SUMMARY

1.1 Suffolk County Council are proposing to build a new crossing over Lake Lothing (Lake Lothing Third Crossing), Lowestoft. It intends to submit an application under section 37 of the Planning Act 2008 to the Secretary of State for Transport for a Development Consent Order to authorise the construction, operation and maintenance of a new bascule bridge highway crossing of Lake Lothing.
1.2 The proposed scheme consists of a new single carriageway road across Lake Lothing by way of an opening bridge over Lake Lothing itself and a further bridge over the railway line linking the B1531 Waveney Drive on the south side of Lake Lothing to the C971 Peto Way on the north side. On the north side the road will join Peto Way between Rotterdam Road and Barnards Way. On the south side the new road will follow the alignment of the existing Riverside Road.

1.3 Before the application can be submitted for examination by the Planning Inspectorate, SCC as developer must consult with a variety of persons and bodies about the proposed application in accordance with the requirements of the 2008 Act and related Regulations. Suffolk County Council and Waveney District Council are statutory consultees under the Act.

1.4 Consultation documents are available to view on line at www.suffolk.gov.uk/lakelothing3rdcrossing

1.5 The two Councils’ officers have produced a draft Joint Response to SCC Highways public consultation on their emerging proposals. Members are asked to consider if they are content to endorse the responses set out in Recommendation. Evidence to support these recommendations is set out in the Planning Considerations section of the report.

THE PROPOSAL

2.1 The proposed scheme consists of a new single carriageway road across Lake Lothing linking the B1531 Waveney Drive on the south side of Lake Lothing to the C971 Peto Way on the north side of Lake Lothing. On the north side the road will join Peto Way between Rotterdam Road and Barnards Way. On the south side of Lake Lothing the new road will follow the alignment of the existing Riverside Road from a remodelled junction with Waveney Drive. The remodelling of the junction will involve the closure of Durban Road at its junction with Waveney Drive.

2.2 The new crossing consists of a multi-span bridge which includes a new opening bridge in Lake Lothing (Port of Lowestoft), a new rail bridge on the north side over the existing East Suffolk Line and a new road bridge on the south side. The new crossing of Lake Lothing will provide facilities for pedestrians and cyclists which tie into the existing networks.

2.3 On the south side there will be a new access road from Waveney Drive west of Riverside Road leading to the road bridge which is required to provide access to existing property that would otherwise become inaccessible due to changes in level on Riverside Road.

2.4 The proposed scheme may require further improvements to the existing local highway network, as informed by traffic modelling. This could include improvements within the current highway boundary to some existing junctions. New landscaping will also be incorporated into the scheme.

THE OBJECTIVES

3.1 The objectives of the scheme are to;

- To reduce congestion and delay on the existing bridges over Lake Lothing.
- To reduce congestion in the town centre and improve accessibility.
- To reduce community severance between north and south Lowestoft.
• To encourage more people to walk and cycle, and reduce conflict between cycles, pedestrians and other traffic.
• To improve bus journey times and reliability.
• To reduce accidents.
• To open up opportunities for regeneration and development in Lowestoft.
• To provide the capacity needed to accommodate planned growth.

THE DESIGN

4.1 The new crossing will be designed using the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), and is currently being designed to have a:
• Design speed of 30mph (50kph);
• Carriageway width of 7.3m (2 x 3.65m wide traffic lanes);
• Safety strip of 0.5m between the proposed footway and carriageway to the east of the crossing and
• the combined footway/cycleway to the west of the crossing; and
• Dedicated footway on one carriageway and a segregated footway and cycleway on the other.

The opening section

4.2 The design of the bridge needs to take account of many considerations whilst optimising opportunities, accessibility and experience for all users, including wheelchair users, pedestrians and cyclists, taking account of constraints including railway and port operations both during the construction period and the lifetime of the bridge.

4.3 A ‘rolling lift bascule bridge’ design has been chosen. The bridge would be opened using hydraulic pistons to lift the deck, which rolls back on the vertical part of the structure that contains a counterweight. The counterweight and hydraulics lift the bridge deck to a specific angle, allowing vessels to pass safely through, before rolling back to its original position. This design enables the size of the in-water PEIRs to be reduced as the counterweight is located in the air above the bridge deck which would produce a visually striking design. The emerging design looks to represent the future of Lowestoft as one of the UK’s key centres for off-shore renewable energy.

4.4 The new bridge would be a minimum of 12 metres above high tide levels, which is significantly higher than the existing Bascule Bridge, this would allow a larger number of vessels using the lake to pass below the new bridge without the need to open it.

4.5 When required to open, traffic will be alerted and the safety barriers would move into place. A control tower would be located adjacent to the bridge but there are no final decisions yet as to its exact location. No decisions have been made on opening schedules and discussions are ongoing with Associated British Ports (ABP) who would be operating the bridge.

4.6 The control tower would be two storeys in height above the bridge deck to provide visibility over the deck. It would contain the operating room for the bridge and potentially
a plant room. Opportunities for a viewing platform or information point for pedestrians and cyclists at deck level are being investigated.

4.7 A summary of the design progress has been produced and made available during the public consultation.

4.8 The project looks to incorporate planting and sustainable urban drainage solutions to deal with the surface water run off from the roads. This could include specially planted pond areas designed to collect the water and release it into the main drainage system slowly.

4.9 Both north and south of the lake, new facilities for pedestrians and cyclists would be provided and this could include controlled and uncontrolled crossing points.

Northern Layout

4.10 Two new roundabouts are proposed on the north side of the lake to connect to Peto Way. The existing roundabout at the junction of Rotterdam Road and Denmark Road will be reconstructed as part of the project.

4.11 The design will include a dedicated left lane on Peto Way for those travelling east towards Denmark Road, which will utilise the existing road following construction of the new roundabout.

4.12 The existing play park on Denmark Road is in close proximity to northern bridge approach. It is proposed to provide a new crossing point to provide access to the new public space.

Southern Layout

4.13 It is proposed to construct a new roundabout at the intersection of Waveney Drive and Riverside Road on the south side of the lake to connect the bridge to the existing road network.

4.14 There is insufficient room in the highway to accommodate an appropriately sized roundabout. Therefore, it is proposed to close Durban Road at its junction with Waveney Drive. Access to and from Durban Road at this location would however continue for cyclists and pedestrians. A turning head would be added to Durban Road to allow vehicles to turn in the road.

4.15 The carriageway between the new roundabout and Tom Crisp Way would be widened to become a dual carriageway with a central reserve.

Riverside Road

4.16 To achieve the necessary gradients, the new crossing will start rising from the current Riverside Road/Waveney Drive traffic lights. This would sever the existing access to Riverside Business Park via Canning Road.

4.17 A new access road from Waveney Drive, west of Riverside Road, is proposed to provide access to the businesses off Canning Road and those that front Waveney Drive.

4.18 The new junction would connect to the retained section of Riverside Road at the northern entrance to Waveney District Council offices. Pedestrian and cycle facilities will be provided.

4.19 It is proposed that tree planting could be added to the access to create a sense of entering a different space.
THE PROCESS

5.1 In March 2016, the Secretary of State for Transport (SoS) directed that the proposed scheme and any associated measures would be treated as a project of national significance for the purposes of the Planning Act 2008 (“Act”).

5.2 The SoS confirmed that he was satisfied that the proposed scheme was nationally significant for the following reasons:

- It provides a connection to/from the Trans European Network–Transport (TEN-T) and the Strategic Road Network. The TEN-T link is to the A12/A47, one of only a limited number of routes in the East of England which is recognised as such; and
- It would act as a tactical diversion route for the strategic road network (SRN), the A12/A47 when the Bascule Bridge, a nationally recognised pinch point, is closed thereby reducing delays and congestion on the SRN;

5.3 In addition, it was the SoS’s view that the proposed scheme;

- Supports national growth potential by directly delivering over 9,000 jobs with a further 3,500 indirect jobs, thus supporting the proposed employment growth;
- Improves connection to/from the Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft Enterprise Zone; and
- Delivers the Port of Lowestoft’s role in being the hub for the off-shore wind farms that are part of the East Anglia Array, a major energy supplier for the UK.

5.4 The developer is therefore required to make an application to the Secretary of State for Transport (through the Planning Inspectorate) for a Development Consent Order (DCO) in order to obtain the necessary consents to construct, operate and maintain the proposed scheme. The DCO would also contain powers to compulsorily acquire land, to override easements and other rights in connection with land and to use land temporarily.

5.5 It is anticipated that a DCO application for the proposed scheme will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in early 2018.

5.6 When the DCO application is submitted, the Planning Inspectorate will first consider whether to accept the DCO application for examination and will only do so if all the relevant statutory requirements and procedures have been followed.

5.7 If the DCO application is accepted, the proposed scheme will be the subject of further publicity by the developer. During the pre-examination stage, which is expected to last approximately three months, those with an interest in the scheme will be able to register with the Planning Inspectorate and provide a written summary of their views on the DCO application.

5.8 During the Examination of the DCO application, which lasts up to six months, those who have registered (including Suffolk County Council and Waveney District Council) to have their say will be invited by the Planning Inspectorate to provide more details of their views in writing.

5.9 The Planning Inspectorate may decide to hold hearings to seek further information.

5.10 Following the Examination, the Planning Inspectorate will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State (SoS) who will then decide whether to make the DCO.
5.11 Subject to approval, construction is anticipated to start in 2019/20 and would take between 2 and 3 years to complete.

Waveney District Council and Suffolk County Council Role

6.1 Host local authorities have an important role in the process. Whilst participation is not obligatory it is strongly advised. Local Authorities provide an important local perspective at the pre-application stage.

6.2 Under the Act the process of consultation is undertaken and “owned” by the development promoter and not by the local authorities. However, Suffolk County Council and Waveney District Council (referred to below as “the Councils”) are statutory consultees.

6.3 The public consultation subject of this report started on 4 September 2017, with a closing date of 16 October 2017. The Councils will be asked at a later date by the SoS to comment on the adequacy of the consultation.

6.4 After this consultation, it will be for the developer to decide whether to submit its application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to the Secretary of State for consideration via the National Infrastructure Planning section of the Planning Inspectorate (https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/)

6.5 The Councils will be asked by the Planning Inspectorate to prepare and submit a Local Impact Report setting out details of the likely impact of the proposed scheme on the authority’s area with regard to local and economic development planning policies for the Examination of the application by the Planning Inspectorate. In this context, the roles of the two Councils are equal.

6.6 The County Council will also, as Highways Authority in consultation with Waveney District Council, will be responsible for discharging the Requirements (planning conditions) on the DCO and be responsible for the monitoring and enforcement of any DCO made.

What has happened to date

7.1 The Councils have been engaging with the promoter on all aspects of the scheme. Agreement has for example been reached on Noise and Air Quality monitoring points, viewpoints for Landscape Visual Impact Assessment and scope of transport and ecological assessments.

7.2 Due to its nature and size, the scheme is Environmental Impact Assessment Development for the purposes of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2009. The developer submitted a request for a Scoping Opinion as required by the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations to the Planning Inspectorate. The Councils were consulted on this submission. Under delegated authority, a joint response from the Councils was sent to the Planning Inspectorate dated 24 March 2017 giving our comments and opinion on the submission. This was taken into consideration by the Planning Inspectorate in the formal Scoping Opinion published in April 2017.

7.3 This Scoping Opinion sets out the required contents of the Environmental Statement necessary to accompany the DCO submission and which will need to address all matters
set out therein, including evidence for the respective choices that SCC Highways has undertaken together with cumulative effects.

7.4 The developer has also consulted the Councils about their Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC). The SoCC sets out how the developer proposes to consult the community. The Councils responded to this consultation in March 2017 under delegated authority.

7.5 The Councils continue to have discussions with the developer on the scheme, in particular on aspects of the design. The design of the opening element of the bridge and other structures is being supported by an architect consultant and being reviewed by the Design Council, Commission for Architecture and Built Environment (CABE).

POLICY CONTEXT
National Policies
8.1 The Planning Act 2008 requires that major infrastructure proposals must be considered in accordance with a relevant National Policy Statement (NPS). These relate to different topics and have been ratified by Parliament. In the context of this proposal, the relevant NPS is the overarching National Policy Statement for National Networks (December 2014). Reference should also be made to the NPS for Ports (January 2012) although no new port development is proposed the development potentially impacts on port and rail infrastructure.

8.2 The National Policy Statements set out a series of criteria against which the Planning Inspectorate should test applications. In large part these replicate the types of test that would be used for any development proposal, including environmental impacts, Alternatives, climate change adaption, pollution control.

NPS for National Networks (2014)

8.3 This states that in considering any proposed development, and, when weighing its adverse impacts against its benefits, the Examining Authority and the Secretary of State should take into account;

- Its potential benefits, including the facilitation of economic development, including job creation, housing and environmental improvement, and any long term or wider benefits;

- Its potential adverse impacts, including any longer-term and cumulative adverse impacts, as well as any measures to avoid, reduce or compensate for adverse impacts.

8.4 On design the NPS states that “Applicants should include design as an integral consideration from the outset of a proposal”.

8.5 Paragraph 4.31 acknowledges that “A good design should meet the principal objectives of the scheme by eliminating or substantially mitigating the identified problems by improving operational conditions and simultaneously minimising adverse impacts. It should also mitigate any existing adverse impacts wherever possible, for example, in relation to safety or the environment. A good design will also be one that sustains the improvements to operational efficiency for as many years as is practicable, taking into account capital cost, economics and environmental impacts”
8.6 Paragraph 4.33 concludes that “The applicant should therefore take into account, as far as possible, both functionality (including fitness for purpose and sustainability) and aesthetics (including the scheme’s contribution to the quality of the area in which it would be located). Applicants will want to consider the role of technology in delivering new national networks projects. The use of professional, independent advice on the design aspects of a proposal should be considered, to ensure good design principles are embedded into infrastructure proposals.”

8.7 Although the National Policy Statements provide the main policy context for the Planning Inspectorate, the Examining Authority should also refer to other matters which it thinks are both important and relevant to its recommendations to the Secretary of State. This could include the Development Plan of the local planning authority. However, in the event of a conflict between the National Policy Statement and any other matter, the National Policy Statement prevails.

Planning Inspectorate Advice Notes
Advice Note nine
8.8 This Advice Note provides guidance on the use of the ‘Rochdale Envelope’; a term used to describe those elements of a scheme that have not yet been finalised but yet can be constrained within certain limits and parameters hence allowing a determination of likely significant effects to be presented in the Environmental Statement.

8.9 When using the Rochdale Envelope to apply for flexibility within a DCO application, the developer should use a worst case approach to identifying likely significant effects and should incorporate mitigation accordingly within the parameters of their scheme. Greater information is included within Chapter 6 on how SCC intends to make use of the Rochdale Envelope in the consenting process for the proposed scheme.

Advice Note seventeen
8.10 This sets out the recommended approach to Cumulative Effects Assessment (CEA) for NSIP projects including guidance on the relative weight to be applied to other developments depending upon how progressed they are through the consenting process.

Local policies
8.11 As mentioned above, the National Policy Statements state that it is appropriate for other matters to be considered by the Planning Inspectorate, including the Suffolk Local Transport Plan 2011-2031 (SLTP), New Anglia Strategic Economic Plan and the Waveney Development Plan.

Suffolk Local Transport Plan 2011-2031 (STLP)
8.12 The SLTP sets out a 20 year strategy which highlights the County Council’s long-term ambitions for the transport network. It includes several long standing aspirations for highway improvements in Lowestoft including the Third Lake Lothing crossing for which it acknowledges there is a very strong desire in the local community.

New Anglia Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Strategy 2017 (NALEP)
8.13 This document makes the case for investment in many major transport, infrastructure, skills and housing projects which the NALEP believes are required to help the East Anglian economy provide:
• 88,000 net new jobs by 2036
• 140,000 new homes by 2036
It acknowledges that Lowestoft suffers from congestion arising from the bottleneck created at the existing Bascule Bridge. And identifies a 3rd crossing as a key transport priority to aid regeneration and growth in the town.

**Waveney Core Strategy The Approach to Future Development in Waveney to 2021 adopted January 2009**

8.15 Policy CS05 - Lake Lothing and Outer Harbour Area Action Plan. Seeks the delivery of an Area Action Plan. An objective of the plan is better connections between the communities north and south of Lake Lothing.

8.16 Paragraph 5.105 sets out the District Council’s support of the creation of a third road crossing of Lake Lothing, as an integral part of dealing with regeneration and transport problems and issues in Lowestoft.

8.17 Policy CS15 – Sustainable Transport – States that the Council will continue to promote the creation of a third crossing of Lake Lothing, as an integral part of dealing with transport problems and issues in Lowestoft and the wider sub-region of Waveney and Great Yarmouth. The supporting text to CS05 on the regeneration of Lake Lothing also highlights the importance of a third crossing as a means of providing connections between communities.

**Lake Lothing and Outer Harbour Area Action Plan Adopted January 2012 (AAP)**

8.18 The AAP helps to guide development in the area surrounding Lake Lothing and the Outer Harbour in Lowestoft.

8.19 The plan supports the creation of jobs, particularly in the energy sector, new homes, improved pedestrian, cycle and vehicle links, flood risk management measures and better connections to the waterfront.

8.20 Paragraph 3.5.22 New Streets and Vehicular Routes states that “as a longterm ambition for the town a third crossing has been identified to provide a further vehicular connection across Lake Lothing. …., it will be expected that developers will work with the Council to ensure that proposals will not restrict the future potential for a new road crossing”.

8.21 Policy SSP3 - Kirkley Waterfront and Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood, furthermore states that development should not preclude a potential third crossing.

8.22 Core Strategy Policy CS10 states that the vitality and viability of all town centres will be maintained and enhanced.

8.23 Policy SSP2 of the Area Action Plan identifies land at Peto Square for town centre use regeneration.

8.24 Policy SSP9 of the Area Action Plan allocates land on the north side of Lake Lothing for Class B use.

**New Waveney Local Plan**

8.25 Waveney District Council is consulting on the First Draft of a new Local Plan. The plan identifies that the Lake Lothing Third Crossing is a strategic piece of infrastructure which is expected to be delivered during the plan period, to deliver and support the growth plans outlined within the plan.
8.26 Proposed Policy WLP1.4 – Infrastructure supports the Lake Lothing Third Crossing.

CONSULTATION DOCUMENTATION

9.1 The following Information has been provided and is available at; [www.suffolk.gov.uk/lakelholthing3rdcrossing](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/lakelolthing3rdcrossing)

- Consultation Leaflet – including a summary of the proposed scheme and details of Consultation Events
- Consultation Brochure – more detailed summary of the proposed scheme and its potential impact
- Design Process Summary – explaining the design rationale
- Questions and Answers – providing answers to commonly asked questions
- Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) setting out currently available information about the likely significant effects of the proposed scheme on the environment.
- Non-technical Summary of the PEIR.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Need for the Scheme and planning policy

10.1 The PEIR sets out the historic need for the scheme identified by both Councils. The proposals as identified in chapter 2 of the PEIR are considered consistent with the existing and emerging Waveney Local, Suffolk Local Transport Plan and objectives of the New Anglia Strategic Economic Plan.

10.2 The southern landing point of the bridge falls within the area allocated by Policy SSP3 of the Lowestoft Lake Lothing and Outer Harbour Area Action Plan (Adopted 2012). This policy allocates the area for a mixed-use development including housing, employment and community uses. More specifically, the policy suggests employment use around the Riverside Road area, where the southern landing point of the crossing is located. Point XII states that development on the SSP3 site should not preclude the potential for a third crossing and that new access routes should be designed to have the potential to be widened. This in effect gives priority to the construction of a third crossing in this location over other potential developments. As such the crossing and landing point is considered to be in conformity with this policy. The separate access road proposed for the existing businesses will also help directly support the development of the new employment uses and housing on the former Jeld Wen Site. Indirectly the crossing will help stimulate regeneration of the area by making the area more accessible and resilient in terms of traffic.

10.3 A central objective to the Area Action Plan is improving pedestrian and cycle connections and opening up public access to the waterfront. The Third Crossing provides an opportunity to help achieve this. The pedestrian and cycle provision on the bridge and at either end is supported, although measures should be included to show how links
between the bridge and the waterfront on the south-side of Lake Lothing can be accommodated.

10.4 The northern landing point of the bridge falls within the area allocated by Policy SSP9 of the Area Action Plan. This policy allocates the area for B class use. The policy also requires regard to be had to the latest proposals for Denmark Road improvements. Whilst the Third Crossing will remove some land allocated for B class uses, this land has already been considered surplus to requirements when considered at appeal for a retail warehouse scheme (DC/13/0110/OUT).

10.5 Policy CS10 of the Core Strategy states that the vitality and viability of all town centres will be maintained and enhanced. Policy SSP2 of the Area Action Plan identifies land at Peto Square for town centre use regeneration. By reducing traffic flows over the Bascule Bridge, this could potentially help improve the environmental amenity of the area and improve pedestrian and cycle connections between the town centre, the station and the waterfront. This could therefore help stimulate regeneration of the Peto Square site and help support the vitality and viability of Lowestoft Town Centre.

10.6 The existing Bascule Bridge crossing provides convenient access to town centre car parks. There is a risk that the new central crossing will not only divert traffic away from the Bascule Bridge, but will also potentially divert custom away from the town centre. Therefore the DCO application should identify how access to the town centre car parks should be encouraged, facilitated and managed.

10.7 The first draft of the new Waveney Local Plan sets out significant levels of growth for Lowestoft including nearly 5,000 new homes over the period to 2036. Transport modelling has been undertaken to test the effects of this growth. This modelling has been undertaken on the basis that a third crossing is in place. Without a third crossing in place, there is a significant risk that the level of growth for the town could exceed the capacity of the junctions at the existing crossings. Therefore, the third crossing is considered an essential piece of infrastructure to allow the town to continue to grow. The First Draft Local Plan also continues the regeneration strategy outlined in the Area Action Plan. A key part of this is the regeneration of the town centre and reducing the effects of traffic around Station Square.

Consultation

10.8 It is considered that the consultation undertaken by the promoter is in accordance with the Scheme of Community Consultation agreed with the Councils. The documentation clearly sets out the background to the scheme, progress to date and identifies the additional information required.

10.9 The questions included within the questionnaire are considered relevant to the scheme so as to elicit an appropriate level and detailed response.
Alternatives considered

10.10 The 2017 Regulations require a “comparison” of environmental effects of the reasonable alternatives that have been studied when providing an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option. The consideration of alternatives is set out in chapter 4 of the PEIR.

10.11 Four types of alternatives have been considered: The broad location of the proposed

• scheme i.e. an eastern, western or central
• crossing of Lake Lothing;
• The constraints associated with the chosen option corridor;
• Waveney Drive Access Arrangements; and
• Bascule Bridge Design Alternatives

10.12 These options have been considered against a series of objectives for the scheme as set out in paragraph 3.1 of this report and the requirements of the scheme listed below:

• Provide a 7.3m single carriageway road with footways and a cycle lane;
• Connect to the existing network with at-grade junctions, wherever possible;
• Provide clearance above the railway line;
• Allow large vessels to turn within the confines of the channel;
• Relate logically to the existing network;
• Have minimal impact on existing development; and
• Avoid conflicting with planned new development, as envisaged in the Lake Lothing and Outer Harbour Area Action Plan.

10.13 The rationale provided and assessment is considered robust. The Councils acknowledge that further refinements to the scheme are ongoing and wish to be consulted on any significant changes.

The Existing Environment

10.14 Chapter 5 of the PEIR provides an overview of the existing environment in the vicinity of the proposed scheme, which is described in detail in chapters 8 to 19 in respect of each individual environmental aspects.

10.15 The PEIR includes in chapter 6 a description of the scheme including Figure 6.1 which shows the red line for the proposed scheme (including land required permanently, temporarily for construction, and over which rights are sought for, and the proposed arrangement.

10.16 Figure 6.3 shows the plan and elevation of the proposed bascule bridge and Figure 6.4 provides a diagrammatic image of the proposed scheme.

10.17 The Councils consider that the information set out in chapter 6 provides for a robust assessment of the potential environmental impacts considering a worst-case scenario of the project, with reference to the ‘Rochdale Envelope’ which allows a project description
to be broadly defined within a number of agreed parameters. This approach provides a
certain level of flexibility while a project is in the early stages of development and all the
detailed aspects are not known.

CONSULTEE RESPONSES

Design

10.18 The Councils have to date been involved in discussion with the developer on the design of
the opening section of the bridge. The form of structure proposed is set against the
Councils aspiration to seek a striking design that draws upon Lowestoft’s maritime history
and which would align with the Councils aspirations for economic growth in the area.

10.19 The Principal Design and Conservation Officer has been closely involved in the evolving
design of the bridge and is in agreement with the theme of ‘Marine Tech’ from which the
design concept of the bridge is derived and which is considered to be of such distinctive
design and appearance that it shall add positively to its immediate and wider setting and
to the surrounding townscape. The exiting idea of the ‘blade’ form for the vertical
counterweights is supported and it is important that consideration is also given to the
design of the sides and underside of the bridge.

10.20 The detailed comments of the Principal Design and Conservation Officer are attached in
Appendix 1 and the developer is advised to have regard to these as part of the DCO
application.

10.21 Whilst the design of the ‘lifting’ element has progressed to the satisfaction of the Councils
as documented in the “Lake Lothing Third Crossing Design Progress Summary”, the
councils seek assurances from the developer that discussions will continue on the other
elements of the structure.

10.22 Furthermore the Councils would like to see the developer’s commitment to a formal
design approach document to cover key site specific infrastructure, such as street
furniture, signage, public open space and landscaping features.

Air Quality

10.23 The information contained within the PEIR sets out clearly the study area and sensitive
receptors relevant for the assessment of local air quality impacts. It is considered that the
assessment modelling parameters are described adequately, and will address the air
quality impacts associated with emissions arising from dust during the construction phase
of the project; and impact of vehicle emissions during the operational phase of the
scheme. The relevant guidance to be followed is discussed and regulatory requirements
outlined.

10.24 Sensible dust mitigation measures are mentioned which are to be incorporated into the
Code of Construction practice.

Cultural Heritage – Historic Buildings

10.25 There is agreement within the PEIR with the listed and locally listed buildings that have
been identified within the study area and agreement that the impact of the proposal on
the Oulton Broad Conservation Area arising from intervisibility should be re-introduced to
the assessment. With regards to the methodology used to significance, magnitude of impacts and sensitivity it is suggested that a less formulaic approach that does not rely solely on the DMRB matrices should be adopted. It is however considered that there will be no harmful impacts arising on the identified designated and non-designated heritage assets, and that paragraphs 134 and 135 of the NPPF will not be engaged.

10.26 With regards to the Cultural Heritage Assessment it is considered that the Oulton Broad conservation area needs to be re-introduced for assessment (para. 5.2.4).

Archaeology

10.27 The PEIR represents a sound approach to assessment to date in relation to below-ground archaeological heritage.

10.28 The approach to assessment to date, as summarised in the PEIR, recognises that the development has potential to impact buried and tidal zone archaeological deposits and features, and the work undertaken towards the Environmental Statement is sound. The proposals set out in the PEIR for the Environmental Statement will provide appropriate assessment on below ground archaeological impacts to determine the planning application, and the PEIR outlines good initial proposals for further investigation and mitigation further to any consent.

10.29 A comment is that table 9.7 perhaps doesn’t reflect the full impacts that are set out in the text in terms of assets and in terms of construction effects.

10.30 Impacts may be considered minor in assessment terminology (9.5.10 and 9.7.1) but the ground impacts are large, and as identified archaeological remains will require the mitigation set out.

10.31 Additionally, and subsequent to the Desk Based Assessment, we have received correspondence, flagging the potential for earlier Saxon and Late Saxon/Scandinavian settlement in the area of the northern proposed roundabout, based on his assessment of the evolution of Lowestoft and the possible use of a former inlet leading northwards in the area of Rotterdam Road. The sections of the ES relating to these periods should therefore incorporate a revised consideration of this period (relating to section 9.4.31 and 9.4.55 of the PEIR), which can be discuss further. The proposals set out for investigation and mitigation, however, would address this potential.

10.32 Additionally to those mitigation proposals referenced in the PEIR 9.3.19, further palaeoenvironmental assessment may be appropriate.

10.33 Continued discussion with SCCAS and Historic England will facilitate the factoring of archaeological work in to project timetables. Specific impacts to draw attention to which are not explicitly set out in section 9.5.2 of the PEIR would include demolition and site clearance, remediation work, construction set up and compounds, piling, new roundabouts and road works, SUDS and planting, utilities and drainage.

10.34 We would encourage consideration of local heritage and distinctiveness inspired design in the open space areas, for example, where appropriate.
Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment

10.35 The PEIR includes a preliminary baseline study and assessment of the visual envelope of the project has been included. The information provided and approach proposed is robust and acceptable, containing a more refined sub-division of townscape character areas suggested during previous consultation, which more accurately reflect the more subtle differences in the local urban character.

10.36 It is particularly helpful that the further work required to finalise the townscape character (paras 10.4.8 and 10.7) and the scope and details of the assessment landscape and visual effects and photomontages, with the Local Authorities and the Broads Authority, is clearly set out.

Nature Conservation

10.37 The PEIR acknowledges that the data is at a preliminary stage and that more detailed assessments will be undertaken to inform the Environmental Statement. A comprehensive suite of surveys has been completed and a number are on-going (having been discussed with SCC and Natural England).

10.38 A detailed mitigation strategy would be expected to be included in the DCO submission. Consultation with SCC Ecologists on the mitigation strategy for the scheme is recommended.

10.39 The Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) Stage 1 Screening document is well set out. We would suggest however, that the HRA screening is revisited (in consultation with Natural England) once the detailed work plan is available.

Geology, Soils and Contamination

10.40 With regard to contaminated land the scope of the proposed work in the PEIR appears comprehensive and should address any issues. The proposal to consult directly with the Council on potentially contaminated sites is noted although this hasn’t happened yet.

Noise and Vibration

10.41 The assessments contained within the PEIR consider potential impacts relating to noise and vibration on Noise Sensitive Receptors (NSR) during the construction phase and confirmation that an assessment of noise impacts during the operational phase will be presented in the submitted Environmental Statement. The level of information for a detailed assessment of noise and vibration however, is not available to date. The noise sensitive receptors (NSR’S) nearest to the development site have been indicated and are considered accurate.

10.42 The relevant guidance to be followed which was previously agreed with WDC is discussed and regulatory requirements are outlined.

10.43 It is noted that further consultation with Waveney District Council Environment Protection Team will be undertaken in order to agree an appropriate level of assessment for the construction phase within the Environmental Statement, based upon the background noise measurements and the degree of information that is available on the construction program, activities and plant which will be employed. This further consultation opportunity is welcomed.
Materials

10.44 Chapter 14 of the PEIR sets out how the ES will assesses the materials resources required during the construction phase of the scheme and the generation and management and disposal of waste from the site. The approach is considered adequate at this stage. Ground investigation works will inform the resources required and it is suggested that the developer seeks advice from Suffolk and Norfolk Minerals and Waste Planning Authorities to identify suitable sites for disposal of hazardous and inert wastes arising from the development. It is noted in Table 14.1 that Wangford Landfill site is listed as a potential recipient for waste arising from the scheme it should be noted that this site has closed for receipt of waste and is in the final stages of restoration.

10.45 The preparation of an interim Construction Code of Practice to identify suitable mitigation measures in line with the waste hierarchy is welcomed.

Socio-Economic including Regeneration

10.46 The proposal is supported in that it supports the regeneration and growth objectives of the Lake Lothing and Outer Harbour Area Action Plan (AAP), Town Centre regeneration and the Enterprize Zone Delivery Plan. The regeneration plans aim to transform the image and perception of central Lowestoft, and a new high quality design crossing within the area will assist its success.

10.47 One of the major challenges for the delivery of regeneration in Lowestoft is that the areas in most need of inward investment, ie the AAP sites, are also where the transport networks have significant problems due to congestion of the two existing bridges and subsequent impact of the surrounding road networks. A third crossing should address this issue (and other objectives as set out in the consultation document), and will greatly improve access (including improved pedestrian and cycle access) to the proposed developments.

Riverside Road Enterprize Zone

10.48 The southern landing point is within the Riverside Road Enterprize Zone aimed at promoting inward investment into the area with a specific focus on supporting the energy, ports and logistics and offshore engineering sectors as well as the services which support them. Riverside Road also houses a new ‘civic quarter’ with Suffolk County Council and Waveney District Council shared office, along with Trinity House a new customer centre for Essex and Suffolk Water. It is important to ensure that the new crossing proposals ensure that there is sufficient access into these sites.

10.49 It is important that the new ‘avenue’ style access road should be able to accommodate the future employment land development both within the Enterprize Zone and the adjacent former Jeld Wen site to the west.

10.50 The proposed construction compound is the largest undeveloped space within the Enterprize Zone. It is desirable that in the longer term this site has waterfront access for pedestrians and has pedestrian access onto the bridge. Previous design discussions have included joint access combined with the control tower, although not detailed in the consultation document. It would be desirable to see this access or an alternative re-established as this would help integrate the bridge into the Enterprise Zone, assist with aspirations for waterfront access throughout the AAP and would encourage employees in the area to walk to work.
10.51 The regeneration delivery around the south landing will mainly be the responsibility of Waveney District Council working in partnership with the Enterprise Zone team (including Suffolk County Council and NALEP) once the crossing is completed, however we would like to ensure that the crossing design assists with the future redevelopment and supports the objectives of the area as set out in the Kirkley Waterfront and Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood Design Brief including the enhancement of waterfront access in the longer term, which will eventually link to access along the Asda site to the east, and to Brooke Peninsular to the west. The Design Guide for the area states that a 5m wide pedestrian/cycle route shall be constructed alongside the waterfront unless it can demonstrated that this would undermine safe/secure business operations.

Town Centre

10.52 The new crossing is likely to reduce traffic on the other bridges and connecting roads in Lowestoft and Oulton Broad. This should have a positive impact on the town centre and historic High Street where there will be opportunities to improve the pedestrian and cycling environment; increase permeability from existing residential areas back into the town centre; encourage new retail and leisure development and improve access and signage to carparks from the new crossing/road network.

10.53 Peto Square and South Quay are strategic sites in the AAP in close proximity to the new bridge. The area currently suffers from the effects of through traffic and poor environmental quality. By removing the volume of traffic from the existing bascule bridge there is an opportunity to encourage inward investment into this area, improve pedestrian and cycle connections and create new public space.

10.54 The impact of the crossing should also support regeneration plans within the northern end of the town centre with traffic reduction and improved permeability between the historic High Street and London Road North. Waveney District Council has recently applied to Historic England for this part of North Lowestoft to become a Heritage Action Zone.

Flood Risk

10.55 SCC Flood and Water Management’s main concern at this stage is the treatment of surface water from the proposed development, this is presented within Appendix 17A: Preliminary Water Framework Directive (WFD) Assessment. Compliance with the WFD and best practice guidelines is critical in this instance in order to protect water quality within Lake Lothing. Details on how surface water is being discharged are suitable at this stage, with further details to be submitted later in the process.

10.56 The site plan encompasses the last few metres and outfall of the Kirkley Stream into Kirkley Ham. It does not appear any works are proposed which affect this watercourse. However the Kirkley Stream is a highly sensitive watercourse and we would advise against works and that clearance on the channel remains. Significant works are being undertaken as part of the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project to reduce flood risk downstream.

10.57 The Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project will be responding separately to this consultation on the following points:
• Welcoming their comments about the importance of flood risk management but seeking confirmation that their plans do not increase flood risk be that tidal, fluvial or pluvial.
• Acknowledging their comments about environmental impacts and transport impacts and seeking clarification in combination effects linking to other projects have been considered.

Traffic and Transport
10.58 The views of Suffolk County Council Highway Authority are awaited.

Cumulative effects
10.59 Cumulative impacts are considered in the PEIR. And include impacts resulting from incremental changes caused by other past, present or reasonably foreseeable developments together with the proposed scheme. Five projects have been identified including;
• East Anglia Array;
• Sizewell C Nuclear Power Station;
• Sanyo Development Site;
• Brooke Peninsula and Jeld Wen Development; and
• Lowestoft Tidal Barrier.

10.60 At this stage the PEIR concludes given the information available that adverse cumulative effects are unlikely.

10.61 The Councils welcome the developer’s commitment to updating the Cumulative Effects Assessment and review of any new projects that may come into scope prior to submission of the application.

Conclusion
11.1 The existing bridges over the lake at Mutford Lock and the A47 Bascule Bridge are inadequate to meet current and future traffic demand. The Council considers that the proposed third crossing is essential infrastructure required to overcome delays and congestion that is a common occurrence for drivers, particularly during peak hours, and pedestrians and cyclists often have long and difficult journeys as they travel across the town. A new crossing will open up opportunities for regeneration and improved links between north and south Lowestoft.

11.2 The theme design concept of ‘Marine Tech’ for the bridge is supported. It is considered that the single rolling leaf bascule design will be a striking design that will become a distinguishing landmark feature in the surrounding townscape.

11.3 Drawing on the consultee responses above, whilst the proposed third crossing is very much supported and welcomed it is considered that in addition to those issues identified in the PEIR there are some matters that require further resolution/inclusion within the DCO application as follows:
Pedestrian and Cycle Links

- The DCO application should include measures to show how links between the bridge and the waterfront on the south side of Lake Lothing can be accommodated

Design

- A formal design approach document to cover a full palette of materials for lighting, seating, surface signage, traffic signage, signalling, colour, surfacing, public open space, landscaping, balustrading, barriers and acoustic beacons.

- Consideration to be given to the design of the sides and underside of the bridge.

- Specification of the choice of structural materials for the deck, supporting structure and the bascule.

- Design principles/parameters for the control tower including appearance, materials height and location

- Inclusion of viewing galleries and waiting areas when the bridge is in the open position.

- An assessment of the design against the set of Design Principles

Traffic and Transport

- The DCO application should identify how access to the town centre car parks should be encouraged, facilitated and managed.

- Recommendations of The Highway Authority

RECOMMENDATION:

That this report forms the Council’s formal response as Statutory Consultee to the Lake Lothing Third Crossing public consultation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Consultation documents are available to view on line at www.suffolk.gov.uk/lakelothing3rdcrossing or

See application ref: DC/17/3902/CCC at www.waveney.gov.uk/publicaccess

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