Highway Improvements at and around the A46 / Stoneleigh Road Junction, Warwickshire

Planning, Design and Access Statement

December 2017
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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

1.1.1. This Planning, Design and Access Statement (PDAS) has been prepared by Atkins on behalf of Warwickshire County Council Highway Authority (the Applicant) to support an application for full planning permission to deliver major improvement of the Stoneleigh junction on the A46 between Coventry and Warwick.

1.1.2. The Proposed Development would improve operation of the A46 / Stoneleigh Road junction through introduction of an elevated gyratory and enhanced junction approaches. This development would improve highway safety, improve highway capacity, and reduce journey times.

1.1.3. The Proposed Development site is approximately 16.8 hectares in area. Most of this development area overlies existing highway infrastructure and highway boundaries. The Proposed Development has been screened under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011. Warwickshire County Council has determined that the proposal would not be likely to have significant residual impacts on the environment and therefore an Environmental Impact Assessment is not required.

1.2. Structure of the Report

1.2.1. This Supporting Statement is divided into eight chapters.

- Chapter 1 provides a general introduction to the Proposed Development
- Chapter 2 provides a detailed description of the site and its environs
- Chapter 3 provides a detailed description of the Proposed Development
- Chapter 4 explains the need or rationale for the Proposed Development
- Chapter 5 summarises the consultation undertaken in relation to the Proposed Development
- Chapter 6 considers in detail the relevant national and local level planning policy context within which the Proposed Development is to be considered and provides commentary on the extent to which the Proposed Development complies with these policies
- Chapter 7 sets out the potential environmental issues pertaining to the development and discusses the findings and recommendations of the various assessments/surveys which have been undertaken in support of the planning application
- Chapter 8 summarises the content of this Statement and draws conclusions on the appropriateness of development

1.3. Additional Supporting Documents

1.3.1. This PDAS is accompanied by the following documents:

- Transport Assessment
- Noise Assessment
- Ecological Impact Assessment
- Tree Survey
- Landscape and Visual Assessment
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Preliminary Drainage Design
- Air Quality technical note
- Preliminary Walking, Cycling and Horse Riding Assessment
- Heritage Statement

1.3.2. And the following drawings:

- 9.2-A46—083-6201 – Site Plan - Existing
- 9.2-A46—083-6202 – Site Plan - Proposed
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- 9.2-A46—083-017 – Vegetation Clearance
- 9.2-A46—083-6204 – Cross Sections
- 9.2-A46—083-6205 – Slip Road Cross Sections
- 9.2-A46—083-6206 – Westley Bridge Plans & Elevations & Sections
- 9.2-A46—083-6213 – Proposed Bridge over A46
- 9.2-A46—083-6214 – A46 Existing Bridge Plans, Elevations and Sections
- 9.2-A46—083-6215 – Traffic Signal Staging
- 9.2-A46—083-6216 – Outline Drainage Scheme
- 9.2-A46—083-6208 – Landscaping Proposals
2. The Application Site and Surroundings

2.1. Site Location

2.1.1. The application site (the Site) is located at and around the existing junction of the A46 and Stoneleigh Road, approximately 1.8 kilometres (km) south of Coventry, 1.5km east of Kenilworth, and 1km north-west of Stoneleigh. These approximate measurements are taken from the nearest settlement edge to the existing road junction. The location is shown edged in red on drawing number 9.2-A46-083-6201B Site Plan - Existing.

2.1.2. The Site falls within the administrative boundaries of Warwickshire County Council and Warwick District Council. Warwickshire County Council will be the determining authority for the application which this Statement supports, due to the nature of the Proposed Development.

2.2. Site Description

2.2.1. The Site is approximately 16.8ha in area. The majority of this development area overlies existing highway infrastructure and highway boundaries.

2.2.2. The current A46 / Stoneleigh Road junction is surrounded by agricultural land, except for the existing roads. The existing roads in the vicinity of the junction are lined with trees of varying type and maturity. There is a small area of woodland, known as Kings Wood, approximately 360 metres (m) to the south-east of the existing junction and 80m to the south of the proposed temporary site compound. There are also trees forming part of field boundaries to the north-east and to the west, trees lining the Finham Brook to the north-west, and small stands of trees around ponds to the south-east and south-west.

2.2.3. The Site extends north-west of the existing A46 / Stoneleigh Road junction to cross Finham Brook. Finham Brook, which is classified as a Main River, is currently crossed by Westley Bridge. The Site includes an area of woodland and other land near Finham Brook and Westley Bridge. Some of this area near the Brook is known to experience fluvial flooding.

2.2.4. Dalehouse Lane does not include any segregated footway or cycle facilities. Stoneleigh Road does include a footway over the A46 overbridge and along a section of the road east of the A46 / Stoneleigh Road junction. However, there is no footway west of the junction and there are no assisted crossing points in the vicinity of the A46 slip roads. A named public access route, the Centenary Way, passes alongside the A46 northbound off slip, over the A46 overbridge, and along a section of Stoneleigh Road until the Stoneleigh Road / B4115 junction.

2.3. The Surrounding Area

2.3.1. There are a number of residential properties to the north of Dalehouse Lane, including: Croyde Hoe; Knysna; Finbrook; Barnfield; Westley House; High-lo and The Cottage. Other properties in the area include: Manor Fields Farm Farmhouse; Kingswood House and Kingswood Farmhouse.

2.3.2. An area of land south of Stoneleigh Road, between Dalehouse Lane and Finham Brook is currently used for bee keeping activities. North of Finham Brook and south of Stoneleigh Road is an area of land in commercial use at Brook Farm. Agricultural access is gained to fields either side of Stoneleigh Road between the A46 and Finham Brook.

2.3.3. Traffic on the existing roads in this area is particularly influenced by vehicle movements to and from Stoneleigh village, Stoneleigh Park events ground, Kenilworth, Coventry and the University of Warwick.
2.4. Planning History & Committed Development

2.4.1. A search for nearby planning permissions granted since 2010 has identified one unimplemented planning permission of significant scale. This application, reference number W/17/1578, seeks consent for 'Replacement of Rugby Farmers Market, 9525m sq of floorspace, together with associated access arrangements, circulation, parking spaces and landscaping' at 'Land at junction of A46 and Stoneleigh Road, Stoneleigh, Kenilworth, CV8 2lZ'. The location of this application site is shown below.

2.4.2. Construction of this scheme is currently expected to begin in early 2018 and therefore there is a risk that this scheme could come forward at a similar time to the Proposed Development’s junction improvements. The footprint of the two schemes does not overlap, but if construction were to be carried out simultaneously there is potential for cumulative impacts (which may be positive or negative) and conflict arising from two principal contractors operating on adjacent sites during the construction period. Warwickshire County Council (the Applicant) are liaising with Rugby Farmers’ Market regarding construction interface.

2.4.3. It is noted that the High Speed 2 railway line (HS2) is expected to pass approximately 800m to the south of the A46 / Stoneleigh Road junction and traffic associated with the construction of HS2 is likely to use the junction. It is anticipated that construction of the Proposed Development would be completed prior to peak HS2 construction and cumulative adverse effects between these schemes are therefore unlikely. The Proposed Development is likely to reduce the impacts associated with HS2 construction, although this is not its primary intention.
3. Development Proposals

3.1.1. This proposal seeks to deliver major improvement of the Stoneleigh junction on the A46 between Coventry and Warwick through introduction of a gyratory layout with two-bridge roundabout and ancillary works to the adjacent highway. These improvements would help address existing congestion and safety issues at the junction whilst also improving access to the University of Warwick and Stoneleigh Park and improving journey times for local communities.

3.2. Programme

3.2.1. Subject to the approvals and licencing process, it is anticipated that construction of the Proposed Development would begin in the summer of 2018, probably in September. The completed development is anticipated to be fully operational in either late 2019 or early 2020. This construction period of approximately 18 months includes implementation of mitigation associated with the development’s potential impact on protected species. An important consideration in the project timetable is ensuring operation of the improved junction prior to the anticipated peak in nearby construction activities associated with HS2.

3.3. Description of Construction

3.3.1. During construction, a temporary site compound would be located south of Stoneleigh Road, south of the existing A46 junction. This temporary compound's footprint would be approximately 100m x 120m. It would be used to store plant and equipment and to house portable site offices. Approximately eight office cabins would be located within the compound, each measuring approximately 10m x 3m, housing around 25 members of staff in total. These cabins are expected to be in use for approximately 18 months, and would then be removed from the Site. Crushed stone would be used as a temporary surface for the compound area. The field level would not be reduced. The compound would be returned to its pre-development condition once construction of the scheme was complete.

3.3.2. Working areas and the compound would be enclosed using Heras style fencing in order to secure the Site from unauthorised access and ensure public safety. It is assumed that the compound would have low level lighting during the working hours of darkness and security lighting during non-working hours.

3.3.3. It is currently proposed to construct the majority of the Proposed Development “off-line”, followed by a brief period of switch over, in order to minimise disruption to the highway network. However, it is likely to be necessary to temporarily close some lanes of the existing highway during construction. Closures would be implemented through the use of appropriate traffic management procedures. Traffic Management on the A46 would be agreed with Highways England prior to implementation. Phasing proposals have not yet been fully determined. The contractor would be obliged to maintain uninterrupted two-way traffic flow during the AM & PM peaks, unless prevented by matters of highway safety. Working hours have not yet been fully determined but there would be periods when night working and / or weekend working was required due to the nature of the construction activity at the time.

3.3.4. In order to facilitate construction, it would be necessary to import plant, equipment and materials for use within the Site. It is the intention of the applicant that plant, equipment and materials would be brought into the Site via the A46, avoiding the local road network wherever possible. A ‘Construction Traffic Management Plan’ (CTMP) will be prepared on behalf of the applicant. It is envisaged that this CTMP would be approved in writing by the planning authority prior to commencement of any construction. It is likely to consider issues such as:

- Work programme;
- Routing and site access, including ability for vehicles to enter and leave the Site in a forward direction;
- Number of vehicles accessing the site per day/week;
Details of the ways in which other highways users would be protected from site traffic e.g. protection of pedestrians; and
Method for spoil removal.

3.4. Description of the Proposed Development

3.4.1. Drawing number 9.2-A46—083-6202C shows the proposed final appearance of the Site following implementation of the Proposed Development. In brief, the scheme comprises the following components:

- installing a new road overbridge to the north-east of the existing junction;
- formation of a new gyratory, including a dedicated left turn lane onto the A46 (northbound);
- modifications to the existing southbound A46 on and off slip roads;
- realigning Stoneleigh Road to form a new approach to the proposed elevated gyratory;
- demolition of the existing Stoneleigh Road/Dalehouse Lane roundabout and formation of a new roundabout;
- construction a new bridge over Finham Brook;
- formation of a new dual carriageway link road between the proposed gyratory and proposed new roundabout at Dalehouse Lane;
- realigning Dalehouse Lane;
- installation of appropriate signage; and
- street lighting improvements.

3.4.2. These scheme elements are described in greater detail below.

Formation of a new gyratory

3.4.3. The most significant element of the proposed junction improvements is alteration of the existing A46 / Stoneleigh Road junction. At present, traffic leaving the A46 at this junction via the north and south-bound slip roads is obliged to enter Stoneleigh Road at un-signalised give-way junctions. When the Stoneleigh Road is busy, it is difficult for vehicles to enter the Stoneleigh Road from the A46 slip roads, resulting in queueing traffic.

3.4.4. To address this issue, it is proposed to construct an elevated, signal controlled, roundabout. This would allow more efficient passage of traffic through the junction. Formation of the gyratory requires an additional bridge over the A46, modification of the A46 slip roads and alterations to Stoneleigh Road on both sides of the A46.

3.4.5. The additional A46 overbridge is shown on drawing number 9.2-A46—083-6213. It would include new carriageway, shared use footway / cycleway, and sections of soft and hard verge. The height of the new bridge would be similar to the height of the existing bridge over the A46 that currently carries Stoneleigh Road. It would be located to the north of the existing bridge.

3.4.6. In order to tie the additional overbridge into Stoneleigh Road and the A46 it is necessary to realign Stoneleigh Road to both the east and west of the A46, forming the new approaches to the proposed elevated gyratory, and to amend the A46 slip roads. Slip road alterations would generally be limited to alignment and elevation, however it is also proposed to provide an additional dedicated left turn lane onto the A46 northbound for those approaching from Stoneleigh Road, on the northern side of the junction. The proposed arrangement, including proposed traffic signal locations, is shown on drawing number 9.2-A46—083-6202C.

3.4.7. In order to facilitate pedestrian crossing, Toucan Crossing points would be provided at each of the four junctions between the A46 slip roads and the proposed gyratory.

3.4.8. An example of a similar elevated gyratory already in operation can be found nearby - the A46 / A452 Junction approximately 2.3 miles south of the A46 / Stoneleigh Road junction.
New Stoneleigh Road / Dalehouse Lane roundabout and link road

3.4.9. In order to achieve acceptable deflection in the carriageway west of the proposed gyratory it is necessary to alter the alignment of Stoneleigh Road. It is proposed to move this section of road north of its existing alignment and widen it, creating a dual carriageway and the approach to the proposed dedicated turn onto the A46 northbound. This would increase the capacity of this section of road.

3.4.10. Altering this section of Stoneleigh Road results in a series of knock-on effects to Dalehouse Lane, the Stoneleigh Road / Dalehouse Lane roundabout, and the crossing of Stoneleigh Road over Finham Brook.

3.4.11. The roundabout would be relocated north of its current position, with Dalehouse Lane being realigned northwards to meet it. The new roundabout would be larger than that which it replaces and include an additional arm intended to provide agricultural access to the field to the north of Stoneleigh Road and maintenance access to the proposed attenuation pond.

Construction of a new bridge over Finham Brook

3.4.12. The realignment of Stoneleigh Road and repositioning of the Stoneleigh Road / Dalehouse Lane roundabout requires a new bridge over the Finham Brook. It is proposed to erect this bridge 3m north-east of the existing Westley Bridge. In order to “future proof” this section of road it is proposed to install a bridge that is wider than that required to serve current demand. Details of this bridge are shown on drawing number 9.2-A46–083-6206B.

Landscaping, planting and ecological mitigation

3.4.13. In order to construct the Proposed Development, it would be necessary to remove some of the hedges and trees adjacent to the existing highway. Details of the proposed removal are provided on drawing number 9.2-A46–083-017C - Vegetation Clearance.

3.4.14. Extensive planting of a range of trees, hedges, grass and wildflowers is proposed as part of the scheme. This is detailed on drawing number 9.2-A46–083-6208C - Landscaping Proposals.

3.4.15. Details of proposed ecological mitigation, including a calculation of the Proposed Development's net impact on biodiversity, will be provided a supplementary ecological report.

Signage, signalling and lighting

3.4.16. The proposed highway works would be supported by a number of traffic signs. The location of these signs and their content is a matter of ongoing detailed design. Installation of appropriate road signage is a typical undertaking of the Highways Authority, which benefits from Permitted Development Rights that confer deemed consent for such work. As such the detail of the proposed signage does not form part of the planning application supported by this Statement.

3.4.17. Traffic signals with Toucan crossings are proposed at each of the four junctions of the gyratory with the A46 slip roads. Traffic signals are also proposed to:

- control entry to the new gyratory for traffic exiting the A46 southbound;
- control westbound Stoneleigh Road traffic prior to the junction with the A46 northbound slip road; and
- control eastbound Stoneleigh Road traffic prior to the A46 southbound slip road junction.

3.4.18. At present, street lighting is provided around the A46 / Stoneleigh Road Junction and on the Stoneleigh Road / Dalehouse Lane roundabout. It is proposed to provide improved lighting around the revised A46 / Stoneleigh Road junction and its approaches, along the new section of dual carriageway north-west of this junction, around the revised Stoneleigh Road / Dalehouse Lane roundabout, and the approaches to this roundabout. Proposed lighting arrangements are shown on drawing number 1301/20.09.584. Proposed Street Lighting light level contours are shown on drawing number 1302/20.09.584. Details of proposed light levels at the north and south bound A46 slip road exists are shown on drawing number 20.09.584.
Drainage

3.4.19. As shown on the Outline Drainage Scheme (9.2-A46--083-6216A), the Proposed Development includes three attenuation basins which would be used to control the rate of discharge of surface water from the revised highway arrangement. In addition, the ground level west of Westley Bridge, on the southern bank of Finham Brook, would be lowered in order to create a flood compensation area. This compensation area would ensure that construction of the Proposed Development did not, on balance, reduce storage capacity of the floodplain. For further details, please refer to the Finham Brook Flood Risk Modelling and Outline Surface Water Drainage Strategy.

Re-provided accesses

3.4.20. To the east of the A46 / Stoneleigh Road junction, the Stoneleigh Road would be realigned northwards. The entrance to an existing silage compound would be extended in order to provide continued and equally advantageous agricultural access from Stoneleigh.

3.4.21. There is currently a gated field access from the existing Stoneleigh Road / Dalehouse Lane roundabout into the field between the A46 and Dalehouse Lane. The Proposed Development requires the breaking up of existing roadway and roundabout in the vicinity of this entrance, however an access road from Dalehouse Lane would provide continuous passage to the current field access point.

3.4.22. There is currently a gated field access on the north side of the existing Stoneleigh Road just south of Finham Brook. This access would be affected by the proposed relocation of the Stoneleigh Road / Dalehouse Lane roundabout. This access would be re-provided via a dedicated spur from the proposed roundabout. The proposed spur would extend to form a ramped access down to ground level within the field. This access ramp would not form part of the main carriageway and would be surfaced with crushed stone.

3.4.23. To the north of Finham Brook, the entrance to Brook Farm (and associated commercial uses) would be extended in order to provide continued and equally advantageous access from Stoneleigh Road.
4. Need for the Scheme

4.1.1. The A46 / Stoneleigh Road junction improvement scheme aims to:

- Reduce congestion and improve reliability of journey times by increasing the capacity of the junction
- Reduce accidents and the risk of accidents at the junction, by creating a gyratory system and reducing traffic queuing back on to the A46
- Improve access to Stoneleigh Park and the University of Warwick
- Improve access for potential future housing developments
- Help residents of Stoneleigh, Ashow and Kenilworth to gain more efficient access to the A46
- Improve facilities for pedestrians and cyclists
- Provide the opportunity to bring forward more substantial access improvements to the University of Warwick
- Improve air quality by reducing the amount of time vehicles are stationary
- Reduce the impact of Heavy Goods Vehicles on local communities in the Stoneleigh and Ashow area – especially associated with HS2 construction

4.1.2. The wider aim of the Proposed Development scheme is to improve strategic connections to the south and west of Coventry, thereby facilitating proposed housing growth within Warwick District and Coventry City and the realisation of the aspirations of the University of Warwick and Stoneleigh Park to grow in line with their current and emerging masterplans.

4.1.3. The scheme also anticipates the proposed construction of HS2. There is a need to progress the Proposed Development to construction in line with the timescales associated with the HS2 Hybrid Bill - which currently predicts the peak of HS2 construction activity occurring in the Kenilworth and Stoneleigh area around 2020/21. Delivery of the A46 / Stoneleigh Road junction improvements in advance of this peak may remove the need for certain mitigation to be delivered by HS2 Ltd, and would ensure that the impact of construction vehicles on the local communities of Stoneleigh and Ashow were minimised during the remainder of the construction phase of HS2.
5. Community Engagement

5.1.1. Project officers have attended Parish and Town Council meetings to provide an overview of the Proposed Development and its key milestones and to respond to questions about the Proposed Development and the impact of construction on the local road network.

5.1.2. A public engagement exercise took place in July 2017. The purpose of this exercise was to bring the scheme to the attention of the public more generally, to provide a context for the works and to explain anticipated timescales and construction. In total 160 responses were received to a questionnaire regarding the event, with an estimated 250 people attending over 6 days (2 days at each of 3 locations). A key issue was raised through the public engagement regarding provision of facilities for cyclists across the gyratory; as a result, this issue has been picked up by design amendments.

5.1.3. Communications on the project are supported by a website allowing for project updates to be uploaded (www.warwickshire.gov.uk/a46linkroad). This website sets out the available detail for the A46 / Stoneleigh Road junction improvement scheme and provides information regarding possible future phases of improvement.
6. Planning Policy

6.1. Introduction

6.1.1. This section of the Statement considers the ways in which the Proposed Development accords with or departs from relevant planning policy and guidance provided at the national and local level. The Site lies within the administrative boundaries of Warwickshire County Council and Warwick District Council. Warwickshire County Council will be the determining authority for the application which this Statement supports due to the nature of the Proposed Development. However, the proposal’s conformity with the Warwick District Local Plan (2017) has also been considered as the relevant Development Plan.

6.2. National Planning Policy

6.2.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England. It is a material planning consideration in determining planning applications.

6.2.2. The Framework advocates a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Sustainable development dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform the following roles:

- **an economic role** – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
- **a social role** – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
- **an environmental role** – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy’.

6.2.3. The NPPF states that, where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole; or specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted.

6.2.4. The Framework sets out detailed guidance under 13 sub-headings that contribute to delivering sustainable development. These are:

1. Building a Strong and Competitive Economy;
2. Ensuring the Viability of Town Centres;
3. Supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy;
4. Promoting Sustainable Transport;
5. Supporting High Quality Communications Infrastructure;
6. Delivering a Wide Choice of High Quality Homes;
7. Requiring Good Design;
8. Promoting Healthy Communities;
9. Protecting Green Belt Land;
10. Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change;
11. Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment;
12. Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment; and
6.2.5. In this case, it is considered that sub-headings 1, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 are relevant and these are examined below:

6.2.6. ‘Building a Strong and Competitive Economy’ highlights the need for the planning system to do everything it can to encourage and support sustainable economic growth. This includes identifying priority areas for economic regeneration and infrastructure provision, ensuring that inadequate infrastructure does not act as a barrier to investment.

6.2.7. The Proposed Development is intended to improve existing highway infrastructure that, in its current condition, is inadequate for existing demand. If this inadequacy is not addressed, it is possible that this infrastructure limitation will become a barrier to investment in the area, particularly affecting future urban growth to the south of Coventry and access to the University of Warwick. The planning system should do everything it can to support this Proposed Development, thereby encouraging and supporting sustainable economic growth in the local and wider area.

6.2.8. ‘Promoting Sustainable Transport’ states that encouragement should be given to solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion. Plans should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people. Therefore, developments should be located and designed where practical to:

- accommodate the efficient delivery of goods and supplies;
- give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, and have access to high quality public transport facilities; and
- create safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians.

6.2.9. The Proposed Development is intended to reduce existing transport congestion, thereby benefitting highway safety and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The Proposed Development would also provide improved facilities for non-motorised users.

6.2.10. A Transport Assessment accompanies this Statement. It sets out the ways in which the Proposed Development is likely to affect traffic in the vicinity of the A46 / Stoneleigh Road junction. The findings of this Assessment are summarised in Chapter 7.3.

6.2.11. ‘Requiring Good Design’ advises that good design is indivisible from good planning. New developments should function well and add to the overall quality of an area for the lifetime of a development. Careful design should ensure safe and accessible environments which are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

6.2.12. The design of the Proposed Development complies with relevant highway safety and design standards. Traffic modelling demonstrates that the development would ensure that the local road network performance is improved. Materials and finishes would be consistent with typical high quality adopted highway.

6.2.13. ‘Promoting Healthy Communities’ describes how the planning system can play an important role in creating healthy, safe, inclusive environments. Planning decisions should aim to achieve safe and accessible developments, containing clear and legible pedestrian routes. Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.

6.2.14. The Proposed Development is intended to improve highway safety (particularly for traffic on and leaving the A46) and non-motorised access along Stoneleigh Road, including for users of the Centenary Way which crosses the A46 at this location and follows a section of Stoneleigh Road to the east of the junction. At present, a dedicated footway exists only across the existing Stoneleigh Road bridge and there are no formal crossing points for the slip road junctions. The Proposed Development would include signal controlled Toucan Crossing points at each A46 on and off slip road and a dedicated shared use footway / cycleway along the proposed new bridge over the A46.

6.2.15. ‘Protecting Green Belt Land’ states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. Certain forms of development, such as local transport
infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location, 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.

6.2.16. The Proposed Development requires development within the Green Belt. However, the proposed junction improvements would not contribute to urban sprawl, being located away from existing urban areas. The Proposed Development is located within or adjacent to existing highway infrastructure. It would have minimal impact on the openness of the Green Belt and would not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt. The transport infrastructure nature of the Proposed Development, and the inability to locate this development elsewhere, means that the development is not “inappropriate” in terms of Green Belt policy.

6.2.17. ‘Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change’ considers, amongst others, the impacts of development on flood risk. Where development in areas at risk of flooding is necessary it should be safe and should not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

6.2.18. The Proposed Development falls within the category ‘essential infrastructure’, which is considered appropriate in Flood Zones 1 and 2, and appropriate in Flood Zones 3a and 3b subject to Exception Test requiring design and construction that ensures the infrastructure remains operational and safe in times of flood, result in no net loss of floodplain storage, not impede water flows and not increase flood risk elsewhere.

6.2.19. The Proposed Development crosses the Finham Brook and is partially located in an area at risk of flooding. Due to the location of the existing highway, it is not possible to locate the Proposed Development elsewhere. The design of the Proposed Development ensures that the new carriageway would be elevated above flood levels and therefore there would be no risk to passing traffic in times of flood. Flood attenuation incorporated within the scheme design would ensure no increased likelihood of flooding elsewhere.

6.2.20. ‘Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment’ states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, inter alia, ‘protecting and enhancing valued landscapes’ and ‘minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible’.

6.2.21. The design of the Proposed Development seeks to minimise adverse impact on both landscape and biodiversity. The design includes a range of mitigation in this regard, including extensive planting, landscaping and measures to avoid harm to protected species. The anticipated impact of the Proposed Development on landscape and biodiversity is assessed within the Landscape and Visual Appraisal and supporting ecological report.

6.2.22. ‘Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment’ directs planning authorities to prepare a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. Authorities should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. Authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset). They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

6.2.23. In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account, inter alia, of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.

6.2.24. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

6.2.25. The existing Stoneleigh Road bridge over the Finham Brook, known as Westley Bridge, has been identified as a heritage asset with potential to be affected by the scheme. The significance of this heritage has been assessed and is reported in an Historic Building Assessment, which is submitted in support of the planning application. Consultation has been undertaken with Historic England,
which determined that the bridge should not be added to the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. In addition, a Certificate of Immunity from Listing has been issued for the bridge.

6.2.26. Although the existing Westley Bridge is not a listed building, the likely impact of the Proposed Development on this non-designated asset has nevertheless been considered. Initial design called for demolition of Westley Bridge, but the scheme design has been amended to retain this structure and to provide views of the retained existing bridge from the proposed new bridge.

6.2.27. Under operation of the Proposed Development the existing bridge would no longer be trafficked, but it would retain its function of carrying (below surface level) a number of utilities over the Finham Brook. The scheme would affect the setting of the retained bridge, although the nature of the Proposed Development is congruent with the existing bridge’s function. Potential harm to setting is considered in the Historic Building Assessment, which concludes that any potential harm would be offset by the improved opportunities to view the retained Westley Bridge. This is considered to meet the need to “conserve in a manner appropriate to significance”.

6.2.28. It is considered that the retained non-designated heritage asset is of limited significance and the scale of harm to the asset and its setting is also limited. It is considered that the need for the Proposed Development and the benefits it would afford outweigh the potential harm to the Westley Bridge and its setting.

6.2.29. In addition to consideration of the Westley Bridge, a programme of trial trenching has been undertaken upon the advice of Warwickshire’s Planning Archaeologist, Anna Stocks. Trenching has been carried out to the west of the A46, north of Stoneleigh Road and to the east of the A46, north of Stoneleigh road, the results of which are provided in the Archaeological Evaluation report.

6.3. Warwickshire Local Transport Plan

6.3.1. The third Warwickshire Local Transport Plan (LTP3) came into effect on 1st April 2011. LTP3 sets out the transport policies and strategies for the County for period 2011-2026. This Plan may be a material consideration in the application’s determination.

6.3.2. The LTP3 identifies a key issue for the region’s motorways and trunk roads relating to congestion within the North-South Corridor, with specific problems occurring at a number of key junctions in the corridor including the A46/C32 Stoneleigh Road/B4115 Stoneleigh interchange.

6.3.3. The LTP3 seeks to reduce lost productive time by maintaining or improving the reliability and predictability of journey times on key local routes for business, commuting and freight through measures that include minor junction / signal improvements at congestion hotspots (e.g. junction improvements). It also seeks to continue to reduce the risk of death or injury due to accidents on the transport network through engineering measures at collision hotspots.

6.3.4. A number of improvements at key locations on the motorway and trunk road network are identified within the LTP3, including at the A46/C32 Stoneleigh Road/B4115 Stoneleigh interchange. The LTP3 describes the A46 Stoneleigh Interchange as the principal access point from the trunk road network to the University of Warwick and the National Agricultural Centre (NAC) at Stoneleigh. The LTP3 recognises that the junction is currently subject to congestion at peak times, which can cause traffic to queue back onto the main carriageway of the A46. The LTP3 states that, “as part of the proposed expansion of the NAC, a scheme to improve the junction was prepared to replace the existing priority junctions with two small roundabouts. This is currently on hold due to a lack of funding”.

6.3.5. Policy CS1: Congestion improvements and other highway users - Improvements to reduce congestion will not normally be implemented if they are detrimental to the safety and/or convenience of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.

6.3.6. Policy LUT8: Road safety audits - The County Council will require an appropriately staged Safety Audit to accompany any planning application that requires certain works within the highway to be carried out, for example new junctions, ghost island junctions and significant alterations to existing junctions. It is recommended that the applicant should contact the County Council for advice and
guidance on these issues at the earliest opportunity. Policy LUT8 will ensure that all works within the highway are carried out to an acceptable standard and will not be to the detriment of highway safety.

6.3.7. Policy RS1: Supporting the Government’s Commitment to Road Safety - The County Council supports the Government’s commitment to work with local authorities to deliver further improvements in road safety and will ensure Warwickshire contributes at least its fair share towards achieving this vision.

6.3.8. Policy RS7: Working with the Highways Agency - The County Council will work with the Highways Agency and its agents to tackle casualties that occur where our responsibilities meet, in particular for educational interventions and where trunk roads impinge on local communities.

6.3.9. The Proposed Development would help to achieve the aims of this Plan by addressing the congestion identified within the Plan at the key A46/C32 Stoneleigh Road/B4115 Stoneleigh interchange through engineering measures. These measures would improve the reliability and predictability of journey times and reduce the risk of death or injury due to accidents for vehicle travellers on the transport network. The design of the Proposed Development also improves crossing facilities, and therefore highway safety, for pedestrians and cyclists. The application is supported by a Road Safety Audit.

6.4. Local Planning Policy

The Warwick District Local Plan 2011 - 2029 (adopted September 2017)

6.4.1. The following polices from the Local Plan are considered relevant to determination of the application for full planning permission.

6.4.2. DS5 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development - The Council will work proactively with applicants to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan will be approved without delay.

6.4.3. It is demonstrated within this section that the Proposed Development accords with the Local Plan. It should therefore be approved without delay.

6.4.4. DS18 Green Belt - The extent of the Green Belt is defined on the Policies Map. The Council will apply national planning policy to proposals within the green belt.

6.4.5. The Proposed Development requires development within the Green Belt. However, the proposed junction improvements would not contribute to urban sprawl, being located away from existing urban areas. The Proposed Development is located within or adjacent to existing highway infrastructure. It would have minimal impact on the openness of the Green Belt and would not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt. The transport infrastructure nature of the Proposed Development, and the inability to locate this development elsewhere, means that the development would not be “inappropriate” in terms of Green Belt policy.

6.4.6. BE3 Amenity - Development will not be permitted which has an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of nearby uses and residents and/or does not provide acceptable standards of amenity for future users and occupiers of the development.

6.4.7. The Proposed Development would not result in unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of nearby uses or residents. Please refer to supporting documentation including the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Noise Impact Assessment for further information. Changes in amenity for future users of the road are not anticipated to be significant.

6.4.8. TR1 Access and Choice - Development will only be permitted which provides safe, suitable and attractive access routes for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users, delivery vehicles and other users of motor vehicles, as appropriate. Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate
that they are not detrimental to highway safety and are designed to provide suitable access and circulation for a range of transport modes.

6.4.9. The Proposed Development is intended to improve access and safety for vehicular and non-motorised users. This application is supported by a Transport Assessment, Walking, Cycling & Horse-Riding Assessment and Review, and Road Safety Audit. These documents evidence the scheme’s compliance with this policy.

6.4.10. HS1 Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities - The potential for creating healthy, safe and inclusive communities will be a guiding principle when considering all development proposals. Support will be given to proposals that, inter alia, contribute to the development of a high quality, safe and convenient walking and cycling network.

6.4.11. The Proposed Development would deliver a significant improvement in facilities for non-motorised users and support should therefore be given to the proposal.

6.4.12. Policy FW1 Reducing Flood Risk – includes the following relevant policy requirements:

- there will be a presumption against development in flood zone 3, and no built development will be allowed in the functional floodplain.
- new development that lies within the floodplain will be required to implement a flood alleviation scheme to reduce the risk of flooding to the proposed development site and deliver significant flood risk reduction benefits.
- all new development proposals will contribute to meeting ‘good status’ as defined by the Water Framework Directive (WFD). This will include delivery of geomorphological, chemical and biodiversity enhancements and include a minimum 8 metre buffer strip from the top of bank of all watercourses.
- new development must be resilient to surface water, fluvial and pluvial flooding. Where new development lies in an area of flood risk it must be designed to be flood resilient with safe dry access for vehicles and pedestrians.
- Where development lies adjacent to a watercourse the supporting planning application will include a WFD assessment to demonstrate how the waterbody will not deteriorate in status and will be enhanced, and
- there will be no impact upon priority habitat or designated sites of nature conservation

6.4.13. This policy prohibits development within functional floodplain but also lists requirements for new development that is located within the floodplain. The Proposed Development would, by necessity, be located partially within floodplain. Mitigation within the proposed scheme design, including drainage attenuation and a flood compensation area, would ensure that the development would not be at risk of flooding or increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

6.4.14. The potential risk to the Finham Brook watercourse and its banks is fully assessed within the supporting ecological document. In addition to mitigation embedded within the scheme design, risk to the watercourse would be mitigated through implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan.

6.4.15. The Proposed Development would have some impact on priority habitat, however this impact would be mitigated as described in the supporting ecological document.

6.4.16. HE4 Archaeology - Development will not be permitted which results in substantial harm to Scheduled Monuments or other archaeological remains of national importance, and their settings unless in wholly exceptional circumstances. There will be a presumption in favour of the preservation of locally and regionally important sites, except where the applicant can demonstrate that the benefits of development will outweigh the harm to archaeological remains. The Council will require that any remains of archaeological value are properly evaluated prior to the determination of the planning application. Where planning permission is granted for development which will have an adverse effect on archaeological remains, the Council will require that an agreed programme of archaeological investigation and recording precedes development.

6.4.17. The Proposed Development would not impact upon any Scheduled Monument or remains of national importance. Trial trenching has been undertaken as detailed within the Archaeological Evaluation report in order to minimise the risk of unexpected finds of below ground archaeology.
Also, in accordance with the presumption expressed within this policy, the Westley Bridge, which is considered to be of local interest (though not locally listed), is proposed to be preserved in situ. The benefits of the Proposed Development are expected to substantially outweigh any potential harm to archaeology or its setting.

6.4.18. **NE3 Biodiversity** - New development will be permitted provided that it protects, enhances and/or restores habitat biodiversity. Development proposals will be expected to ensure that they: a) lead to no net loss of biodiversity and where possible a net gain, where appropriate, by means of an approved ecological assessment of existing site features and development impacts; b) protect or enhance biodiversity assets and secure their long-term management and maintenance, and; c) avoid negative impacts on existing biodiversity. Where this is not possible, mitigation measures must be identified. If mitigation measures are not possible on site, then compensatory measures involving biodiversity offsetting will be required.

6.4.19. **The Proposed Development has been designed to minimise impact on biodiversity assets. The proposed footprint has been minimised wherever possible. Mitigation and compensation will be described in the supporting ecological assessment report.**

6.4.20. **NE4 Landscape** - New development will be permitted which positively contributes to landscape character. Development proposals will be required to demonstrate that, inter alia, they: integrate landscape planning into the design of development at an early stage; consider its landscape context, including the local distinctiveness of the different natural and historic landscapes and character, including tranquillity; and identify likely visual impacts on the local landscape and townscape and its immediate setting and undertakes appropriate landscaping to reduce these impacts.

6.4.21. **The planning application is supported by a full Landscape and Visual Assessment. Proposed landscaping and planting would ensure that the Proposed Development would be, as far as possible, integrated within its landscape and reduce the scheme’s visual impact.**

6.4.22. **Other site-specific policy considerations** – extracts from the adopted Local Plan maps for Stoneleigh and Kings Hill are re-provided below. These show that the site of the Proposed Development falls partially within Green Belt (Policy DS18, addressed above), and partially within housing allocation H43 (Kings Hill) (Policy DS11), which is allocated for housing development and associated infrastructure.

6.4.23. **The Proposed Development would provide infrastructure necessary to enable future development of this allocated site. Large scale development at this site would otherwise exacerbate existing issues experienced at the A46 / Stoneleigh Road junction.**
7. Environmental Considerations

7.1. Introduction

5.1.1 This section summarises the anticipated environmental impacts of the Proposed Development both during construction and operation, and identifies mitigation measures required to ensure that impacts are removed or reduced to an acceptable level.

7.2. Socio-Economic Impacts

5.2.1 The Proposed Development is expected to provide a positive economic impact in the local area and through the supply chain during the construction process. A possible increase in congestion during construction may give rise to a temporary adverse socio-economic impact. However, during operation, the scheme is anticipated to reduce journey times and improve journey time reliability, resulting in a positive socio-economic impact in the area.

7.3. Transport Assessment

7.3.1. The Transport Assessment has evaluated the likely impact of the Proposed Development on the local transport network. It demonstrates that the A46 / Stoneleigh Road junction improvement scheme would result in significantly better highway operation performance than the "without scheme" scenario. It also demonstrates that the scheme provides improvements to sustainable non-motorised user provisions, improvements to safety from the reduced congestion on the A46 slip roads, and improvements to air quality in the area.

7.4. Noise Assessment

7.4.1. The Noise Assessment has identified that there is potential for construction induced noise to give rise to short term adverse noise impacts at residential properties on Dalehouse Lane. During the daytime period, noise impacts are only predicted to be an issue when the roadway construction activities are taking place in close proximity to sensitive receptors (up to approx. 50m). Although expected to be infrequent, night-time works may give rise to adverse impacts.

7.4.2. In light of the potential for adverse impacts associated with certain construction activities, a range of mitigation measures is recommended. The use of Best Practicable Means should be adopted as part of the contractor's working methodology, together with temporary noise fences (where necessary and practicable) to control emissions from the works. In addition, it is recommended that the contractor initiates a community liaison campaign to keep residents abreast of potentially disturbing activities that will be taking place. The mitigation measures to be deployed will be finalised in the detailed design stage, once the contractor's method statement and programme have been refined.

7.4.3. The Proposed Development is not predicted to create any adverse impacts once operational, as it is likely to reduce overall noise impact. As such, the noise levels from the Proposed Development will not require mitigation in order to meet the appropriate World Health Organisation noise criteria.

7.4.4. In summary, the Proposed Development is considered to have a positive effect during operation, as it would reduce the number of people exposed to noise levels above Significant Observed Adverse Effect Level during both the daytime and night-time periods.

7.5. Ecological Impact Assessment

7.5.1. A supporting ecological assessment will form part of the information submitted in support of the forthcoming planning application. At the time of authorship of this Supporting Statement, that ecological report is not complete. Notwithstanding the complete results of the ecological
assessment, it is currently expected that potential impacts on ecology and biodiversity can be adequately mitigated as part of the scheme.

7.6. **Tree Survey**

7.6.1. This document reports the findings of an arboricultural survey undertaken in accordance with BS:5837 (2012) Trees in relation to design demolition & construction. The report is intended to plot the positions, and categorise the quality, of the trees on site to inform the layout and design of the Proposed Development.

7.7. **Landscape & Visual Assessment**

7.7.1. The Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVA) finds that the Proposed Development would constitute a noticeable alteration to the existing junction, however the development would take place in the context of the existing highway infrastructure at this location.

7.7.2. Moderate adverse effects on landscape character have been identified for the construction stage. Key landscape effects are associated with:

- loss of vegetation along the road corridor and the approaches; and
- subsequent presence of construction plant and operations within the area which would temporarily reduce tranquillity of the landscape.

7.7.3. During operation, it is judged that the effects on landscape would be reduced to slight adverse. The operational adverse effect would be due to an increase in the presence and footprint of highway infrastructure within the area. However, the mitigation planting proposed as part of the Proposed Development would become established to integrate the scheme into the landscape to a similar degree to the baseline arrangement, with wildflower planting around the junction providing a positive new feature.

7.7.4. Visual effects during construction would be limited to visual receptors located close to the Proposed Development. Large adverse effects are expected for users of the Centenary Way long distance path from the A46 overbridge. This change is primarily due to the receptor being located within the Site itself and therefore experiencing a direct close proximity view of the construction activities taking place. It is currently understood that there is no longer a dwelling at Brook Farm. This this is the case, then no significant visual impact is expected for this receptor. However, if a dwelling does exist at this location, moderate adverse effects are expected for residents of Brook Farm, as it is expected that construction operations associated with the north-western end of the Proposed Development would be visible in close proximity. All other receptors were identified as having effects of slight adverse, negligible adverse or no change as a result of the Proposed Development, due to undulating topography alongside the presence of intervening vegetation and buildings restricting views towards it.

7.7.5. During operation, moderate adverse visual effects were identified for users of the Centenary Way LDP from the A46 overbridge in Year 1 due to an increase in the prominence of highway infrastructure within the view and the immature nature of mitigation planting. However, by Year 15 these effects would reduce to slight adverse, as the planting would have matured to restore the broad characteristic of the baseline view. All other receptors were identified as having effects of slight adverse, negligible adverse or no change as a result of the Proposed Development, due to undulating topography alongside the presence of intervening vegetation and buildings restricting views towards it.

7.7.6. As a result of the LVA process, and considering identified effects, it is generally considered that the Site and surrounding landscape has a capacity to accommodate the Proposed Development without compromising key qualities of landscape resource and without adversely affecting a large number of visual receptors. Where temporary or Year 1 effects have been identified, these are able to be mitigated through new planting to restore the broad characteristics of the baseline condition by Year 15.
7.8. **Flood Risk and Drainage**

7.8.1. JBA Consulting was commissioned by Warwickshire County Council in January 2017 to undertake fluvial flood risk modelling and prepare an outline Surface Water Drainage Strategy for the proposed improvement works to the existing highway alignment east of Westley Bridge near Stoneleigh.

7.8.2. The drainage strategy outlines the means of surface water disposal from the proposed development, including attenuation, discharge to ground, and discharge to watercourses. It has been produced in line with the following guidance documents:

- CIRIA 753 'The SuDS Manual', November 2015;
- 'The Environment Agency’s approach to groundwater protection, Version 1', October 2016;

7.8.3. The results of hydraulic modelling show no change in flood risk downstream of Westley Bridge (except for the area of land raised for the new road) would result from the Proposed Development in the 100-year plus climate change events. Peak flows and water levels are consistent with the baseline scenario.

7.8.4. For the 200m reach upstream of Westley Bridge, there is up to 10mm change in water levels in the 100-year event (upper end scenario) most likely due to the change in expansion reach downstream of Westley Bridge, though this does not manifest itself in significant changes to flood extent due to the floodplain topography locally, with approximately 44m² of additional flooded area on the left bank and 69m² of additional flooded area on the right bank.

7.8.5. It is proposed to deliver approximately 480m³ of floodplain storage upstream of Westley Bridge, the outside of existing Flood Zone 3 by lowering ground levels. This has been shown to ensure negligible increase in flood risk as a result of the Proposed Development.

7.9. **Air Quality**

7.9.1. The Air Quality Technical Note identifies one Air Quality Management Area, approximately 600m from the Proposed Development. The Note also identifies one site designated for its ecological value. Available monitoring and background mapping indicate that air quality conditions are well below the relevant air quality objectives near the Proposed Development.

7.9.2. Construction works are expected to last approximately 18 months. Although details about construction traffic flows are not available, it is not expected that construction traffic flows averaged over the year would exceed an increase of 100 HGV per day or 500 AADT (including all vehicle types). Significant impacts on local air quality at sensitive receptors, as a result of construction traffic are therefore unlikely.

7.9.3. During operation, the proposed changes as a result of implementing the scheme do not exceed the Environmental Protection UK and Institute of Air Quality Management Planning and Development Control Guidance, indicating that an air quality assessment is not required.

7.10. **Desk-Based Historical Assessment**

7.10.1. This report presents the findings of a desk-based historical assessment of Westley Bridge, Stoneleigh, Warwickshire.

7.10.2. There has been a bridge at the site since the 13th century. An estate map of 1597 shows an early bridge which was probably only a footbridge or packhorse bridge. A later estate map of 1766 shows what is probably the same, or a similar, bridge, although this is not entirely certain. The present bridge was probably built after that date and certainly pre-dates 1829, when it was adopted as a...
County Bridge. There are no records of replacement or rebuilding since then, although it was widened on the west side in 1982.

7.10.3. The bridge is not of sufficient age, rarity or importance to be Scheduled as an Ancient Monument. Although probably of an age which merits serious consideration for Listing, there is no clear case for Listing in its own right. It is arguably a good candidate for Listing as a representative example of its type. It is certainly a heritage asset of local importance. Any works that may affect it should be planned to minimise impact on the structure, and appropriate measures implemented to mitigate any such impact.

7.11. **Historic Building Assessment**

7.11.1. Following on from the Desk-Based Historical Assessment, Archaeology Warwickshire was commissioned in September 2017 to assess the historic significance of Westley Bridge in order to inform the design and position of a new bridge that is planned to be built beside it.

7.11.2. Westley Bridge was built in the early 19th century and became a county bridge in 1829. Originally a narrow, single-carriageway bridge, it was widened in 1982. Construction of the original bridge was in red sandstone, and incorporated a segmental arch and a parapet with plain terminal piers, all of which are characteristic of Warwickshire bridges in the early 19th century. However, when the bridge was widened in 1982 it was faced in new material which, despite the continued use of red sandstone, has resulted in a significant loss of character. The report argues that the bridge does not meet the criteria to be listed as a building of special architectural or historic interest, but that it is a heritage asset of local interest. It recommends that the bridge should be retained, if possible, and that the erection of a new bridge on its east side will have a positive outcome if it can make visible the historic character of the older bridge.

7.12. **Archaeological Evaluation**

7.12.1. An archaeological evaluation, consisting of 28 trial trenches, was undertaken on behalf of Warwickshire County Council prior to the redesign of the Stoneleigh junction of the A46. The single feature found in the evaluation trenches was a shallow and undated ditch which was parallel to a field boundary in ‘Area C’, north of Stoneleigh Road and East of the A46. No finds were recovered from the brown sandy clay loam fill. No features were revealed to the west of the A46.

7.12.2. No archaeological remains of national significance were found within the Site, therefore the Proposed Development would result in ‘less than substantial harm’. The potential need for future mitigation will be discussed with the County Archaeologist.
8. Summary & Conclusion

8.1. Summary of proposal

8.1.1. This Statement supports an application made by and to Warwickshire County Council under Regulation 3 of the Town & Country Planning General Regulations for full planning permission for implementation of a scheme of highway and junction improvements at and around the A46 / Stoneleigh Road junction, Warwickshire.

8.2. Need

8.2.1. The Proposed Development is required for a number of reasons, as detailed within Chapter 4. Chiefly these relate to issues of highway safety and congestion/journey time.

8.3. Compliance with Planning Policy

8.3.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning decisions to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Chapter 6 provides an assessment of the ways in which the Proposed Development accords with or departs from relevant planning policy. It is demonstrated that, on balance, the proposal is supported by planning policy and would help achieve planning policy aims.

8.4. Environmental Impacts

8.4.1. Chapter 7 summarises the key environmental impacts which have been identified by the studies which support this application. It is considered that potential adverse impacts of the Proposed Development on socio-economics, traffic and transport, noise, landscape, flood risk, air quality, and cultural heritage and archaeology can be adequately mitigated. The Proposed Development is anticipated to have a beneficial socio-economic and transport impact during operation.

8.4.2. It is considered that the Proposed Development would have no significant adverse effects on any existing uses that surround the Site.

8.4.3. At the time of authorship of this Supporting Statement the full findings of an ecological impact assessment are not available. However, the scheme is not anticipated to result in any significant adverse residual (post mitigation) impact on ecology.

8.5. Conclusion

8.5.1. The Proposed Development proposal accords with the planning policy context. The need for the scheme and the benefits that it would deliver clearly outweigh any adverse impact. The application for planning permission should therefore be approved.