

**Application Ref:** 20/01026/FUL

**Proposal:** Construction of dual use cycle/pedestrian path and associated earthworks from Sutton village across the meadows to the Nene Valley Railway station at Stibbington, including cattle grids, a new 3m wide timber cycle/footbridge over field drain and new flight of steps with wheeling channel to the footbridge across the River Nene

**Site:** Land South Of, Lovers Lane, Sutton To Nene Valley Railway Station At Stibbington, Peterborough

**Applicant:** Mr Andrew Nash

**Referred by:** Councillor John Holdich  
**Reason:** The application should be considered along with other cycling and walking plans for the area as they will not all be funded.

**Referred by:** Sutton Parish Council  
**Reason:** Road Safety concerns, loss of amenity, availability of superior routes

**Site visit:** 06.09.2020

**Case officer:** Mrs J MacLennan  
**Telephone No.** 01733 4501733 454438  
**E-Mail:** janet.maclennan@peterborough.gov.uk

**Recommendation:** **GRANT** subject to relevant conditions

**1 Description of the site and surroundings and Summary of the proposal**

**Site and surroundings**

The application site is located to the south of Lovers Lane, Sutton comprising a 915m corridor of agricultural land leading to the Nene Valley Railway's (NVR) footbridge across the river Nene at Stibbington. Part of the site is the former Wansford to Stamford railway line, disused since 1931 and abandoned in 1959; the remains of which are clearly visible. Part of the line is a path which is tree lined on to the west with some trees on the east; access is not possible along its full length. The line is safeguarded for walking and cycling Infrastructure under policy LP15 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019). The northern end of the site lies adjacent to the Sutton Conservation Area boundary and runs to the west and south of an existing ménage. The southern end of the site includes as area of the Sutton Meadows County Wildlife Site (CWS).

There is an existing public right of way leading from Lovers Lane further west of the field which leads to the railway line and then runs to the south of the railway line towards Castor.

At present the footbridge is a permissive right of way, owned by the Nene Valley railway.

**Proposal**

The application seek permission for the construction of a shared-use path, providing access for pedestrians and cyclists, from the village of Sutton to the NVR station at Stibbington.

The path would be accessed off Lovers Lane and would run to the west and south of the Menage and then follow the former railway line on the eastern side of the field. An earthwork ramp would take the path from the field level to the old railway level. The path would continue along the former railway line. The proposal includes:

- A 2.5m wide path with a tarmac surface with suitable access controls to maintain the adjacent land-use for livestock with cattle grids and gates.
- A 3m wide timber cycle/footbridge crossing an existing field ditch.
- Replacement steps with two landing sections leading up to the footbridge across the River Nene to the NVR station. The steps include a 'wheeling rail' enabling cycles to be pushed up to the bridge.
- 6 No Sheffield cycle stands will be provided at the bottom of the steps.
- Proposed surfacing works to widen and level out the existing un-surfaced informal path between the pedestrian bridge over the River Nene and the edge the Old Great North Road.

Revisions to the scheme and additional information including a Heritage Statement, Ecological Impact Assessment and Sequential Test Statement have been received since the application was submitted and a further re-consultation has been undertaken.

A Listed Building application has also been submitted for the construction of new steps to Nene Valley viaduct ref. 20/01746/LBC which is also to be considered for determination by Members of the Planning Committee.

A small section of the application site falls within Huntingdon District Council (HDC) Authority and therefore an identical application has been submitted to HDC for consideration.

## **2 Planning History**

No relevant planning history

## **3 Planning Policy**

Decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan policies below, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

### **Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990**

#### **Section 66 - General duty as respects listed buildings in exercise of planning functions**

The Local Planning Authority has a statutory duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

#### **Section 72 - General duty as respects conservation areas in exercise of planning functions.**

The Local Planning Authority has a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

### **National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019)**

#### **Paragraph 47 - Determination of Applications**

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

**Paragraph 91/92 -** Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address

identified local health and well-being needs. To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community.

**Paragraph 102 – Sustainable Transport**

Opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued.

**Paragraph 155 - Flood Risk**

Inappropriate development in areas at risk from flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk. Where development is necessary in such areas the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing the risk of flooding elsewhere. Development should be subject to a sequential test and if appropriate an exceptions test.

**Paragraph 175 - Biodiversity Enhancement**

Development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported. Opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged.

**Section 16 - Impact on Designated Heritage Assets**

Local Planning Authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhance the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation, the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic viability and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. When considering the impact of development great weight should be given to the assets conservation. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. Any harm to or loss of the significance of the designated heritage assets should require clear and convincing justification. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to the designated heritage assets permission should be refused unless it can be demonstrated that substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm. Where harm is less than substantial this harm should be weighed against the public benefits including securing an optimum use of the asset.

**Peterborough Local Plan 2016 to 2036 (2019)**

**LP01 - Sustainable Development and Creation of the UK's Environment Capital**

The council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development within the National Planning Policy Framework. It will seek to approve development wherever possible and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area and in turn helps Peterborough create the UK's Environment Capital.

**LP07 - Health and Wellbeing**

Development should promote, support and enhance the health and wellbeing of the community. Proposals for new health facilities should relate well to public transport services, walking/cycling routes and be accessible to all sectors of the community.

**LP11 - Development in the Countryside**

Part F: Protecting the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land- Proposals should protect this land to ensure the continuation of the agricultural economy. With the exception of allocated sites proposals affecting this land will only be accepted if there is lower grade land available, the impacts have been minimised through design solutions and where feasible the land is restored when the development ceases.

**LP13 - Transport**

LP13a) New development should ensure that appropriate provision is made for the transport needs that it will create including reducing the need to travel by car, prioritisation of bus use, improved walking and cycling routes and facilities.

LP13b) The Transport Implications of Development- Permission will only be granted where appropriate provision has been made for safe access for all user groups and subject to appropriate mitigation.

LP13c) Parking Standards- permission will only be granted if appropriate parking provision for all modes of transport is made in accordance with standards.

LP13d) City Centre- All proposal must demonstrate that careful consideration has been given to prioritising pedestrian access, to improving access for those with mobility issues, to encouraging cyclists and to reducing the need for vehicles to access the area.

#### **LP15 - Safeguarded Land for Key Infrastructure**

Permissions will only be granted on safeguarded land which does not threaten or hinder the ability to implement the identified infrastructure project.

#### **LP16 - Urban Design and the Public Realm**

Development proposals would contribute positively to the character and distinctiveness of the area. They should make effective and efficient use of land and buildings, be durable and flexible, use appropriate high quality materials, maximise pedestrian permeability and legibility, improve the public realm, address vulnerability to crime, and be accessible to all.

#### **LP17 - Amenity Provision**

LP17a) Part A Amenity of Existing Occupiers- Permission will not be granted for development which would result in an unacceptable loss of privacy, public and/or private green space or natural daylight; be overbearing or cause noise or other disturbance, odour or other pollution; fail to minimise opportunities for crime and disorder.

LP17b) Part B Amenity of Future Occupiers- Proposals for new residential development should be designed and located to ensure that they provide for the needs of the future residents.

#### **LP19 - The Historic Environment**

Development should protect, conserve and enhance where appropriate the local character and distinctiveness of the area particularly in areas of high heritage value.

Unless it is explicitly demonstrated that a proposal meets the tests of the NPPF permission will only be granted for development affecting a designated heritage asset where the impact would not lead to substantial loss or harm. Where a proposal would result in less than substantial harm this harm will be weighed against the public benefit.

Proposals which fail to preserve or enhance the setting of a designated heritage asset will not be supported.

#### **LP27 - Landscape Character**

New development in and adjoining the countryside should be located and designed in a way that is sensitive to its landscaping setting, retaining and enhancing the landscape character.

#### **LP24 - Nene Valley**

Within the Nene Valley area the council will support development that will safeguard and enhance recreation and/or bring landscape, nature conservation, heritage, cultural or amenity benefits. The proposal would need to be appropriate in terms of use, scale and character. Development which would increase flood risk or compromise the performance of flood defences will not be permitted.

#### **LP28 - Biodiversity and Geological Conservation**

#### Part 1: Designated Site

International Sites- The highest level of protection will be afforded to these sites. Proposals which would have an adverse impact on the integrity of such areas and which cannot be avoided or adequately mitigated will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where there are no suitable alternatives, overriding public interest and subject to appropriate compensation.

National Sites- Proposals within or outside a SSSI likely to have an adverse effect will not normally be permitted unless the benefits outweigh the adverse impacts.

Local Sites- Development likely to have an adverse effect will only be permitted where the need and benefits outweigh the loss.

Habitats and Species of Principal Importance- Development proposals will be considered in the context of the duty to promote and protect species and habitats. Development which would have an adverse impact will only be permitted where the need and benefit clearly outweigh the impact. Appropriate mitigation or compensation will be required.

#### Part 2: Habitats and Geodiversity in Development

All proposals should conserve and enhance avoiding a negative impact on biodiversity and geodiversity.

#### Part 3: Mitigation of Potential Adverse Impacts of Development

Development should avoid adverse impact as the first principle. Where such impacts are unavoidable they must be adequately and appropriately mitigated. Compensation will be required as a last resort.

#### **LP29 - Trees and Woodland**

Proposals should be prepared based upon the overriding principle that existing tree and woodland cover is maintained. Opportunities for expanding woodland should be actively considered.

Proposals which would result in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland and or the loss of veteran trees will be refused unless there are exceptional benefits which outweigh the loss. Where a proposal would result in the loss or deterioration of a tree covered by a Tree Preservation Order permission will be refused unless there is no net loss of amenity value or the need for and benefits of the development outweigh the loss. Where appropriate mitigation planting will be required.

#### **LP32 - Flood and Water Management**

Proposals should adopt a sequential approach to flood risk management in line with the NPPF and council's Flood and Water Management SPD. Sustainable drainage systems should be used where appropriate. Development proposals should also protect the water environment.

Sutton Conservation Area Appraisal (2015).

## **4 Consultations/Representations**

**PCC Conservation Officer** – From a heritage consideration in principle the proposed works can be supported.

Replacement of the staircase: The existing staircase was presumably part of the 1977 restoration. Although important the existing iron staircase is not considered significant. It is incongruous with the decorative metal work on the bridge and does not reference the character of the Listed building. Further information was sought to determine if the proposed new staircase design would be acceptable. Following receipt of a revised Heritage Statement and Listed Building application there is no objection. Although a more detailed Heritage Statement would be welcomed, the revised Heritage Statement meets the requirements in NPPF paragraph 189, and this is deemed sufficient.

Construction of the cycle way: The Wansford to Stamford abandoned railway is safeguarded under the Peterborough Local Plan for a potential infrastructure routes. The re-use of heritage assets is considered an important aim in conservation as it ensures their future use. In this instance the

principle of conversion of the archaeological feature to a cycle track is welcomed because in addition to its re-use, it would also keep the transport use of the former line and allow the public to better appreciate the asset. In combination with the Heritage Railway Line at Wansford as a destination it would also allow for a more holistic approach to the use of the redundant railway infrastructure.

The preference is for the former line to form the basis of the cycle route however the proposal only uses a section and appears to make full re-use of the line more difficult. In the future the cycle path should meet up with the Green Wheel in Southorpe, therefore allowing the entire of the abandoned line to be traversed from Wansford Station to Stamford. If the route is to be incorporated with the soon to be dualled A47 and beyond the cycle path should remain on the archaeological feature and be accessed directly from Lovers Lane.

The second point of concern is where the proposed cycle way drops off the abandoned railway. There is a clear preference for as much of the route to be utilised as possible. However it is understood that due to the height of the bank closer to the bridge this would make access and egress difficult.

Although the works will impact upon the former railway line through surface excavation, this is considered limited and as it is to be filled the form of the archaeological feature will be retained. As such the loss of some of the integrity of the remaining earthwork is an acceptable loss to bring the former railway route back in to use.

There is concern regarding the asphalt surface. A softer hardened gravel should be used which would allow for the appreciation of the route to be of a more subservient arrangement and differentiate it as a former railway rather than a road.

Impact of the proposals upon the Sutton Conservation Area: The beginning on the route starts just inside the Sutton Conservation Area boundary but the presence of the route will also have an impact upon the general Conservation Area due to its presence and use.

Although Sutton now appears relatively isolated with no through traffic, this is mostly a modern construct brought upon due to the increase in vehicle traffic. Historically there would have been access to Stibbington, Water Newton and Durobrivae, various accesses of which can still be discerned and are more explicit within the first OS Map. There is a clear preference for Sutton to be linked up on none motorised routes, bringing the village back in to the local historical environment connectivity. Indeed this will be of benefit to the appreciation of the many heritage assets within the village. As such there is no issue with the re-establishment of greater connectivity of Sutton with other local destinations.

Lovers Lane is a verdant and pleasant access to the village centre from the south. It provides good views of various Listed buildings at the northern end, with some interesting buildings and features as you traverse southward out of the village. These culminate of open views of elements of the 'Grange' with glimpses of the historic and Listed buildings on Graeme Road before you arrive at the open countryside with its appearance of former village common and flood plain.

The only impact to Lovers Lane positive serene character from the proposal would be through its increased use. This would be limited, to not be materially detrimental and more than balanced by its greater appreciation by the public. It is accepted that this benefit would be lost if as preferred the cycle path remained on the former railway feature.

In general the proposal is considered to be of benefit to the Sutton Conservation Area, the archaeological feature of the former railway line which is considered a non-designated heritage assets and potentially depending upon details the Grade II Listed Bridge.

**PCC Ecologist** - The survey was done in 2018; the badger survey needs updating to assess whether a licence is required and GCN survey results updated. The applicant should consult with the Wildlife Trust.

Having reviewed the updated ecological survey report I have no objection to the proposal, subject to conditions – Ecological measures in accordance with section 8.5.2 and 8.6.2 of the Ecology report. Section 8.2.2 of the ecology report describes how appropriate mitigation/compensation could be delivered. The mitigation/compensation scheme should be conditioned to be carried out pre-commencement in consultation with Wildlife Trust.

**PCC Tree Officer** – No objection in principle. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) and Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) with regards to the obvious tree root related issues and impact with the installation of a 2.5/3m wide cycleway/footpath, as proposed should be secured by condition. Please note all trees within 15m of any proposed development should be clearly and accurately marked on any submitted plan/s and included within any AIA/AMS, where appropriate.

**PCC Rights of Way Officer** – No objection. I support additional links and access to the countryside and welcome this project, However if possible I would like the route to be open to all NMU's including equestrians, this could be done relatively easily by changing some of the gates and surface, I appreciate that a tarmac path can be relatively easy to maintain but could be considered not in keeping with the surrounding countryside, an unbound alternative could be considered and this would also benefit equestrians should they be permitted on the route.

Could I confirm that the route is to remain permissive with no intention to dedicate the route as a public right of way? And maintenance would be the responsibility of the individual landowners?

**PCC Pollution Team** – No objection. The submitted information is noted and accepted the Pollution Team has no objections to the proposal.

**PCC Peterborough Highways Services** – No objection. At the current time, very little highway is affected, but a discussion would need to be had if there is an overarching plan to take on sustainable routes such as these. We understand the cycleway is not subject to adoption by the LHA, therefore our only concern is how the site connects to the existing public highway, and its associated infrastructure. This can be undertaken as part of a s.278 application during the detailed design stage. This will include visibility at the junction connection with Lovers Lane. No fencing is to be installed on the public highway. Ensure no materials are stored on the public highway - access to the site will also need to be covered by a CTMP to minimise and mitigate the impact on Lovers Lane.

**Lead Local Drainage Authority** – No objection. Further information is required on the party responsible for the maintenance and management of the proposed timber bridge and the ramp construction. Further construction details of details including a cross section to show the length of construction and pipes, headwall details, backfill materials, bedding surround and fencing are required. The details may be secured by condition.

**PCC Archaeological Officer** – No objection. At the Stibbington end the remains of a Roman kiln were found under a railway track during maintenance work at Wansford Station in the mid-1980s. The kiln was used for firing grey wares and was probably one of those noted by 19th century antiquarian E.T Artis in the vicinity. Roman pottery was also found in the area.

The proposed route crosses an area of medieval ridge and furrow visible on aerial photographs as cropmarks and partly surviving as earthworks. Remains may extend towards the proposed cycle route. The route will follow the existing embankment of the disused railway branch line which has already been dismantled.

The heritage assessment submitted to support the current application has highlighted the positive contribution of the scheme. The scheme is not going to have a major impact on potential buried remains. However, details are needed with reference to the works compound and the 3m wide timber cycle/footbridge over field drain, including type and depth of foundations, and any other groundwork associated with the scheme that has not been mentioned in the Design and Assess Statement.

Following receipt of further information the officer is satisfied that the proposed scheme is not going to impact on buried remains. Therefore, there is no need to secure a programme of archaeological work. Dr Upex's involvement is very welcome.

**PCC Sustainable Travel Officer** – Supports the scheme.

**Highways England** - No objection.

**The Wildlife Trusts (Cambridgeshire)** - The report states that the cycle path will include 0.28km of The Nene Valley Railway Line CWS only. However, the route of the path crosses the dismantled railway and into Sutton Meadows South CWS; the plans show the route along the north of the drain and pond and then heading south into Nene Valley Railway Line CWS. The Trust would be keen to know the extent of permanent loss of habitat within Sutton Meadows CWS, additional temporary loss during construction, and what mitigation measures are proposed, including those to protect other areas of the CWS during construction activities and to protect the remainder of the CWS once the cycle/pedestrian path is operational (for example from litter or public access).

The Ecology report also states the occurrence of unimproved herb-rich grassland, tall fen and semi-improved riverside pasture along other parts of the route of the cycle path. These habitats are given no evaluation in the subsequent Impact Assessment, with only nesting birds and reptiles highlighted as potential significant receptors. Whilst the reports says that areas of habitat loss will be small, there are no calculations provided as to the areas of loss of habitat types, with some of these (those mentioned above) potentially qualifying as Habitats of Principal Importance. We would encourage a further consideration of these habitats within the Impact Assessment, with thought provided as to how the project can ensure no net loss of biodiversity, in keeping with National Planning Policy Guidance.

Discussion have taken place with Nene Park Trust (land owner) and Wildlife Trust have agreed on an appropriate approach to compensation for the impact of the proposed cycleway on the Sutton Meadows South CWS. This would be implementing a plan to harrow (or similar) an area of currently poorer grassland, in the CWS or fields immediately adjacent to it, and spreading locally sourced green hay. As per the ecologist's report this area should be 0.8ha. I would suggest that this is the minimum size and any additional can count towards the scheme's delivery of a net gain for biodiversity (BNG).

An outline statement is required for planning purposes, with sufficient detail to ensure the fundamental points are committed to, with the details being conditioned, subject to planning approval. A survey of the areas available should be carried out at the right time of year, to identify a suitable area for the compensatory measures and monitoring surveys of the enhanced area of grassland should form part of the compensation package and a commitment to these be made in the statement for planning and include details of Biodiversity Net Gain.

A statement has been provided by the applicant with is acceptable to the Wildlife Trust.

**Natural England** - No objection. Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have likely significant effects on statutorily protected sites and has no objection to the proposed development.

The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 requires local planning authorities to consult Natural England on "Development in or likely to affect a Site of Special Scientific Interest" (Schedule 4, w). Our SSSI Impact Risk Zones are a GIS dataset designed to be used during the planning application validation process to help local planning authorities decide when to consult Natural England on developments likely to affect a SSSI.

**Environment Agency** - The proposed development will only meet the National Planning Policy Framework's requirements in relation to flood risk the development is carried out in accordance with the submitted flood risk assessment (November 2019) and the mitigation measures it details.

**British Horse Society** - Objection. Whilst we support the creation of safe off road Active Travel routes for all non motorised user groups, the construction of restrictive cycle / pedestrian routes is contrary to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Plan which defines Active Travel as pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. It is socially and environmentally right that public money should be spent to benefit the most users possible.

The creation of cycle paths rather than bridleways give precedence to potentially very fast moving cyclists over the more vulnerable NMU's - the most vulnerable being pedestrians followed by equestrians. On bridleways cyclists are required to give way to pedestrians and horse riders and horse riders are required to give way to pedestrians. Therefore we would support the creation of bridleways which meet the requirements of equality rather than cycle paths.

The construction of restrictive paths further fragments the existing inadequate bridleway network. This path not only restricts which NMU groups can use the path but also restricts users within the groups. The bridge with its steps and cycle gully is an obstruction for those with mobility challenges, Mums with prams and any cyclist who simply cannot wheel a bike up the steps.

There appears to be conflicting information supporting this application. On the one hand it is deemed to be a leisure route and therefore would be lightly used to avoid the objection that it would increase traffic on the Bridleway Ailsworth 3 and Bridleway Sutton 3. On the other it is claimed it would attract heavy use in order to justify creation of the route.

Reference is made within the application to the Green Wheel cycleway - we would point out that the Green Wheel is not a cycleway but a multi user route available to equestrians as well.

'Desire line' is often referred to in discussions about cycle routes – cyclists seek the most direct line to achieve their destination therefore it is highly likely that anyone travelling from Ailsworth to the proposed path would use the Bridleways. The paucity of bridleways in this area means that local horse riders only have use of Bridleways Ailsworth 3 and Sutton 3 or the highway. Whilst horse riders and cyclists can and do share the PROW network safely and mostly considerately, as this bridleway network is extremely limited, there is no option to dissipate any increased traffic over other routes.

We do not support the use of tarmac in the countryside creating roadification. There are other surfaces available more suitable for a rural environment. Whilst tarmac creates a suitable surface for speeding cyclists, it is not a preferred surface for horse riders, joggers, pedestrians nor dog walkers.

Whilst we appreciate the desire for a new route in this area and that the terrain presents significant challenges, this route does not meet the requirement for a multi user path available to the widest group of users therefore we must object to this application.

**Peterborough Civic Society** – Support - The proposal will provide a safe and convenient route from the village streets and lanes of Sutton into the open countryside to the west of Peterborough and more immediately to Wansford Station on the Nene Valley Railway. It will help to encourage cycling and walking on a safe, convenient and attractive route.

Concerns have been expressed, from the Sutton Parish Council and a number of individuals, regarding the potential conflict between cyclists and pedestrians, horse riders and motor vehicles on the highways leading to the proposal from an easterly direction. There are also concerns about impact on wildlife and general amenity level enjoyed by the villagers.

The proposed scheme has been developed by the applicant and Sustrans over a number of years involving a substantial amount of local and wider public consultation. It has the support of a large number of the general public and interested organisations such as; Nene Park Trust, Nene Valley Railway, The Langdyke Trust, a number of local cycling clubs, and East Northants District Council.

**Peterborough Local Access Forum** - On behalf of the Peterborough Local access Forum I support this excellent application that will enhance and encourage public access to the countryside.

**Ramblers (Central Office)** - I have frequently walked on the existing public footpath between Sutton and Wansford station which at times can be quite difficult to traverse because of flooding in parts. Therefore on behalf of Peterborough Ramblers I fully support this plan.

**Huntingdon District Council** - It would appear that the proposal includes development within the District of Huntingdonshire. Therefore, in accordance with paragraph 11 of the National Planning Practice Guidance an identical application should also be submitted to Huntingdonshire District Council. It doesn't appear that the works within the District of Huntingdonshire would require an application for listed building consent.

**Peterborough Cycling Forum** - Supports application however the following requests are made:  
Animal Grids - The Cycle Forum therefore requests confirmation of bar diameter and spacing. (grid with closely-spaced (100mm) threaded rod bars can be crossed by cycles without undue difficulty)  
Recommends the grids incorporate a design feature to allow a small animal to escape in the unlikely event it has fallen down between the bars.

Cycle Parking - requests the Sheffield stands are placed no less than 1m apart, to enable easy access for cycles fitted with panniers or child seats and to minimise the risk of damage caused by inadvertent contact between cycles.

Wheel channels - Where possible, wheeling ramps should be provided on both sides of steps, so that ascending and descending cyclists do not have to wait for each other, and because most cyclists prefer to push their bike on their right side.

A width of 2m is insufficient for a second channel to be located 300mm from the left hand edge but the Cycle Forum requests the Applicant considers the possibility of providing an L-section on this side.

Instead of the standard 'shared path' sign (TSRGD 2016, Schedule 3, Part 2, Diagram 956) the Forum recommends that signs are installed which include simple, concise wording to encourage consideration and respect between users. Recommends additional signage that alerts all users to the fact that the road is shared by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. The route will appeal to families/leisure riders and will be in addition to a new cycle route between Sutton and Stibbington.

**Network Rail - Eastern** - Network Rail has no observations to make. Please note that the Nene Valley Railway is not operated or maintained by Network Rail. The line is operated by Nene Valley Railway Ltd who should be contacted in relation to this scheme if you haven't done so already.

**Cllr Holdich** - In the absence of Cllr Lamb I have been asked to handle the residence concerns regarding this application of which there are many and I believe have been listed to you so I will not repeat them. What I would ask you to do is to look at what is going on around this application. It is my understanding that the highways Agency are proposing a cycle track alongside the A47 upgrade which I and others have been pushing for ,also it is my understanding that Nene park are doing similar things along the Nene valley railway .

It is my view their needs a cycling and walking plan for the area and this application should be at the very least put on hold and told to come up with others a master plan for the area because they will not all be funded and in the end nothing will happen at all. Should you not have the well laid out objections from Sutton Village I am happy to forward them to you .

If you are mindful to approve the application I would request it goes to committee for discussion.

**Sutton Parish Council** – Objection. Sutton Parish Council strongly opposes the above application and irrespective of the officer recommendation, requests the application is determined by Planning Committee.

There is strong local opposition. A survey carried out in January 2020 - 71 (79 % of respondents) were opposed or strongly opposed to the scheme; 18 (20%) were supportive or strongly supportive. Road safety - Sutton's roads have a Quiet Lane status with blind sharp bends, a hump-back bridge, four junctions with poor visibility, no footways, some blind driveways (visibility mirrors used on some) and pedestrian gates connecting directly to the highway all giving rise to safety concerns for all road users including walkers, families with young children and horse-riders.

Fast riding and larger group cyclists are already an ongoing issue.

Horse-riding is a common and popular activity on Sutton's roads. Sutton itself has 3 active stable yards and 7 paddocks. Safety incidents with other road users is already an increasing danger to horse and riders both locally and nationally. The inevitable increase in cyclists and car traffic will only exacerbate the problem.

Although the proposed route does not advocate the short cut using the narrow Sutton Crossways bridleway, as is the case now a large proportion of cyclist do and will use this problematic bridleway endangering cyclists, horse riders and pedestrians alike.

General cycle traffic is projected to increase, adding to safety concerns.

#### Loss of Tranquillity and Amenity:

- No consideration has been given to Sutton Conservation Management Plan in line with policy PP17.
- Sutton will no longer be, in effect, a cul-de-sac for cyclists which, in itself, has managed the cycle traffic levels, and will become a through route attracting more cyclists and other motorised traffic. These include powered-cycles, which are particularly attractive for commuting, and vehicle traffic using the village as an alternative parking space to visit Nene Valley Park and Wansford Railway, which the village already experiences especially during special events in the winter months.
- No surveying nor valid consideration has been given to wildlife habitat especially protected species such as badgers and bats given they are regularly seen within and around the village.
- Special cattle grids have been included at two points on the proposed route which are cycle friendly but will certainly be a risk for horse entry and exit to the ménage only a few metres away, endanger riders due to the 'spooking' of horses using the ménage and endanger roaming wildlife.

#### A Better Credible Way Forward

- PCW scheme was originally devised a decade or so ago as a means of improving access to Wansford and the countryside west of the A1 and avoiding the dangers of cycling on the narrow section of the present A47 between Sutton roundabout and Wansford. Sutton Parish Council strongly supports that objective.
- However, since then green travel and awareness of the environment has dramatically increased, Peterborough continues to expand and needs room to breathe. So, a far more inclusive and joined up approach is needed involving Parish Councils and integrating the work of the various bodies putting forward cycling and leisure routes.
- Nene Park Trust's (NPT) strategy document 2017-2050 highlights far better and less intrusive alternative routes, one being an upgrade to the footpath from Station Road Ailsworth to Nene Valley Railway (NVR) station at Wansford, by-passing Sutton altogether and giving NPT access to their land to the west and NVR station.
- The major change affecting PCW scheme is Highways England's project for dualling the A47 between Wansford and Sutton. This includes safe full disabled friendly WCHR (Walkers, Cyclists and Horse Riders) routes for both East/West and North/South travel away from the main carriageway. It addresses all the primary objectives that PCW raised and is a 'live' funded scheme expected to be the subject of a Development Consent Order later this year. We have been given a preview of the new scheme design which we are advised will be formally released in mid October, which we believe the parishes of Stibbington, Wansford, Upton and Sutton will overwhelming support.

#### Submitted Planning Documentation Errors and Inaccuracies

- Peterborough Cycle West (PCW) have consistently ignored the negative impacts on Sutton and have not included any safety or traffic survey analysis.
- PCW have actively downplayed the significant benefits to all leisure users of the A47 WCHR routes. It is noted that many of the supporters of the application seem to be unaware that an alternative more direct route is planned.
- PCW/Sustrans have misquoted Highways England representatives more than once to support their narrative that PCW route is complementary to their route. We have documented evidence from HE.
- Sustrans Design and Access statement completely misrepresents the Parish Meeting on this proposal and the strength of argument against it by Parishioners and have not made any change

of significance suggested at the time.

- PCW have consistently implied Sutton was the only parish against the proposal when they were explicitly told neither Wansford or Stibbington supported their proposal but along with Sutton were fully behind Highways England's A47 WCHR scheme.
- PCW fail to advise that the route is currently a permissive footpath and along with the existing footpath across Sutton Meadows and rail bridge access gives the same views and vistas of the landscape and heritage so is not unique to their proposal.
- PCW openly quote supporting partners and organisations that they have presented to but we are advised that no impacts on Sutton nor the duplication of the A47 route nor other alternatives were conveyed thus giving a false impression to the value of the scheme.

**Sutton Parish Council – following re-consultation –** Any proposal should give the utmost consideration to the need of this route, design and construction details, and the impact on residents, amenity and environment. Sutton Parish Council stands by its original objection and all the previous comments submitted. The following comments should be read in conjunction with those previously submitted as they build the argument against the proposal and reasons for objecting.

Additional comments to the application and revisions:

1. Highways England have recently released their latest proposals for the A47 dualling project between Sutton and Wansford which it anticipates to submit to the Planning Inspector in May 2021. The walkers, cyclist and horse riders (WCHR) routes have been confirmed within the proposal giving safe access to the West from Sutton roundabout to Wansford for all types of non motorised leisure and commuter users. We also welcome the additional safe access to the North of the existing A47 under the new dual carriageway. The WCHR ROUTES within the A47 upgrading provide all the safe and functional needs for cyclists and make the proposed route redundant.

2. Flood Risk- A major part of the application is within a Flood risk 3 area and is subject to a Sequential Flood test. The applicant states "I would argue that in this case the exception test should be applied because grounds exist as described in paragraph 160 of the NPPF, that is a) The development would provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh the flood risk: The development provides no additional benefit to the community than the route provided by the A47 dualling, therefore does not outweigh the flood risk. b) The development will be safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risks elsewhere and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall: It is very likely that the proposal will increase flood risk, will not reduce flood risk- A sequential flood test should be carried out.

3. Flood Risk - Serious flooding has been recorded at least six times during the last 20 years along the Nene valley from Northampton to Peterborough. Upstream from the Nene Valley Rail bridge flooding has affected Sutton, Stibbington, Wansford, Yarwell and beyond. The area around the rail bridge and Sutton meadows floods every year making the lower part of the proposed route impassable, over a month so far this year and counting! The bridge is a pinch point for flood waters and any addition structures, as part of the cycleway construction, will collect more debris affecting the rapid dispersal of flood water. The applicant ignores the current flood risk conditions in an attempt to circumvent the need for a sequential flood test. Given the likelihood of more severe weather conditions in the future this makes a mockery of the flood planning management.

4. Ecological Assessment - This confirms that the application will have a negative impact on the flora and fauna. Mitigation improvements and monitoring during construction is recommended. We note that the investigation has been made during the autumn and early winter and as we understand it is not in line with best practice and not able to give an indication of seasonal changes. Mitigation proposals should be part of the application and should be subject to independent scrutiny.

5. Nene Park Trust Master Plan - the majority of the planning proposal is over an existing permissive footpath and on land which is part of the NPT estate. As a charity NPT should ensure that any proposal on their land is in line with their published strategic objectives. All routes should be for all leisure uses. This route ignores horse riders, despite our effort and discussion with NPT and the applicant no attempt has been made to take this into consideration. As supporters of this application NPT should be held accountable for their plan for the Peterborough City and Rural Community.

6. Surfaces -The response from the Conservation Officer makes reference to the tarmac surface being incompatible with a rural aspect and typical rural footpaths. The Conservation Officer

recommends that a 'softer, hardened gravel' should be used to 'allow for the appreciation of the route to be of a more subservient arrangement: SPC totally agrees with this statement.

7. Surfaces - Transport Guidance note L TN 1/20 which we believe has been adopted by PCC refers to the range of surfaces which can be used and what is fit for purpose for the range of users. The applicant makes reference to the durability of tarmac and lower maintenance costs: SPC believe the surface should be loose bound porous material the same as Lovers Lane and compatible with the surrounding area. Whilst tarmac may be suitable for higher speed cyclists it may not be a preferred surface for horse riders, pedestrians nor dog walkers. Increasingly hot summers and tarmac melt is especially dangerous for dogs. Icy in the winter and a slip hazard for all.

8. Heritage statement - this refers to all heritage aspects within the area, on that we would defer to the expert. However, it also makes note to Heritage benefits: a) Increased access to the western part of the Nene park trust's rural estate which has a wealth of natural and historic interest: The proposed route adds no community benefit as a network of rural footpath already exists. b) Increased access to the Nene Valley Railway with similar benefits: Access already exists from Sutton to NVR by two footpaths which cyclists can walk with their bicycles as some already do.

9. Cattle grids? - cattle grids can be dangerous, particularly in this open rural setting, to wildlife, children, horse riders and dogs exercising with their owners. Lovers Lane is used by visitors and residents alike many of whom walk their dogs off lead as it is currently very safe to do so. Cattle quite frequently escape onto the proposed route and in a stressed situation could attempt to cross cattle grids. SPC has queried this on numerous occasions with the applicant and NPT with no specific response. If appropriate fencing were erected there would be no need for a cattle grid as is the current circumstance.

10. Route and Construction site access - Roads leading into and around Sutton hold Quiet Lane status, they are narrow, single track in many places, there are blind bends, blind drive exits and no footpaths. Little or no attention has been given to the impact of increased traffic and parking in the village nor to transportation of bulk construction materials. This is especially important with the narrow entrance to Lovers Lane which is totally unsuitable for heavy vehicles. Despite numerous requests the applicant has made no information available as to the potential numbers of users and to the amenity and safety impact upon the village. Sutton already becomes an overflow car park for the NVR at peak times. SPC believes all transport of bulk materials should be from the NVR end of the route and not through Sutton. NVR has the space, facilities and rolling stock for this purpose.

11. Route and Construction site access- details have been released by the applicant regarding the positioning of the site compound. The positioning is particularly inconsiderate to residents along Lovers Lane and users of the Menage facility. The Menage will be rendered unusable during construction and the amenity value significantly impacted with cyclists riding along 2 sides of the facility let alone the cattle grids.

12. Users - Many villagers and visitors use the permissive rail bed footpath towards NVR station and suitable improvements to the path surface would be welcomed to accommodate other less able users. NPT currently does very little to maintain the path which cyclists could already use to walk the 300m with their bicycles. SPC would readily provide a suitable secure cycle rack at the end of Lovers Lane. This would be an ideal compromise for all leisure users especially as the A47 proposals accommodate all the primary cycling needs.

13. Alternative route - The land owners, NPT, state in their Master Plan - Cycle West Sutton: "By 2032 cyclists will follow a route across our fields connecting the Green Wheel with Sutton and beyond with the possibility of opening a route alongside NVR from Station Road Ailsworth to Wansford Station. which is why it considers PCW proposal part of its future links". SPC has challenged the applicant and NPT as to why this is not the preferred route only to be informed its too difficult, fraught with engineering problems and is expensive. However the route would be far better value to the community and facilitate an off main highway route from Ferry Meadows to NVR.

14. The Green Wheel - the applicant promotes the route as an extension of the Green Wheel. The Green Wheel is for all non motorised users: Therefore the proposal is not as extension to the Green Wheel whereas the A47 proposals would.

15. General observations - Many of the supporting comments to this application focus on the issue of safe routes west, to Northamptonshire villages and towns with the respondents seemingly totally unaware of A47 dualling and what significant value it will add for all non motorised users.

16. General observations - The route cannot be considered as a reliable commuter route due to the flooding which historically is between 1 and 8 weeks per year.

Given the safety concerns, loss of tranquillity and amenity, the availability of superior alternatives, weight of inaccuracies, lack of detail and misrepresentation we urge Peterborough City Council to reject this proposal.

**Wansford Parish Council** - Does not like the idea of use of tarmac and Cattle Grids therefore we are generally opposed to this proposal although we are sympathetic with what Cycle West are trying to do.

### **Local Residents/Interested Parties**

Initial consultations: 50

Total number of responses: 119

Total number of objections: 40

Total number in support: 74

The representations received are summarised below:

### **Comments Objecting**

#### The principle of development

- This is a commendable project, however it should be done in a way that protects cyclists / pedestrians and residents.
- Safe cycle access west avoiding the A47 is being provided by the A47 dualling between Sutton and Wansford for Walkers, Cyclists and Horse Riders (WCHR).
- The A47 project have routes for both East/West and North/South travel away from the main A47 carriageway.
- The A47 scheme means that cycles will be better placed to then cycle on to all villages including Wansford, Yarwell, Nassington, Elton and Stibbington.
- The A47 scheme make this proposal unnecessary and a duplication in purpose and function and a waste of public funds.
- The A47 cycle route is more important and must proceed without impediment as encouraging all cyclists through the village will be a hazard to all.
- The route will be of no additional benefit to cyclists.
- As part of the A47 project there is a newly constructed route under the A1 from the picnic area into Wansford.
- The A47 route will not impact Sutton in any way and the end-goal is the same.
- According to the applicant this route will complement the A47 planned route, this is a distraction route, and is unsafe.
- The route is ill thought-out, dangerous folly by a group of leisure cyclists.
- It is not a multi user route due to the restrictions on the old railway bridge and detrimental to the environment.
- There is a more appropriate, safer and accessible route on NPT land from the bottom of Station Road Ailsworth to NVR (NPT Master Plan). Increased cycling traffic would aid to reduce the anti social behaviour and theft from cars parked at the end of station road near Castor Back Waters.
- A route that continues the dedicated cycle path that runs alongside the NVR from Ferry Meadows and currently terminates at Mill Lane Castor would be a far safer route for cyclist / pedestrians and residents alike.
- Concern that with funding from Highways England's designation funds we will end up with a lack of funding on the route all cyclists want.
- How many potential cyclists will also actually be using the route. Evidence is needed to assess the impact on a range of environmental issues.
- The applicant has chosen a route that is the worst of the options in terms of environmental damage and road safety.

- No formal assessment has been made to gauge potential traffic increases both vehicle and cycle.
- The national and local policy is to improve and expand non-motorised routes for the safety, health and wellbeing for all not just for cyclists.
- The application fails to make any provision for the implications of the infrastructure of Sutton, fails to make any proposals to deal with issues of safety, contrary to LP14 and LP16
- The proposed cycle route into Sutton involves a two mile ride along a 60 mph stretch of country road which is not only unsuitable, but highly dangerous.

### Highway Implications

- Cyclists coming through the village, with no pavements it will make it even more dangerous to walk around especially for the elderly.
- The tarmac cycleway/footway will encourage more traffic into the village which has limited parking.
- A tarmac surface track provides a fast route for cyclists entering into a village.
- Bikes already pass through Sutton at speed and without consideration of pedestrians.
- Because of the quietness of Lovers lane, cyclists assume that there is no danger they are much more focussed when negotiating busier roads.
- It is difficult to walk when cars are parked on the verges.
- The majority of roads in Sutton are less than 3.8m wide and in places only 2.7m.
- The roads in and around Sutton have 'Quiet' Lane status and subject to 20mph speed restriction applying to all except cyclists!!!
- Inconsiderate road users regularly violate the speed and quiet Lane restrictions.
- Changes in shopping habits have led to a marked increase in vehicle traffic within the village.
- There is a blind corner from Manor Road onto Nene Way. We have already had some near misses with cyclists especially Sunday mornings.
- Lovers Lane exit onto Nene Way is at a 90 degree and completely blind.
- Living on Nene Way/Lovers Lane junction my gate opens directly onto the lane. It is already a concern with cyclist and cars coming round the blind corner.
- Parking at the front of the Church will cause problems when there are functions.
- There are already issues with the footpath crossing the railway bridge; it is not wide enough for a bicycle and a pedestrian to cross in opposite directions.
- As NVR lacks car parking during peak periods there is a high risk the village becomes an over spill car park.
- NVR needs to consider and sort out the parking issues which it causes before supporting this application.
- Sutton is not equipped to act as a bikers' car park.
- The volume of cars will increase as people will want to walk from Sutton to the NVR.
- Out-of-town commuters will leave their cars before travelling on into Peterborough by bike or train.
- Unless the council is prepared to invest in footpaths through Nene Way there is a possibility of a serious accident.
- The application fails to make any provision for the safe, convenient and sustainable access by all user groups, and to address highway safety, contrary to Peterborough Local Plan (LP13).
- This increase in traffic of all types will increase the risk of accident to cyclists, pedestrians, vehicle drivers and horse riders.
- The proposal represents an additional, acute risk to horse riders. LP13 refers to the need for provision for safe movement of all modes of transport.
- A mixture of pedestrians, horse riders, cars, vans, lorries increased cyclists using the narrow Nene Way is a recipe for increased accidents, confrontation, and road rage.
- Cyclists will not confine themselves to the official route, but spread throughout the village.
- Horses and cycles don't mix as horse see the cycles as a threat will increase safety issues.
- The drives on many residential properties have limited visibility and pedestrian gates direct onto the highway. Safety mirrors are used on some.

- Once over the NVR bridge a cyclist then has to negotiate numerous HGV trucks over the Stibbington A1 junction and up New Lane past Bradshaws.

#### Impact on character

- This will make an unwelcome change both in character and life living in the village.
- The grass verges are protected as part of the village's Conservation status.
- The village of Sutton is a conservation area and the need to safeguard its unique character is therefore well-recognised.
- The application fails to consider Sutton's conservation plan adopted by PCC and subject to policy LP19.
- Part of this uniqueness arises from the village being a cul-de-sac to wheeled vehicles.
- Sutton is a tranquil and unique conservation village ideally suited for walkers and should be a jewel in the crown for Peterborough.
- As indicated in Sutton Conservation Plan, Sutton is characterised by its quiet tranquil nature giving way for safe and relaxed walking and horse riding.
- The footpath is a country trail, provides views across fields and flood meadows and perfect for viewing nature; this will be greatly diminished.
- The existing beautiful and natural footpaths provide peaceful and unhurried access to NVR and NPT land without the need for a change of use.
- The character of the village and of Lovers lane will be altered by this cycle path. It will become hazardous, noisy and potentially litter-strewn area whose rural character will be destroyed.
- During a survey in 2019 NPT said they have no intention of this part of the park becoming suburbanised. However, this cycle route and their support of it is in direct contradiction.
- The prospect of a swathe of tarmac across Sutton Meadows is unattractive.
- The track should be a grey/brown hardcore track (as used in many other rural cycle and walking routes) and not as wide as the 2.5 metres proposed.
- The route should start from the southern end of Lovers Lane straight onto the old railway track, and not take a route through the field to minimise the impact on the environment and screen the track from the nearby menage.

#### Impact on Amenity

- We need to safeguard the tranquillity and amenity of our village life.
- Increase in cycle traffic will result in loss of amenity to our young and all who walk or ride around the village.
- There is no risk assessment on the impact of amenity, safety, health and welfare of residents and visitors.
- The health and well-being of residents and visitors should not be impacted upon when there are alternative safe routes.
- Object on grounds of loss of amenity and safety when a perfectly viable route west has been procured through locals' sustained effort in ensuring it goes ahead with Highways England.
- The majority of the residents would say they moved to the village for what it is and not what PCW are trying to turn it into, namely a through route for cyclists.
- The proposal will make leaving my drive and the lane extremely dangerous.
- My gate opens directly on to Lovers Lane and it is already a concern when cyclists and cars come round the blind corner faster than I can get out of the way.
- Cyclists turning into Lovers Lane at any speed will not be able to see my vehicle and I will have little chance of avoiding them.
- Over 40% of the adult residents are retired and of those almost 60% are over 70 and 20% over 80 years of age. The vast majority walk as a safe and enjoyable way to exercise for health and wellbeing.
- As the parent of two young children, one of whom is a wheelchair user, any increase in traffic, vehicular or cyclists, presents additional risks for residents.
- The national Nene Way footpath runs through the village and attracts many of walkers.

- Most of the remaining younger members of the village and those with children also regularly use the roads for walking or gaining access to the recreation field.
- A number of walkers/visitors have reported of issues and altercations with cyclists and motorists during lockdown due to increases in traffic.
- The new "through traffic" will make Sutton more vulnerable to crime and the potential for anti-social behaviour.
- Lovers Lane is closed when there is a funeral – will it be possible to close of the cycleway for a funeral?
- The route takes in the shaded areas cattle use to stay cool in the summer. These cattle also have a habit of chasing pedestrians across the meadow.
- The bridge access at NVR renders its easy use difficult for "family" cycling.
- Horse riding/horse management activities will become more dangerous due to increase in speed related traffic (cyclists & motorised vehicles).
- The route will result in a loss of amenity for the stables/yards; simply leaving private yards will become extremely dangerous.
- Increased traffic will deter horse riders, due to the increased threat to their safety.
- The cycle path will have a serious impact on horse ménage at the end of Lovers Lane; no attempt has been made to protect the interest and safety of horses and riders using the facility.
- Putting a cattle grid immediately adjacent to our manege/arena entrance would be dangerous to the well-being of any horse.
- The cycle way would run immediately adjacent to the existing manege/arena which would render it unfit for purpose due to noise and distraction and the noise of tyres going over the cattle grid would frighten horses during concentrated practice. This would result in the loss of an existing amenity we enjoy all year round.
- Cyclists speeding from Graeme road over the old railway line to the route will spook horses leaving and entering this area potentially into the cattle grid (broken legs for horse).
- Lovers Lane is the only access to our horse manege/arena located at the bottom of Lovers Lane. This is a blind entrance so the horse and rider have no time to correct or move.
- If a horse that becomes out of control and ends up near a cattle grid it could have a unthinkable outcome.
- We have a narrow high hedged bridleway which will be a more desirable line/short cut. There is little room to allow safe passing and is used by a large number of horse riders.
- Cyclists do not understand the risks they pose to horses.
- In order to access the countryside, including the Nene Valley Park, horse riders must use the route through Sutton which traffic will have to use to access the proposed route.
- I am a horse rider and need to be able to safely use the village roads and the Sutton Crossways bridleway to exercise my horses.
- Concern that cyclists will not access the village via Nene Way but will cross the well-used bridleway (Ailsworth 3) and lead to conflict cyclists and horse riders.
- The majority of cyclists ride directly at horses on our small lanes or come up from behind silently and seek to overtake.
- On wider roads this is not an issue as a horse, being a creature of flight, knows it has space to avoid what it sees as an oncoming "threat".
- Horses are flight animals and can react badly to suddenly being confronted by a group of speeding cyclists a bolting horse has no regard for its own or anyone else's safety.
- We already have problems with cyclists who see no reason to slow down and are abusive when asked to slow down or stop to let a horse pass safely.
- Many cyclists need educating and who ride at us at high speed with their ear-phones in so they cannot even hear our calls for them to stop. The proposal will exacerbate the issue.
- The proposal will encourage more cyclists into the area and the bridleway provides a short cut/desire line to Sutton, so will be subject to increased usage.
- Impeding rather than encouraging the access of Sutton's horse riding community to the Park should not be permitted.
- Objects to the proposed footpath/cycle path along the A1 and clearing of trees and its impact on my privacy and Sutton.

- Cyclists coming round the blind corners will impact on the safety of children who are currently able to walk and play unattended – cars can be heard but cyclists are silent.
- Additional cars parking will affect residents' amenity and privacy.
- We can choose to walk in the main Nene Park with easy walkways, but we also need to be able to choose to walk on grass, soil and mud, through puddles, floods and cowpats.
- I do not understand the need for cattle grids. Cyclists would have to stop to use the steps at the railway bridge and also at the level crossing gates should they be down
- Increase noise and disturbance with significantly more cycle and pedestrian access through the Village.
- Concern the users will cut across the footpath linking Graeme Road to Lovers Lane causing conflict with pedestrian users.

### Flood Risk

- The submission fails to properly consider and assess flood risk.
- The proposed route cannot be used throughout the year due to flooding.
- I do not see that an additional route through Sutton village and then across a major flood plain can be considered "complementary".
- The site lies within flood zone 3 and the applicant is required to undertake a sequential and possibly the exception test as set out in the NPPF.

### Wildlife Implications

- The application refers to a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal ("PEA") but has not attached the report.
- The PEA was carried out 2 years ago. Ecology reports have a useful lifespan of only 18 months-2 years.
- Any ecological report should be carried out in the most recent spring in order to properly assess the likely impact.
- The PEA apparently identified 8 recommendations, but the application has not stated what these are.
- Fails to consider protected species, veteran trees and general habitat.
- The use of cattle grids is a risk to the abundant wildlife in the Nene valley.
- The routes across Sutton Meadows and along the disused railway bed are wildlife corridors and havens.
- It is noted that the DEFRA Magic website identifies the site as priority habitat -floodplain grazing- and the rail line as part of a habitat enhancement zone.

### Landscape Impact

- No arboricultural impact assessment is provided to assess the impact the mature tree belt/nature corridor which runs alongside the former rail line.
- It is not clear how the proposal will cross the rail embankment onto the rail bed without impacting on trees.

### Heritage Implications

- The Heritage Statement fails to report on the impact on two listed structures within the proposed route.
- The heritage statement does not address the impact of the proposed stairs and walkway on the Listed railway bridge.
- There is no statement of significance or HIA to address the impact on the setting of the bridge or the signal box.
- The Heritage Statement has not addressed paras. 189 and 196 of the NPPF.
- A listed building application is required.
- There is no consideration of the cumulative impact of increased cycle usage through the village

and consequent impact on the character and setting of heritage assets within the village of Sutton.

- When the ménage was approved in 2016 a full archaeological condition was imposed; presumably the routing of the proposal in this northern portion is of similar sensitivity. This is not identified in the Heritage Statement.

### Public Consultation

- No proper consultation has been carried out by PCW with the villagers of Sutton.
- The meeting that was held in Sutton church in January 2020 was far from consultative.
- PCW advised Sutton villagers who expressed concerns that their proposal would be pursued regardless of those concerns.
- Sutton Parish Council carried out a consultation exercise. The results were overwhelmingly against the proposal: 71% of adults responding were opposed, as were 79% of Sutton households.
- 38 issues raised by the survey were published by the Sutton Parish Council on its website, but PCW has made no attempt to consult further with Sutton or to address the issues.
- The presentation (not consultation) to the residents of Sutton completely downplayed the value of the Walkers, Cyclists and Horse-riders route embedded within the A47 dualling project.
- The consultation was no more than an explanation/ presentation of what is being proposed and there was no provision for, or intention to amend the proposal following this presentation.

### Environment

- I agree with Peterborough Council Plans to be an environmental capital, to provide all its citizens with safe leisure facilities and sustainable commuting routes. However I am sure it did not intend to create a winners and losers (Sutton and its residents will certainly be big losers).

### Disabled access

- I cannot see any provision for disabled access to the proposed new footbridge?
- The route is not suitable for cyclists with mobility issues as the steps are the only access up to and across the bridge.
- The proposed steps to the rail bridge do not make provision for people with mobility issues, using pushchairs or in wheelchairs and so will prevent usage by certain groups, contrary to access for all principles.

### Further comments

- The application has serious errors of fact, omissions and misleading statements to sway opinion, particularly related to HE and Stibbington Parish Council opinions.
- Inaccuracy of the Application.
- The application refers to "letters of support" from Parish Councils - no such letters are attached.
- Stibbington Parish Council comments that it was totally unaware that it had been included as agreeing with the proposal until it saw the application itself.
- The applicant claims that highways England considers that the application proposal is complementary to the planned cycle way along the A47 works; this is incorrect.
- I have written to the Chairman of the Nene Park Trust and to Peterborough Cycle West expressing concerns regarding safety, but have received no acknowledgement or reply.
- A reply on the PCW Facebook page makes for worrying reading: "You need not worry...horse riders are in no danger from cyclists. Any one of us cyclists can assure the villagers that we won't make the ewes and cows miscarry, or frighten the horses! ..."
- I should like to invite the Planning Officer to visit the site and Sutton in order that she/he may understand the risks that the application poses.
- There is lack of clarity towards the funding and upkeep of the path.
- PCW partners NPT and NVR have done very little to maintain the existing permissive footpath.

- The vast majority of respondents are supporters of access to the west and not specifically to this application.
- In the absence of documents the application is technically incomplete having regard to the national and local list for validation and should not therefore progress to determination.
- All but one of the comments of support are from outside the village of Sutton and as such the writers are not directly impacted by it.

**Sibson-cum-Stibbington Parish Council** - We were totally unaware that we have been included as agreeing with this proposal until it was seen on the Planning Application/Portal. We have not and do not endorse this application.

## Comments supporting

### The principle of development

- Excellent connecting route; giving valuable access to rural facilities.
- I see no reason for not going ahead on this project; it should be built as soon as possible.
- The path is well thought out and will be well used.
- This is the most welcome proposal for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders in years, providing a scenic and safe route East West across the A1 and river Nene.
- As a keen cyclist in Ailsworth I would love to avoid the A47 in order to get out to the cycling routes west beyond the A1.
- There is currently no link to follow the valley west bound without using the A47.
- An excellent plan to get cyclists away from the A47 corridor.
- It will remove the need for cyclists to make extremely hazardous journeys on stretches of the A1/A47 and will be a much safer option.
- As a family of cyclists I welcome the means of safe access across to the west of the A1 and the countryside beyond.
- If the path is not built, people will cycle along the A47 from Sutton/Upton roundabout to Wansford and then along the A1.
- This will allow improved access on foot, to Stibbington and Wansford.
- It will provide access for cyclists to the delightful lanes of East Northants avoiding the A47.
- This is the final part of creating a safe route from the villages north of Peterborough and Marholm to the south of the A1 without having to pass through the busy shared use paths of Ferry Meadows.
- Currently cyclist are instead using the busy A47 from Langley Bush road to the Wansford roundabout which is highly dangerous and actively discourages younger and less confident riders from cycling in the area, and effectively splits the region in half for cycling.
- This would create a clear route across the A47 through Castor, Ailsworth and Sutton and on to Stibbington, where the A1 can easily be crossed safely.
- It could one day form part of a larger scheme linking us to Stamford and or Oundle.
- Leisure cyclists can approach Sutton on existing cycle friendly routes, and connect with Green Wheel routes.
- Living in the nearby village of Castor the only route west is to use the A47 which his dangerous and members of our family have now declined from cycling this route because of the near miss situations.
- At present it is not possible safely and realistically to reach Sibson and its Nene Valley Railway Depot, nor Wansford village, without the use of private motor transport.
- It is provide safe access from the south.
- The bus service from Peterborough to Wansford and beyond was also withdrawn recently.
- The distance to Sibson from South Bretton, Longthorpe and nearby areas is roughly 7km, an easy cycling distance.
- This will provide a valuable link for the community.
- The current option to cycle down the A47 is not safe and to cycle from Elton is a long detour.
- A cycle/footpath to Wansford would mean that I and many others could safely utilise the path

along the west side of the A1 to Wittering.

- There is a large housing development starting on the edge of Wittering.
- I live in Wittering and would love to have a safe cycle way that my children could use between Sutton and Stibbington. The proposed route would bridge the gap between Ailsworth and Wansford.
- The new underpass to the South between the A47 picnic spot and Wansford is particularly dangerous for cyclists or horse riders who want to turn right (towards Peterborough) which necessitates a very dangerous right turn across 2 lanes of bust A47 traffic that point.
- It will improve safety of cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders and keep them away from a very busy road.
- I am pleased to note some cycle parking will be provided at the foot of the bridge across the river as I would be physically unable to push my heavy cycle up a wheeling channel.
- There is the possibility of extending the route to Nassington, King's Cliffe etc.
- The route extends safe cycling beyond the Green Wheel, into the most attractive parts of Peterborough's historic county of Northamptonshire.
- I hope good access will be given in the dual carriageway scheme linking Castor and Wansford.
- It would be an excellent use of the disused railway line between Sutton and Wansford Nene Valley station.
- In keeping with the rural setting and will complement the heritage railway.
- Cycling in the direction of Castor and Peterborough which currently means dragging my bicycle across half flooded meadows.
- It would open up the Nene Way to walkers and cyclists all year round; it is sometimes impossible to walk across the flooded fields.
- Pedestrians and cyclists will no longer be toiling across the fields and disturbing the livestock.
- The cycle route will complement the NVR as passengers could cycle one way and take the train back. Cycles can be accommodated in the traditional "guard's van".
- This (or the same trip in reverse) makes a day of adventure for youngsters who may not have cycled beyond the urban area.
- It will increase business for the railway, which is currently managed by volunteers.
- The attractions around Wansford are valuable components of the City's visitor economy.
- It will have positive financial impact on the surrounding areas.
- The City Council encourages access to the countryside and the Nene Valley as a major attraction to locals and tourists.
- This cycle route will enable exploration to a raft of people in West Peterborough and visitors to Ferry Meadows camp site etc.
- The Nene Valley is a beautiful area that is not easily accessed by cycle due to the lack of safe roads.
- As more visitors will be attracted by a safe bike route it will help improve the parking situation, which is always dire at busy times of year.
- As a resident of the surrounding villages it has my full support.
- It will improve connectivity between the local villages for social cyclists and walkers.
- It will improve connectivity for workers who wish to cycle or walk to work.
- Faster cyclists would rather stay on the A47, than have to dismount at either end of the new cycle west route.
- The off-road link will be valuable to many cyclists with no significant damage to the interests of any others.
- The only safe way our family has been able to cycle West from Sutton to Wansford, Oundle and beyond, has been to take the lengthy, circuitous detour through Ferry Meadows.
- This direct, safe route, would be a fantastic asset to both the local and wider community and would be of particular benefit to young families.
- I am very nervous of riding on roads with motor traffic; the new path enable me to once again visit the lovely area around Sutton.
- Due to health problems I am no longer comfortable walking even relatively short distances across rough ground.

### Alternative route

- It is not an alternative to the proposed cycleway which is planned as part of the A47 improvements.
- I disagree that the A47 scheme negates the need for the cycle West project.
- This is an important part of the infrastructure and will complement the road development of the A47 following a separate route to a different destination - the NVR station and Sibbington.
- The A47 cycle route is expected to be a different faster 'through route' east to west – this will be suited to longer distance cyclists.
- I am heartened to hear that Highways England have given their assurance that the Cycle West route will not influence their decision regarding their own provision of a cycle route.
- The A47 route will still be a road for cars but the proposed route here would be traffic free making it suitable for families or mountain bike users rather than large pelotons of road bikes.
- This would be an alternative greener route, free of car and lorry fumes, particularly for children and those with respiratory health problems.
- The cycling and horse-riding route as part of the A47 scheme will result in a cycle-path adjacent to the upgraded busy road with no enhanced scenic value with the associated noise, fumes and safety risk.

### Health and lifestyle

- It will benefit the entire community and encourage people to become more active and improve people's health.
- The city encourages cycling this sits well with Peterborough's aims.
- It will help support people of the city to live a more sustainable lifestyle and encourage a health means of transport.
- It will provide health positive opportunities and reduce demands on the NHS.
- The provision of a safe route meets the Government's strategy to promote cycling.
- We are trying to encourage more people to cycle to work/pleasure/physical well being this a much needed route.
- Covid has highlighted the importance of getting fitter, using greener methods and opening up our green spaces.
- During lockdown there was a significant increase in families cycling and this should be capitalised upon.
- As traffic picks up again after lockdown it is vital to have suitable traffic free routes.
- This is a question of safety and would make a huge difference to many.
- It would hopefully encourage people to cycle to work from the villages to the west; all in line with government policies.
- We need to support all endeavours to encourage people to cycle and cycle tracks are the obvious thing.
- It will encourage both cyclists and pedestrians to further enjoy our countryside safely.
- This proposal would enable me to commute to work, saving CO2 emissions benefiting my health but reducing the negative effect that driving every day has to the health of others.
- As a doctor I can confirm that Peterborough is in a very unfortunate position regarding health inequalities. We have a very high local rate of illnesses such as coronary heart disease. General life expectancies are much lower than the national average for both males and females.
- In illnesses such as diabetes and coronary heart disease, lifestyle changes make more difference than nearly any medical intervention.
- Ninety-nine cyclists died on British roads in 2018. Just over 4200 suffered serious injury. Despite these sad figures, the public health evidence is that the benefit of cycling more than negates this risk in terms of reduced disease morbidity and increased life expectancy, in those who cycle regularly.
- The very pressing challenges of health inequalities, COVID and global warming should make any cycling initiatives difficult to refuse.

## Environment and Pollution

- It will encourage active travel and sustainable leisure, in keeping with Peterborough's Environment City status and overall policies for climate change and sustainability.
- It is consistent with the principles and themes of Peterborough's Environmental Capital Action Plan. I trust that it will be viewed as part of that agenda and passed.
- This is a fabulous opportunity for PCC to show commitment to Environment Capital.
- It will reduce the number of road users, reduce congestion, reduce pollution and improve the environment.
- The City Council has an ambitious carbon neutrality target date, as part of its Climate Emergency statement. It applies the Road User Hierarchy, i.e. gives walking and cycling preference over motor vehicles in all matters relating to highway design and planning.
- It would also give my children the option of cycling to school safely, thus cutting down on the very 'ungreen' twice daily 40 minute round trip car journey.
- It will encourage visitors to the City and with electric bikes and scooters encourage a green commuting into the City and around.
- The mixed green transport agenda is central to Peterborough City Council 'Green Capital' ambitions and will not compromise our village character, as long as motorised transport becomes secondary to non-motorised. I would argue that this is long overdue and will be welcomed when it happens.
- Cycle transport in place of public transport is now government policy as witnessed by the introduction of 'pop up cycleways' in Peterborough and many other cities around the world. The introduction and promotion of new local cycle routes that are easy to access and away from traffic is a national imperative that Peterborough City Council will support by approving this planning application.

## Amenity

- There is no evidence that the increase in walking and cycle traffic through the village would be excessive, or that accident risk will increase in Sutton because of cycling, any more than within any other village in this area.
- The cyclists have always been courteous and respectful, and signage is already there to indicate there may be walkers and horse riders on the road.
- Cyclists are considerate this access will not deter from the pleasure and enjoyment of others.
- The proposed route will provide a pleasant, safe green route to these areas east of the A1 and vice versa for local residents in those areas.
- We have a 20 mile an hour speed limit and in my experience it is the local car users and delivery vans that pose the biggest risk.
- The serious fast riding peloton road cyclist will avoid the proposed route because it doesn't provide a 'fast track'.
- The horses and their riders add much to the character of the village. Our tranquillity is only really threatened by inconsiderate motorists who break the speed.
- My drive is on the very narrowest part of the road that leads to Lovers Lane where the route will start from, and I strongly support this proposal.
- There will always be negative anecdote about drivers and cyclists, even horse riders, but we know that the vast majority are courteous and accommodating.
- In general, in the vast majority of collisions, cyclists do not cause these accidents. They do not in general ride into each other or cause motorists to run into them.
- Increased cycling tends to reduce accident rates.
- Cycling and horse riding should take precedence over motorised transport in Sutton, which is already limited to 20mph, as are all road users.
- I appreciate concern regarding large groups of cyclists, which is unlikely.
- Clearer signage through the village might be a good option to consider, as would the inclusion of a gate at the new route entrance instead of a cattle grid.
- PCW have listened to Sutton village views. The original plans did include the Crossways bridleway, but this has been changed due to local concerns, even though the actual evidence

for risk to horse riding, separate from local anecdote, is small.

- Horse riding and cycling already co-exist locally and all over the country. Sutton is no different to other villages in this respect.
- BHS has confirmed that over the last 10 years recorded 88 injuries to horse riders where cycling was contributory. This ten-year statistic needs to be set against the popularity of horse riding. In the UK approximately 1.8 million people ride horses at least once a month. Therefore, according to BHS statistics, the national risk of injury related to cycling is about one in two million. This is about the same annual UK risk of being struck by lightning.
- The statistical evidence therefore suggests that the chance of horse rider injury due to cycling in Sutton is minimal, and is far less than other risk factors which face riders of horses on a daily basis such as equestrian competition or motorised road vehicles which currently cause 2 horses die per week on a national level.
- The anxieties expressed by horse riders in Sutton is a matter that is driving much of the opposition to cycling in the village, but we need to keep this in proportion. This is Sutton, not Newmarket. Excluding cycling from Sutton will not make a material difference to the very real risks horse riders face and accept every day.
- It has been suggested that a small increase from already low number of cyclists will somehow pose a significant special risk situation for Sutton. There is no evidence anywhere to support this.
- Non-motorised transport, walkers, cycling, and horse riding together need to have priority over cars and vans in our 20mph zone. This will reduce the risk that we already face every day.
- The risk of pedestrian injury due to cycling in terms of journeys undertaken in cities is tiny, and in rural settings there is no statistically significant risk. There is no reason or evidence to consider Sutton village as different in any way as compared to other villages in respect of pedestrian risk and cycling on the village road network.
- The village of Sutton is speed limited to 20mph. Walkers already share the highway with vehicles which are statistically of significant risk to pedestrians. This 'risk to pedestrians' is not true of cyclists when the evidence is examined.

#### General comments

- It should be adequately signed to ensure clarity that it is a shared route.
- It is a pity the design requires the use of stairs and wheeling of bicycles up to a bridge which will limit the use to those more fit and active and deter family use.
- I am aware of the concerns of horse riders so would urge that full consideration is given in that regard.
- I would suggest that gated access across Sutton meadows rather than using cattle grids would help keep fast road cyclists away from the route and would remove the chance of horse injury.
- Adequate separation should be made for cyclists in connection with the new A47 dual carriageway between Wansford and Sutton.
- At the time when Peterborough Cycle West began its work for a cycle route through Sutton (2010) there was strong village support.
- It may be difficult to persuade some who have strong personal perceptions against additional walkers and cycling in Sutton, but anecdote, while important to acknowledge and review, should not direct policy over evidence and social priority.
- Sutton is already part of the Nene Way, a famous long-distance walking route. The route across the fields to the Nene Valley Railway already exists and is useable in all but the wettest months. The proposed walking/cycling route to Nene Valley Railway and beyond builds upon this and enhances year-round accessibility as well as disabled access to the wider Nene Valley.
- I do not think that Sutton village can reasonably set itself apart from other rural villages in the region which have already embraced walking and cycling as a priority for health fitness and the Green Agenda.

**Nassington Parish Council** - The parish council is supportive of this proposal and the benefits it

will bring to allow people to safely cycle from Northamptonshire to the northern part of Peterborough.

**Ailsworth Parish Council** - Supports this proposal by the Peterborough Cycle West Project.

**East Northamptonshire Greenway Programme Board** - Our vision is to link East Northamptonshire with Wellingborough and ultimately Northampton, through to Peterborough with a series of interconnecting green routes. We have worked closely with cycle West Peterborough and have copied Warmington Parish Council into this who are delivering a link from Warmington, through Elton to join the Peterborough Green Wheel. Cycle West were also active in the project development of this. Our Greenway Forward Plan can be found at [www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/greenway](http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/greenway) and includes Cycle West as one of our partners. We would be delighted to see the project succeed to increase off road, safe green travel in the area.

**Nene Park Trust** – Support. Creating recreation opportunities for the people of Peterborough is central to the Trust's purpose and this project represents an important connection, enabling visitors to safely explore the western reaches of Nene Park and venture further beyond. The cycle path will run through a section of our land that we would like to make more accessible for visitors as stated in our Strategy and Master Plan. Indeed, we have an obligation under our charitable aims to ensure our land is provided for the benefit of the people of Peterborough. The Peterborough Cycle West Project will undoubtedly contribute towards our aspirations in this area.

Based on expected usage we see no reason to predict an excessive number of users of the cycle path. We are working with Peterborough Cycle West Project to ensure that maintenance of the path network is appropriately managed in future.

We are seeing a rapid growth in cycling currently which has every chance of being sustained long term. The Cycle West Project is therefore ideally timed to respond and build on this enthusiasm by providing infrastructure that is safe and enjoyable for families as well as individual cyclists. We look forward to seeing this project taking forward to fruition.

**Elton Parish Council** - supports this application. It will provide the only safe and segregated from the city of Peterborough to the surrounding countryside to the west and south of the city and provides an important link to the wider sustainable transport system, notably the Northamptonshire Nene Valley green lane system.

**Langdyke Countryside Trust:** The cycle west project fits very neatly into our broader vision for the countryside west of Peterborough and indeed we had factored it in to our thinking already. We launched the vision for John Clare Countryside last September and have been steadily gaining support, indeed Peterborough City Council formally voted to support the project at its recent Full Council meeting. Creating improved access to the countryside through improved and expanded cycle, walking and horse riding routes is an important part of that project.

## **Following re-consultation**

### **Comments objecting**

#### The Principle of Development

- The proposal is unnecessary as the new A47 road (Highways England) construction has a new cycle track with better access to west lying villages.
- Since the establishment of the A47 route, the route is nothing more than an indulgence by the applicant – the main reason for the route being no access to the west, a concern which we know no longer exists.
- A North-South route under the new highway and safe onward transition to Sacrewell Farm has been added.
- The A47 project will also provide multi user use north south connectivity using part of the old rail bed at Sutton station.
- Bringing cyclists into a village like Sutton with cars and horses is an unnecessary risk when

there is this safer alternative.

- The only value is supporting the commercial aspirations of NPT and NVR.
- Where exactly are the benefits with this scheme compared those already in the delivery pipeline?
- The proposed route is environmentally damaging contrary to The Peterborough Transport Plan's stated goal to "protect and enhance our environment".
- The proposed route fails to meet The Peterborough Transport Plan's Assessment Objectives (1) to enhance and improve accessibility and connectivity for all; and (2) to increase the proportion of journeys made by Active Travel Mode.
- As pointed out by the British Horse Society, Active Travel Mode is defined as "physically active modes such as cycling, walking and horse riding". The route excludes horse riders.
- The Nene Park Trust is contemplating opening a route along side the Nene Valley Railway from the level crossing at Ailsworth to Wansford station in 2032.
- The Peterborough Green Wheel, already links to National cycle routes 21 and 53, which provide a safe route to villages such as Elton and Warrington and others to the west of the A1.
- Concerns around visitor parking needs which already affects Sutton and Stibbington. A separate application scrutinising these commercial needs should be undertaken prior to any consideration being given to this cycle route.
- The Nene Way footpath running through the village and other walking routes in and around Sutton make it a walkers paradise. Nothing is being added to the current accessibility to NVR or NPT footpaths in the area. Cyclists can already dismount and take the short walk from Lovers Lane to NVR where they would have to dismount anyway to climb the stairs and cross the rail bridge.
- This application, although highlighting the need for safe green transport, has so many negative impacts to the environment, people and amenity that it adds no net value to the community.
- The A47 cycling proposals add far more community benefit, will not be prone to flooding and therefore will be a reliable "green" commuter link to the West.
- If Nene Park Trust were to follow the objectives as stated within their plan, this route should cater for recreational use by all leisure users.
- Within their own plan they refer to a route from Station Road, Ailsworth to NVR. This route would provide a link from Ferry Meadows to NVR and if desired (as stated within the application data) a rail trip back to the carparks at Ferry Meadows. This would completely bypass the problematic route through Sutton.

### Highway Implications

- The village cannot sustain additional traffic. The existing volume of traffic is hazardous, at times, at all junctions.
- PCW have not addressed the safety issue of cyclists coming around the single track village street with 5 x 90 degree blind bends.
- Walkers, including elderly residents would be placed at significant risk by speeding cyclists.
- Horse riders are daily users of the village roads and additional traffic, cycles and vehicles, could be potentially hazardous to them.
- Grass verges, some of which are protected, are already significantly damaged from vehicular parking. Addition vehicles cannot be accommodated other than roadside parking.
- This new route will mean a large increase of cyclists within the village of Sutton, rendering a village much more dangerous.
- The Nene Valley Railway have not made proper provision for cars that frequent it at peak times causing unsafe parking and litter issues. Congestion of cyclists will only cause further problems.
- The village will become an overspill car park to NVR.
- The tarmac track, desirable for speeding cyclists on circuit loops, next you Lovers lane covered in tarmac, presently an unmade track.
- With existing traffic issues, litter, parking issues, mud on the paths, HGV parking, verge erosion at the Nene Valley Railway, this development will add to a difficult situation.
- The entrance to Lovers Lane from Nene Way has already been the scene of several 'near

misses' involving cyclists.

- The extra cycling and walkers would cause congestion through the village, with cycles and walkers moving in 2 directions, considering the width of road, along Nene Way and Lovers Lane and villagers gateways. This must have a negative impact from a health and safety and congestion viewpoint.

#### Impact on village character

- Increased pedestrian/cycle activity will have an adverse impact on the quiet character of the village.
- This is a rural area and I and Peterborough residents enjoy it for this reason.
- The peaceful and tranquil nature of the village would be lost.
- Will spoil an existing rural footpath.
- A tarmac surface is completely wrong in a countryside/rural setting.
- The earthworks would add to the cycle way/ footpath looking more of an eyesore.
- Possible congestion at each end of the route will result in cycling on the grassland causing mess and damage.
- Why are so many existing quiet and tranquil walking routes being spoilt when purpose made routes specific for cyclists are being introduced.

#### Impact on Amenity

- The freedom of the villagers to go about their day to day lives, such as dog walking, horse riding, horse schooling, exercising and general socialising is compromised.
- Sutton and particularly Lovers Lane and beyond is a very safe and tranquil leisure amenity for walkers and especially those with dogs.
- Amenity impact will be significant along Lovers Lane by encouraging more cyclists.
- The proposal significantly reduces the amenity value for walking routes in the vicinity of the application.
- The proposal completely ignores the concerns, needs and impact on residents, other leisure users and the environment.
- Ignoring public safety shows total ignorance and lack of empathy of the losses and hazards to other users.
- An asphalt surface, and an entrance incorporating a cattle grid will make equestrian use impossible.
- During busy times at NVR cyclists crossing the narrow bridge will create more safety hazards.
- Horse riders are completely excluded from this proposal.
- With blind entrances and exits from Graeme Road between exiting manage users and cyclists there is a high increase in risk of scaring horses.
- The inclusion of a cattle grid 10 metres from the manège riding school entrance is unsafe - horses that spook are highly likely to move onto this grid, as it will be seen as an 'open way' to the field - seriously injuring them. Such an eventuality would present great danger to both horse and rider's safety and wellbeing.
- The noise and speed of cyclists close to the manege would significantly increase the risk of horses being spooked.
- The cycleway as proposed would run immediately adjacent to the manege!!
- The increase in activity and speed of cyclist and bright clothing will unsettle horses and make the Manege facility unusable contrary to policy LP17.
- In considering the planning application for the Manege the case officer was concerned at the potential impact the manege would have on neighbours and concluded that the quiet location on the edge of the village was appropriate and acceptable.
- Cattle grids are dangerous for young children, dogs, horses and wildlife; deer around the railway cutting and not great for hedgehogs either.
- The footpath across the meadows is enjoyed by walkers and dogs alike. A tarmac surface which becomes very hot in summer is detrimental for dogs and icy conditions make it dangerous for all.

- Due to constant surface damage, regular maintenance needs will add to the ongoing negative amenity and environmental impact.

### Flood Risk

- The proposed route is unsuitable as a result of flood risk and subject to annual flooding.
- Why is it necessary to construct a tarmac path over flood plane to end up at steps limiting who can actually use?
- The field between Sutton and Wansford rail station has been under water now for about a month and is impassable to the railway bridge.
- The A47 project would have no affect to the floodplain.
- Flooding will get worse with climate change.
- Any structures that diminishes the dispersal rate of the flood water will only make matters worse.
- The flood plain gives a natural escape for water, which may well give rise to other problems.
- As a green commuter route it is unreliable due to seasonal flooding.
- Tarmacking over a flood meadow and the loss of habitat that goes with it is unnecessary.
- The chair of PCW claims a sequential test is not required.
- Trying to avoid scrutiny of a sequential flood risk assessment verges on neglect by the applicant.
- The additional sequential test statement has misunderstood the requirements of the NPPF and the requirement for a sequential test, and reference to NPPF para 160 is incorrect in the context of the argument put forward.
- Para 160 of the NPPF does not exempt the proposal from the requirement to undertake a full sequential test as set out in paras 158-9, but does enable any wider sustainability benefits to be taken into account in the exception test- if (and only if) the sequential test is passed can para 160 be taken into account in the exception test.
- The submission made is not a sequential assessment of the site, the proposal and the available alternatives as required by Para 158.
- As a funded alternative footpath /cycle way would be provided in the A47 scheme, this proposal fails the sequential test and as a consequence, the NPPF does not enable an exception test to be undertaken (Para 160).

### Wildlife Implications

- This is the degrading of a wildlife zone to satisfy the desire of cyclists when a better alternative route is becoming available.
- The Peterborough Transport Plan states that one of its three goals is to "protect and enhance our environment". This application does neither. It contemplates putting in place an asphalt path where currently there is a grass path.
- The ecological impact assessment refers, inter alia, to "permanent loss" of more than 300sqm of grassland habitat, a "loss" of suitable nesting habitat, and "general loss" of reptile habitat. The timing of the ecological report has meant that further potential damage has not been assessed.
- Given the time of year the Ecology report was conducted it fails to give a full picture and hence mitigation proposals by this fact alone are likely to be inadequate.
- It is very unusual to carry out an ecological survey in December- the conclusion is in the report confirm that additional surveys would be necessary (in spring), particularly in respect to GCN and reptiles- it is questioned if the report conclusions are sufficiently robust to meet the provisions of NPPF section 15.
- The mitigation proposed is only an attempt to reduce damage and its impact.
- Given Peterborough's aspirations as an Environmental City, there should be a very good and unavoidable reason for inflicting any damage in the first place. No such reason exists here.
- Unnecessary damage to the environment of this kind is diametrically opposed to how Peterborough CC is trying to position itself as an environmental capital, stating its intention to

"enhance and protect the environment", talk is easy, action is needed to stop this kind of creeping damage to our environment.

- Leave our existing green habitat alone.
- The inevitable reduction and cutting back of bushes and trees to accommodate the width of the route will reduce the overall area of habitat for birds, insects and invertebrates.
- Root damage to trees and bushes will impact their growth and or survival and no mitigation can compensate for that.
- Otters can now be seen along this stretch of the River Nene, there is no mention of the disturbance construction and cyclists may cause to their habitat.
- It cuts across a piece of rare grassland, which is old pasture land rich with flora and fauna.
- Worryingly this proposal will disturb badgers during construction and ongoing with the introduction of cyclists.
- The recommended mitigation measures would need to be implemented on third party land. presumably a S106 (legal agreement) would be necessary as it cannot be conditioned as it lies outside of the application site.

### Heritage Impacts

- Heritage statement - the additional information is still somewhat sparse in terms of its description of the site, and heritage assets therein.
- The report does not address the heritage impacts in any significant detail having regard to NPPF section 16 and in particular paras 193-197.
- The balancing exercise required by NPPF paras 195-196 has not been explicitly undertaken.
- A comprehensive statement of significance and heritage impact assessment in accordance with NPPF section 16 should be required.

### Construction

- Disruption to Lover`s Lane during construction and afterwards is unwelcome in such a peaceful village lane with graveyard.
- The positioning of the site compound, material transportation and equipment will have a serious impact on amenity and safety within the village.
- The Ménage at the end of Lovers Lane would be totally unusable during construction.
- If this route cannot be safely built then it should be rejected.
- Heavy construction traffic through the village is a great concern to many.

### Further comments

- This cycle way has the backing of NPT and NVR why? It will help their commercial objectives.
- While NPT are developers with green credentials; a 200 year old ash tree, had its limbs lopped back due to risk of branches falling on footpath, consequently killed it, and a few years ago left it as a monumental stump.
- NPT advised there were no plans for this to be used for cycle based events - but we know this is a potential income stream.
- It's a desire to turn these Victorian disused feats of engineering into cycle tracks, but some have been reclaimed by wildlife and are very active wildlife corridors. I have still retained some of the original historic fencing from 1867. NPT have ripped theirs down including some of my boundary fence and replaced with nice wildlife friendly barb wire!!!
- This application has been given backing by various groups to extend commercial and grant funding incomes against environmental and safety issues. Please reject this planning application.
- The application fails to take into account the concerns of residents and Sutton and Stibbington Parish Councils.
- The amendments fail to answer the numerous and genuine concerns raised in objection to the plans.

- NPT currently do very minimal maintenance to the route, the majority of which is done by caring, local users. I have no confidence that the route will be adequately maintained.
- The additional reports submitted have not addressed the statutory requirements of the NPPF or the substantive concerns expressed in relation to the planning merits of this proposal.

### **Comments Supporting**

- The proposal will link with the proposed cycle/equestrian/pedestrian route alongside the planned A47 dualling.
- It will give easy cycle access to the NVR at Wansford Station from the centre of Peterborough, thus increasing tourism turnover and using the former Stamford branchline railway cutting will keep it largely out of sight of Sutton properties.
- It will enable cyclists to cross the field between Sutton and the NVR more easily.
- It will help more people access and appreciate the countryside west of Peterborough, in line with the vision and ambitions of the John Clare Countryside project, which Peterborough City Council is officially supportive of.

## **5 Assessment of the planning issues**

### a) The principle of development

#### *Proposed Route:*

As stated in section 1 above most of the cycleway/footway would follow the former Wansford to Stamford railway line which is safeguarded for walking and cycling infrastructure under policy LP15 of the Local Plan. The principle of the conversion of the former railway line to a cycleway/footway is therefore acceptable.

The preference would be for the cycleway/footway to follow the former railway line in its entirety to allow the path to meet up with the Green Wheel in Southorpe, therefore allowing the entirety of the abandoned line to be traversed from Wansford Station to Stamford. Instead the path would commence off Lovers Lane and would circle around the ménage before re-joining the former railway line. Access to the former line could also be gained from Graeme Road.

However, apart from the section the subject to this application, most of the former discussed line is in private ownership and the resources needed to open it up are not available to the applicant. The proposal would however, tie in to the existing road and cycle network enabling access for cyclists and pedestrians from Peterborough and elsewhere to an important local leisure destination – the Nene Valley Railway and the surrounding countryside of Northamptonshire.

The applicant would prefer the route to access the portion of disused line that is directly south of Lovers Lane, however as that piece of land is in private ownership and it has not been possible to acquire the land. The proposed route for the first section around the horse ménage is on land owned by Nene Park Trust (NPT) who are the applicant's main partner.

It is acknowledged that the cycleway/footway only follows the safeguarded land designated under policy LP15 in part, however this does not make the scheme unacceptable.

#### *Sustainable Transport Modes:*

Policy LP1 of the local plan advises that when considering development proposals the council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It will seek to secure development which improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area and in turn helps Peterborough create the UK's Environment Capital. The proposal is in line with the council's Carbon Management action plan in that it would encourage alternative means of transport to car use. This mixed sustainable transport addresses the national agenda that is

central to Peterborough City Council ambitions to be the Green Capital of the UK.

One of the overarching issues identified in the Local Plan is that there are opportunities to improve walking and cycling networks. The vision for Peterborough over the Local Plan period is to provide a range of high quality attractions and facilities making it a distinctive place to live, work and visit. A walkable, liveable city, with a network of footpaths and cycleways, providing safe, efficient and enjoyable ways to move around. Sustainable transport options will link all parts of the city, including the railway station and the River Nene, to the wider regions beyond.

Policy LP13 of the Local Plan supports opportunities to improve sustainable transport links to travel hubs from rural areas and improve walking and cycling links between villages. The application proposal will provide a safe and convenient route from the village of Sutton into the open countryside to the west of Peterborough and more immediately to Wansford Station on the Nene Valley Railway (NVR). It would provide both a cycleway/footway for leisure purposes as well as a commuter route and help encourage more sustainable means of travel.

Highways England (HE) are soon to submit a Development Consent Order to the Secretary of State to dual a section of the A47 from Sutton to Wansford. As part of that scheme it is proposed to provide a route for walkers, cyclists and horse riders (WCHR). The applicant considers that the scheme, the subject of this application, would complement the HE scheme by creating a possible route west into Leicestershire and north into Lincolnshire.

Sutton Parish Council and others consider this cycleway/footway to be unnecessary and a duplication in terms of purpose and function of an alternative safe and convenient cycleway/footway being provided by HE. Objectors consider the proposed route will be of no additional benefit to cyclists to the route proposed by HE which will allow access to the west, suitable for all leisure and non-motorised commuter users and for those with mobility issues. Also that there is a lack of evidence as to how many would actually use this route.

It is also stated that the proposed HE route will allow access to all villages including Wansford, Yarwell, Nassington, Elton and Stibbington rather than having all cycles converge on the tiny hamlet of Stibbington alone.

Objectors have also stated that there is a more appropriate route on Nene Park Trust (NPT) land from the bottom of Station Road Ailsworth to NVR (NPT Master Plan) which would be much safer. This route would also provide greater access for all users to NVR station. Far better value for money and for all leisure and commuter users.

Others suggest a route that continues the dedicated cycle path that runs alongside the NVR from Ferry Meadows and currently terminates at Mill Lane Castor would be a far safer route for cyclist / pedestrians and residents alike.

Whilst the suggestions for alternative routes are noted these are not for consideration under this planning proposal.

There have been substantial number of comments in support of the scheme. Supporters state that the proposed route would be a complementary route to a to the A47 scheme, following a separate route to a different destination - the NVR station and Stibbington. The route would be traffic free making it more family friendly and would not be used by large 'pelotons' of road bikes. The A47 scheme would also lack the scenic value and would have associated noise, vehicle fumes and so on.

The applicant has also stated that whilst the A47 route would provide a WCHR route from Sutton to Wansford this route is a substantial distance from Stibbington and the villages beyond and therefore the cycleway/footway would provide an alternative route.

The proposal is assessed on its planning merits and whilst the A47 WCHR route is noted this does

not make the proposed alternative route unacceptable. It is considered that the proposal would provide a sustainable cycleway/footway and would accord with policies LP13 and LP15 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan and para 102 of the NPPF.

Concerns are also raised regarding funding from HE's designation funds we will end up with a lack of funding on the route all cyclists want. However, the funding of the scheme is not a material planning consideration.

#### *Equestrian Use:*

An objection has been received from the British Horse Society commenting that the proposal would be contrary to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Transport Plan which defines Active Travel as pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians and that public money should be spent to benefit the most users possible. The route does not meet the requirement for a multi user path available to the widest group of users.

It is accepted that new paths should encourage equestrian access, however in this instance once on the path there would be no access over the bridge at Stibbington as no changes to the bridge are proposed as part of this application. Access over the bridge for equestrians would require significant improvements including a gradient access, increase in height of the hand rail to 2.5m and would not be a pleasant environment for a horse close to the railway track.

At the southern end of the proposed cycle/footway there is currently no bridleway/no access for equestrians into the adjacent field. This is something that could be pursued with the land owner (NPT), however this is not for consideration as part of this application. There is a permissive right of way, a 1m wide path, to the south of the railway line which is accessed by galvanised steps up a steep embankment which is not an accessible route for equestrians.

In addition, whilst there is a public right of way from Lovers Lane further to the west of the proposal cycle/footway, the field is also grazed by cattle and therefore not ideal for equestrians and would need a confident rider to negotiate.

Therefore the lack of access for equestrians does not make the proposal unacceptable.

#### *Replacement steps:*

Concerns have also been made regarding the bridge with its steps and cycle gulley is an obstruction for those with mobility challenges, Mums with prams and any cyclist who simply cannot wheel a bike up the steps. However, there are no changes to the bridge other than replacement steps and a wheeling tunnel which will be an improvement on the existing situation.

#### *Health and Wellbeing:*

Policy LP7 of the Adopted Local Plan is supportive of development which facilitates "participation in sport and physical activity". The proposal would improve sustainable travel and promote healthy and active lifestyles for the local population encouraging a greater use of the outdoor environment and the subsequent benefits to health.

Para 91 of the NPPF advises that planning decisions to aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which, among other thing, enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example layouts that encourage walking and cycling.

Comments received from a local GP confirms that Peterborough is in a very unfortunate position regarding health inequalities; having a very high local rate of illnesses such as coronary heart disease and life expectancies are much lower than the national average for both males and females. In illnesses such as diabetes and coronary heart disease, lifestyle changes make more difference

than nearly any medical intervention. The very pressing challenges of health inequalities, COVID and global warming should make any cycling initiatives difficult to refuse.

Comments supporting the proposal argue the proposal is one way of encouraging more active lifestyles and subsequent improvement in health and well-being thus reducing demands on the NHS. Covid has highlighted the importance of getting fitter, using greener methods and opening up our green spaces and the lockdown period has witnessed a significant increase in families cycling and this should be capitalised upon.

The proposal would provide a means to encourage more active lifestyles and subsequent benefit to health and well-being and would therefore accord with policy LP7 of the Local Plan and paras. 91 and 92 of the NPPF.

### Nene Valley

The site is located within Nene Valley as designated under policy LP24 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019). The Nene Valley area is identified as having high amenity, landscape, ecological and heritage value. The supporting text to policy LP24 advises that 'there is still scope for further action to enhance the Nene Valley's role for recreation, whilst having due regard to enhancing the natural environment'.

Policy LP24 advises that the Council will support development that will safeguard and enhance recreation and/or bring landscape, nature conservation, heritage, cultural or amenity benefits provided the proposal is appropriate in terms of use, scale and character within its townscape or landscape setting. Development will be supported where, amongst other things, it will enable greater public access to the waterspace and the achievement of continuous publicly accessible paths and cycle routes through the valley.

The proposal would provide an important connection, enabling visitors to safely explore the western reaches of Nene Park and venture further beyond and to the NVR where, as supporters have stated passengers could cycle one way and take the train back. NPT has advised that the route will run through a section of their land which would be more accessible for visitors as stated in their Strategy and Master Plan.

The proposal would therefore accord with policy LP24 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019).

### b) Highway Implications

There is very little adopted highway that would be affected by the proposal however the Local Highways Authority require further details of how the cycleway/footway would link into the existing highway and include visibility at the junction connection with Lovers Lane. These details would be secured by condition and through a S278 agreement. No fencing is to be installed on the public highway.

A number of concerns have been raised by Sutton Parish Council (SPC) and local residents with regard to the potential increase in cyclists going through the village. There is limited parking provision, the roads are narrow, there are a number of blind corners and parking on the verges makes it difficult to walk around the village, especially for the elderly.

Bikes already pass through Sutton at speed and without consideration of pedestrians. There is concern that the tarmac provides a fast route for cyclists entering into a village.

Whilst it is accepted that the proposed cycleway/footway would result in an increase in cycles and pedestrians in the village it is very unlikely that the numbers would be high. It is considered that most road users are considerate to pedestrians however it is accepted that there is always an exception to the rule.

It is considered that the proposal would not result in significant numbers of cyclists/pedestrians through the village thereby not unduly impacting upon the road network of Sutton.

Concerns have been raised by Sutton Parish Council regarding the construction route and site access. There are concerns regarding the 'Quiet Lane' status of the roads in Sutton and that the roads are narrow and there are blind bends. Also no attention has been given to the impact of increased traffic and parking in the village nor to transportation of bulk construction materials. The Parish Council considers the narrow entrance to Lovers Lane is totally unsuitable for heavy vehicles. They believe all transport of bulk materials should be from the NVR end of the route and not through Sutton as NVR has the space, facilities and rolling stock for this purpose. This is something that could be suggested to the applicant.

The Local Highways Authority has requested a construction traffic management plan should be secured by condition to ensure construction traffic does not impact on Lovers Lane and that associated materials are not stored on the highway.

The LHA has raised no objections to the scheme.

Sutton Parish Council also considers the positioning of the site compound is inconsiderate to residents along Lovers Lane and the users of the Menage facility. It is accepted that there will be some disturbance caused to these occupants during the construction period however, this would be for a relatively short period and would not make the proposal unacceptable.

The cycleway/footway is not proposed to be adopted by the Local Highways Authority and the maintenance would be the responsibility of NPT as land owner.

The Peterborough Cycle Forum supports the proposal and considers the cycleway/footway would appeal to families and leisure riders and will certainly be of no interest to high speed peletons of lycra-clad 'roadies'. It would be in addition to a new cycle route proposed in the A47 scheme. The Forum recommends that signs are installed which include simple, concise wording to encourage consideration and respect between users. Signage should alert all users of the fact that the road is shared by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. These details would be secured by condition.

The Cycle Forum recommends that the cycle stands are placed no less than 1m apart, to enable easy access for cycles fitted with panniers or child seats and to minimise the risk of damage caused by inadvertent contact between cycles. These details would be secured by condition.

In addition they advise that wheeling ramps should be provided on both sides of steps, however accepts that a width of 2m is insufficient for a second channel to be installed. Further details of the wheeling ramps would be secured by condition.

The proposal would therefore not unduly impact on the highway network and hence the proposal accords with policy LP13 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019).

#### c) Wildlife and Biodiversity Implications

A preliminary ecological appraisal report (PEA) was submitted in support of the application. The PEA was completed in 2018 and the Ecologist recommended the survey be updated. It should be noted that the PEA was not available for public access due to the document containing sensitive information regarding Badgers.

Thereafter an Ecological Impact Assessment was subsequently submitted which provided an assessment of the likely impacts the proposed scheme might have upon notable and/or protected species and habitats and mitigation where required.

The proposed route runs through the area designated as the Sutton Meadows South County Wildlife Site (CWS) and is adjacent to three further County Wildlife Sites, including Sutton/ Sibson Flood Meadows, Nene Valley Railway and River Nene. The proposal is therefore assessed against Local Plan policy LP28 which states that development likely to have an adverse effect on designated sites, including CWSs will only be permitted where the need and benefits of the development clearly outweigh the loss and the coherence of the local ecological network is maintained; and para 175 of the NPPF which states that if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.

Whilst no impacts are anticipated on Sutton / Sibson Flood Meadows, Nene Valley Railway and River Nene CWS, there would be a permanent loss of approximately 308m<sup>2</sup> neutral semi improved grassland habitat within the Sutton Meadows CWS. There would also be 589m<sup>2</sup> of temporary impacts within the CWS during works. The proposed works will also impact upon improved grassland, hedge/treeline, a small area of unimproved neutral grassland and an area of neutral semi-improved grassland outside of the CWS. The total area to be impacted (permanent and temporary) amounts to approximately 0.7ha. None of the species recorded in these habitats are considered rare or vulnerable.

The applicant has been working with the Wildlife Trust and the land owner Nene Park Trust (NPT) and have agreed on an appropriate approach to compensation for the impact of the proposed cycleway on the Sutton Meadows South CWS. This would be implementing a plan to harrow (or similar) an area of currently poorer grassland, in the CWS or fields immediately adjacent to it, and spreading locally sourced green hay. As per the ecologist's report, this area would be a minimum of 0.8ha to count towards the scheme's delivery of a net gain for biodiversity (BNG).

An outline compensatory statement has been submitted outlining the measures to be taken; this includes surveys of the areas available to identify suitable areas for the compensatory measures and monitoring surveys of the enhanced area of grassland. The Wildlife Trust is satisfied that the details can be secured by condition.

NPT, as land owner, has confirmed that this approach is acceptable. As the land, the subject of the compensatory measures is not in the control of the applicant it will be necessary to append a Grampian condition to ensure that these measures are implemented prior to the commencement of development.

As stated in section a) above the majority of the site is designated under policy LP15 for the provision of walking and cycling infrastructure and therefore there is no alternative site which would provide this purpose and the loss of the CWS can be compensated for which would include a net gain for biodiversity.

It is considered benefits provided by the cycleway/footway including improved sustainable travel promoting healthy and active lifestyles, environmental benefits and improved access to the western areas of Nene Park would outweigh the loss of the CWS.

The proposal therefore accords with policy LP28 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019) and para. 175 of the NPPF (2019).

**Nesting Birds:** The proposal would result in the loss of suitable nesting habitat, such works should be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season unless a bird nesting survey is undertaken. An informative would be appended to the decision notice. The Ecology Report recommends the provision of nesting habitats in the form of nest boxes.

**Bats:** A very small section of the tree / hedgerow belt is to be removed to allow the cycle route to cross the dismantled railway into the floodplain. There are roosting opportunities for bats however, no trees are to be directly impacted by the proposed works and no trees are proposed to be removed. The entire site was considered suitable to support foraging /commuting bats, particularly along

the dismantled railway line. There is the potential to enhance the site for bats through the installation of bat boxes on mature trees within the dismantled railway line.

No lighting is proposed to be installed as part of the proposal and a condition would be appended to ensure that no lighting is installed without the prior approval of the Local Planning Authority.

**Badgers:** It is not anticipated that any tunnels would be impacted by the development. The Ecology Report recommends that a pre-commencement badger check is carried out to ensure no new setts/burrows have been created within the zone of influence of the works during the intervening time, following which further recommendations may follow. It is advised that Trenches/pits created during the works will be covered/fenced nightly to prevent badgers from becoming trapped. Alternatively, ramps may be installed to allow badgers to escape freely.

**Great Crested Newts:** The Ecology Report advises that the impact on potentially present great crested newts by the proposed development/works is assessed as negligible. However, as a precautionary measure, all working areas subject to vegetation removal will be fingertip searched by an experienced ecologist and all vegetation removal will be subject to a watching brief under the supervision of an ecologist. At the end of construction works, the 'roll out road' to be installed at the northern end of the route will be lifted under the supervision of an experienced ecologist. To mitigate for the loss of suitable habitat it is proposed that log piles, and, or brash piles are created within the tree/hedge line of the dismantled railway.

**Reptiles:** The dismantled railway line is noted for its suitability for reptiles and the prevailing habitats are potentially suitable. However, the dismantled railway line is a well-used permissible footpath, the ground is very compacted resulting in suitability for basking reptiles only, and mainly confined to the peripheries of the railway line. The Ecology Report recommends site clearance is undertaken under supervision and to mitigate for the loss of suitable habitat it is proposed that log piles, and, or brash piles are created within the tree/hedge line of the dismantled railway.

**Hedgehog:** It is recommended that onsite vegetation considered suitable to support hedgehogs would be avoided. If this is not practicable then clearance will be carried out by hand or under supervision, avoiding frosty days when hedgehogs may be hibernating. As with badgers, pits/trenches will be fenced/covered to avoid hedgehogs from becoming trapped/injured. If this mitigation is followed, then no significant effect on hedgehogs is anticipated.

**European Rabbit:** Active rabbit warrens were identified within areas of improved grassland and the treeline / hedgerow during the walkover survey (TN3). Rabbits are protected under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 which makes it an offence to cause unnecessary suffering. It is recommended that works to rabbit burrows will be avoided, and care will be taken when excavating close to the rabbit burrows to reduce risk of injuring individuals. A banksman should be provided to reduce the risks of encountering rabbits when excavating.

Having reviewed the updated ecological survey report the Ecologist raises no objections subject to the details within sections 8.5.2 (badgers) and 8.6.2 (great crested newt) of 'Ecological Impact Assessment' being secured by condition.

**Sites of Special Scientific Interest – Natural England** Based on the plans submitted, considers that the proposed development would not have likely significant effects on statutorily protected sites and so has no objection to the proposed development.

Concerns have been made regarding the risk the cattle grid poses for wildlife. The Cycle forum has suggested that the cattle grids incorporate a design feature which will allow a small animal to escape from under the grid in the unlikely event it has fallen down between the bars. These details would be secured by condition.

The proposal would avoid any adverse impact on the biodiversity within the site, including protected species and biodiversity enhancements would be provided. Hence the proposal accords with

policies LP24, LP28 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019) and para 175 of the NPPF (2019).

d) Landscape Implications

There are a number of existing trees within close proximity to the cycleway/footway that would be impacted upon as a part of the proposed works. No trees are proposed to be removed. No Arboricultural Information supports the application. The Tree Officer has been consulted on the proposal and raises no objection in principle, subject to further information being secured by condition with regards to root protection of trees including an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) and Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS). The method statement will confirm the construction methods used, both to limit the impact on the root protection area of any affected trees, and also to limit root damage over the long term to the surface of the cycle/pedestrian way. This will involve the use of 'cellweb' or similar geogrid with the subbase, in any areas where it is necessary.

The removal of a small section overhanging branches, scrub understory of the tree/hedgerow belt along the dismantled railway line is not considered likely to disrupt the connectivity and thus functionality of this corridor.

It is considered that appropriate methods would be implemented to protect the existing trees surrounding the site and therefore the proposal would accord with policy LP29 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019).

e) Flood risk and drainage

The Environment Agency's indicative flood map shows that the majority of the proposed path route is located in Flood Zone 3 and partly within Flood Zone 2.

Para 155 of the NPPF advises that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk. Where development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere. In this case, the land is allocated within the Local Plan for walking and cycling infrastructure to enable the provision of a sustainable walking and cycle link to the west. It is therefore considered that there is no reasonable alternative route or better site at lesser risk of flooding.

Para. 159 of the NPPF advises that if it is not possible for development to be located in zones with a lower risk of flooding (taking into account wider sustainable development objectives), the exception test may have to be applied. The proposed land use (amenity open-space, outdoor sports and recreation) is categorised as 'Water-compatible development' as defined in Table 2 of NPPF-TG and as such is assessed to be appropriate development for both Flood Zone 3 and Flood Zone 2 (Table 3 of NPPF-TG). Therefore the Exception Test is not required.

The majority of the proposed path route is located within the floodplain of the River Nene. There is therefore a risk of fluvial flooding to the path. Comments have been made about the principle of the development in an area which is at risk of flooding at certain times. It is accepted that there will be times when the path will be impassable.

A public flood warning service is in operation by the Environment Agency, for areas near the River Nene in Peterborough including Sutton, Water Newton, Thorpe Meadows and Woodston.

The new path would have a finished surface flush with the surrounding existing ground levels for the main part and therefore will not result in any loss of flood plain storage capacity. Where the path will be raised up, alongside the existing railway embankment, it will tie into the embankment in a way which does not impede flows across the flood plain. The size of the loss of floodplain caused by raising the path level is very minimal in relation to the overall flood plain volume. All new or replacement boundary fencing will be timber post and wire and will therefore be permeable flood water flows.

The construction of the path through the existing underpass is to be gabion boxes to allow the permeability of the flood water. Where levels allow, a new drainage system will be installed to allow for a more effective dispersal of flood waters following a flood event into the surrounding field drain network.

The proposed development will result in an overall increase in the impermeable area of the site, however this will occur as a very narrow linear strip, which will be profiled to drain to infiltrate into the existing permeable ground to either side of the path. The risk of flooding occurring from the site drainage is therefore considered to be insignificant, and able to be mitigated through good surface water management practices.

The Drainage Team has considered the proposal and raises no objections subject to further clarification being submitted on the maintenance and management of the proposed timber bridge and the ramp construction which includes a cross section to show the length of construction and pipes, headwall details, backfill materials, bedding surround and fencing. The details would be secured by condition.

It is considered that the proposal would not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere and the site can be appropriately drained and would accord with policy LP32 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019) and paras. 155, 158, 159, 163 and 165 of the NPPF (2019).

#### f) Impact on Heritage Assets

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019) sets out high level policies to conserve and enhance the historic environment. The approach set out in paragraphs 189-202 is of particular relevance.

Considerable weight and importance should be given to the avoidance of harm to conservation areas and the significance of a listed building and its setting. The presumption against the avoidance of harm is a statutory one, and can only be outweighed if there are material considerations strong enough to do so.

Policy LP19 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019) places emphasis on the protection of designated heritage assets and their settings. All proposals that would directly affect any heritage asset should be accompanied by a Heritage Statement.

#### Sutton Conservation Area

The beginning on the route starts just inside the Sutton Conservation Area boundary, close to listed and locally listed buildings. The presence of the route will also have an impact upon the general Conservation Area due to its presence and use. Section 72 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 places a duty on the LPA to pay 'special regard' to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the special character or appearance of conservation areas.

The Conservation Officer considers that although Sutton now appears relatively isolated with no through traffic, this is mostly a modern construct brought upon due to the increase in vehicle traffic. Historically there would have been access to Stibbington, Water Newton and Durobrivae, various access of which can still be discerned and are more explicit within the first OS Map. There is a clear preference for Sutton to be linked up on non-motorised routes, bringing the village back in to the local historical environment connectivity. This will be of benefit to the appreciation of the many heritage assets within the village. As such there is no concern with the re-establishment of greater connectivity of Sutton with other local destinations.

Lovers Lane is a verdant and pleasant access to the village centre from the south. It provides good views of various Listed buildings at the northern end, with some interesting buildings and features as you traverse southward out of the village. These culminate in open views of elements of the

'Grange' with glimpses of the historic and Listed buildings on Graeme Road before you arrive at the open countryside with its appearance of former village common and flood plain.

The only impact to Lovers Lane positive serene character from the proposal would be through its increased use. However as this would be relatively limited, it would not be materially detrimental and more than balanced by its greater appreciation by the public. It is accepted that this benefit would be lost if as preferred the cycle path remained on the former railway feature.

The Conservation Officer considers there is a clear preference for the route to remain on the former railway, however, as discussed above this would require land which is outside the applicant's control.

The Conservation Officer raises concerns in respect of the proposed tarmac surfacing and advises that a softer hardened gravel be used as this would allow for the appreciation of the route to be of a more subservient arrangement and differentiate it as a former railway rather than a road. The applicant has responded that tarmac/asphalt is far more durable than softer surfaces and the maintenance costs are significantly lower. In addition the Transport Guidance LTN 1/20 recommends the use of harder sealed surfaces for cycle routes. However the applicant has confirmed that consideration will be given to rolling chipped gravel into the surface to make it seem less like a roadway and perhaps more suitable to the rural setting. These details would be secured by condition.

#### Former railway line and construction of the cycle way

The abandoned railway is a non-designated heritage asset due to its history, its importance to the development of district and the completeness as a line which is easily appreciable within the landscape. The Local Planning Authority has a duty under the NPPF when considering whether to grant permission for development which affects a non-designated heritage asset or its setting to have regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. As stated in section a) above under policy LP15 of the Local Plan part of the route along the discussed railway line is safeguarded for a walking and cycling route. The Conservation Officer's view is that the re-use of heritage assets is considered an important aim in conservation as it ensures their future use. In this instance the principle of conversion of the archaeological feature to a cycle track is welcomed because in addition to its re-use, it would also keep the transport use of the former line and allow the public to better appreciate the asset. In combination with the Heritage Railway Line at Wansford as a destination it would also allow for a more holistic approach to the use of the redundant railway infrastructure.

As set out above there is a preference for the former line to form the basis of the cycle route however the proposal only uses a section and appears to make full re-use of the line more difficult. In the future the cycle path should meet up with the Green Wheel in Southorpe, therefore allowing the entire of the abandoned line to be traversed from Wansford Station to Stamford.

The second point of concern is where the proposed cycle way drops off the abandoned railway. There is a clear preference for as much of the route to be utilised as possible. In this instance there is potential for the route to continue further. It is however understood that due to the height of the bank closer to the bridge this would make access and egress difficult.

The former railway lines have been removed and only the archaeological feature remains. Although the works would impact upon the former railway line through surface excavation, this is considered limited and as it is to be filled the form of the archaeological feature will be retained. As such the loss of some of the integrity of the remaining earthwork is an acceptable loss to bring the former railway route back in to use.

The applicant has advised that because it is only possible to cross the river by using the NVR footbridge, any route must emerge on the south side of the NVR line. It is not possible to continue much further on the existing line to the point where it meets the existing NVR line because of the difference in ground levels and there would need to be a way of crossing the NVR. An earlier design

considered continuing along the disused line then through an underpass to the south side of the NVR line. It then ran alongside the embankment before going up to the level of the current floodspans and footbridge by means of a ramp on steel stilts built into or beside the embankment. This design was not acceptable to the NVR. Using more of the disused line would therefore be impracticable.

### Replacement Steps to NVR Bridge

The NVR bridge is Grade II listed and therefore the Local Planning Authority has a duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Section 66.1 when considering whether to grant permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting to have a special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their special features and their setting, with the latter often an essential ingredient of its character.

The Heritage Statement submitted with the application did not include an assessment of the impact the development would have on the listed building as required by para 189 of the NPPF. A revised Heritage Statement has now been received and the Conservation Officer considers a sufficient assessment has been made. In addition a separate Listed Building Consent application is also under consideration.

The only change to the listed structure will be the replacement of the existing steel steps, which are themselves not part of the original nineteenth century structure and not in keeping with it. The new steps will be built up to the existing footbridge, with a wheeling channel for bicycles and a waiting area. Cyclists will thus be able to go up to the footbridge and wheel their bikes across more easily. Although the new steps would have an impact, being larger than the current staircase and extending further along the length of the floodspans, they will be more in keeping with the historic structure because the balustrade of the stairs will match the existing 'lattice work' design of the bridge parapet both in style and colour. They will offer much greater ease of access to cyclists and pedestrians.

The staircase is split in to two parts, a stone staircase for the bottom third and a cast iron staircase rising from the stone element to the bridge. The railings which form the upper element continue down the stone element providing the enclosure. The Conservation Officer considers that the existing staircase was presumably part of the 1977 restoration and is incongruous with the decorative metal work on the bridge and does not reference the character of the Listed building and raises no objections to the replacement staircase. The details of materials and finishing would be secured by condition under the Listed Building Consent.

Comments have been submitted regarding acceptability of the heritage statement. The Conservation Officer's view is that although a more detailed Heritage Statement would be welcomed, the applicant meets the requirements in NPPF paragraph 189, and so this is deemed sufficient.

Comments have also been made regarding the requirement of a balancing exercise required by paras. 195-6 of the NPPF. The proposals are not considered 'less than substantial' harm and as such no balancing exercise is required.

It is further suggested that a "comprehensive statement of significance and heritage impact assessment in accordance with NPPF section 16 should be required". The Conservation Officer's view is there is no justification for this requirement. The proposal would impact upon a Grade II Listed building and two NDHA's and there is no suggestion that the impact would be anything more than minimal.

In general the proposal is considered to be of benefit to the Sutton Conservation Area, the archaeological feature of the former railway line which is considered a non-designated heritage assets and the Grade II Listed bridge.

It is considered that the work will not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the listed building and would accord with section 66(1) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, It is considered that the work will preserve the character and appearance of the

Sutton Conservation Area in accordance with Section 72(1), of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) and is in accordance with policy LP19 of the adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019), and the National Planning Policy Framework (Heritage considerations).

g) Archaeology

The proposed route crosses an area of medieval ridge and furrow visible on aerial photographs as cropmarks and partly surviving as earthworks. Remains may extend towards the proposed cycle route. The route will follow the existing embankment of the disused railway branch line which has already been dismantled.

The Archaeologist considers that the scheme is not going to have a major impact on potential buried remains however requested further information on the works compound area and the new 3m wide timber cycle/footbridge over the field drain, including the type and depth of foundation.

The applicant has provided a revised drawing showing the location of the works compound which will provide parking and material storage provision. This would be served by a 5m wide access track from Lovers Lane. Matting such as 'Tufftraks' or 'Groundmatz' will be used, both for the access track and the compound to protect the existing ground surface. If any infilling is needed over uneven ground then sharp sand or something similar will be used to create a level base area. The matting and any in-fill material will be removed once construction is completed.

The site for the compound is outside the area of historic ridge and furrow shown in recent Lidar plots and commented within the Heritage Statement.

Further information have been submitted detailing the groundwork and foundations for the new cycle/footbridge. We are proposing that a concrete bankseat approx. 1.0m X 0.7m is used although the final dimensions will be determined at the final design stage using geotechnical survey information.

Other groundworks associated with the construction are the cycle grids and ramps at the exits from the disused railway line and the construction of new steps adjacent to the NVR railway bridge. None of these elements encroach on known historic features recorded in the Heritage Environmental Record.

In order to provide additional safeguarding of previously unknown historic features, Dr Upex, the author of the report has offered to visit the site during the construction phase and examine any new groundwork.

Our Archaeologist is satisfied that the proposal would not impact on buried remains and that a programme of archaeological work would not be required.

The supporting heritage statement advises that the proposal would bring benefits from a 'Heritage' perspective; it would provide access to the western part of the Nene park trust's rural estate which has a wealth of natural and historic interest and increased access to the Nene Valley Railway.

In addition the future provision of leaflets and other material Nene Park Trust with information about this locality, could provide much additional background information about the historic features which will allow visitors to increase their understanding and appreciation of the history of the area. This is accepted.

The proposal would not result in any impact on archaeological remains and therefore accords with policy LP19 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019) and paras. 189 and 190 of the NPPF (2019).

h) Impact on Amenity

A number of objections have been received regarding the potential increase in walkers and cyclist passing through the village which will affect the peace and tranquillity and impact on the amenity of residents. Whilst it is accepted that the number of visitors to the village would increase it is not considered that this would be to an unacceptable level, and would be no different to many other villages across the country.

Concerns have also been raised regarding the risk of serious injuries resulting from speeding cyclists through the village. As stated above in the report a Walking, Cyclist and Horse Riding (WCHR) is to be provided within the scheme to dual the A47 and it is likely that cyclists wishing to travel at speed would be more attracted to this route given that the village has a 20 mph speed limit and the proposed cycleway/footway would not provide a 'fast track'. Like all road users, most are respectful however there is always the exception to the rule.

As some commenters have stated in many cases it is the local car users and delivery vans that pose the biggest risk to users of the highway.

Whilst some residents refer to the existing increase in vehicle traffic through the village. The proposed cycleway/footway may actually reduce the number of vehicles coming to the village through the provision of this pedestrian/cycleway route, allowing people the option to use more sustainable travel modes other than the car.

A number of objections have been received regarding the impact on horse riders which is part of the character of village life. Horse riding and cycling already co-exist locally and all over the country. Sutton is no different to other villages in this respect. In fact many routes, including the proposal to dual the A47 propose shared routes for walkers, cyclists and horse riders, as they are considered compatible users.

Comments received by a local resident refer to statistics regarding accidents between cyclist and horse riders. The risk of a horse rider being injured as a result of cycling or cyclists is one in two million. The resident has received information from the BHS advising that they have recorded 88 injuries to horse riders over the last ten years where cycling was contributory. This ten-year statistic needs to be set against the popularity of horse riding. In the UK approximately 1.8 million people ride horses at least once a month. Therefore, according to BHS statistics, the national risk of injury related to cycling is about one in two million.

The resident goes on to say that the statistical evidence therefore suggests that the chance of horse rider injury due to cycling in Sutton is minimal, and is far less than other risk factors which face riders of horses on a daily basis such as equestrian competition or motorised road vehicles which currently cause 2 horses die per week on a national level. If there is risk to horses and riders in Sutton this is where it lies.

Turning to the Menage there is concern that this facility would be significantly impacted by the cycleway/footway. The Menage is enclosed and there is a separation of approximately 2m between the Menage and the proposed cycleway/footway. A group of trees bound the southern boundary.

On a recent visit to the site by the case officer, it was apparent that the existing permissive footpath is a popular route for walkers. However walkers do not always stay on this route and take a route adjacent to the Menage and through to the route along the former railway line. These include dog walkers. Whilst the proposal would result in more visitors to this part of Sutton both walkers and cyclist this is not likely to be excessive and given the existing recreational use it is not considered that the proposal would unduly impact on the Menage facility.

A number of objections have been raised regarding the danger posed by the installation of the cattle grids to horses. The cattle grids are intended to provide a continued route for cyclists along one side of the route; access for pedestrians would be through a 1.2m wide gate. Cattle grids are part of the rural character and it is not considered that they would be of any more danger in this location than

elsewhere. The applicant's preference is for the cattle grids to remain and it is considered unreasonable to insist that they are removed.

Concern has been raised that the route would cause the increased use of the Bridleways Ailsworth 3 and Sutton 3 or the highway by cyclists. Whilst horse riders and cyclists can and do share the PROW network safely and mostly considerately, as this bridleway network is extremely limited, there is no option to dissipate any increased traffic over other routes.

It is accepted that some cyclists may use these routes however it is more likely that cyclists would prefer to cycle on a road or cycle route in preference to the bridleways.

The proposal would result in additional visitors to the village of Sutton however, it is not considered that the increase would be significant and would not unduly impact on the amenity of residents. Hence the proposal accords with policy LP17 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019).

i) Impact on character

The character of Sutton village is well recognised for its quiet and tranquil character. There is concern that the cycleway/footpath would result in a significant increase in visitors; cyclists, pedestrians and vehicles. The purpose of the route is to provide better access by cyclists and pedestrians to the NVR and beyond and therefore it is likely that the number of visitors would not substantially increase. There is already a permissive right of way across the field which draws people to the village and whilst it is accepted that visitor numbers would increase it is not considered that this would be to a degree which would harmfully alter the village character.

The purpose of the route is to provide access for cyclist and pedestrians linking up existing routes and in the most part this is unlikely to result in significant numbers of vehicles parking on the narrow village lanes.

A number of concerns have been raised regarding the tarmac surface which is out of keeping with the rural setting and this is accepted. As stated above the applicant is in agreement for gravel to be rolled into the surface which would address the maintenance of the route and at the same time soften its appearance and respect the rural character. These details would be secured by condition.

It is therefore not considered that the proposal would be unsympathetic to the character of the village and would accord with policies LP16 and LP19 of the adopted Peterborough Local Plan.

j) Items not covered in the above report

- The application has serious errors of fact, omissions and misleading statements, particularly related to Highways England and Stibbington Parish Council opinions. *Officer response: Representations have been received as part of the planning application.*
- The applicant claims that Highways England considers that the application proposal is complementary to the planned cycle way along the A47 works; this is incorrect. *Officer response: HE have been consulted on the application and have raised no objection.*
- I should like to invite the Planning Officer to visit the site and Sutton in order that she/he may understand the risks that the application poses. *Officer response: Site visits have been undertaken.*
- There is lack of clarity towards the funding and upkeep of the path. *Officer response: The funding of the path is not a material planning consideration.*
- In the absence of documents the application is technically incomplete having regard to the national and local list for validation and should not therefore progress to determination. *Officer response: The information submitted was sufficient to validate the application. Further updates/information have been received during the application process.*

## 6 Conclusions

Subject to the imposition of the attached conditions, the proposal is acceptable having been assessed in the light of all material considerations, including weighing against relevant policies of the development plan and specifically:

- The proposal would provide a sustainable cycleway/footway along a route which is safeguarded for such provision in accordance with policies LP1, LP13 and LP15 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019);
- The proposal would provide an accessible cycleway/footway enhancing the recreational offer within the Nene Valley promoting active and healthy lifestyles in accordance with policies LP7 and LP24 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019) and paras. 91 and 92 of the NPPF;
- The proposal would not unduly impact on the surrounding highway network in accordance with policy LP13 of the adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019);
- The proposal would provide appropriate compensatory measures for the loss of the Sutton County Wildlife site in accordance with policy LP28 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan and para. 175 of the NPPF (2019).
- The proposal would avoid any adverse impact on the biodiversity within the site, including protected species and biodiversity enhancements would be provided. Hence the proposal accords with policies LP24, LP28 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019) and para 175 of the NPPF (2019);
- Appropriate methods would be implemented to protect the existing trees surrounding the site and therefore the proposal would accord with policy LP29 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019).
- The proposal has demonstrated that there are no sequentially preferable sites available at a lesser risk of flooding and that the development would not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. The proposal therefore accords with policy LP24 and LP32 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019) and paras 155, 158, 159 of the NPPF (2019).
- The proposal has demonstrated that the site can be suitably drained, will incorporate SuDS into the proposal to reduce surface water run-off. The proposal therefore accords with policy LP32 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019) and paras. 163 and 165 of the NPPF (2019).
- The proposal would have a negligible impact on the Listed Bridge and would not harm the setting of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Area within the village of Sutton hence the proposal accords with policy LP19 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019) and paras. 189, 190 and 192 of the NPPF (2019).
- The proposal would not result in any impact on archaeological remains and therefore the proposal accords with policy LP19 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019) and para. 189 of the NPPF (2019).
- The proposal would not unduly impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers and therefore accords with policy LP17 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan in respect of neighbouring amenity.
- The proposal would not unduly impact on the character of the village of Sutton and hence the proposal accords with policy LP16 of the adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019).

## 7 Recommendation

The Executive Director of Place and Economy recommends that Planning Permission is **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

C 1 The development shall be implemented in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

- Location Plan (Planning Red Line Drawing) drg. no. 11965-PAPP-PCW-01 Rev B
- Proposed route between Sutton and Wansford Station sheet 1 of 5 drg. no. 11965-DWG-PCW-FC-01 Rev C
- Proposed route between Sutton and Wansford Station sheet 2 of 5 drg. no. 11965-DWG-PCW-FC-02 Rev B
- Proposed route between Sutton and Wansford Station sheet 3 of 5 drg. no. 11965-DWG-PCW-FC-03 Rev B
- Proposed route between Sutton and Wansford Station sheet 4 of 5 drg. no. 11965-DWG-PCW-FC-04 Rev B
- Proposed route between Sutton and Wansford Station sheet 5 of 5 drg. no. 11965-DWG-PCW-FC-05 Rev B
- Typical Details drg. no. 11965-DWG-PCW-FC-06 Rev C
- Proposed route from Green Wheel to Wansford NVR station
- Proposed cycle / pedestrian route through Sutton
- Heritage Statement – November 2020
- Ecological Impact Assessment – December 2020
- Proposed compensatory work on Sutton Meadows South CWS
- Sequential Test Statement – January 2021
- Archaeological Statement – November 2020
- Flood Risk Assessment – November 2016

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

C 2 The development shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted flood risk assessment (ref Sustrans, dated November 2019) and the following mitigation measures it details:

- The northern section of the new path to have a finished surface flush with the surrounding existing ground levels.
- The path will be raised up, alongside the existing railway embankment, it will tie into the embankment in a way which does not impede flows across the flood plain.
- Any arisings generated by the path construction will either be removed and disposed off-site or where suitable will be deposited on ground that is outside of Flood Zones 2 and 3.
- All new or replacement boundary fencing to be timber post and wire.

These mitigation measures shall be fully implemented prior to occupation and subsequently in accordance with the scheme's timing/phasing arrangements. The measures detailed above shall be retained and maintained thereafter throughout the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To reduce the risk of flooding to the proposed development and future occupants in accordance with policy LP32 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019) and para. 155 of the NPPF.

- C 3 All ecological measures and/or works shall be carried out in accordance with the recommendations contained in section 8.3.2 (nesting birds), 8.4.2 (bats), 8.5.2 (badgers), 8.6.2 (great crested newt), 8.7.2 (reptiles), 8.8.2 (hedgehogs) and 8.9.2 (rabbits) within the 'Ecological Impact Assessment Peterborough Cycleway Wansford Station to Sutton' by Greenwillows Associates Ltd and dated December 2020.

Reason: In order to ensure that the development does not have an adverse ecological impact in accordance with policy LP28 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019).

- C 4 The development hereby approved shall not commence unless and until the following measures as described in the 'Proposed compensatory work on Sutton Meadows South CWS' have been completed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority:-

- A survey of the CWS and fields immediately adjacent to it to be made at the appropriate time of year, to identify an area of poorer grassland where compensatory measures would be most effective. This area shall be at least 0.8ha.
- This area shall then be harrowed and spread with locally sourced green hay from a nearby local provenance species-rich site.

The area shall be monitored annually for a period of at least 3 years, to record its continuing diversity as part of the conservation aims of the CWS.

The applicant shall submit a single annual monitoring report to the Local Planning Authority for written approval for the first three years following the commencement of development.

If, after evaluating the submitted monitoring results, the Local Planning Authority considers remedial measures are necessary, it will serve notice on the applicant requiring a scheme of remedial measures. The remedial measures shall be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development. Within one month of receiving such written notice, the applicant shall submit such a scheme of remedial measures (including a timeframe for implementation) and the approved remedial measures shall be implemented in accordance with the approved scheme and programme.

Reason: To ensure appropriate compensation for the impact of the proposed cycleway/footway on Sutton Meadows South Country Wildlife Site and in accordance with policy LP28 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019) and para. 175 of the NPPF (2019).

- C 5 No lighting shall be installed along the proposed cycleway/footway unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and to avoid impact on ecology and in accordance with policy LP16 and LP28 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019).

- C 6 Prior to the commencement of development the following details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority :-

- \* An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA)
- \* An Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS)

All trees within 15m of any proposed development, including their root protection areas should be clearly and accurately marked on any submitted plan/s and included within any AIA/AMS, where appropriate.

The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In order to protect retained trees and hedges in accordance with policy LP16 and LP29 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan 2019. Policies DPD. This is a pre-commencement condition as measure to protect trees shall need to be agreed prior to works commencing on site.

- C 7 Notwithstanding the details hereby approved, prior to the laying of the surfacing of the proposed cycleway/footpath hereby approved, the details of the surface finished shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The surface finish shall be tarmac with chipped gravel rolled into the surface.

The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To provide a more natural appearance in keeping with the rural setting and in accordance with policies LP16 and LP19 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019).

- C 8 No development shall take place until a Construction Traffic Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The development shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved detail.

Reason: To minimise and mitigate the impact on Lovers Lane and in accordance with policy LP13 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019).

- C 9 No development shall take place until details of the tie in of the proposed cycleway/footway to the adopted highway have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The details shall include visibility splays at the junction connection with Lovers Lane.

The proposed cycleway/footway shall not be brought into use until all of the works have been completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety, in accordance with Policy LP13 of the Peterborough Local Plan (2019). This is a pre-commencement condition because the off site highway works are required to make the development acceptable and in addition to planning approval will require permission from the Highway Authority under the Highways Act.

- C10 Prior to installation of the cattle grids details of the bar diameter and spacing shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The cattle grids shall incorporate features which allow a small animal to escape from under the grid in the event it has fallen down between the bars.

Reason: In the interests of safety and biodiversity and in accordance with policies LP13 and LP28 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019).

- C11 The Sheffield cycle stands shall be provided prior to the cycleway/footway being brought

into use and shall be retained in perpetuity. The stands shall be placed no less than 1m apart.

Reason: In order to ensure that sufficient and suitable cycle parking is available in accordance with policy LP13 of the adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019).

- C12 Details of the cycle wheel channel shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Thereafter the cycle wheel channel shall be provided in accordance with the approved details prior to the cycleway/footway being brought into use.

Reason: To ensure the cycle wheel channel shall be of an appropriate design in the interests of amenity and safety and to encourage sustainable means of travel in accordance with policy LP13 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019).

- C13 No fencing is to be installed on the public highway.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with policy LP13 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019).

- C14 Prior to the proposed cycleway/footway being brought into use details of appropriate signage to warn cyclists that horses are likely to be in the road ahead shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The approved signage shall be erected prior to the cycleway/footway being brought into use.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and in accordance with policy LP13 of the Adopted Peterborough Local Plan (2019).

Copies to Councillor: Gavin Elsey