

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

Summary of LCC5: Proof of Evidence of Esme Portsmouth Planning

dated 20 May 2024

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Qualifications and Experience

1.2 I, Esme Portsmouth, am a Chartered Principal Planner at AECOM. I have worked in this role since October 2021 and I am responsible for advising promoters of infrastructure projects through the planning process.

1.3 I set out my qualifications in Section 1 of my Evidence. In brief, I am a Chartered Member of The Royal Town Planning Institute. I have worked in the industry for approximately 14 years and have worked at AECOM since 2012.

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 and my Evidence 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 My Evidence provides an overview of my involvement in the Scheme since January 2021. This has involved general planning agency advisory input for the Bardon Link Road from an early stage of design, leading the initial consultation with the Planning Authority, advising on the design compliance with planning policy, preparation of the Planning Statement and Statement of Community Engagement, coordination of the planning application through to submission and continued liaison with the Council following submission.

1.9 In relation to the S73 Bardon Link Road Planning Permission, my current role is to oversee the discharge of conditions and provide general planning advice to the Council.

1.10 I have also separately considered the planning position of all other elements of the Scheme which do not benefit from express planning permission.

2 SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

2.1 I set out the following in my Evidence:

2.1.1 the application process for the Bardon Link Road element of the Scheme; and

2.1.2 matters relating to planning for the Scheme as a whole including the position of the highways works carried out under permitted development rights.

2.2 My evidence includes five appendices in the form of Proofs of Evidence from colleagues at AECOM specialising in the following disciplines relevant the Scheme providing evidence in respect of their areas of expertise:

2.2.1 Landscape (appendix (EPXX);

2.2.2 Ecology (appendix EPXX);

2.2.3 Noise (appendix EPXX);

2.2.4 Air Quality (appendix EPXX); and

2.2.5 Climate Change (Appendix EPXX).

3 **PLANNING EVIDENCE**

Grant of planning permission

3.1 The Original Bardon Link Road Planning Permission was granted on 12 January 2023.

3.2 In response to a Screening Opinion Request, the Planning Authority determined than an Environment Impact Assessment was not required for the application. The environmental reports prepared in support of the Original Bardon Link Road Planning Application are set out in Section 3.1.2 of my Evidence.

3.3 **Decision-Making Body**

3.4 The Original Bardon Link Road Planning Application was determined by the Council's Planning Authority Development Control and Regulatory Board pursuant to Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, as the Council was an interested party as developer and landowner. Permission was granted subject to conditions. The proposal was deemed in accordance with the policies and strategies of the Development Plan, the NPPF and to enable improvements to congestion levels as part of the wider Scheme.

3.5 Permission was granted for the S73 Bardon Link Road Planning Application on 22 September 2023, which contained a revision to the proposed drainage design and associated landscape proposals through variation to conditions 2 and 4. The S73 Bardon Link Road Planning Permission will be implemented as part of the Scheme.

3.6 **Pre-application consultation**

3.7 Prior to the submission of the Original Bardon Link Road Planning Application, an extensive pre-application consultation was carried out, including public consultations in September 2019 and September – October 2021, opportunities for public discussions and drop-in events, publication of information, online consultation and direct engagement with the lead Council Member and relevant County Councillors.

3.8 Sixty-eight feedback forms and thirteen emails were received, which included concerns over speed limits, environmental impact, congestion issues and impacts on pollution, particularly during the construction phase.

3.9 **Application Documents**

- 3.10 The planning application was considered a major application due to the scale of the Scheme, however the Planning Authority did not consider it constituted Environmental Impact Assessment development. A suite of environmental reports was prepared to support the application and inform potential mitigation measures.
- 3.11 The supporting documents to the planning applications are listed at Section 3 my Evidence.
- 3.12 **Post-submission Process**
- 3.13 A 21-day public consultation exercise followed the validation of the Original Bardon Link Road Planning Application. Responses are set out in Section 3.5.1 of my Evidence.
- 3.14 The Planning Officer's Report for the Development Control and Regulatory Board was published following the consultation, recommending approval. Full planning permission was granted for the Scheme on 17 January 2023.
- 3.15 The S73 Bardon Link Road Planning Application amending the drainage layout and soft landscape was granted on 22 September 2023 following consultation.
- 3.16 **Planning conditions**
- 3.17 The S73 Bardon Link Road Planning Permission attached twenty-two conditions which in my opinion are of the type expected on such a development, and no undue difficulty is expected in discharging the relevant details. See Section 3 of my Evidence.
- 3.18 **Compliance of the Scheme with Planning Policy**
- 3.19 The Public Inquiry is in relation to the CPO and SRO, not the planning applications.
- 3.20 The development plan for the Scheme area in May 2022 was considered when the planning permissions were determined. Key material considerations included the NPPF, the Planning Policy Guidance and the Leicestershire County Council Local Transport Plan 3.
- 3.21 There are highway improvement works at nine locations along the A511 Major Road Network, of which the Bardon Link Road is one. The other works, set out at Section 3.7.9 of my Evidence, comprise alterations to existing highways within highway boundaries or on the land joining the existing highway, and as such have been delivered under permitted development rights under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. These works are consistent with the local and national policy framework.
- 3.22 **Planning benefits**
- 3.23 The North West Leicestershire Infrastructure Developer Plan refers to the required key improvements along the A511 Growth Corridor, including highway improvement works and the Bardon Link Road development, to support the potential growth. The Scheme directly helps to deliver the aims of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and supporting growth in the Coalville area.
- 3.24 Coalville is suitable for supporting future housing development and the Bardon Link Road will provide an important north-south route through housing allocation sites.
- 4 **Conclusion**

- 4.1 I have been working on the Scheme since October 2021. My role has involved advising promoters of infrastructure projects through the planning process and I have had a particular focus on the Original Bardon Link Road Planning Permission.
- 4.2 The S73 Bardon Link Road Planning Permission was granted subject to 22 conditions which are considered the type of conditions expected on a similar development, and no undue difficulty is expected in discharging the relevant details.
- 4.3 With the exception of the Bardon Road Link, the highways works are proposed to be carried out as permitted development rights so do not require specific assessment by planning authorities.
- 4.4 The Scheme helps to deliver the aims of the North West Leicestershire Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan and support growth in the local area.