

Reference: 06/13/0614/CU

Parish: Bradwell

Officer: Mr D Minns

Expiry Date: County Council

Applicant: Norfolk County Council/Great Yarmouth Borough Council

Proposal: Construction of a new Link Road from A143 Beccles Road, Bradwell, to a proposed roundabout to be constructed to serve retail development at Beaufort Way, Gorleston, and to link with A12. Proposed Link Road to comprise of a single carriageway highway, including grass verges, shared cycleway and footway and other associated works; including highway improvements on the A143 in the vicinity of the junctions with Browston Lane and New Road

Site: Land at Wheatcroft Farm, Bradwell, Great Yarmouth NR31 9AF

REPORT

1. Background / History :-

1.1 This planning application is to be determined by Norfolk County Council with the Council being a consultee on the application with all consultations being undertaken by the County Council. This means that the Development Control Committee will make a recommendation to the County Council only and not the final decision on the application.

1.2 The Link Road is a local road scheme promoted by NCC in partnership with GYBC. GYBC own land at Beacon Park which will provide part of the land required for the Link Road at the eastern end of the proposed alignment. The remainder of the road will overlie land that is in single ownership and the landowner has expressed their willingness to participate in delivering this scheme. Independently of the Link Road, planning application proposals for up to 1,000 new homes and 9.67ha of new employment land at South Bradwell are being currently being considered by the Borough.

1.3 The A12-A143 Link Road scheme (the Link Road) comprises a new 1.8km road routeing from the western end of Beaufort Way (the existing access road from the A12 trunk road at South Gorleston) through the Beacon Business Park, north westwards to connect with the A143 Beccles Road at a new roundabout junction to be located at the existing junction of the A143 with C620 New Road.

1.4 The Link Road will cross two existing minor roads: Gorleston Lane, a private road providing access to Wheatcroft Farm, and the publicly maintained Browston Lane. Two roundabout junctions are proposed to provide access to the South Bradwell residential and employment development to the north and south of the Link Road. The first of these roundabouts will be located at the point where the Link Road meets Gorleston Lane and a new access to Wheatcroft will be provided from this roundabout. A second roundabout will be located approximately 0.4km to the west of Gorleston Lane and 0.4km south east of the A143 Beccles Road

1.4 An uncontrolled left in/out junction with a central median is proposed at the point where the Link Road meets Browston Lane. The existing section of Browston Lane to the north of the Link Road will be closed to vehicular traffic, access to existing residential properties maintained via a new ghost island T- Junction. Browston Lane to the north of the Link Road will remain accessible by pedestrians and cyclists providing access between the A143 and the Link Road.

1.5 The area to the south of the Site is predominantly rural, with the land mainly used for agricultural purposes. To the north of the Site is Bradwell. Where the proposals join on to A143, it is within close proximity to residential properties located on Clay Lane and Kings Drive. The proposed road will go through an existing tree belt which is designated as a Landscape Buffer Area, which is located to the south-eastern corner of the Site. As the road connects to A12 via Beaufort Way, the area is predominantly industrial with large commercial buildings where further development is anticipated.

1.6 The Site is located within a designated Landscape Important to the Setting of Settlements within the adopted Great Yarmouth Local Plan Proposals Map. The Southern part of the proposed Link Road will also go through the South Gorleston Policy. In the emerging Core Strategy, the majority of the Site runs through a designated area known as Beacon Park extension and through Grade 1 and 2 Agricultural Land. Towards the south of the Site the road reaches a designated 'Safeguarded Employment Area' known as Beacon Business Park Extension.

1.7 The Link Road is largely low lying with a bituminous surfaced carriageway at ground level, with associated landscaping and street lighting columns. The Link Road has been developed as a single carriageway road. The typical cross-section width is 34.5m and will incorporate the following features :

- Kerbed 3.25m wide carriageway in each direction;
- 1m wide grass verges (with widening in area adjacent to junctions for visibility requirements);
 - 3m wide shared Cycle/Footway – north side only;
- 2m wide verge to accommodate Public Utility (PU) Services – south side only
- 1m wide swales – north and south sides
- 5m wide landscape areas- north and south sides; and
- Street lighting columns located in the verge between the shared cycleway/footway and swale

1.8 Landscaping for the Link Road will include wildflower meadows on both sides of the road. This will be planted on both sides of the road in a 5m wide strip on the northern side and a 3m wide strip on the southern side as far east as the tree belt

after which it will become a 5m wide strip The remaining approximately 2m wide strip on the southern side up to the plantation woodland will be planted with a native, species-rich hedgerow to divide the Link Road from the proposed residential development to the of new habitat

1.9 Pedestrian and cyclist access to the Link Road will be connected to the existing A143 (Beccles Road) and connecting roads associated with the residential urban extension and Beacon Park Industrial Area A shared footpath and cycleway will be running parallel to the road on the north side to provide safe access for pedestrians, which also increases connectivity and permeability between the developments. Public Rights of Way will be maintained during the operational and construction phase at Clay Lane.

1.10 An uncontrolled equestrian crossing will be provided as part of the proposals for the Link Road to provide an appropriate crossing facility for users of the bridleway. A holding pen has been incorporated into the proposals where the Link Road intersects the bridleway.

1.11 The Link Road accommodates a new bus stop on either side of the road. New and existing bus routes will be re-routed to take advantage of this new road.

1.12 The “end to end” vehicular access arrangements will be from A143 (Beccles Road) and Beaufort Way. Additional accesses onto the Link Road are anticipated from the two integral roundabouts allowing access to other developments in the vicinity.

1.13 The proposal is one that requires an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The EIA process identifies and assesses environmental effects that are likely to arise from the construction and operation of the proposed development and determines whether they are significant. The assessment includes the need for the development, construction, alternative solutions, ecology and nature conservation, landscape and visual impact, cultural heritage, water resources and land drainage, geology and soils, air quality, noise and vibration, traffic and transport along with a construction management plan.

1.14 The proposal was subject to pre-application consultation at Coles Pavilion, Bradwell on Wednesday, 18 September 2013 from 2pm to 8pm

2. Consultations :-

2.1 Site Notice/Neighbours: All undertaken by the County Council

3.0 Policy

3.1 **The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** provides the overarching policy at national level, and it promotes a ‘presumption in favour of sustainable’ development This presumption requires economic, social and environmental considerations to be Assessed during the determination of the development proposals

3.2 Section 4 of the NPPF promotes sustainable transport and in paragraph 29 it states that the Government recognises that different policies and measures will be required in different communities and opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solution will vary from urban to rural areas.

3.3 Paragraph 37 states:

“Planning policies should aim for a balance of land uses within their area so that people can be encouraged to minimise journey lengths for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities.”

3.4 The Link Road is key element in assisting with facilitating the delivery of other uses within the local area, which include providing new homes, employment and retail opportunities. This proposal accords with these aims of the NPPF in providing traffic relief, acting as a trigger for further sustainable economic development, and diverting traffic away from residential areas.

3.5 The National Infrastructure Plan (2011) and Updates

The National Infrastructure Plan supports projects that keep Britain moving By improving the capacity, performance and resilience of roads such that the proposed Link road conforms to the plan.

3.6 Great Yarmouth Borough Wide Local Plan 2001

3.7 Part of the Site goes through an allocated employment area which is referred to as South Gorleston Employment Area in the Local Plan and Beacon Business Park in the emerging Core Strategy.

3.8 Policy EMP4 states that in order to meet the needs of modern business and commerce, and subject to approval of appropriate details, a high quality landscaped business park will be permitted on 34 hectare of land with outline planning permission allocated at South Gorleston, this is detailed in Table 2.1.

3.9 Paragraph 1.9.4 of the Local Plan further states that when the South Gorleston site is developed, provision will be made for a possible long-term link to the A143. The development of a Link Road is integral to this strategic site in both the Local Plan and emerging Core Strategy.

3.10 Policy TCM2 states that the Council will request the highway authority to identify a protection corridor for access roads running westwards from the western boundary of the South Gorleston Business Park to the A143 at Bradwell. In paragraph 3.1.8 (d), it identifies that an access road is required from the A143 to serve a proposed new residential development in South Gorleston. It recognises in the long term it is of benefit to create a link between A143 and A12.

3.11 Policy TCM11 states that to maintain traffic in free flow on corridors of movement comprising roads classified as trunk roads and principal routes, outside the urban areas of Great Yarmouth, Gorleston and Bradwell. Direct access to these roads will not be permitted, and development served by side roads connecting to such highways will be permitted only where it can be demonstrated that the defined

corridors of movement would not be significantly adversely affected. The Link Road will redirect some traffic movements from the trunk road (A12).

3.12 Policy TCM31 states that the Council is committed to providing adequate cycleways. Paragraph 3.8.3 states that the Council seeks to improve the Borough's cycleway network to allow for greater accessibility, better public safety and the wider needs of cyclists. The proposals will provide a new pedestrians/cycleway along the entire northern side of the Link Road.

3.13 The design of the Link Road has been developed in conjunction with other developers where their development will connect to the proposals.

3.14 Policy SG15 describes the need for the main access / distributor road to be designed to allow for sufficient capacity to accommodate traffic flows from the increased development in the South Gorleston development area. It will need to address the following:

a) Highway design, environmental effects and minimising severance of farm land if the main access/distributor road is extended westwards;

b) Need to be accessible to the new industrial, commercial and residential areas, with no access permitted from Woodfarm Lane, and

c) Provision of appropriate spacing of access road junctions along the main access/distributor road, with individual direct vehicular or pedestrian access to the access/distributor road denied to frontage development.

3.15 Policy SG17 states that surface water drainage from all roads shall only be discharged by means of gravity operated surface water sewerage system to a new outfall or such other arrangements as agreed with Anglian Water or the Environment Agency as the case may be.

3.16 The Link Road is located within a designated "Landscape Important to the Setting of Settlements" and therefore policy NNV5 is applicable to this proposal. It states that the Council will permit development provided a developer can demonstrate essential need or that the development would not impinge on the physical separation between settlements, particularly between Great Yarmouth, Caister, Gorleston and Hopton which are major gateways to the town, or give rise to any other significant adverse impact.

3.17 Policy NNV6 states that the Council will only permit development which would not have a significant adverse effect on areas of important landscape character, provided that the applicant can demonstrate that:

The introduction of buildings/structures into the landscape would be in keeping with the intrinsic landscape qualities and traditional built form of the area;

3.18 Features of landscape importance which contribute to the character of the area would not be damaged, destroyed or permanently altered in any way.

A section of the existing tree belt will be removed to accommodate the Link Road, however the width of this part of the highway corridor has been reduced to retain as much of the tree belt/vegetation as possible.

3.19 Policy NNV10 states that in connection with new development, the council will, where appropriate, expect the retention, restoration and creation of landscape features and wildlife habitats. Paragraph 8.3.4 states that proposals for development present opportunities for landscape enhancement. Schemes should improve the variety of landscapes but can also increase wildlife habitats and greatly enhance the amenity of new development. The Link Road includes a landscaping scheme which runs along the route of the new road, to encourage wildlife corridors and habitats.

3.20 Policy NNV16 state that proposals for the development of land regarded as the best and most versatile land i.e. land classified as Grade 1, 2 or 3a by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there is no other suitable site for the purpose and, that, in so far as is possible land of the lowest classification (Grade 1 and 2 Agricultural Land) has been used.

3.21 Great Yarmouth Local Plan: Emerging Core Strategy

3.22 Policy CS1 (Focusing on a sustainable future) states that when considering development proposals the council will take a positive approach, working positively with applicants and other partners to jointly find solutions so that proposals can improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the borough.

3.23 Policy CS6 (Supporting the local economy) encourages the safeguarding of existing local employment areas to strengthen the local economy. In particular part (c) of the policy that Beacon Park Extension, South Bradwell is anticipated to deliver approximately 10-15 hectares of new employment land.

3.24 Policy CS18. This policy clearly supports the need to develop this area, and to deliver the economic drivers, good connectivity to the wider borough for future workers and business operations is required.

3.25 Policy CS9 (Encouraging well designed distinctive places) states that high quality distinctive places are an essential part in attracting and retaining residents, businesses, visitors and developers. As such the council will ensure that all new developments within the borough:

Respond to and draw inspiration from the surrounding areas distinctive natural and built characteristics ensuring that the full potential of the development site is realised, making efficient use of land and reinforcing the local identity;

Promote positive relationships between existing and proposed buildings, streets and well lit spaces, creating safe, attractive, functional places that limit the opportunities for crime;

Provide easy access and convenient routes for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users and disabled people that maintain high levels of permeability and legibility;

Conserve and enhance biodiversity, landscape and townscape quality and consider the impact on and opportunities for green infrastructure; and

3.26 Minimise greenhouse gas emissions and the risk of flooding, through the use of renewable and low carbon energy and efficient site layouts and building designs that accord with or exceed current national sustainability standards.

3.27 Policy CS14 (Securing essential new infrastructure) recognises that new development can result in extra pressure being placed on existing infrastructure and local facilities. The Council has produced an Infrastructure Plan to help identify which type of infrastructure the Council will be promoting and delivering within the Plan period. The Link Road is identified in the Draft Infrastructure Plan as one of the physical infrastructure schemes to be delivered in the borough.

3.28 Policy CS16 (Improving accessibility and transport) seeks to make the best use of and improve existing transport infrastructure within and connecting to the Borough. Proposals for transport improvements that improve accessibility and improve road safety without an unacceptable impact on the local environment and communities. The policy supports the development of a new Link Road to the south of Bradwell via A12 through Beacon Park to the A143 Beccles Road.

Policy CS18 (Extending the Beacon Park Development at land south of Bradwell) promotes that the proposals should be developed to the highest possible standard. This proposal is for the new A12/A143 Link Road, which is referred to in this policy and it will offer the following benefits:

Link approximately 10 hectares of new employment land and 1,000 new homes to the wider area;

Reduce the potential impact of the Beacon Park Development on the existing wider transportation network, and Create shorter commuting times.

4.0 Assessment :-

4.1 The Link Road also aims to divert traffic away from existing residential roads and unsuitable rural roads, and will tackle the pinch points on the local road network by alleviating congestion in the morning and evening rush hours. The area through which the proposed link will pass is a strategic allocation in the GYBC emerging Local Plan Core Strategy which has the potential to deliver up to 1,000 homes and 15 hectares of commercial development.

4.2 The impact of the Link Road has been assessed on people travelling via different means throughout the area including motorised transport, cycling, walking and horse riding. The Link Road will provide an alternative east to west link between the A12 and A143 and facilitate employment and housing development in South Bradwell and Beacon Park. It is predicted that the Link Road will re-route traffic from Hobland Road, Bradwell Woodfarm Lane, Brasenose Avenue, and Long Lane to the Link Road. This will result in a reduction in traffic on the A12, the routes listed above and increased vehicle flows on the A143

4.3 An assessment of the noise impact of the proposed Link Road has been conducted in terms of relevant standards for construction and operational phase impacts. Existing noise levels at sensitive locations were compared with predicted noise levels assuming the Link Road is built.

4.4 The Link Road will attract traffic which currently uses Hobland Road to travel between the A12 and the A143 south of Bradwell. This will result in reductions in traffic noise levels along Hobland Road and to a lesser extent Browston Lane.

4.5 There will be a small increases in noise level at residences along the southern edge of Bradwell at Marjoram Road, Sorrel Road, Carraway Drive, Foxglove Drive, Bluebell Way, Oxford Avenue, Edinburgh Avenue and Carrell Road. Moderate increases in noise level will occur at residences near the corner of Oriel Road and Woodfarm lane and Greenacres, whilst more substantial noise level increase in noise level will occur at the isolated residences on Gorleston Lane.

4.6 However, should the residential and commercial developments outlined in the emerging Core Strategy come forward as envisaged in the plan along each side of the proposed Link Road this will screen will screen the existing dwellings from the road, the predicted increases in noise level should be negated by those developments There will be some temporary noise impacts on residences in the areas listed above during construction of the Link Road, especially during initial earthworks. This will be should be mitigated through the actions set out in the Construction Environmental Management Plan produced prior to construction.

4.7 An assessment of the construction and operational phase effects of the Link Road on air quality have been undertaken following best practice guidance. Construction phase effects were assessed qualitatively using a risk-based approach and specific key construction activities were assessed by considering their dust emission potential and the location of sensitive receptors. The assessment conclude that the effects of the Link Road on air quality will not be significant during construction, due to the range of mitigation measures proposed to reduce any potential adverse impacts

4.8 A quantitative assessment of air quality effects was also undertaken based on the transport model created for the Link Road during its operation. Predicted effects were compared against relevant legislation, policy and significance criteria, and overall effects on air quality will not be significant.

4.9 No major watercourses, open water or flood plains are directly affected by the proposed Link Road

4.10 A flood risk assessment has undertaken to assess the potential flood risk to and from the proposed Link Road. The area studied is known to be located within low risk flood zone and the overall risk of surface water flooding was therefore identified as being 'low'.

4.11 The impact of flooding from overland flow was also considered during heavy rainfall events because the Link Road will increase the area of impermeable ground.

4.12 The potential effects of increased flood risk to the Link Road and the neighbouring land has been considered neutral (insignificant) and any additional run-off will be contained within the proposed road drainage design.

4.13 Mitigation measures incorporate best practice techniques in design and on-site management to reduce potential adverse effects on surface and ground waters during construction and operation of the Link Road. Whilst the report states there will be a neutral impact upon the water environment Further assessments will be required during the detailed design stage to ensure the proposed drainage design has no adverse effects on surface water and groundwater quality and use.

4.14 In terms of the cultural heritage the scheme will not directly impact upon the heritage buildings in the area although the creation of an embanked highway will be visible within what is a relatively flat landscape. A series of archaeological investigations revealed that there is potential for buried archaeological remains to be found and that these impacts can be mitigated through further archaeological investigation and a programme of archaeological investigation has therefore been agreed.

4.15 The landscape surrounding the proposed Link Road is characterised by agricultural land crossed by roads and footpaths. There are also residential areas to the north, east and west ie Bradwell, Gorleston-on-Sea and Browston Green. The A143 Beccles Road runs to the west. To the south of the Link Road there is Hobland Hall which sits in historic parkland.

4.16 The site of the Link Road itself is inhabited by vegetation including trees and hedges and has an "open feel" due its location within arable land. However, the residential areas and scattered vegetation to the south and west limit views to and from the site.

4.17 Views from the houses to the north, north-west, and south, and from Clay Lane and Hobland Lane footpaths will be affected by construction works. As a result of the proposed scheme long-term views will change from these locations as screen planting will run parallel to the Link Road. The construction works will therefore affect the local landscape in the short term, and in the long-term the Link Road will affect views of the surrounding area only from specific locations

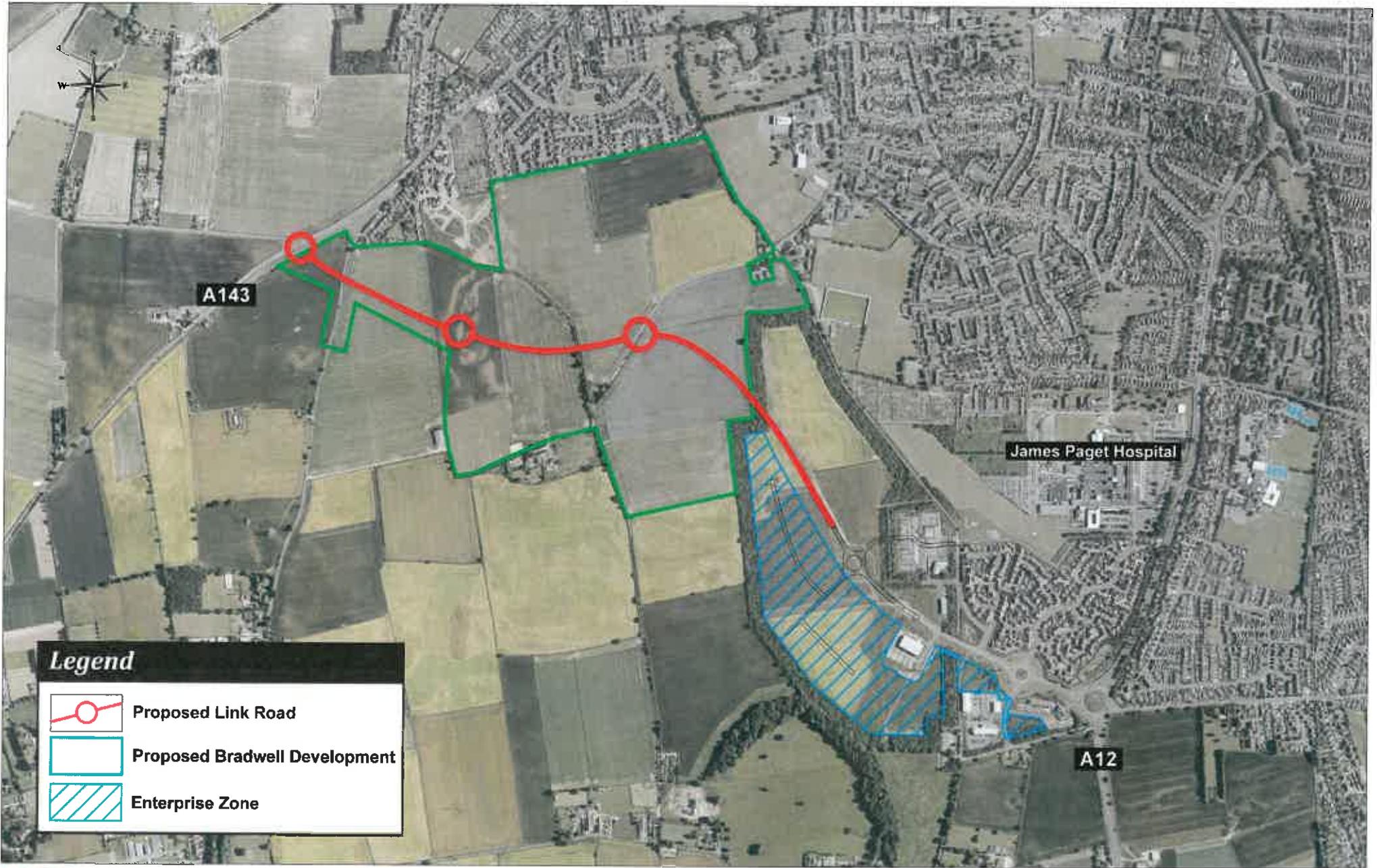
4.18 From the foregoing commentary, the following summary position is drawn in respect of policy matters:

- i) That the proposal will respond positively to policies that seek to improve connectivity to the wider area without creating an adverse impact on the environment;
- ii) That, whilst the application partially falls within a proposed employment area, a Link Road from A12 to A143 is encouraged in adopted and emerging local policies;
- iii) The proposal will be permitted provided it meets the policy criteria and can demonstrate the environmental impacts posed by the development could be appropriately mitigated.

4.19 Overall, therefore, prevailing planning policy promote a road development at this site and is considered an important catalyst for future economic, social and residential development in the area.

5.RECOMMENDATION :-

5.1 The Borough Council supports and recommends approval of the application subject to the details set out in the supporting documents.



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BOROUGH COUNCIL

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