

**Leicestershire County Council (A511 Growth Corridor) (Side Roads) Order 2023**

**Leicestershire County Council (A511 Growth Corridor) Compulsory Purchase Order 2023**

PINS Ref: NATTRAN/EM/HAO/299

**Proof of Evidence of Nigel Weir  
Landscape**

**dated 20 May 2024**

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Qualifications and Experience

1.2 I, Nigel Weir, am the Landscape Architect for the Scheme. I have been in this role since 2021. In my role I led the team undertaking the landscape and visual impact assessment and associated landscape design.

1.3 Section 1 of my Evidence provides an overview of my experience and qualifications. In summary, I have extensive experience in landscape matters relating to highway schemes and have worked in this industry for approximately 39 years.

1.4 This summary proof of evidence (hereinafter referred to as this **Summary**) summarises my Proof of Evidence (my **Evidence**) which is made in support of the Leicestershire County Council (A511 Growth Corridor) (Side Roads) Order 2023 (the **SRO**) and the Leicestershire County Council (A511 Growth Corridor) Compulsory Purchase Order 2023 (the **CPO**) (together, the **Orders**) in connection with the Leicestershire County Council A511 Growth Corridor (also referred to in this Summary as the **Scheme**).

1.5 The facts and matters set out in this Summary are within my own knowledge. The facts set out below are true to the best of my knowledge and belief. Where reference is made to facts which are outside my knowledge, I set out the source of my information and I believe such information to be true.

1.6 I have been assisted by other professional advisors and officers of Leicestershire County Council (the **Council**) with the preparation of my Evidence, some of whom will also provide evidence at the inquiry.

### 1.7 Involvement with the Scheme

1.8 I have been working on the Scheme since 2021. My role has involved:

1.8.1 Supervising the landscape team in preparing initial sketch designs/options for landscape designs and assessment of potential effects and mitigation;

1.8.2 Review of materials and designs provided for public consultation;

1.8.3 Undertaking the Landscape and Visual Appraisal (**LVA**) and reporting on effects of the Scheme;

1.8.4 Supervising and reviewing the detailed landscape design and mitigation proposals;

1.8.5 Production of a high-level costing for implementation of the landscape mitigation and subsequent maintenance.

## 2 Scope of Evidence

2.1 As detailed in Section 2 of my Evidence, my Evidence addresses matters relating to landscaping for the Scheme.

- 2.2 The majority of the Projects forming part of the Scheme are limited in their nature and as such do not require any significant landscape intervention. Details of these Projects are contained in paragraph 2.3 of my Evidence.
- 2.3 The works to create the Bardon Link Road and the new roundabout on Bardon Road have a more significant potential to impact on surrounding landscape as a result of the Scheme. As such my Evidence focuses on the landscape mitigation required in respect of this element of the Scheme.
- 2.4 A comprehensive LVA was carried out in respect of the Bardon Link Road and the new roundabout on Bardon Road.
- 2.5 I do not consider that landscape evidence is required in respect of Objections 1-4 and 6 as these are not related to land required for landscape interventions and are entirely highway related. My Evidence is therefore restricted to Objection 5 and 7.

### **3 Landscape Evidence**

#### **3.1 Landscape Design Optioneering for Public Consultation**

- 3.2 My Evidence details how matters relating to landscape and visual amenity were considered from the outset as part of an iterative design process. Opportunities for mitigation and enhancement of the Bardon Link Road were presented for comment by the public during and after the public consultation. An overview of the details contained in the plan can be found at paragraph 3.3 of my Evidence, in summary the proposals included, amongst other elements:

- 3.2.1 Creation of a green infrastructure framework;
- 3.2.2 Provision of native woodland planting;
- 3.2.3 Integration of Sustainable Urban Drainage (**SuD**) into the wider site design;
- 3.2.4 Sensitive design of the large SuD pond;
- 3.2.5 Highway verges to be sown with low-growing 'flowering lawn' native wildflower species
- 3.2.6 Provision of new hedgerows;
- 3.2.7 Management of existing grassland to enhance the ecological value of species-poor grassland;
- 3.2.8 Retention and protection of existing woodland.

- 3.3 The consultation feedback from the public and other consultees was incorporated into revised landscape proposals, subsequently taken forward as the Detailed Landscape Design.

- 3.4 The design also evolved in order to achieve Biodiversity Net Gain (**BNG**) targets.

**3.5 Summary of Effects of the Scheme on Landscape and Visual Receptors**

- 3.6 A Chartered Landscape Architect undertook an appraisal of likely effects on landscape character and visual amenity (in the LVA) arising from the Scheme. In accordance with the Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment the appraisal is proportionate to the scale, context and nature of the development.
- 3.7 During construction, adverse effects on landscape character will arise. However, the effect on landscape character will be of negligible importance.
- 3.8 In Year 1 (post construction) effects on the wider character of the landscape will be of negligible importance.
- 3.9 The change in landscape character is predominantly at the scale of the site and its immediate context. However, effects will diminish in magnitude by Year 15, as a result of landscape mitigation embedded in the design.
- 3.10 The landscape and visual effects present no over-riding landscape or visual reasons, identified by this LVA, to suggest that the Bardon Link Road, and accordingly the Scheme more generally, will cause important harm to landscape or visual amenity other than briefly and locally in proximity in construction, which is typically the case for most highway construction schemes.

**3.11 Bardon Link Road Mitigation Measures**

- 3.12 The landscape masterplan approved by the Council was informed by the need for mitigation of landscape and visual effects to reduce or partially mitigate the effects identified in the LVA. The objectives of the landscape mitigation are set out in Section 3.3.1 of my Evidence.
- 3.13 The landscape mitigation required to integrate the highway corridor into its context is primarily provided by new woodland, hedgerows and scrub to improve/enhance green infrastructure corridors along the road and create new boundaries to it.
- 3.14 The visual mitigation is primarily in the form of tree planting along the highway corridor and particularly between the houses south of the A511 London/Bardon Road and for properties and open space to the east in the vicinity of John Cooper Way and Palmer Close.

**3.15 Land Acquisition Justifications in Relation to Landscape Matters**

- 3.16 Objection 5 relates to the CPO Map 4 covering land parcels 012 to 038, namely plots 036, 037 and 038. The landscape design was achieved within the land take required for the Bardon Link Road as a whole and did not require any additional land in order to mitigate effects identified within the LVA or specifically for landscape purposes on their own (that is, separate to land access/engineering reasons).
- 3.17 OBJ 7 relates to land in land Plots 018 to 022. Plots 018 to 021 are required for working areas during construction but on completion of the works will be planted as woodland or grasses as shown on the Landscape Masterplan approved by the S73 Bardon Link Road Planning Permission. Part of Plot 018 is also required to provide a footway to the highway. The Scheme boundary to the south of 46, 50-58 Bardon Road, which form the logical boundary and will assimilate the Scheme at this location into the landscape minimising its overall impact to provide appropriate landscape mitigation. In addition, planting within Plots

018 to 021 will assist in screening the highway from properties 50-58 Bardon Road, supplementing existing vegetation along their boundaries and that of 46 Bardon Road.

3.18 Other plots are being acquired for purposes such as flood attenuation, construction compounds and working areas, but on completion of the works will be landscaped in accordance with the approved Landscape Masterplan with a variety of trees, mixed trees/shrubs, native woodland and grasses. This also has ecological benefits.

3.19 In my opinion, the landscape treatment is proportionate to a Scheme of this type and represents the minimum required to achieve adequate landscape and visual mitigation. Please see section 3.3 of my Evidence for further detail.

3.20 Overall, I consider that the land take to achieve the landscape/environmental mitigation is proportionate and necessary for a scheme, of this scale, in the landscape and visual context.

#### **4 Conclusion**

4.1 I conclude that the effect of the Scheme on the landscape is proportionate to the overall aims and design of the Scheme and is not excessive or unjustifiable.