

**LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
REGULATORY AND OTHER COMMITTEE REPORT**

NAME OF COMMITTEE:	Planning and Regulation
DATE OF MEETING:	18/03/05
SUBJECT:	County Council Development To construct a new highway around the eastern side of Lincoln between the A158 Wragby Road and A15 Sleaford Road (The Lincoln Eastern Bypass) in the Districts of North Kesteven, Lincoln and West Lindsey N12.17.71/0387/04; L/0170/04; and W42.65/0279/04
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IS THE REPORT EXEMPT	No
IS REPORT CONFIDENTIAL?	No

SUMMARY

Planning permission is sought for the construction of a highway around the eastern side of Lincoln between the A158 Wragby Road and A15 Sleaford Road in the Districts of North Kesteven, Lincoln and West Lindsey. The application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement. Following consideration of the relevant development plan policies, other relevant material planning considerations and comments received through consultation and publicity it is recommended that conditional planning permission is granted.

DISCUSSION

Background

1. The concept of an eastern bypass for Lincoln has a long history and was first considered in the 1930's. By the 1960's this had developed further with the identification of a route from Canwick Road to Wragby Road via Great Northern Terrace. Due to the development of part of the land reserved for this route a further line was identified linking Canwick Road to Allenby Road. This route was dropped in the late 1980's.
2. The former Department of Transport put forward a proposal for a western relief road in the late 1970's, with an alternative for an eastern bypass. This route proposed to link the A46 in the south to the A158 in the north via Bracebridge Heath, Canwick and Washingborough. Following the construction of the western relief road this eastern route was rescinded.
3. As a result of development proposals within the north east section of the City together with the congestion on the A15 through the City Centre, the need for an eastern bypass has re-emerged. In 1990 the County Council's Transportation and Planning Committee resolved to appoint consultants to prepare a scheme for the Lincoln Eastern Bypass (LEB) between Wragby Road (A158) and Grantham Road (A607). Approval was also obtained for a more detailed report to be prepared on a southern section from Newark Road (A1434) to Grantham Road (A607). An application was submitted seeking planning permission for LEB Stage 1 (Wragby Road to Grantham Road route) but withdrawn in 1992 because of funding issues and Central Government revising the National Road Programme.
4. Following the withdrawal of the planning application consultants were appointed in 1993 to investigate the implications of constructing the LEB Stage 1 in isolation. This investigation examined the implications of phased construction of LEB Stage 1 on traffic flows and economics of the scheme. The report concluded that construction of LEB Stage 1 in isolation can be justified.
5. In July 2000 the engineering feasibility of the Lincoln Eastern Growth Corridor Study was investigated to examine the potential of the construction of the LEB Stage 1 to increase the economic development potential of the eastern section of the City. This report concluded that apart from very minor amendments the route identified previously was the most practical route option available. In February 2002 work commenced on engineering design and environmental impact assessment to facilitate the submission of a planning application.

The Application

6. Planning permission is sought to construct a 7.5km long dual carriageway linking Wragby Road/A158 in the north to Sleaford Road A15 in the south, through the Districts of West Lindsey, Lincoln City and North Kesteven, with the majority of the route in North Kesteven. The key overall features of the scheme are as follows:-
 - each carriageway would comprise two 3.65m wide lanes with provision of 1.0m wide hard strips at each edge;
 - each carriageway would be separated by a grassed central reserve of a minimum width of 2.5m;

- verges would be a minimum of 2.5m wide on both sides of the new road. A 3.0m wide combined cycle and pedestrian facility is proposed along the western side of the Scheme along its full length. Where the facility is adjacent to the carriageway the verge would be widened to 5.0m wide (including the 3.0m facility);
- additional facilities and access for vulnerable users are proposed;
- the horizontal and vertical alignment of the road would conform to the current standards applicable to a 70mph speed limit, 120kph design speed.

Route Description

7. Wragby Road/A158 to Greetwell Fields

The route would commence at the existing roundabout where Wragby Road joins the Lincoln Western Bypass. A four-arm roundabout would be constructed with an external diameter of 95m. The proposed roundabout would include an additional lane for traffic approaching from the east along the A158 together with provision of access to the southbound carriageway without the need to give way. The following provision would be made:

- off carriageway 3m combined cycle/footway along the east side of the route between Wragby Road and Hawthorn Road;
- off carriageway combined cycle/footway would be provided along south side of Wragby Road (A158) to connect with existing facilities along A15 Wragby Road and proposed facilities along the LEB;
- Toucan crossing facility proposed to south of junction;
- tree planting is proposed on the eastern side of the roundabout.

The road would be at existing ground level at the roundabout then it would fall in level into a cutting beneath Hawthorn Road. Embankments would be constructed on either side of the LEB and an over bridge constructed incorporating a 3m combined cycle/footway on the southern side of the bridge. At this point an equestrian route/private means of access (PMA) is proposed from Hawthorn Road linking with Greetwell Fields to the south along the eastern side of the LEB.

8. Greetwell Fields to Greetwell Road

The route continues southwards in a cutting crossing the south eastern edge of Greetwell Quarry towards the junction with Greetwell Road. On the eastern side of the LEB at this point a balancing pond is proposed. The road would be raised over the cavity of the quarry at this point on an embankment.

At Greetwell Road a four-arm roundabout is proposed with an external diameter of approximately 95m. It would incorporate the following:-

- access to the northbound carriageway for eastbound traffic along Greetwell Road without having to give way;

- 3m wide combined cycle footway around west side of junction with Toucan crossings of Greetwell Road and on LEB to south of Greetwell Road;
- combined 3m wide cycle and pedestrian facilities along both sides of Greetwell Road to west of LEB;
- tree planting is proposed on three sides of the roundabout; and
- link from cycle/footway to connect with SSSI viewing facility within Greetwell Quarry.

9. Greetwell Road to Lincoln-Spalding Railway

From Greetwell Road the LEB would continue south on an embankment to the Lincoln to Market Rasen railway which would be crossed via an overbridge. Access to Public Footpath 139 (Viking Way) from the cycleway/footpath would be provided. The LEB would veer to the south west towards the River Witham Corridor, still on an embankment. Tree planting is proposed on the eastern embankment. A five span bridge is proposed over the River Witham. A link would be provided to the Sustrans national cycle route via a cycle/footway facility running down the embankment and across the South Delph on a cycle footbridge. The LEB would pass under the Lincoln to Spalding railway which already runs along an embankment.

10. Lincoln-Spalding Railway to Washingborough Road (B1190)

Beyond the railway line the LEB would cross Washingborough Road with a four-arm roundabout in cutting with an external diameter of 90m. A minor realignment of Washingborough Road to the west of the LEB would be required to allow for this. Off carriageway combined cycle and pedestrian facilities would be provided around the western side of the roundabout with a toucan crossing facility on the B1190 Washingborough Road. Tree planting is proposed on four sides of the roundabout.

11. Washingborough Road to Heighington Road

From Washingborough Road the route would rise in a deep cutting in a south westerly direction to Heighington Road. At this point Heighington Road would be realigned and raised on embankment and bridge over the LEB. The existing western section of Heighington Road would be retained to provide access to the existing residential properties, adjacent fields and access from the combined cycle/footway on the LEB. Tree planting would be provided at appropriate locations along this section.

12. Heighington Road to Lincoln Road (B1188)

From Heighington Road the road would continue in a shallow cutting towards Lincoln Road. Within this section lay-bys for both northbound and southbound traffic would be provided. At the junction with Lincoln Road a four arm roundabout with an external diameter of approximately 95m would be constructed. Access to Public Footpath No. 3 would be provided together with off carriageway combined cycle and pedestrian facilities. Toucan crossings would be provided across the LEB to the north of the roundabout and across Lincoln Road to the west. A PMA would also be provided at this point. Tree planting would be undertaken around the roundabout.

13. Lincoln Road (B1188) to Sleaford Road (A15)

From Lincoln Road (B1188) the route continues southwards across open fields between Canwick Manor Farm and the eastern development boundary of Bracebridge Heath to Bloxholm Lane. Landscape bunds would be provided adjacent to the western carriageway for the full length and for approximately 600m adjacent to the eastern carriageway in the vicinity of Canwick Manor Farm. Access from the combined cycle/footway to Canwick Avenue B1131 at the north eastern corner of Bracebridge Heath would be provided. A junction would be provided for southbound traffic only. The western section of Bloxholm Lane from the A15 Sleaford Road would be severed. A 3m wide combined cycle/pedestrian facility would cross the LEB on an overbridge at this point. A three-arm roundabout would be created at the junction with Sleaford Road with the cycle/pedestrian facility stopped up on the northern side. Landscaping is proposed for this roundabout.

14. The requirements for the scheme have been assessed and are set out below (summarised):-

Transportation Need

Network limitations – The City of Lincoln suffers from a severely constrained network and capacity problems are frequently experienced. Lincoln's existing road network generally comprises a number of radial routes from the centre together with the relief road running around the north and western sides of the City. The radial routes are not linked outside of Lincoln itself and movement between these are achieved via the Internal Distribution Road (IDR). The IDR carries a high traffic volume which results in severe congestion. Whilst movement is possible through the City, journeys are slow due to the number of junctions and volume of traffic, especially at peak hours.

Congestion – the existing highway network has been analysed to identify the scale of congestion and other related problems. Traffic modelling has been used to examine the benefits on network capacity and benefits provided by the LEB. To give an indication of performance of the highway network the number of junctions with tailbacks in excess of 25 vehicles and journey times have been projected at morning and afternoon peak times. The model demonstrates that the existing situation is a number of junctions with capacity problems especially in the City Centre and south east Lincoln. Remedial measures to increase capacity has been investigated but such improvements are only short-term solutions and improvements to the strategic network is required.

Accidents – the vast majority of the existing highway network would benefit to some extent from the proposed LEB in relation to accident reduction. However, much of the benefits would be offset by additional accidents on LEB junctions. Areas to the east of Central Lincoln, the main central routes through Lincoln and radial routes to the north and south of Lincoln would all benefit significantly from accident reduction.

Public Transport – currently in the locality of the proposed scheme there is a relatively limited bus network which provides a service to the surrounding areas and City itself. Across the City as a whole issues of congestion and delay affect the reliability of public transport services. The LEB would free up road space to contribute to providing improved public transport services, priorities and facilities potentially leading to modal shift and choice.

Economic and Development Needs - Lincoln and surrounding areas have experienced significant structural change. Objective 2 status under the European Regional Development Fund reflects the structural economic weakness in the area. Unemployment levels in Lincoln are above regional and national averages. Regional Planning Guidance for the East Midlands

(RPG8) states that Lincoln has significant potential to strengthen its position in the region as a cultural and commercial centre. Transport needs should be addressed which requires a predominantly road-based approach to infrastructure improvement in the eastern sub-area. A Memorandum of Understanding concerning the Development of the Lincoln Eastern Growth Corridor has been agreed between the City of Lincoln Council, Lincolnshire County Council, West Lindsey District Council, North Kesteven District Council and Lincolnshire Enterprise. It recognises the strategic significance of the potential development of this area to the whole of north Lincolnshire. Such an opportunity would play a key role in the long term realisation of Lincoln as a major regional growth centre.

Environmental and Social Needs - The City of Lincoln has a highly valued and recognised heritage and distinctive character. The historic environment with tight street patterns and building layouts is not designed to cope with stresses and volumes of modern day activity and movement. Traffic provides both a continued threat to the fabric of historic areas but also an opportunity in terms of realising environmental improvements. A number of streets in the City also currently experience high levels of traffic-generated pollution which is projected to decrease following the construction of the LEB.

Environmental Statement

15. The application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES) pursuant to the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment)(England and Wales) Regulations 1999. The Environmental Statement provides details of the potential environmental impacts of the development and proposes a number of mitigation measures. In brief the principal subjects addressed are listed below:
 - (a) Air Quality – Road vehicles have a significant impact on air quality and traffic is the cause of urban air pollution. It is accepted that beyond 200m from the highway the contribution of vehicle emissions to air quality is not significant. A number of streets within Lincoln currently experience high levels of traffic-generated pollution. It is predicted that even without the LEB air quality will improve within the City but the LEB would result in a further reduction in pollution concentrations. It is predicted that at a few of the more remote locations concentrations would increase slightly but all pollutants will remain below stated objectives. The projected scenario predicts pollution concentrations for the design year 2023. This shows that with emission rates decreasing traffic concentrations would fall further by the design year 2023. It is predicted that even at the most adversely affected receptor (new development between A15 Wragby Road and Hawthorn Road) pollutant concentrations would only be slightly elevated above levels without LEB. Current air quality objectives would easily be achieved at all sensitive locations. Therefore no specific mitigation measures would be necessary. The impact is not therefore predicted to be significant.
 - (b) Traffic Noise and Vibration – The predicted impacts of traffic noise and vibration have been assessed for selected properties within 300m of the proposed road. Following the consultation process in relation to the application and Environmental Statement further information has been submitted in relation to noise. Predicted noise levels at noise sensitive properties demonstrate that noise insulation under Noise Insulation Regulation 1975 is not likely to be required at any location exposed to road traffic noise. The ES shows that for properties fronting the A15 the impact of the bypass is generally beneficial. Major adverse impacts are predicted for the proposed housing estate in the north east sector of the City. The bypass would result in a new source of traffic noise to properties located adjacent to the LEB in the areas east of Lincoln including the properties and farms to the east of Bracebridge Heath. Background noise levels at

selected properties within Cathedral View in Bracebridge Heath are currently low and therefore major adverse impacts are predicted for these properties. The addendum to the ES notes that although the increases in noise are assessed as significant at isolated receptors because of low background noise levels, predicted noise levels are at least 15dB below the level that requires noise insulation to be provided as part of mitigation measures under the 1975 Regulations.

The ES notes that the number of properties predicted to experience an increase in traffic noise of 1dB(A) or greater in 2023 if the LEB is not constructed is 842, whereas with the construction of the bypass only 412 properties would experience such a noise increase. In addition it is predicted that 68 properties would experience a reduction in noise greater than 1dB(A) with the do minimum option in 2023 compared to 78 properties with the construction of the LEB.

Mitigation measures proposed during construction work are:

- local residents to be informed of when and where work is to be carried out including likely duration of work and measures to be taken by the contractor to reduce noise levels;
- noise monitoring would be carried out at site boundary and selected noise sensitive properties to ensure noise levels remain within reasonable limits. These noise limits would be set in consultation with the Environmental Health Officer and would be both appropriate and feasible.

For operations the following mitigation is proposed:

- three metre high earth bund within the residential development at the northern end of the scheme between A15 Wragby Road and Hawthorn Road to provide a noise reduction of approximately 5dB(A) LA10 18hr.
- three metre high earth bund adjacent to the carriageway along the section of the LEB between Lincoln Road (B1188) and Sleaford Road A15. On the western side of the carriageway this would be constructed for the whole of this section and along part of the eastern side of the carriageway;
- low noise surfacing between the B1188 Lincolnshire Road and A15 Sleaford Road.

In respect of vibration for properties that are predicted to experience increases in vibration nuisance, the levels would be low and should not require mitigation.

In conclusion the projected greatest impacts would be to properties and farms at Bracebridge Heath. The current background levels for noise levels at selected properties within Cathedral View, Bracebridge Heath are currently low and therefore 'Major Adverse' impacts are predicted for these properties. The increase in noise levels at these properties are assessed as significant at isolated receptors because of the low background noise levels (between 12dB and 14dB above existing levels) but these are at least 15dB below the level requiring noise insulation pursuant to the Noise Insulation Regulations 1975.

Away from properties on the eastern side of Bracebridge Heath following completion of the LEB many properties in Lincoln are expected to benefit from the development of the

LEB. This is due to the majority of the roads experiencing reduced traffic flows. Properties located along major road arteries into the City, such as the A15 in particular, would experience beneficial impacts.

Following completion of the scheme most residents in the area are predicted to experience beneficial impact although a number of isolated properties close to the LEB and some properties at Cathedral View, Bracebridge Heath will experience a major adverse impact.

- (c) Water Quality, Drainage and Hydrology - A detailed assessment of the potential impacts upon surface water and groundwater regime arising from construction of the LEB has been undertaken. The LEB would be situated in the vicinity of two watercourses classified as main rivers which are the River Witham and South Delph, non main river watercourses include the North Delph, Canwick Farm Drain and a number of smaller drainage ditches.

Five landfill sites are situated within 500m of the site. Accepted waste for all sites is inert solid material, the maximum input varies from small, less than 10,000 tonnes per year to large, greater than 75,000 but less than 250,000 tonnes per year. Two of the sites have lapsed and three are operational as far as is known.

The Environment Agency holds no data relating to the existence of contaminated land along the proposed route corridor, however this does not preclude the existence of any contaminated areas.

In respect of groundwater the northern part of the route commences on, and crosses, the eastern edge of the limestone plateau to the north of the Lincoln Gap before descending the escarpment to cross the River Witham Floodplain. The southern section of the bypass crosses the limestone 'plateau' above the escarpment between Canwick south of the Witham floodplain and at Bracebridge Heath some 3km further south. The proposed LEB corridor is underlain by a variety of aquifer and soil types. The northern section of the route is underlain by minor and non aquifers. The overlying soils in the northern section are primarily classified as comprising high or intermediate leaching potential.

The southern section is underlain by Lincolnshire Limestone which has a high permeability owing to fissure flow. In addition the overlying soils have little ability to attenuate pollutants and will readily transmit a wide range of surface pollutants to groundwater which makes this aquifer especially vulnerable to contamination. This section is located within Groundwater Protection Zone II of Moor Farm and Branston Booths water supply boreholes. These zones delineate areas around public water abstractions that are particularly sensitive to groundwater pollution. Two groundwater and one spring water licensed abstractions are within a 2km radius of the southern stretch of the proposed route.

During the construction there are a series of risks and pollutants that have the potential to affect the surface waters which include:

- suspended solids from site runoff water;
- leakage or spillage of fuel, oil or chemicals;
- spillage of cement, concrete or admixtures;

- disturbance of contaminated land; and
- disturbance of existing sewage systems.

Construction work would be undertaken in accordance with the relevant Environment Agency Pollution Prevention Guidelines.

For the more specific risks identified for suspended soils, to reduce the risk of high levels of suspended soils being discharged into nearby watercourses the following mitigation measures are proposed:

- minimise the area of exposed surfaces in the vicinity of the watercourses;
- installation of wheel wash facilities;
- incorporation of appropriate site compound measures such as perimeter cut-off ditches, overland flow or settlement tanks/lagoons;
- should de-watering be required along part of the construction corridor pumped groundwater should be disposed of in accordance with Pollution Prevention Guidelines.

With the incorporation of the above mitigation measures the predicted magnitude of any input from suspended sediments would be minor or negligible and expected impact of negligible to low significance on water quality.

In relation to oils, fuels and chemicals, mitigation measures are:

- incorporation of bund or drip tray around drums and intermediate bulk containers to prevent oil escaping into surface waters or groundwaters;
- provision of bunding and storage facilities around oil, fuel and chemical tanks.

The incorporation of the above mitigation measures would reduce the potential of oils, fuels and chemicals to impact on water quality to a level of negligible to low significance.

Use of in-situ concrete would incorporate measures to ensure concrete mixing is undertaken in a designated area away from potential receiving waters and adequate facilities to prevent contaminated wastewater from entering surface waters should be installed. This would result in an expected magnitude from the impact of concrete to be negligible.

In respect of disturbances of existing sewerage system, with adherence to relevant Environment Agency guidance notes and careful working practices any impact from disturbing the existing sewage system would be negligible.

In respect of potential impacts on surface water and abstractions during the construction stage, the incorporation of mitigation measures already outlined above together with strict adherence to Environment Agency guidelines would result in the predicted impact on abstraction points to be negligible and therefore insignificant.

The two public water supply boreholes have been subject to a groundwater risk assessment that identified that the abstraction boreholes are located in such a position that they would not be affected by the hydraulic gradient of the route and impacts upon these abstraction points are unlikely.

The ES recommends that surface water quality monitoring be undertaken before, during and after construction of the proposed road. Also that samples of groundwater are obtained to provide further information on baseline groundwater quality.

In respect of flood risk and floodplain a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) was submitted with the original submission and following on-going discussions with the Environment Agency an amended FRA has been submitted to address the concerns of the Environment Agency. This amended FRA incorporates the required modifications to drainage design.

Flood levels predicted for the watercourses in the area are lower than the proposed road level and by implementing mitigation measures to ensure current water levels are maintained, flooding of the road surface is not expected to occur.

Should a breach occur floodwater would flow out of the bank and reach the adjacent plains. Provided appropriate flood alleviation measures are implemented the impact of the road on water levels for the 1 in 100 year event will be insignificant. The proposed five span bridge would provide better flood relief than the originally suggested three span bridge. Therefore the capacity of this flood relief measure is sufficient to minimise any further rise in water levels in the event of a breach and so the road would not cause flooding of properties that are currently not at risk from flooding.

The amendment to the FRA submitted included within the addendum to the ES relates to a change to the drainage proposals within the River Witham floodplain. It is proposed to discharge by gravity into the Soak Dyke and it is proposed to increase the size of the balancing pond to cover an area of 8,200m².

In conclusion the impacts on water quality from the proposed route are predicted to be insignificant or of low significance. It has been identified that the greatest impacts are likely to occur as a result of construction phase accidents and handling/storage of oils/hydrocarbons, but mitigation measures outlined above would address these possible impacts. The pollution risk assessment and spillage risk assessment indicates that the surface water drainage from the proposed road and risk of a pollution event from spillage should have negligible impact on water quality in the area. However, the incorporation of spillage control measures and oil interceptors is recommended in high risk areas such as roundabouts and slip roads.

- (d) Geology and Soils – It is inevitable that soils along the proposed route will have their physical and chemical characteristics altered both during construction operations and long term as a number of deep cuttings and high embankments will be constructed. Potential contamination and alteration of the superficial soil characteristics may arise from construction, with impacts such as compaction of the soil through vehicular movements, which may restrict root growth and adversely affect the drainage of surface and ground waters.

There has been limited industrial land use along the line of the proposed route. The potential contamination sources are therefore restricted. Limited testing during preliminary ground investigations in the southern section indicated no elevated

contaminant values in the samples tested. Further contamination testing is however required, particularly for the northern section where no testing was undertaken during the preliminary ground investigation stage. The scheme should be designed to allow reuse of as much material as possible. Unsuitable material should be treated on site to render it suitable for use in the works.

Good construction practice and proper disposal of any contaminated arisings should minimise the possibility of creating a pollution pathway. When construction encounters suspected contaminated material, the nature and extent of the contamination will need to be assessed. Recommended protective and remedial measures should be in place prior to the commencement of construction. Measures should be implemented to minimise the amount of additional sedimentation transportation to watercourses during the works. This could be in the form of temporary silt traps and settlement ponds. Erosion can be minimised by ensuring that vegetation is established as soon as possible following construction.

(e) Ecology and Nature Conservation – A Phase 1 Habitat Survey, Hedgerow Survey, Walkover Bird Survey, Bat Survey and Badgers Survey were all undertaken. In addition a survey of sites with nature conservation value was completed. Four Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI's) are within close proximity to the site as follows:-

- Greetwell Wood SNCI;
- Greetwell Hall Wood SNCI;
- South Delph; and
- Washingborough Junction SNCI

In respect of Greetwell Wood SNCI the scheme would result in the loss of woodland habitat from the western end of the strip of woodland. In total an area of 0.35 ha of woodland habitat would be lost as a result of the scheme. Such an impact would have significant implications in the woodland habitat. The impact is considered to be of high negative magnitude upon an ecological receptor of County-level importance, leading to moderate negative significance.

The proposed road is planned to cross the River Witham, North and South Delphs via a bridge passing over all three waterways. Some habitat loss of the terrestrial habitats associated with this corridor is expected during the construction process and considerable disturbance is likely during the construction phase. Once constructed, impacts are likely to be associated with disturbance to birds using the river corridor and surrounding wetland habitats. These impacts are likely to result in an adverse impact, but are unlikely to result in a permanent loss of integrity of the habitat area. Therefore, the impacts associated with the road construction on these habitats are considered to be of low negative impact. On an ecological receptor of County-level importance, these impacts are assessed as being of slight negative significance.

Of these four sites, only the above two would be affected by the alignment; Greetwell Hall Wood lies approximately 1km west of the route and Washingborough Junction approximately 100m west of it.

Greetwell Hollow Quarry Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which is designated for its geological features, being considered of national importance for its exposures of Lincolnshire Limestone, would be impacted upon by the scheme. However loss of habitat important for conservation such as scrub or grassland is predicted to be negligible and disturbance during the construction phase is unlikely to be greater than existing levels. Following road construction roadside verges and embankments would potentially provide opportunities for habitat creation. Impacts are assessed as being of negligible magnitude, assuming that roadside verges are of limited ecological value. Thus impacts are considered as being of negligible significance.

Hedgerows – a total of 33 hedgerows have been identified as possibly impacted by the scheme. Most of which are local or less than local value. One hedgerow is considered as District value. Impacts will be of medium negative magnitude, equating to slight negative significance.

Breeding Birds – In respect of breeding birds the road will pass through areas currently used by barn owls. The impacts of direct mortality and fragmentation of their territory by the road could represent an impact of high negative magnitude on the local barn owl population represents an impact of moderate negative significant. In all other respects the impact on breeding birds is assessed to be slight significance.

Water Voles – In respect of water voles the overall impacts is considered to be of high negative magnitude on a population assessed of being of Regional importance results in an impact of moderate negative significance.

Otters – As no otters were recorded during the survey it is not anticipated that any impacts will arise as a result of construction and operation of the LEB.

Bats – The impacts on bats is predicted to be of slight negative significance for all the areas of impact assessed.

Badgers – Expected that proposals would result in the fragmentation of the badger territory even with the installation of underpasses as a mitigation measure, with the loss of foraging habitat may result in badgers abandoning the main sett. Residual impacts are still considered to remain as slight negative.

To assist in reducing impact of the proposal a series of generic mitigation measures are proposed as follows:

- establish an Environmental Management Plan to be undertaken throughout the construction period;
 - erect fences prior to site clearance;
 - undertake landscaping and tree planting with appropriate native species.
- (f) Landscape and Visual Assessment – The landform of the route is predominantly flat to gently undulating along the higher areas of the limestone escarpment, the ‘Lincoln Edge’, with the landform falling to the east along a dip slope. A number of dry valleys fall to the east, providing greater topographical variation towards Washingborough and Branston. In the central part of the route the River Witham flows through the Lincoln Gap, a natural break in the Lincoln Edge where the landform falls quickly from the raised

limestone escarpment to the north and south to the level flood plain either side of the River Witham. The main man made landform features along the route are Greetwell Quarry, a cutting for the Lincoln to Market Rasen railway, embankment for the Lincoln to Spalding railway and disused railway embankment. The canalised River Witham is slightly raised above the surrounding flood plain with adjacent flood embankments.

The land use is predominantly agricultural, with intensively managed arable farmland over the majority of the area with some rough pasture. Within the area there are occasional woodland copses and small tree groups associated with farms or along hedgelines. The main woodland uses are 'the Pits' at Canwick, a large deciduous woodland and scrub along the railway lines and River Witham. There are few individual trees within the hedgerow landscape. Scattered tree cover occurs on the golf course, and with Greetwell Historic Park and throughout the urban areas.

To assist the assessment of the LEB on the landscape, the route and surrounding landscape has been divided into eight rural sub areas and nine urban areas, each with a distinct and recognisable landscape and townscape character. The rural character areas identified are as follows:-

- R1 Upland Arable Escarpment East of Lincoln, North of River Witham – ordinary quality medium sensitivity to change.
- R2 Valley slopes to north of River Witham – ordinary quality, high sensitivity to change.
- R3 Parkland associated with Greetwell Hall - good quality, high sensitivity to change.
- R4 River Witham Fen - ordinary quality, high sensitivity to change.
- R5 Rural valley slopes to south of River Witham – ordinary quality, high sensitivity to change.
- R6 Sewage Works and area between Lincoln to Grimsby Railway and Washingborough Road – poor quality, low sensitivity to change.
- R7 Golf Course – ordinary quality, high sensitivity to change.
- R8 Upland arable escarpment south of Lincoln – ordinary quality, high sensitivity to change.

The scheme would not pass through any of the nine urban character areas identified but would be visible from all of them. The scheme would pass directly through six of the rural character areas (R1, R2, R4, R5, R6 and R8) and would be visible in part from two others (R4 and R8). It is assessed that the scheme would have substantial adverse impacts on those landscape areas which have a high sensitivity to change and where the LEB would have a high or medium magnitude of impact. This impact may be in the form of the creation of cuttings or embankments or through the impact of traffic movement or noise. Those character areas are R2, R4, R5, R7 and R8. Moderate adverse impacts would be realised in areas R1 and R3. The significance of the impacts in R6 would be negligible due to its low sensitivity to change and poor quality. The scheme will not have any direct impacts upon the urban character areas.

The principal physical impact on landscape features would be the loss of high sensitivity woodland at the western extent of Greetwell Wood, a mature woodland and Site of Nature Conservation Interest. The scheme would also impact substantially on the watercourses running west to east along the Witham Valley including the River Witham, North Delph and South Delph and the drainage ditches running north-south and draining into the Witham. The setting of these features is adversely affected as is the open nature of the valley divided by the embankment. Approximately 600m of hedgerows would also be lost as a result of the scheme, although this would be more than compensated for by the replanting proposed as part of the mitigation and landscape proposals. The loss of hedgerows is considered to be low sensitivity and magnitude with slight negative significance at the time of construction, changing to slight benefit following establishment of proposed planting.

The visual impacts of the scheme would potentially arise from the movement and visibility of the traffic on the road level elevated up to 1m above the surrounding landscape and disruption of open views as a result of the associated landscape mitigation earthworks and planting.

An assessment of all visual receptors (locations from where persons will be able to view the proposed scheme) have been identified. Whilst the ES provides analysis of all visual receptors, in this section only those identified to experience substantial impacts will be reviewed.

Residential Properties

Properties along Wragby Road and Westfield Approach both have direct views towards the scheme in the foreground, mid distance views of the scheme towards Greetwell Road and distant views of the southern section in good visibility. The impacts in some cases are substantial. The impact on these properties would be mitigated by landscaping.

Properties on and in the vicinity of Hawthorn Road, including new developments along Carlton Avenue have views across the line of the LEB. Whilst some properties are identified as having substantial impact the area is undergoing rapid development and once proposed housing is established south of Hawthorn Road the views from properties would be substantially reduced.

Properties fronting and in the vicinity of Greetwell Road would have varied views of the scheme. Although the valley slope, railway line and existing woodland reduce visibility of the scheme to these properties, the impact in some cases remains substantial. Stoneleigh House will experience substantial impacts from its proximity to the junction, planting is proposed to mitigate the impact of the visibility of traffic movement.

Some properties within the urban character areas on the eastern side of Lincoln have been identified as having a potential substantial adverse impact depending on the degree of obstruction from other buildings and street trees they experience.

Panoramic views could be possible from Shuttleworth House, a residential tower block at Stamp End, and wide distant views are possible from detached properties on St Michael's Terrace and Maud's Hill. These impacts could vary from substantial to slight negative reflecting the panoramic or restricted views from usual receptors and orientation of the building towards the LEB. Planting would mitigate the imprint of the scheme in the landscape. The scheme would visually contain the lower sections of the City.

Some properties on the western edge of Washingborough are predicted to experience substantial adverse impact depending on the orientation of the property and degree of obstruction from other buildings and garden and other trees. The LEB on embankments across the northern slope and bridge across the River Witham would remain as a residual negative impact for these properties in their foreground restricting their view towards Lincoln.

Properties situated off Heighington Road along the upper slopes of the southern valley have panoramic views of the scheme, with properties including Glebe Cottages, Glebe Farm, Manor Farm and Sheepwash Bungalow predicted to have substantial impacts. Mitigation planting is proposed to soften the road line in the landscape.

Properties off Lincoln Road, Canwick Heath Farm, Highfield House and Mill Lodge Hotel are close to the scheme with long views possible over existing hedgerows. The impacts on these properties are substantial adverse as the road crosses the landscape at grade within view over a wide arc. Proposed mitigation bunds and planting would partially screen traffic on the road as planting matures.

The scheme would be visible from properties within and beyond the north eastern boundary of development at Bracebridge Heath. The impact on some of these properties is assessed as substantial dependent on the degree of obstruction. The proposed bunds and screen planting would reduce the impact of moving traffic in the long term.

Canwick Manor Farm, Westfield Cottages, Westfield Farm and Westfield Bungalow are assessed in some circumstances as facing substantial negative impact from the scheme. Proximity of the properties and the extent of screening tree groups around the buildings determine the degree of visual intrusion resulting from the scheme.

Manor House Cottages and Farm Cottages are situated in close proximity to the scheme with little intervening vegetation and the assessed impact in some cases would be substantial. The tree planting proposed at the junction with Bloxholm Lane and along the route would provide long term screening of the road.

The Manor House and properties in the vicinity of Kings Drive, Salters Close, Ickneild Close and Sewstern Close at Bracebridge Heath are close to the scheme and views from them are towards the junction with Sleaford Road. The impacts depending on screening are assessed as substantial. Tree planting to the proposed junction with Sleaford Road would reduce the long term impact of the scheme.

Commercial/Tourist/Recreational Areas

Historic areas of Lincoln situated high on the cliff include the Cathedral, Castle and Bishop's Palace. Visibility from these areas are potentially panoramic with views extending to beyond Heighington Road to Greetwell Road. Views from the Castle are extensive. Public access to the Cathedral roof is restricted, but views from here are panoramic extending over most of the scheme. The impact in some cases is assessed as substantial and will remain as residual impacts.

Public Rights of Way

Pedestrians on public rights of ways being crossed by or having unobstructed views towards the scheme would experience substantial visual impact in the year following completion of the scheme. These include P1 (PF140), P2 (PF138), P3 (PF58), P4

(PF139), P5, P6, P7 (PF26), P8 (Sustrans route), P9 (PF54), P12 (PF3) and P14 (PB6). The open paths such as P1, P3, P4 and P7 are exposed to adverse views over longer sections than those afforded some protection from existing vegetation or landform such as P6, P8, P9 and P15 (PF3). Mitigation would result in generally slight adverse residual impacts from these rights of way. Distant views are experienced from paths P10, P13 and sections of P14, P4, P5, P11 and P16. The scheme would be visible from these paths in the year following construction but once planting has established by year 15 the road would barely be perceived in the distance behind existing fields and hedgerows.

The mitigation proposed is intended to reduce, where possible, impacts arising from implementation of the scheme and would comprise:

- landscaping and tree planting proposals;
- layout (horizontal alignment) has been designed to minimise disruption of existing physical features and to position the roadway from sensitive visual receptors;
- vertical alignment and proposed earthworks have been designed to minimise negative visual impacts and enhance visual mitigation of sensitive viewpoints;
- proposed bunds would be asymmetrical with gentle outer gradients to maximise return of land to farmland.

In conclusion the alignment and planting, once mature, would enable the scheme to be successfully accommodated within the landscape and as a result of planting encourage a greater biodiversity within this agricultural landscape. The most severe impact is on the River Witham valley where important views in and out of Lincoln would be adversely affected and the character of the valley as it approaches the Lincoln 'Gap' degraded by the form and alignment of the earthworks. Further development is planned to the north east of Lincoln between the proposed scheme and current urban edge of Lincoln and as these develop the impact of the scheme would be reduced but the embankment would remain as a residual negative landscape impact within the valley.

- (g) Cultural Heritage – The bypass passes through or adjacent to a series of archaeological sites, parts of which would be damaged or destroyed by the scheme. The significance of a number of affected sites, particularly those in the Witham Valley is high and are likely to require a substantial programme of recording works in advance of construction to mitigate any adverse impacts. The assessment of the existing situation is that the construction of the LEB would result in impacts of minor to major significance, including loss or damage to features of Prehistoric, Roman and later date.

The key areas with the potential for the most significant archaeological impacts are situated in the low-lying areas of the valley. Damage to archaeological remains falling within the immediate footprint of the road is likely to be severe and may result in the total loss of any such deposits. Potential also exists for other features falling outside the immediate footprint, but within the working width of the easement to be damaged during the course of general construction activities, or as a result of the creation of haul routes, site compounds and borrowpits.

Few Listed Buildings are situated within the study area and advancement of the scheme is unlikely to have any adverse impacts on the built environment. Furthermore a general reduction in traffic levels through Lincoln is predicted to have a beneficial impact upon

Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas in the City that are currently affected by high traffic volume and pollution.

Mitigation measures suggested are, where possible, to preserve the relevant sites in-situ, this would require either realigning the bypass or burying sites under any embankments or similar feature. However, a number of sites identified, especially in the valley bottom, are not suitable for preservation in situ as the weight of the embankment would lead to compaction of the archaeological deposits, while traffic vibration will lead to problems with settlement/movement of cultural material. Where preservation in situ is not feasible/acceptable the appropriate mitigation strategy would be preservation by record. Following an extensive programme of evaluation works it is assessed that the following mitigation works are necessary:

- detailed archaeological excavation at selected sites;
- strip, record and sample at selected sites;
- controlled archaeological watching brief throughout the scheme area.

The full extent of methodology for each mitigation operation would be set out in a detailed written scheme of investigation.

In conclusion the desk based studies and a staged programme of archaeological evaluation works identified 63 sites of cultural heritage interest. A potential for construction related impacts have been identified at 24 sites. To mitigate for this impact a substantial programme of mitigation measures has been suggested to reflect the significance of the impacts.

- (h) Land Use and Agriculture – The proposed route passes through some of the best and most versatile land with approximately 37ha (66%) of Grade 2, 16 ha (29%) of Grade 3a and 2.8ha (5%) of Grade 4. Nine owners and/or occupiers of agricultural land were identified as potentially suffering land-take as a result of the bypass. The agricultural land use in the area is predominantly mixed arable with some grazing livestock farming.

The identified impacts are severance of farmland, resulting in small, irregular shaped areas of fields which would not be suitable for continued arable farming. Some farms would lose a significant proportion of the farmed area to the scheme. Also land that becomes remote due to significant detours can become unprofitable.

Without mitigation measures the predicted impacts of land-take and severance would result in the majority of identified agricultural businesses moderately adversely affected by the bypass proposals. One business would suffer major impacts.

The mitigation measures proposed are as follows:

- provision of private means of access (PMA) arrangements to ensure the continued cropping and stocking of severed areas which could not be accessed once the road is constructed. Criteria is included for the assessment of provision of PMAs;
- ensuring suitable outlets for existing field drainage systems;
- replacement of water and electricity supplies and telephone connections;

- provision of access to watercourses where abstraction rights exist for crop rotation;
- provision of sleeved culverts under proposed road to carry irrigation pipes;
- provision of appropriate fencing; and
- ability to return landscape strips to agriculture by creation of suitable slopes and protection of soil resources.

In conclusion whilst the proposal would result in the loss of agricultural land which falls into the best and most versatile category, this loss is relatively small and not considered to be a significant factor in assessing the environmental impact of the proposal. It is considered that maintaining access to severed land would enable the continuation of farming activities on the identified holdings. Whilst this would involve extended journeys for some occupiers between blocks of land, this would be reflected in any compensation agreed.

- (i) Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians and Community Effects –The scheme’s impact upon journeys made by pedestrians (including ramblers), cyclists and equestrians has been examined. During construction a number of routes (including highways) would be subject to closures. Temporary diversions would be implemented during this period to minimise disruption. No public rights of way would be severed without appropriate mitigation being implemented which would not add significantly to journey length. Vulnerable user facilities would be provided at each of the proposed junctions encountered by public rights of way. PMAs would be provided at minimal additional journey length where existing access roads are severed. New equestrian routes would be provided where existing routes are affected. The scheme provides 7.5km of combined pedestrian and cycle facilities along the entire length of the LEB, providing greater connectivity to existing networks, especially local cycle networks.

Concluding, the LEB would not create any new community severance but provide positive benefits in respect of relief from existing severance through creating a crossing of the River Witham, reducing severance caused by city centre congestion and developing local cycle network.

- (j) Vehicle Travellers – In respect of vehicle travellers the ES indicates that the construction of the new bypass would provide an enhanced environment for vehicle travellers and a reduction in accident rates although the benefits are offset by predicted accidents on the LEB. The driver stress levels are predicted to be lower with the proposed bypass in comparison to the current road infrastructure resulting in a beneficial impact. The redistribution of traffic on the city centre roads and a high standard of design and layout would all contribute to a reduction in driver stress. Although views from the road would be limited owing to the presence of cutting, bunds and landscaping, stretches of the road would provide very good views of Lincoln and the landscaping would nonetheless provide a pleasant environment for vehicle travellers. Traveller care is also anticipated to be good along the bypass and therefore it can be concluded that the bypass would have beneficial impacts for vehicle travellers.
- (k) Disruption due to Construction – It is not predicted that disruption due to construction would be significant throughout the majority of the route in view of its rural nature. It is expected that significant impacts would be localised to areas adjacent to residential and

proposed residential areas and where the scheme crosses existing road network and public rights of way. Anticipated construction impacts are as follows:

- localised increase in noise and vibration through use of heavy plant, dust creation and general dirt and mud; and
- impacts from construction of embankments and cuttings throughout the scheme causing temporary impact on residential and general amenity values.

To mitigate against these impacts the development and implementation of a construction site environmental management plan would be undertaken.

In conclusion, provided the proposed mitigation measures are undertaken the impacts from construction works are not predicted to be significant.

- (1) Cumulative and Residual Impacts – This section identifies the cumulative impacts of the scheme and residual impacts which may continue after the establishment of mitigation measures. This notes that a small number of properties and public rights of way adjacent to the proposed bypass would receive potentially moderate to substantial disbenefits through an increase in traffic related noise and vibration, short term disruption due to construction, a slight reduction in air quality and loss of visual amenity. Also the crossing of the River Witham is likely to result in a number of negative impacts which combine to create a more significant footprint. It is argued that these negative cumulative impacts are mitigated for by the positive impacts upon the road network and surrounding land uses in Lincoln City Centre, including a reduction in congestion, associated severance, reduction in accident numbers, a reduction in traffic related noise and vibration and improvement in air quality.

The residual impacts identified in respect of nature conservation are temporary adverse impacts resulting from construction works. Slight negative residual impacts may remain for badgers and barn owls due to a fragmentation of habitat and territory. Minor overall loss of habitat would occur in River Witham corridor. The scheme would result in a permanent linear feature on the landscape the impact of which would be reduced as landscaping matures. Impact of highway lighting is difficult to mitigate, although this also would be assisted by landscaping. This residual impact would be especially significant at junctions which are currently predominantly dark areas. The bridge and embankments at the River Witham would create a permanent landscape feature although this has a potential to become a local landmark and its impact reduce as new development takes place on the urban fringe. Greetwell Hollow geological SSSI would be directly impacted as the proposal would cross a small corner of the site. Whilst the land-take would be minimised and most important features of interest not affected, access to a small part of the site would be lost permanently.

Site and Surroundings

16. The proposed route of the LEB runs from the junction of the A158 and A15 north east of Lincoln City Centre. It would run along a corridor east of Lincoln, crossing North Delph, River Witham and South Delph prior to rising to cross the B1188 Lincoln Road east of Canwick and then continuing through agricultural land to meet the A15 south of Bracebridge Heath.

Main Planning Considerations

Structure Plan Context

17. The Approved Structure Plan (1982) contains the following relevant policies:

Policy 30: In the improvements of the existing road system, the County Council will accord first priority to the improvement where necessary of those principal roads and the more important non-principal roads catering for national and regional demands and inter-urban movement which, together with trunk roads, form the county strategic road network.

Policy 31: In determining priorities for improvements within the county strategic road network, the County Council will accord highest priority to those schemes which, in addition to facilitating the free flow of traffic and reducing accidents, confer the most benefit in terms of creating acceptable environmental standards, and in particular to the construction of bypasses and relief roads to remove extraneous traffic from centres of population and areas of high amenity value.

Policy 34: In planning highway improvements regard will be had to the effect upon the landscape and the built environment and the need to conserve high quality agricultural land.

The A158 and A15 are identified on the key diagram as part of the strategic road network and lorry routes.

18. The County Council's most up-to-date strategic planning policies now comprise the Lincolnshire Structure Plan Deposit Draft (2005).

Policy M1: The Strategic Road Network states:

To increase accessibility by road across Lincolnshire, major highway improvements will primarily be concentrated on the strategic road network which will cater for the majority of longer distance road traffic and for the movement of heavy goods vehicles.

The strategic road network comprises:

- all trunk roads and other 'A' Class Roads (except the A1111);
- the following 'B' Class Roads:

B1166 (Market Deeping to Crowland), B1188 (Lincoln to Metheringham), B1189, B1192 (Coningsby to Kirton Holme), B1225.

Within this network, priority will be given to the following key strategic routes:

- A46/A158 (Newark-Lincoln-Skegness);
- A15 (M180-Lincoln-Sleaford).

The County Council will seek to pursue the following major schemes on the strategic network during the Plan period:

A158 Lincoln Eastern Bypass.

The following policies are considered particularly relevant to the consideration of this application (summarised):

Policy M8 (Cycling): seeks to encourage a greater proportion of journeys made by cycle.

Policy M9 (Pedestrians): seeks to encourage a greater proportion of journeys made on foot.

Policy M10 (Freight): seeks to make provision to limit the environmental impact of freight movement.

Policy BE4 (Archaeological Heritage): aims to preserve important archaeological remains or their setting either through preservation in situ or excavation and recording.

Policy NE1 (Development in the Open Countryside): only permits development in the open countryside if it is considered to be essential in that location or it is in accordance with other structure plan policies.

Policy NE2 (Sites of Nature Conservation Importance): outlines the intention to protect sites of nature conservation importance, unless the needs of the proposal outweigh the need to safeguard the site.

Policy NE3 (Species Protection): provides safeguards to species protected by law.

Policy NE4 (Trees, Woodlands, Hedgerows Protection): seeks to retain and protect existing trees, woodland and important hedgerows of amenity value and associated habitat including replacement planting where loss is unavoidable for reason of overriding need.

Policy NE6 (Landscape Character Areas and Natural Areas): provides for the protection of the County's landscape character and natural areas.

Policy NE7 (Development of Agricultural Land): seeks to prevent unnecessary loss of high grade agricultural land.

Policy NE10 (Water Resources and Water Quality): permission will not be granted that would lead to a deterioration in water quality or pose a risk to water resources.

Policy NE11 (Development and Flood Risk): provides for a presumption against development that would give rise to a risk of flooding or have a detrimental impact upon groundwater storage capacity.

Policy LPA1 (Strategy): the overall strategy for the Lincoln Policy Area is to:

.....significantly strengthen its regional role as a principal urban area;

provide for economic regeneration and employment growth including necessary infrastructure requirements;

provide for increased accessibility and transport choice;

protect and/or enhance the dominance of Lincoln Cathedral on the skyline.

Policy LPA7 (Movement Strategy): makes provision for an appropriate movement strategy for the Lincoln policy area.

Policy LPA9 (Protection of the Dominance of Lincoln Cathedral): seeks to restrict development which would adversely affect the dominance of Lincoln Cathedral on the skyline.

Policy T7 (Informal Recreation in the Countryside): makes provision for informal recreation in the countryside provided these can be accommodated without significant detriment to the environment.

Local Plan Context

19. The City of Lincoln Local Plan (1998) contains the following general policies and specific development control policies that are relevant to the consideration of this proposal (summarised):

Policy 5G (Strategic Network of Cycleways, Footpaths and Bridleways): restricts development which would hinder the completion of the strategic network of cycleways, footpaths and bridleways.

Policy 14G (Strategic and Major Road Proposals): land required for the construction of the Eastern Bypass will be safeguarded and planning permission will not be granted for any development which would hinder the construction of that road.

Policy 21 (Archaeological Assessment): requires results of archaeological assessment to be submitted where development may affect known or suspected archaeological remains.

Policy 22 (Archaeological Constraints): seeks preservation of archaeological remains and their setting when considering development proposals.

Policy 34 (Design and Amenity Standards): planning permission will be granted for development which meets the stated criteria.

Policy 38D (Environment Pollution Arising from Development Proposals): restricts developments which would cause environmental pollution or adversely affect groundwaters or watercourses unless it can be shown that those impacts can be controlled to an acceptable level.

Policy 38E (Development Adjacent to Greetwell Quarry): restricts residential development adjacent to Greetwell Quarry.

Policy 38F (Flood Risk): restricts development which would increase the number of people or properties at risk from flooding.

Policy 44A (Sites of Special Scientific Interest and other Critical Natural Assets): restricts development which will adversely affect SSSI or other critical natural asset sites.

Policy 44C (Protected Species): restricts development which would harm protected species unless adequate protection can be secured by planning conditions or obligations.

Policy 45A (Trees and Other Ecological and Landscape Features on Development Sites): requires all new development proposals to retain as many trees within the landscape as possible.

Policy 46A (Woodland and Other Major Planting Initiatives): seeks provision of new woodland and major planting schemes to provide linear buffers.

Policy 55 (Long views Into and Out of the City): restricts developments which would obstruct views of the historic hilltop city and/or the Lincoln Edge and Witham Gap from

.....A57 and Eastern Bypass (A46)

line of Eastern Bypass where it crosses the floor of the Witham Gap.....

20. The following policies of the West Lindsey Local Plan (1998) are relevant (summarised):

Policy G1 (Development Requiring Planning Permission): is a general policy which requires all development which is subject to this Plan will be judged against this Policy.

Policy ENV10 (Landscape Conservation): restricts development which would result in the loss or cause harm to the quality of the landscape.

Policy ENV11 (Wildlife Conservation): restricts development which would result in the loss or cause significant harm to important wildlife habitats.

Policy ENV17 (Water Quality and Supply): restricts development which would constitute a risk to the quantity and quality of water resources or to amenity, nature conservation and fisheries through pollution from development.

Policy ENV18 (Flood Risk Areas): restricts development in close proximity to a flood defence or in areas of flood risk unless the stated criteria are met.

Policy ENV19 (River Corridors): restricts development which would cause unacceptable loss or significant harm to the stated environments features of the river corridor or the ...Witham...

Policy SA8 (Ancient Monuments and Sites of Archaeological Importance): restricts development which would detrimentally affect archaeological remains unless the stated criteria are met.

Policy SA14 (Sites of Special Scientific Interest): does not allow development which would potentially have a harmful impact on an SSSI and that harm cannot be mitigated.

Policy SA15 (Sites of Nature Conservation Importance and Local Nature Reserves): only allows development if the proposal would provide an overriding benefit in connection with another aim of the Plan and cannot be sited elsewhere.

Policy C1 (Development in the Countryside): does not permit development in the open countryside unless it is essential or meets objectives supported by other Plan policies.

Policy C2 (Development in the Countryside): restricts development which detracts from views across open countryside or views of Lincoln Cathedral.

Policy C3 (Quality of Agricultural Land): requires proposals to take into account the need to protect the best and most versatile land from irreversible loss.

Policy RC6 (Public Rights of Way): restricts development requiring the extinguishment or diversion of a public right of way unless adequate alternative provision is made.

Policy TR2 (Transport): only allows development where provision for the safe and efficient passage of cyclists and pedestrians is provided for by the prescribed methods.

Policy TR4 (Road Transport – New Road Schemes): does not allow development which will prejudice the implementation of road schemes as follows ...Lincoln Eastern Bypass (A15)...

21. The following policies of the North Kesteven Local Plan (1996) are relevant (summarised):

Policy G3 (Development Outside Curtilage Lines): development will not normally be permitted in the countryside zone unless the stated criteria are met.

Policy G5 (Landscaping Provision): normally require landscaping of the site for new development proposals.

Policy G7 (Sites of Nature Conservation Interest): not normally permit development adversely affecting sites of nature conservation interest.

Policy T1 (Protection of Road Lines): restrict development affecting the line of proposed road schemes. An explanatory paragraph notes this includes A15 Lincoln Eastern Bypass.

Policy C6 (Protection of Archaeological Interests): development which is approved but which affects archaeological interests will normally be granted subject to the stated conditions.

Policy PU2 (River Witham Flood Protection Area): developments within this area will not normally be approved unless the stated criteria are met.

Policy PU3 (Flood Risk): development which would result in flood risk will be required to include measures to mitigate this risk.

Policy PU4 (Protection of Water Quality and Quantity): restricts development which would have adverse impacts on the quality or quantity of ground or surface water.

22. Lincolnshire Local Transport Plan (2000-01 to 2005-06): notes that the Lincoln Eastern bypass is classed as a “longer term major scheme”. Paragraph 9.5.2 of the LTP states, “the development of an Eastern bypass is seen as an important step in the further growth of Lincoln as a regional centre. The scheme will open up land to the east of the City for further development, as well as relieving congestion on that side of the City.”

Paragraph 9.5.3 states the proposal has the support of the three District Councils involved, particularly Lincoln City Council. “The County Council has restated its commitment to the construction of an eastern bypass for Lincoln and will seek the support of the City and District Councils to secure an eventual scheme.” It is recognised that because of the size and complexity of the scheme and its high costs, the scheme will only be able to make significant construction progress in the period after that covered by this LTP.

Regional Planning Guidance

23. Regional Planning Guidance for the East Midlands to 2021 (RPG8) states that regional transport strategy has an important role in providing a strategic framework for decision-making at local level on the development and management of the road network. Whilst recognising individual authorities will adopt their own policies to reflect local circumstances these will need to take account of regional priorities. Amongst these should be recognition of the

constraints which the quality and capacity of rural road networks can impose on the economic prospects of remoter rural areas. Problems of distance can be compounded by limited capacity and economic diversification can be inhibited.

Policy 54 (Regional Major Highway Investment Priorities) of the Revised RPG8: Proposed Changes (July 2004) is relevant and states:

Local Transport Authorities, working closely with Local Planning Authorities and national and regional bodies should:

- work to progress the highway investment priorities in Appendix 8 subject to full and detailed appraisal;
- ensure that all new highway capacity is managed effectively to reduce congestion and improve safety.

Appendix 8 – Sub-area Transport Investment Priorities includes Lincoln Eastern Bypass/Growth Corridor.

Results of Consultations and Publicity

24. (a) Nettleham Parish Council – no comment.

(b) Greetwell Parish Council
(c) Washingborough Parish Council
(d) Canwick Parish Council } All consulted in March 2004 and consulted on the amended proposals in January 2005 but have not replied.

(e) Bracebridge Heath Parish Council – Objects to the application for the following reasons (summarised):

- close proximity to Cathedral View housing estate, causing problems for residents due to noise and pollution levels. The Council would prefer to see the route moved further east away from the residential development to the eastern side of Canwick Manor Farm;
- proposed footbridge allowing access to Bloxholm Lane is inadequate and should be replaced to allow vehicle access to Bloxholm Lane from the northern carriageway to provide access for emergency vehicles, and this is currently a route for school transport and to prevent residents of Mere from being isolated;
- information relating to noise is inadequate, background noise levels currently in Bracebridge Heath are high due to proximity to aircraft noise from RAF Waddington;
- concerned that bypass will cease at junction with A15 Sleaford Road, complete bypass should be constructed;
- noise reduction measures planned remain insufficient;
- result in increased levels of traffic travelling through the village. No traffic studies undertaken to consider current levels and any impact on future traffic levels in the village;