramp specification for the crossing of public footpath over the bus link shown on drawing CTAB/730/HIG/10 PA. The development shall be completed in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority

Reason: In order to ensure that a safe and satisfactory footpath and cyclepath link is provided in accordance with Policy T/7 of the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan.

Ecology

25. No development shall take place within an identified work phase approved under condition (3) until a Landscape and Conservation Habitat Management Plan for that phase has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall include a detailed scheme of mitigation, compensation and biodiversity enhancement measures including a timetable for the monitoring, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules for all landscape and ecological areas together with compensatory planting including the requirements set out within the Environmental Statement dated July 2013. The requirements of the Landscape and Conservation Habitat Management Plan shall subsequently be carried out in accordance with its approved recommendations.

Reason: In order to preserve bio-diversity and protected species in accordance with Policy CS4 of the North Somerset Core Strategy.

approved under condition (3) until details of the new ponds for that phase, including requirements set out within the Environmental Statement dated July 2013, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be completed in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority

Reason: In order to preserve bio-diversity and protected species in accordance with Policy CS4 of the North Somerset Core Strategy

27. No development shall take place within an identified work phase approved under condition (3) until plans for that phase have been submitted to and approved in writing of the Local Planning Authority showing full details of bird and bat boxes to be provided around the site. The works shall be completed in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority

Reason: In order to preserve and enhance bio-diversity and protected species in accordance with Policy CS4 of the North Somerset Core Strategy

28. No development shall take place within an identified work phase approved under condition (3) until full details of boundary treatment for that phase together with its phasing have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The specifications shall include all types of temporary, protective and permanent fencing including protective limekiln, rabbit and deer fencing. The details, as approved, shall be erected within their particular phase of the development.

Reason: In the interests of wildlife, landscaping and security and in accordance with Policy GDP/2 of the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan.

Highridge Common

29. No development shall take place within the relevant defined work phase approved under condition (3) until a Mitigation Plan for the Highridge Common and Exchange Land, in accordance with the Environmental Statement Volume 2, Chapter 2.13 Ecological Impact Assessment July 2013, has been submitted to and approved by the LPA that sets out in detail:
1. protection measures to minimise damage to the common during construction
 2. a methodology for the translocation of turf to the common exchange land
 3. proposals and methodology for the reinstatement of areas of grass land affected by the construction of the road that are returned to grass land on the existing common
 4. proposals, methodology and monitoring arrangements for the establishment of the common exchange land during the period from the commencement of development to 10 years following the completion of the new road across the common

5. proposed management and maintenance regime thereafter.
 6. The approved ecological mitigation plan shall be carried out in full unless any variations are agreed in writing with the LPA
- All development shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved plan.

Reason: In the interests of landscape amenity and in accordance with Policy GDP/2 of the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan.

Notes

1. The LPA would strongly suggest that consideration be given to cooperation with all landowners in an area between Ashton Vale, Ashton Court/ B3128, Barrow Common and Highridge to promote additional landscape enhancement (including open land conservation management, hedgerow management/ improvement, hedgerow trees and woodland).
2. No site clearance or tree or hedge removal (or work to the building that could disturb nesting birds) should be carried out on site between 1 March and 30 September inclusive in any year, unless a check has been carried out beforehand by a qualified ecologist as agreed with the local planning authority.
3. The applicant is encouraged to pursue further consultation with Bristol Water and the Environment Agency regarding the Barrow Reservoir.
4. The applicant is advised to show the correct legal alignment of public footpath LA12/14 and LA 12/43 up to red line development boundary below the Park & Ride.
5. The applicant is advised to undertake an updated badger and bird survey to identify any new badger setts or breeding birds within the application site. If new setts or breeding birds (particularly kingfishers) are found consultation with and LPA and Natural England must be undertaken and a licence prepared if required.
6. The applicant should note that it may be necessary to investigate improvements to signal timings on the A38 roundabout in the longer term.

