



**A556 Knutsford to Bowdon Improvement Scheme
Local Impact Report**

Prepared by Cheshire East Council August 2013

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SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Local Impact report (LIR) should be used by Local Authorities as the means by which their existing body of local knowledge and evidence on local issues can be fully and robustly reported to the Examining Authority. It should draw on existing local knowledge and experience. Examples might be local evidence of flooding, local social or economic issues or local knowledge of travel patterns to community facilities.

1.2 This report has been prepared by Cheshire East Council (CEC) as the planning authority for the site, in accordance with advice and requirements as set out in the Planning Act 2008, the Localism Act 2011 and Advice Note one: Local Impact Reports (version 2, April 2012, The Planning Inspectorate).

1.3 The Advice Note states that a Local Impact Report is a 'report in writing giving details of the likely impact of the proposed development on the authority's area'.

1.4 The Advice Note states that when the Examining Authority decides to accept an application it will ask the relevant local authorities to prepare a Local Impact Report and this should be prioritised whether or not the local authority considers that the development would have a positive, negative or neutral effect on the area. The Report may include any topics that they consider to be relevant to the impact of the development on their area as a means by which their existing body of knowledge and evidence on local issues can be fully and robustly reported to the Examining Authority.

1.5 The Advice Note indicates that topics addressed in the LIR may include:

- Site description and surroundings/location
- Details of the proposal
- Relevant planning history and any issues arising
- Relevant development plan policies, supplementary planning guidance or documents, development briefs or approved master plans and an appraisal of their relationship and relevance to the proposals.
- Relevant development proposals under consideration or granted permission but not commenced or completed
- Local area characteristics such as urban and landscape qualities and nature conservation sites
- Local transport patterns and issues
- Designated sites
- Socio-economic and community matters
- Consideration of the impact of the proposed provisions and requirements within the draft Order in respect of all of the above
- Development consent obligations and their impact on the local authority's area.

1.6 The LIR may also comment on the development consent obligations and the

requirements and also any relevant representations.

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1.7 The LIR has been written so as to incorporate the subject areas suggested in the Advice Note (set out above), the subject areas in the Environmental Statement, and the obligations and proposed requirements submitted with the application for DCO

1.8 The LIR includes details of commuted sums that are the subject of discussion between CEC and the Highways Agency.

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SECTION 2 SITE DESCRIPTION, SURROUNDINGS AND HISTORY

Site description and surroundings/ location

2.1 The site is located approximately four kilometres north west of Knutsford, Cheshire, in a predominantly rural area. Knutsford is the nearest town with a population of approximately 13,000. The scheme passes close to a number of small villages and hamlets including Bucklow Hill, High Legh, Hoo Green, Hulse Heath, Mere, Millington and Tabley. The plan in Appendix A shows the relevant study area including the currently proposed alignment for the scheme.

Details of the proposal

2.2 The Highways Agency (HA) intends to improve the A556 trunk road between Junction 19 of the M6 motorway, near Knutsford, and Junction 7 of the M56 motorway, near Bowdon. The scheme forms part of a strategic programme of infrastructure projects confirmed by the government as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review in 2010.

2.3 The A556 is a major strategic route, heavily used by traffic travelling between south Manchester and northern Cheshire going to the West Midlands via the M6. It is the only non-motorway section on the route between Manchester and Birmingham. The A556 carries approximately 51,500 vehicles daily, with HGVs contributing approximately 11% of this figure.

2.4 The scheme requires 7.5km of new (offline) or improved (online) road. Most of the scheme would be built to the standard of an all-purpose dual carriageway trunk road, with a short section (approximately 300m long) at the north end to which motorway regulations would apply. For the whole length of the scheme, there would be two lanes of traffic in each direction, separated by a central reservation with a concrete safety barrier. On the dual carriageway sections, there would be 1m wide hard-strips on the near-side and off-side of each carriageway. On the short motorway section at the north end, the nearside hard-strip would be widened to form a full 3.3m-width hard shoulder. Nearside verges throughout would be a minimum of 2.5m wide, grassed and with no footways.

2.5 From Junction 19 of the M6 motorway to north of Bucklow Hill, the improvements would be constructed 'off-line' to the west of the existing A556, bypassing the villages of Over Tabley, Mere and Bucklow Hill. The route would rejoin the existing line of the A556 north of Millington Lane, continuing northwards on-line for a distance of approximately 1km and crossing the M56 motorway via the existing Chester Road Bridge. North of the bridge, the main line of the scheme would curve off-line to the east to form a new freeflow link between the A556 and the M56 motorway for traffic to and from the east, replacing part of the existing M56 spur.

2.6 The section of the existing A556 that would be bypassed by the off-line improvements would cease to be a trunk road and would become part of the local highways authority's (CEC's) network. This 'de-trunked' section would become a rural side road. To avoid confusion, the following terminology is adopted throughout this LIR:

- the 'existing A556' refers to the road as it is now, either before the scheme is built or in any hypothetical scenario where the scheme is not built;
- the 'new A556', 'new road' or 'new trunk road' refers to the scheme itself; and,
- 'Chester Road' or 'the de-trunked road' or 'the de-trunked Chester Road' refers to the section of the existing A556 that would be bypassed, and that would therefore cease to be a trunk road.

2.7 There would be six junctions along the line of the improvements, as outlined below:

- the existing Junction 19 of the M6 would be modified by closing the access to and from Chester Road as part of the de-trunking works, and creating a new tie-in between the off-line section of the new A556 and the junction;
- a new 'south-facing' junction (Tabley Junction) would be built north-west of Over Tabley. This would include a slip road and overbridge allowing northbound traffic on the new A556 to exit towards the de-trunked Chester Road, giving access to local communities and, indirectly, to the A50. A second slip road would allow traffic from Chester Road to join the new A556 southbound only. Both slip roads would be linked to the de-trunked Chester Road at a new roundabout located approximately 700m north of the existing M6 Junction 19. There would be no access from Tabley Junction to the new A556 northbound, and no exit to the junction for southbound traffic already on the new A556. Because the scheme would sever the existing line of Old Hall Lane in Over Tabley, the lane would be diverted northwards and would be linked to the new Tabley Junction via a roundabout, enabling continued vehicular access across the new road;
- a new roundabout on the A50 west of the new A556, would give access to a single slip-road, allowing traffic to join the new A556 northbound. A compact layout has been adopted, whereby the slip road would exit from the south side of the roundabout and form a loop through almost 180 degrees to reach a northbound alignment. This minimises land-take and conflict between vehicular and non-motorised traffic on the A50. No traffic would be able to exit from the new A556 at the A50 in either direction, and there would be no access to the new A556 southbound (as this is provided at Tabley Junction);
- at Millington, a single slip road would allow southbound traffic to leave the new A556 to join the de-trunked Chester Road via a new roundabout. No traffic would be able to join the new A556 in either direction (as this is provided at Tabley for southbound traffic and the A50 for northbound traffic), and there would be no exit from the new A556 for northbound traffic (provided at Tabley);
- there would be very minor modifications to the existing Junction 8 of the M56 which comprises a single slip-road linking the southbound carriageway of the A556 to the M56 westbound; and,
- Junction 7 of the M56 motorway would be substantially remodelled. The main

line of the new A556 would curve to the north-east to form a free-flow link between the A556 and the M56 for traffic to and from the east. The existing roundabout and a new roundabout located to the south-east would lay either side of this free-flow link, linked by an overbridge, forming a 'dumb-bell' arrangement. Slip roads would link the roundabouts to the A556 and the M56 spur. Two of the four slip roads would be built within the existing highway infrastructure (i.e. within the existing width of the A556 and the M56 spur), while the other two slip roads would be entirely new. The junctions of the A56 Lymm Road and A56 Dunham Road with the existing Bowdon Roundabout would be unchanged.

Both the "de-trunked" road and the new road are situated entirely within the administrative area of Cheshire East Council. However, as noted later in section 4 traffic impacts extend onto the existing A556 south of M6 junction 19 up to the boundary with Cheshire West and Chester Council.

Side roads

2.8 Side roads affected by the improvements include:

- Old Hall Lane, in Over Tabley - the existing line of this lane would be stopped up, but the lane would be diverted northwards to Tabley Junction to enable continued vehicular access across the line of the scheme. This diversion is considered too long/too far off the desire line for pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders, so an underpass would be provided adjacent to the existing line of Old Hall Lane.
- Moss Lane, in Over Tabley would not be directly affected, but its junction with the existing A556 is within the section to be bypassed, so it would meet the de-trunked Chester Road instead of the trunk road.
- Bentleyhurst Lane, south of Mere, would be carried over the new trunk road on an overbridge. Its junction with the existing A556 is within the section to be de-trunked.
- The A50 to the west of Mere would be carried over the new trunk road on an overbridge, meeting a new roundabout just west of the new road. A new slip road off the roundabout would give access to the new trunk road northbound.
- There would be some increase in the volume of traffic using the A50 through the scheme area, compared to the do-minimum situation.
- Bucklow Hill Lane would be stopped-up either side of the new A556, between Bucklow Hill and Hoo Green, forming a pair of cul-de-sacs. The very small number of residents on Bucklow Hill Lane to the west of the new road would have access to the east via Hoo Green and the A50 or via

Hulse Heath Lane and the new over-bridge on Chapel Lane.

- Chapel Lane in Bucklow Hill would be carried over the new road on a bridge.
- The A5034 in Bucklow Hill/Mere would not be directly affected, but its junction with the existing A556 would be within the section to be de-trunked, so it would no longer have a direct connection to the trunk road. Traffic flows would become asymmetrical, because trunk-road traffic from the north heading towards Knutsford could still use the A5034 as it does now with little change in the volume of traffic in this direction, while there would be a substantial fall in northbound traffic as traffic in this direction would access the new A556 via the new slip road off the A50 west of Mere.
- Millington Hall Lane, in Millington, north of Bucklow Hill, would be stopped-up either side of the new road. Residents of Millington to the west of the new road would have a convenient access route to the de-trunked road, Rostherne Lane and Cherry Tree Lane via the new over-bridge at Millington Lane, and an alternative but less direct route via the new over-bridge at Chapel Lane.
- Millington Lane would be carried over the new trunk road on a new overbridge, slightly north of its current line, tying-back in to its present line approximately at the location of its junction with the de-trunked Chester Road and Rostherne Lane. There would be no direct access to the new trunk road, but access to the de-trunked road and to the villages and countryside east of the scheme would be via the new bridge, whereas at present it is not possible to either cross between Rostherne and Millington Lanes or to turn right from either lane onto the existing A556, so a roundabout route ultimately leading to Chapel Lane is required. There would also be direct access northwards to Cherry Tree Lane without using the trunk road for the first time.
- Rostherne Lane would retain its junction with the de-trunked Chester Road, but would have no direct access to the new A556. Access to the countryside west of the scheme would be via the new overbridge on Millington Lane, whereas at present it is necessary to travel southwards to make a difficult right turn at Millington Hall Lane or go to Bucklow Hill and turn right at Chapel Lane.
- Cherry Tree Lane would lose its direct connection onto the trunk road, but would be diverted southwards within the width of the existing A556 to link with Rostherne Lane and the de-trunked Chester Road. This would provide a north-south connection past Rostherne Mere SSSI without using the trunk road for the first time. Access to the west of the new road would

be provided via the bridge on Millington Lane.

- One private road (Yarwoodheath Lane) would be diverted; it would still cross the main line of the M56 by the existing bridge, but its tie-in to the existing A556 southbound carriageway would be replaced by a tie-in to the new southern roundabout forming part of the remodelled M56 Junction 7.

2.9 CEC have some concerns with regard to the current proposals for the A50 / new A556 roundabout junction design. It is not considered that the junction as proposed will operate efficiently with the forecast flows. As listed in the Statement of Common Ground (SOCG) the HA are working in conjunction with CEC to develop a mutually acceptable design for the junction that addresses these concerns, following a number of interactive workshop sessions held at CEC offices. The latest available design is contained in Appendix B.

Tatton Park

2.10 Tatton Park an historic estate tourist attraction visited by 850,000 a year, managed and financed by Cheshire East Council on behalf of the National Trust, may be impacted by the scheme from a construction and final operation perspective as the A556 provides the main Brown & White signposted route to Tatton and Tatton has many regionally significant events with large attendances eg RHS Flower Show around 100,000 visitors over 4 days.

De-Trunking of the existing A556 Chester Road

2.11 Where the improvement is off-line, the existing Chester Road would cease to be a trunk road. A programme of 'de-trunking' works would be required before it could be handed over to CEC (the local highway authority) as part of the CEC network. These works have been designed after extensive and repeated consultation with CEC through multiple face-to-face meetings and correspondence, and the proposals include the following :

- a reduction from four lanes to two along the length of Chester Road;
- changes at junctions with side roads;
- changes to traffic signs and signals and road markings;
- changes and removal of lighting, where it is present;
- changes to provision for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders; and,
- removal and changes of speed control measures, safety barriers and CCTV/security cameras.

2.12 In spite of this dialogue a number of outstanding issues remain to be resolved and these will be outlined later in this report in section 4. The following text outlines the current proposals for the detrunked road.

2.13 The de-trunked Chester Road would be formed principally within the two southbound lanes of the existing A556, making the two northbound lanes redundant.

2.14 Feedback from organisations representing cyclists in particular, as well as from Tabley Parish Council and a number of individuals, both before and during the 2012 consultation of the community, identified a strong demand for improved provision for cyclists and other non-motorised users as part of the de-trunking works. In response to this demand, it is intended to use part of the redundant width of the former northbound lanes along the de-trunked Chester Road to provide segregated facilities. The existing continuous footway would be retained, while the nearside lane would be used to provide a track for cyclists and horse riders along the whole length of the de-trunked road. The redundant outside lane would be perforated and replaced with a low earth mound. The mound is likely to be around 1-1.2m high, and would be planted with grass and scattered shrubs; it would be designed to ensure inter-visibility between the road and the track, to alleviate potential concerns about safety for users of the track arising from a lack of surveillance.

2.15 There are two existing signalised junctions within the section of Chester Road that is to be de-trunked – with the A50 at Mere Crossroads and with the A5034 at Bucklow Hill Junction. Both junctions would be modified, see Appendix C for further details of Mere crossroads and Appendix D for Bucklow Hill. Initial designs were considered by CEC and suggested amendments to the designs were made to address concerns (these revised proposals are shown in draft form in the appendices and will require further detailed design)

2.16 At Mere Crossroads in the current proposals the A50 would become the main through route. The de-trunked Chester Road would be realigned at the junction to form two T-junctions onto the A50, offset from each other. Existing restrictions on right-turning movements would be lifted, so that all turns would be possible. The junction would continue to be partially controlled by traffic light signals. Signals would be retained at the southern junction to include provision for pedestrians, horse-riders and cyclists crossing the A50.

2.17 At Bucklow Hill Junction a revised scheme to prioritise movements off the new A556 to Mereside road is to be agreed. This is expected to remove signal controls from Chapel Lane and alter the phasing of the remaining lights to reflect the new dominant flow of vehicular traffic (i.e. southbound traffic leaving the A556 at Millington and turning left at Bucklow Hill onto the A5034). The revised layout includes uncontrolled crossings for pedestrians / cyclists across both the de-trunked A556 and A5034 Mereside Road for the benefit of cyclists on the Cheshire Cycleway (Regional Cycle Route 70). At the west end of this crossing, cyclists would use the new segregated shared-use track to reach Chapel Lane. On the east side, a short section of the footway on the east side of Chester Road and north side of Mereside Road would be widened to 3m to provide a cycleway link between the crossing and Cicely Mill Lane.

2.18 At the new Millington Junction, a crossing for pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders would be provided just south of the junction, incorporating corrals for horseriders, but without signal controls. A crossing without signals would also be provided on the de-trunked road just to the north of the roundabout.

2.19 The process of “de-trunking” is subject to an agreement over a commuted payment to CEC to cover future maintenance liabilities on the de-trunked road. This will be considered in more detail later in this report in section 5.

Byways, bridleways and footpaths

2.20 The new road impacts on a number of walking, cycling and pedestrian routes and these have required new facilities to be provided as part of the scheme. In addition as noted previously, one of the detrunked road's carriageway's will be converted in to a non motorised users route for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. All new facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders would be designed to be accessible for disabled users.

SECTION 3 RELEVANT DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Relevant planning history and any issues arising

National

3.1 This scheme is a nationally significant infrastructure project for the purposes of Sections 14(1)(h) and 22 of the Planning Act 2008. The National Planning Policy Framework came into effect on 27 March 2012 however this Framework does not contain specific policies for nationally significant infrastructure projects. The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. The National Networks National Policy Statement has not yet been published and is currently expected later in 2013.

Regional

3.2 The North West of England Regional Spatial Strategy and the saved policies from the Cheshire Structure Plan were revoked by the Government on 20th May 2013 and are no longer part of the Statutory Development Plan.

Local

3.3 The Development Plan for the land included in the A556 Knutsford to Bowden Improvement scheme comprises of saved policies of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan 2004.

3.4 In line with paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework weight should be given to emerging documents. Cheshire East Council is currently in the process of preparing the new Cheshire East Local Plan. The new Local Plan will be made up of a number of documents including the Core Strategy and Site Allocations documents. Once in place, the Local Plan will replace saved policies in the existing Local Plans and will form the Statutory Development Plan in Cheshire East. Cheshire East Council consulted on the overall Development Strategy and Policy Principles documents between 15 January and 26 February 2013, followed by a Possible Additional sites Consultation during May 2013. Once all the responses have been considered the Council aims to consult on the final submission draft of the Local Plan later this year.

Relevant development plan policies, supplementary planning guidance or documents, development briefs or approved master-plans and an appraisal of their relationship and relevance to the proposals

Macclesfield Borough Local Plan 2004

In no specific order, the following saved policies are relevant:

- GC1 – Green Belt. The land is included within the Green Belt. Within the Green Belt approval will not be given, except in very special circumstances, for the construction of new buildings;
- T1 – Integrated Transport. The Council will seek to enhance the

integration of modes of transport, encourage the use of public transport and ensure that a balance is maintained between safety and movement and the need to protect and enhance the natural and built environment. Proposals for new transportation schemes will be judged against the six criteria listed which includes reducing the noise and congestion and pollution in residential or shopping areas, and protection and enhancement of the environment;

- T6 – Highway Improvement Schemes – supports highway improvement schemes which reduce accidents, and traffic hazards.
- T7 - Safeguarded routes along road schemes including A556 (M) M6 to M56 link. The road now proposed differs in places to that indicatively shown in the adopted Local Plan;
- T8 – Introduction of traffic management measures and environmental improvements on and adjacent to the roads subsequently relieved of heavy traffic as a result of the new road schemes referred to in Policy T7;
- T11 – The Council will support improvements to the strategic highway network between Macclesfield and the M6 motorway;
- NE1 – Protection of Areas of Special County Value - seeks to conserve and enhance the quality of the landscape and to protect it from development which is likely to have an adverse effect on its character and appearance;
- NE2 – Protection of Local Landscapes – seeks to conserve and enhance the diversity of landscape character areas and ensure that any development respects local landscape character;
- NE5 – Conservation of Parkland Landscapes – promotes the conservation and enhancement of historic landscapes, parklands and gardens. Development which would adversely affect their special historic interest, setting or the enjoyment of any part of their grounds will not normally be allowed;
- NE7 – Woodland Management – seeks to retain and enhance existing woodlands by woodland management. Development which would adversely affect woodlands will not normally be permitted;
- NE9 – Protection of River Corridors – seeks to restore, enhance and promote public access where appropriate while development which would adversely affect river corridors will not normally be permitted;
- NE11 – Nature Conservation – seeks to conserve, enhance and interpret nature conservation interests. Development which would adversely affect nature conservation interests will not normally be permitted;
- NE12 – SSSI's, SBI's and Nature Reserves – protects these areas from adverse development. In addition unsympathetic development on adjacent sites will not normally be permitted;
- NE13 – Sites of Biological Importance - protects these areas of more local importance from adverse development;
- NE14 – Nature Conservation Sites – development proposals which involve the loss of ponds, wetlands, heathlands, ancient woodlands or ancient grassland together with newly created habitats will not normally be

- allowed and their conservation will be encouraged;
- NE17 – Nature Conservation in Major Developments – seeks improvements for nature conservation, tree planting and landscaping and will seek to secure the implementation of these by the developer;
 - BE2 – Preservation of Historic Fabric – seeks to preserve, enhance and interpret the historic fabric of the environment.
 - BE16 – Setting of Listed Buildings – protects the setting of Listed Buildings.
 - H13 – Protecting Residential Areas – protects the amenities of occupiers of residential properties;
 - DC3 – Development should not significantly injure the amenities of adjoining or nearby residential property;
 - DC9 – Tree and Woodland Protection – seeks the long term retention of existing trees and woodlands of amenity value including trees the subject of Tree Preservation Orders.
 - DC17 – DC20 – Water Resources – relate to the consideration of flooding, sustainable urban drainage and reduction in flood risk, prevention of damage to groundwater resources.

Policy Principles – Pre Submission

- Objective 1 – Promoting economic prosperity by creating conditions for business growth. This includes by delivering improved transport links.
- Policy SE3 – Protection of areas of high Biodiversity and Geodiversity.
- Policy SE4 – Protection of the landscape character, including trees and woodlands.
- Policy SE6 – Protection of the Historic Environment
- Policy SE12 – Pollution
- Policy SE13 – Water Management
- Policy C01 – Sustainable Travel and Transport
- Policy C02 – Enabling business growth through transport infrastructure

Development Strategy – Pre Submission

- CS3 – Green Belt
- CS8 – Sustainable Development
- CS9 – Sustainable Development Principles
- CS10 – Infrastructure

Policy Summary

The proposal affects land currently located in the designated green belt however paragraph 90 of NPPF states that local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location is not inappropriate, however it is noted that the NPPF does not apply to nationally significant infrastructure projects. The Highways Agency state that 98% of the land permanently required is currently agriculture use and would not require the demolition of any private properties. The scheme may have an impact on the historic fabric, and landscape character of this area, particularly having regard to the impact on, or proximity to, protected designations including SSSI, SBI,

Ramsar site, ancient woodland, and listed buildings. A small part of the area, adjacent to the existing carriageway, is also included in Flood Risk Zone 2 and Zone 3. It will be essential that the impact is kept to a minimum and that there are adequate mitigation measures, wherever practicable. The scheme will also have amenity issues for some residential properties.

Relevant development proposals under consideration or granted permission but not commenced or completed

No recent planning applications, decisions or approved development have been made or implemented within Cheshire East near the site in recent years.

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SECTION 4 HIGHWAY JUSTIFICATIONS / TRAFFIC IMPACT ON LOCAL ROADS

Local transport patterns and issues

4.1 CEC has actively engaged and challenged the Highways Agency on the alternative options for the scheme including the proposals for the M6 J20. CEC are generally supportive of the scheme as it improves strategic access to the Motorway network for both CEC residents and businesses as it relieves significant congestion issues along the A556 between the M6 at junction 19 and junction 7 of the M56. However CEC have some concerns over the impact on the local road network that the new road may have, that as yet have not been resolved and are identified later in this section.

4.2 The new A556 alignment significantly reduces traffic in the villages of Mere and Bucklow Hill, from around 50,000 vehicles per day to about 5,000 with long distance through traffic removed. Limited traffic remains on the de-trunked A556, including traffic accessing Tatton Park from the M6 and M56.

4.3 Traffic levels on the A5034 are forecast to fall significantly principally because of the removal of the northbound access to the A556 at Millington with traffic routed via the new A50 / A556 junction to the north west of Mere.

4.4 Traffic levels on the A50 through Mere are however forecast to increase compared to the situation without the scheme in future years (in part due to traffic reassigning from the A5034). This increase in traffic is also experienced on the A50 through Hoo Green and High Legh. However, these increases are well within the link capacity of the road.

4.5 CEC has raised issues about the capacity and design of the proposed A50/new A556 roundabout junction, the proposed alterations to Mere crossroads (A50/detrunked A556) and the A5034 Mereside Road / detrunked A556 junction. Revised proposals are contained in the appendices.

4.6 Another area of concern for CEC is the forecast increase in daily traffic flow (when compared to the Do Minimum situation without the A556 scheme) of around 1500 vehicles per day on the A556 to the south of M6 Junction 19 due to traffic rerouting to use the A556 from alternative routes when the new A556 is open to traffic. As noted in section 6 on Air Quality this has negative implications in terms of air quality. There are potential negative impacts on safety at the junctions with the B5391 Pickmere Lane, and A5033 Northwich Road (as noted below) due to the increased traffic volume on the main A556 through these junctions. These need further investigation and will be monitored once the scheme opens to traffic.

4.7 In addition to the main road network the scheme is forecast to have impacts

on traffic flows on the minor road network around the scheme. In many cases these roads are forecast to experience reductions in traffic. However the traffic model has limitations that suggest any forecast changes in flow on the minor road network should be treated with caution as outlined below,

4.8 It is stated in the consultation report that the traffic model used for both the consultation options and final scheme layout simulates a significant proportion of the national road network, and is primarily designed to accurately model longer distance journeys, and is therefore the appropriate tool for modelling a scheme with strategic importance, such as the A556. However, a result of this is that flows forecast along local roads are likely to be less robust, meaning forecasts of local traffic are inherently less certain.

4.9 A particular limitation of the strategic model used is its inability to accurately model driver behaviour on country lanes. The lanes are often narrow, and have limited visibility as a result of their alignment (with regular bends) and other obstructions such as hedgerows and accesses. There is a relatively high probability of meeting other users such as farm equipment or NMUs which will tend to delay journeys while a safe opportunity to pass is located. It is stated that the model is not able to accurately model this. In reality drivers will seek roads of a higher standard where more consistent progress can be made. This is particularly true where the user is on a longer journey, and may not be familiar with the lanes.

4.10 Because the model cannot take these factors into account it will tend to over-estimate the amount of traffic on local roads, as it believes them to be more attractive to users than they really are. The output from the model is therefore considered to be conservative (i.e. a worst case).

4.11 CEC accept that the model has these limitations and that the flows under normal conditions (average day without incidents on the Motorway / strategic network or events at Tatton Park) will be likely to be close to those presented.

4.13 Given these uncertainties and the inability to accurately predict specific "Hot Spots"- CEC's view is that a locally held and directed complementary measures funding package should be devolved to CEC . This is set out in section 5 and table 2. It addresses the issues and potential issues identified in the following detailed analysis of local road impacts.

Tatton Park

4.14 Tatton Park has been involved in discussions with the Highways Agency and its contractors in providing input to the options and giving views on issues as Tatton sees them in relation to the scheme and its impacts. Tatton has been asked to provide a Statement of Common Ground but as a CEC managed site this input is included within the CEC SOCG and this report. As Tatton is land

owned by the National Trust, it is understood that the Trust have been having their own discussions with the Highways Agency in relation to both Dunham Massey and Tatton Park and are providing expert opinion in relation to many issues including possible Noise and Visual impact concerns, which the Tatton management and CEC have left to the Trust to discuss in relation to the Tatton estate.

4.15 The option selected by the HA provides the least impact of all the suggested schemes to Tatton, however Tatton believes that there will be some adverse impacts compared to existing arrangements.

4.16 Based on the current option presented, Tatton management believe that the A556 will not be closed down during the construction of the new road and therefore this will have little or no impact to operations at Tatton. If as stated there are to be some minor closures (a week or weekend) to link in the new road then Tatton has no issue over the construction impact to traffic. Tatton has asked for forewarning of any impact as that can be built in to the planning of literature/websites promoting the park and any events so that visitors can be informed of any concerns.

4.17 The access to Tatton from the new road potentially improves matters on some aspects of existing traffic issues, however potentially not having the diversity of using the Cherry Tree Lane event traffic route may funnel more traffic in one direction with little scope to flex. If this road can continue to be used this will allow greater flexibility in managing event traffic in particular.

4.18 Tatton has raised issues over the new egress route from Tatton on to the A50 on to the new link road, particularly on main event days. Whereas before two routes for egress on to the A556 could be used, the new system will only allow one route and reduces options. Following meetings with the Agency and its contractors it was agreed that Costain would work on event traffic management issues and devise an agreed traffic management plan, most notably concentrating on the RHS Show and see if any areas could be reviewed and improved in light of this with agreed plans being worked through before construction starts. No further discussions have yet taken place so Tatton cannot comment on this agreed traffic management strategy progress. A revised layout for the new A50 / A556 junction is considered in section 4.57

4.19 Tatton also has highlighted the potential negative impact to Clamhunger Lane of increased traffic as a result of the new scheme, with no understanding of how this may be resolved. Analysis of Clamhunger Lane in section 4.53 suggests that this is unlikely to be an issue.

4.20 Tatton have highlighted concerns on the increased level of traffic joining the A50 northbound before Mere traffic lights. The revision proposed by CEC's highway service (para 4.58) of additional northbound left turn lane at Mere traffic

lights might improve this compared to the suggested scheme. The traffic lights at this junction need to be 'intelligent' to respond to event traffic at certain times. With all the current information provided, this needs to be reflected in the traffic management plans for events and assessed properly with those plans.

4.21 Tatton Park has agreed it is happy to liaise with the Agency and CEC Highways over developing a unified Brown and White signage strategy for the new road and link roads to Tatton. This would make sure that routes from M6 northbound, M6 southbound, M56 eastbound, M56 westbound, A556 (new road) east and westbound, A50 north and southbound are all linked effectively with a new signage strategy for the CEC controlled A/B roads. This would minimise the impact to local residents in Mere, Rostherne and Knutsford. This also needs to work effectively with regard to a Yellow event signage strategy for Tatton events and 3rd party run events at Tatton including the RHS Show. The related issue of signage from Junctions 6 and 9 M56 and Junction 20/20A M6 would need to be considered to replace some of the flexibility lost through all of the proposed schemes for major events traffic but would need further discussion with the RHS and other local councils.

Detailed analysis of the impact on Local roads

4.22 The following analysis of traffic on local roads (maintained by CEC) has been based on traffic forecasts as presented in the A556 Consultation Report – Part A – Main Text. This presents a table (Table 11 in the report) that compares forecast traffic flows for the design year of the scheme (2032) which is 15 years after the proposed opening year (2017) with and without the scheme.

4.23 Details of accidents over the past 5 years (2008 to 2012) in the wider area around the scheme have been analysed. This has included all minor roads within an area bounded by the M56 to the north, Ashley Road / Knutsford to the east, Tabley Hill Lane / Pickmere Lane to the south and Whitley Lane / Camms Lane / M6 to the west. This has allowed any hotspots or potential sources of future problems to be identified.

4.24 Post opening monitoring will be undertaken on the local road network to allow CEC officers to understand the actual impacts of the scheme and to identify the nature and extent of mitigation measures that might be required (as considered in section 5, commuted sums).

4.25 This forms the basis for an estimate of the required amount of commuted sum to be requested from the Highways Agency to mitigate against potential problems resulting from traffic increases on the local CEC road network in the vicinity of the A556 scheme (see section 5).

Cherry Tree Lane

4.26 This road is located to the north east of the area and currently joins into the A556 just south of the M56. One slight accident has been recorded on this road in the last 5 years and this was about 1km east of the A556. At the value engineering CEC identified a potential issue with the proposal for a roundabout to slow traffic on the approach to the new A556 off slip roundabout which has been resolved by revisions to the design. A very small increase in traffic is forecast with the scheme in place (around 30 vehicles). This road will continue to be used for access to events at Tatton Park as at present. No additional mitigation measures are likely to be required.

Birkinheath Lane

4.27 Birkinheath Lane connects to the east into Cherry Tree Lane. No changes in traffic flows are forecast and no accidents have been recorded in the last five years. For this reason no mitigation measures are likely to be required.

Millington Lane

4.28 Millington Lane joins the existing A556 north of Bucklow Hill and connects with other lanes to the A56 (to the north), and the A50 (to the west) via High Legh. With the scheme in place it is forecast to experience an increase in traffic (+370 vehicles per day), though it remains a low flow road. The increase is principally because other alternative routes (principally Chapel Lane and Bucklowhill Lane) are stopped up, preventing traffic crossing the new A556 on these roads. A lot of this local traffic is expected to reassign onto Millington Lane. It is unlikely that strategic traffic accessing the new A556 would be likely to assign onto Millington lane as it has no direct connections onto the new A556. Only one slight accident has been recorded over the last 5 years (midway between the existing A556 and Boothbank Lane).

4.29 Given that the road is a narrow country lane, largely with no centre line and sections of poor forward visibility, it is not suitable for large volumes of motorised traffic. To reinforce this, the principle was agreed at the Value Engineering workshops that all minor lanes linking into the detrunked A556 would be subject to a “gateway” treatment to signify that the lanes are unsuited to through traffic. These “gateways” would include road narrowing, signs etc to indicate entry onto minor roads.

4.30 When a post opening evaluation is undertaken, particular attention will be paid to the operation of the junction between Millington Lane, Boothbank Lane and Reddy Lane, where the approach from the north (Reddy Lane) is particularly narrow. If any remedial measures are required these will be sort from the mitigation fund.

Reddy Lane / Boothbank Lane

4.31 Reddy Lane connects the A56 Lymm Road to the north with Millington Lane and Boothbank Lane. It passes under the M56 motorway. It is a largely straight but narrow road with three significant bends. This is a very low flow road which is forecast to experience a very small increase in traffic with the scheme of less than 30 vehicles per day. No accidents have been recorded on this road over the last 5 years. Given that it is some distance away from the scheme no mitigation measures are proposed for this road. Likewise Boothbank Lane is also forecast to experience no change in flow, remaining under 500 vehicles per day. No mitigation measures are proposed with the exception of the future post opening evaluation of the junction with Reddy Lane and Millington Lane noted previously.

Millington Hall Lane

4.32 This is a narrow country lane that is proposed to be stopped up by the scheme. Only local access will be possible on either side of the new A556. as such no mitigation measures will be required other than a “gateway” treatment at the junction with the detrunked A556.

Rostherne Lane and Marsh Lane

4.33 These roads are immediately to the east of the detrunked A556 to the north of Tatton Park (and south of Cherry Tree Lane). Both lanes are low flow with less than 500 vehicles per day currently and this is forecast to remain the case with the scheme in place. No accidents have been observed on either road in the last five years. Accidents currently observed at the junction with the A556 are expected to be resolved by the reduction in traffic on the detrunked road. A “gateway” treatment is requested for Rostherne Lane at its junction with the detrunked A556, as at other minor road junctions on the detrunked A556. No measures are required for Marsh Lane.

Cicely Mill Lane

4.34 Although no flows are reported in the table, there are concerns locally that flows may increase on this road with the scheme in place. A weight limit and other access control measures may be required. It accesses onto the A5034 Mereside road, where traffic calming measures are proposed as detailed below.

Chapel Lane / Peacock Lane

4.35 Chapel Lane / Peacock Lane / Boothbank Lane connect Bucklow Hill to High Legh, Lymm and other locations west of the existing A556. With the scheme in place Chapel Lane and Peacock Lane are forecast to experience a reduction in flow. It is likely that this is due to local traffic reassigning to join / leave the detrunked A556 further north (via Millington Lane).

4.36 In common with the other minor road accesses onto the detrunked A556 a

“gateway” treatment is required onto Chapel Lane, although the exact design would need to reflect its’ location within Bucklow Hill village.

4.37 In addition there may be a need to make improvements to the junction between Peacock Lane and West Lane, to mitigate for increased traffic flows forecast for this junction compared to the do minimum situation.

Back Lane / Thowler Lane

4.38 Back Lane and Thowler Lane are low flow, narrow country lanes with farms and houses along them that connect Chapel Lane / Peacock Lane to Boothbank Lane / Agden Lane. No accidents have been recorded on them in the last 5 years. Flows are forecast to reduce on them as a result of traffic reassigning away from Chapel Lane / Peacock Lane. No mitigation measures are likely to be required on them.

Agden Lane

4.39 Agden Lane is a low flow, narrow country lane that connects the A56 into Chapel Lane via Back lane / Thowler Lane and Millington Lane via Boothbank Lane. Although traffic is forecast to increase by just over 600 vehicles per day, overall totals remain low with around 1200 vehicles per day forecast to use this road. This is likely to be caused by local traffic rerouting. No accidents have been recorded over the last 5 years. No mitigation measures are proposed.

Bucklowhill Lane

4.40 Bucklowhill Lane is a narrow low flow country lane that links the A556 at Bucklow Hill with the A50 at Hoo Green. No accidents were recorded in the last 5 years on this road. With the scheme in place it is stopped up at the new A556, limiting it to local access traffic only. As such no mitigation measures are required.

Hulseheath Lane

4.41 This road connects Chapel Lane to the A50 at Hoo Green. Flows are forecast to remain low (less than 500 vehicles per day). No accidents were recorded in the last 5 years. No mitigation measures are required.

Moss Lane

4.42 This road currently link Green Lane on the edge of Knutsford to the A556 north of the M6 junction. With the scheme in place this road connects in to a “dead end” section of the detrunked road, to the south of a new connection known as the Tabley Link to a junction with the new A556. As a result flows are forecast to decrease on this road to less than 500 vehicles per day. One slight accident was recorded on this road in the last 5 years. No mitigation measures

are needed on this link

Wrenshot Lane / B5159 West Lane in High Legh

4.43 These roads link High Legh to the A50. The B5159 West Lane links the A50 with the A56 at Broomedge and is a relatively high standard road with a centre line. Wrenshot Lane is a narrow country lane. No accidents have been recorded on Wrenshot Lane in the last 5 years. 5 slight accidents and 3 serious accidents have been recorded on the B5159 over the same period. Most of these were at junctions, in particular the junction with Peacock Lane. Traffic is forecast to decrease on West Lane, and to increase on Wrenshot Lane. This is likely to result from traffic from High Legh choosing to join/leave the A50 further east (due to increased traffic flows on the A50). This area will be monitored to examine if any junction safety improvements are required after opening of the new road.

4.44 A “gateway” feature on the entry to Wrenshot Lane at the A50 would help to discourage traffic from using this less suitable route. Improvements may be necessary to the A50 / Wrenshot Lane junction if issues are identified in the post opening monitoring of traffic in the area. Likewise if traffic does not route away from West Lane, then further measures may be needed to address accidents in High Legh on the A50. This is likely to take the form of speed reduction measures, which would need to be specified later.

Whitley Lane

4.45 Whitley Lane provides a link from High Legh (via Halliwell’s Brow) to Budworth Road and south to Northwich. It is a relatively high standard country road with a centre line. It is a low flow road which is forecast to experience a slight reduction in traffic. One slight and one serious accident were recorded in the last 5 years. No specific mitigation is likely to be required for this road.

Budworth Road

4.46 This is a low flow road that links Pickmere Lane to Budworth, North East of Northwich. In the last 5 years one slight accident was reported close to the junction with Old Hall Lane. No increase in traffic is forecast. For this reason no mitigation measures are proposed along the road.

Pickmere Lane

4.47 The B5391 Pickmere Lane is a relatively high quality country road that links the A556 with Pickmere. It provides a potential alternative route between Northwich and the A556. two serious and two slight accidents have been recorded on the section between the A556 and Budworth Road in the last 5 years. In addition a number of accidents were recorded at the junction with the A556. Recent safety improvements at this junction are expected to have addressed some of these issues. A significant increase in traffic is forecast

(+10%) which may lead to additional problems, particularly at the junction with Budworth Road. Post opening monitoring will need to establish if traffic has grown as forecast and if any safety issues have arisen. Mitigation measures may be required in the form of junction improvements at the Budworth Road / Pickmere Lane.

Old Hall Lane

4.48 This road is currently a narrow country road that connects the A556 just north of M6 junction 19 to Budworth Road just south of the M6. With the scheme in place the connection to the former A556 Chester Road is moved north to a new intersection with the new A556. Access is not possible to / from the A556 north at this point, with this traffic routed via the detrunked road and the A50 northbound and the detrunked road from Millington southbound. No accidents were recorded in the last 5 years. Flows are forecast to remain under 500 vehicles per day. Mitigation measures may be required if post opening monitoring identifies increases in flow that weren't expected. This may happen if delays are experienced through junction 19 with more traffic using the new A556. Mitigation would be likely to take the form of speed reduction measures to reduce the attractiveness of this as a "rat run" route to avoid junction 19. A weight restriction may be required.

Tabley Hill Lane / Tabley Road

4.49 This is a relatively high quality road that links Knutsford to the A556 just south of M6 junction 19. Traffic is forecast to fall significantly with the scheme in place (by nearly 2000 vehicles). There have been six slight and two serious accidents on this road in the last 5 years. Most of these happened to the north east of the M6 close to the junction with Green Lane. In future traffic to/from Knutsford to / from the M56 and Manchester is likely to transfer to the A50/ new A556 route, avoiding M6 junc 19. If traffic from Knutsford continues to use the current route or more traffic is attracted than expected, then consideration may be needed to traffic calming and other safety measures on Tabley Hill lane. Measures are most likely to be required around Green Lane to address the existing safety issues.

Green Lane

4.50 Green Lane is a narrow country lane with low traffic flows that are forecast to remain under 500 vehicles per day with the scheme in place. No accidents were recorded on this link in the last 5 years. No mitigation measures are proposed.

Mereheath Lane

4.51 Mereheath Lane is a minor country lane that runs along the western edge of

Tatton Park. Traffic flows are forecast to increase slightly with the scheme in place. 2 slight accidents and 1 serious accident were reported in the last 5 years. No mitigation measures are proposed for this road.

A5034 Mereside Lane

4.52 This road is a high standard, busy A road that links the existing A556 (north) to Knutsford. It is forecast to experience a reduction in traffic with the scheme from around 9,000 vehicles per day to around 5,000. Most northbound traffic will reassign onto the A50 to access the new A556, as there will be no northbound connection north of Mere onto the new road. Southbound traffic will continue to use the A5034 leaving the southbound A556 at the new Millington interchange and turning onto the A5034 at Bucklow Hill as is currently the case. Over the last 5 years there have been two serious and 11 slight accidents between the A556 and A50 junctions. There is a perception that vehicle speeds are high. With reduced traffic volumes speeds may increase further leading to more serious accidents. Traffic calming / speed reduction / management measures may need to be identified on this road to mitigate this potential problem. The performance of the A50/A5034 junction will be monitored to ensure its efficient operation with the higher flows on the A50.

Sugarpit Lane

4.53 Sugarpit Lane is a minor road on the edge of Knutsford which is forecast to experience no growth in traffic (traffic flows remaining under 500 vehicles per day). No accidents were recorded in the last 5 years. No mitigation measures are proposed for this road.

Clamhunger Lane

4.54 Clamhunger Lane is a minor road that links the A5034 Mereside Road and the A50 Warrington road to the south east of Mere Village. No Accidents were recorded in the last 5 years. Traffic is forecast to remain under 500 vehicles per day. It is noted that this road is used as a rat run during Tatton event traffic and that traffic management proposals should have regard for this.

Ashley Road

4.55 Ashley Road is a relatively high quality road that links Hale and Ashley with the A5034 Mereside Road near to Mere. It currently provides a "rat run" route avoiding the A556 to provide access to/from Knutsford to/from north of the M56.

4.56 Traffic is forecast to reduce significantly by 4,000 vehicles per day. In the last 5 years there have been eight slight accidents and two fatal accidents recorded on the section between Ashley and the A5034.

4.57 No mitigation measures are proposed as the scheme is expected to provide significant relief. Even if this reduction is overestimated and reductions in traffic are lower conditions on this road will improve.

Junction with A5033/ A556

4.58 As noted in para 4.6, with the A556 scheme traffic is forecast to increase on the A556 south of M6 Junction 19 by an additional 1500 vehicles per day compared to the situation without the scheme. This will potentially have an impact on the operation of the A5033 Northwich Road / A556 Chester Road signalised junction. To provide network resilience it will be necessary to install MOVA control, link this junction to a local UTC system and provide a connection to the HA's incident management system. This will allow diversionary signal settings to be implemented as and when required. These will be considered as a requirement in the commuted sum settlement (section 5).

Revised and new junction designs

4.59 A50 / new A556 junction – CEC have concerns over the design of this new junction that have not yet been resolved. Initial assessments by CEC using flows supplied by the HA indicate that significant queues would be generated in the morning peak on the southbound A50 approach to the roundabout in the 2032 design year – this is without additional traffic stress caused by Motorway incidents. An improved design is shown at Appendix C and further work is underway with the HA to finalise the design.

4.60 The A50 / de-trunked A556 junction at Mere – the initially proposed junction arrangement may not be adequate. CEC are looking for network resilience to cater for additional traffic that might be generated by events at Tatton Park and during incidents on the M6 that force traffic to divert onto the A50 / de-trunked A556. The proposed revised junction layout operates much more effectively. CEC are also working with the HA to devise alternative signal timings to be instigated when incidents occur on the M6, that will help manage extreme traffic events. However, it is recognised that it is appropriate for the baseline design of the junctions to reflect usual traffic conditions. Details of this design are included in Appendix D

4.61 At Bucklow Hill Junction (Appendix E) the existing traffic light signals would be modified to remove signal controls from Chapel Lane and alter the phasing of the remaining lights to reflect the new dominant flow of vehicular traffic (i.e. southbound traffic leaving the A556 at Millington and turning left at Bucklow Hill onto the A5034). Provision will be made for non motorised users through the junction, including crossing facilities and new segregated routes.

4.62 At the new Millington Junction (Appendix B), a crossing for pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders would be provided just south of the junction,

incorporating corrals for horseriders, but without signal controls. A crossing without signals would also be provided on the de-trunked road just to the north of the roundabout. A revised junction design for the roundabout has been presented by the HA to CEC that needs to be agreed by the end of the examination in public.

Road Safety issues on the local road network.

4.63 There were 98 personal injury accidents on the A556 (including relevant parts of its junctions with the M6, A50, A5034 and M56) in the period January 2007 to December 2011, including 1 fatality and 13 serious injuries. The scheme will significantly reduce this number.

4.64 Agreement on some aspects of the treatment of road safety issues on the rest of the local road network has not yet been reached – discussions are ongoing on the outstanding points.

Issues re de-trunking of the existing A556

4.65 Consultation with the Parish Councils and the public identified that misuse at cul-de-sacs and illegal parking on the sections of road stopped up because of the new road needed to be addressed. There was concern that the cul-de-sacs created at stopped up side roads (including the southern end of the de-trunked A556) would encourage fly tipping and unauthorised parking. Discussions at the workshops should mean that this is accounted for in the design of the scheme.

4.66 The de-trunked A556 design proposes a linear planted mound adjacent to the carriageway to prevent unauthorised usage. Where the two side roads are to be stopped up, turning heads will be located such that public access to the redundant length of carriageway will be restricted. The back of turning head will be gated, allowing restricted access only to fields or any services along the existing carriageway. It should also be noted that the number of side roads to be stopped up as part of the scheme has been reduced (when compared to the pre-consultation design) through provision of Millington Overpass and a vehicular connection along Old Hall Lane.

4.67 There were some requests for the redundant width of the existing road to be converted to car parking spaces for St Paul's Church. In response to this issue the HA have considered whether additional car parking space for the Church could be provided. A suitable location was identified to the south of the Church; however, this has been marked for further consideration at the detailed design stage to ensure a layout can be provided that would not be subject to misuse. It should be noted however that access to the Church will be much improved as a result of the proposed scheme. Narrow carriageway widths and reduced traffic volumes will make use of the existing car park, located on the opposite side of the road, much more feasible.

SECTION 5 COMMUTED SUMS FUND FROM THE HIGHWAYS AGENCY TO CEC

5.1 This section outlines CEC's requirements for commuted sums funds for future maintenance of the detrunked A556, to mitigate for the potential (as yet unforeseen) impacts of the scheme on safety and the environment (particularly air quality).

Maintenance

5.2 Commuted sums are required to pay for the future maintenance of the detrunked A556 road. The condition of existing assets and proposals for lighting and so on need to be agreed. A "walk over" survey was undertaken on 15th August, with relevant CEC officers and the scheme designers to help establish the condition of the existing assets.

5.3 Table 1 below will include details of the assumptions made with regard to maintenance of the detrunked A556 road surface, footways, NMU route, vegetation maintenance and lighting. Agreement on the level of commuted sum payable to CEC is required as soon as possible, and in any event prior to the closure of the examination.

Complementary schemes funding package to cover unforeseen issues on the local road network

5.4 In the analysis of impacts on local roads, various potential issues were identified that may arise when the new A556 has opened. Commuted sums need to be agreed to pay for any of these issue, including post scheme monitoring.. Some of these issues are associated with forecast traffic volumes on the minor / local roads which may be higher or lower than forecast, as the model is strategic in nature and may not accurately model traffic on more minor roads in the network.

5.5 Table 2 will include details of the proposed complementary measures / schemes that may be required to provide mitigation if traffic differs from forecasts, or if other unforeseen issues arise.

5.6 Table 3 will include details of the proposed schemes that may be required to mitigate for the environmental impacts associated with traffic increases to the south of the M6 between the M6 and the CEC boundary.

5.7 Agreement on the level of commuted sums payable to CEC is required as soon as possible and in any event prior to the closure of the examination.

TABLE 1 Maintenance commuted fund

DRAFT

TABLE 2 Complementary measures / schemes

TABLE 3 Environmental Impact mitigation measures

DRAFT

SECTION 6 AIR QUALITY

6.1 The Environmental Statement considers local and regional effects on air quality. The LIR should specifically consider the local impacts.

6.2 The Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) process is set out in Part IV of the Environment Act 1995. It places an obligation on all Local Authorities to regularly review and assess air quality in their areas, and to determine whether or not the air quality objectives are likely to be achieved.

6.3 Where exceedences are likely, an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) must be declared and an Action Plan produced outlining the measures it intends to put in place to work towards achieving the objectives. In Cheshire East, there are currently 13 AQMA's, all of which are as a result of transport emissions.

6.4 The existing A556 between the south of Junction 19 of the M6 and to the north of Junction 8 of the M56 is designated as an AQMA as concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) exceed European Limit Values.

6.5 The Environmental Statement considers both local and regional effects on air quality.

6.6 Dust emissions, which would be expected during construction, are proposed to be mitigated by a number of measures such as water suppression, wheel washing and cleaning. These should be contained within the Construction Management Plan (CEMP).

6.7 Given that the construction phase of the works are estimated to take place over 3 years, measures to control dust, particularly over dry periods of the year are critical.

6.8 There will be significant HGV movements associated with the removal of unwanted soil and materials being brought to site for the road construction. Further discussion with the relevant Air Quality Specialist (within Public Protection and Health) is requested to establish routes that minimise the impact on air quality.

6.9 During the operational phase of the road, it is noted that the modelled changes in air quality will achieve the primary objective of air quality improvements in Bucklow Hill and Mere where there are predicted to be large reductions in NO₂ concentrations at properties on the existing A556. It is likely this will result in the revocation of a large proportion of the AQMA. This is a significant beneficial impact.

6.10 It is noted that there will still be a number of properties along the "online" part of the new route, most notably at the north end of Millington and in Over

Tabley south of the M6, which will continue to be in exceedence of the NO₂ air quality objective during the operational phase of the road. It is predicted that levels of NO₂ will slightly reduce in these areas. As such this is considered to be a negative local impact.

6.11 In addition, there are some implications wider afield most notably along the Southbound M6 where a small increase in traffic levels is predicted. The assessment confirms that levels of NO₂ may breach the objective in this location and as such Cheshire East may be required to declare a further AQMA in this area. This is considered a negative local impact.

6.12 There will be a number of properties close to the new road which would experience a worsening of air quality; however the model does not predict any exceedences of the air quality objectives. This is considered neutral in terms of overall impact.

6.13 The scheme overall is in compliance with the Air Quality Action Plan (2011) and the broader aims of the Cheshire East Air Quality Strategy. Mitigation will be sought (as previously outlined in section 5 and table 3) in order to offset the negative local impacts outlined above.

SECTION 7 CULTURAL HISTORY and ARCHAEOLOGY

Local area characteristics - urban qualities

7.1 There are potential issues concerning built heritage that are listed as follows.

7.2 The new road affects two grade II listed properties and a historic parkland of local significance.

7.3 There are a number of properties affected by the scheme, the following are particularly sensitive to the likely impact:

7.4 Denfield Cottages- Millington Hall Lane (Grade II)- the red line is literally up to the boundary of the cottage, this is an historic grouping of cottages that will be impacted by the development.

7.5 Over Tabley Hall associated buildings (grade II) and parkland- Tabley Superior

7.6 Mere Hall- Historic Parkland- the road proposal runs straight through this historic parkland associated with Mere Hall as described in the local plan. This is contrary to Macclesfield Local Plan saved policy NE5-Parkland Landscapes. The parkland is not included on the EH registered parks and gardens of special historic interest.

7.7 Mitigation measures are proposed that address these issues.

Archaeology

7.8 The archaeological planning advisory service has provided advice to CEC in their role as specialist archaeological advisors to CEC and as English Heritage's nominated curatorial representative for this scheme, which is summarised as follows.

7.9 The advisor has been involved in an on going dialogue with the HA and their consultants, to ensure that CEC were aware of progress with the archaeological assessment and evaluation.

7.10 The submission is supported by a Cultural Heritage Desk-Based Assessment, which has been prepared by Jacobs on behalf of the Highways Agency and is presented as part of Appendix 8 of the Environmental Statement. This study has considered data held in the Cheshire Historic Environment Record, historic mapping, aerial photographs, and various other sources of readily-available information and aimed to determine the need for further archaeological assessment and evaluation and define the scope of such works. The study concluded that, in addition to the archaeological sites identified in the

report, there was a clear potential for further archaeological remains to be present within the proposed development area.

7.11 Therefore, a field evaluation strategy was devised by Jacobs and agreed with English Heritage and the Archaeology Planning Advisory Service. Briefly, this consisted of a programme of geophysical survey and trial trenching. Some of this work has already been carried out and reports on the results of the geophysical survey and that part of the trenching programme completed to date also appear in Appendix 8. The trenching to the north of the A50 and east of Hulme Farm Barns was particularly informative and produced evidence of prehistoric cremation burials. Access difficulties have prevented the completion of all of the proposed trenching but its extent, including the location of individual trenches, has been defined and it is intended to complete this work once unrestricted access has been secured. Completion of these works will allow the precise extent of the remaining field work to be defined. Some areas will probably be signed off at this stage, whilst some may require strip, map, and record approach or more formal excavation. Others may require a watching brief during construction.

7.12 All of the above is summarised in Chapter 8 of the Environmental Statement and the key paragraphs are 8.6.57 and 8.6.58, where it is confirmed that the evaluation programme has been agreed with English Heritage and the Archaeology Planning Advisory Service, that much of this work has been completed although a significant amount of trenching remains to be completed, and that sufficient time will be allowed to complete the outstanding evaluation works and any further mitigation that proves necessary. Such mitigation works will be in accordance with those outlined above.

7.13 In CEC's opinion, the above outlines an appropriate scheme of works which is in accordance with current national and local planning guidance and the procedures outlined in the current edition of the DMRB.

SECTION 8 ECOLOGY AND NATURE CONSERVATION

Local area characteristics - landscape qualities and nature conservation sites

8.1 The proposed A556 Knutsford to Bowden Improvement scheme has the potential to have an adverse impact upon a number on sensitive ecological receptors. Each of these is discussed in detail below.

Sites of international and national importance

8.2 The proposed route of the A556 is adjacent to Rostherne Mere is designated as a SSSI, Ramsar Site and national nature reserve. The proposed development therefore has the potential to have an impact (both positive and negative) upon the nature conservation value of the mere. The proposed development may also have an indirect adverse impact upon The Mere,(SSSI and Ramsar) site due to changes in air and water quality.

8.3 In order to comply with the Habitat Regulations and Wildlife and Countryside Act it is essential that a thorough assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed development upon these sites is undertaken and considered by the decision maker. However, Cheshire east is supportive of the drainage strategy developed for the proposed new road which diverts run off away from these existing sites, which is an improvement upon the current drainage system in respect of these designated sites.

Local Wildlife Sites

8.4 The proposed development is likely to have a direct, irreversible, adverse impact upon two Local Wildlife Sites: Tabley Pipe wood and Belt Wood. Fragmentary effects associated with Tabley Pipe wood have the potential to be particularly significant.

8.5 The proposals also have the potential to have an adverse impact upon a number of other Local Wildlife Sites located within 2km of the proposed route. No assessment of the potential impacts of the development upon these additional sites appears to have been undertaken.

8.6 To compensate for the loss of woodland habitat from Tabley Pipe wood and Belt wood replacement planting is proposed on a two for one basis. In the Council's view replacement planting will take many years to mature and many more years to have any substantive ecological value as woodland habitat. This acknowledged in the ES which states that an adverse impact at the local scale would remain by design year.

Protected and Priority Species

8.7 The proposed development has the potential to have an adverse impact upon a number of legally protected and priority species. These include:

Badgers.

8.8 As a result of the proposed development four badger setts will be disturbed and one sett lost. Death as a result of road traffic collisions poses a significant risk to this species as does loss and isolation of foraging habitat. To mitigate the risk of road traffic accidents five mammal tunnels and associated fencing is to be provided along the route. To compensate for the loss of the existing sett an artificial sett will be provided within 100m of the existing sett. However, no compensation specifically for the loss of badger foraging habitat appears to be proposed.

Bats

8.9 A Pipistrelle bat roost will be lost as a result of tree felling operations in belt wood. Buildings with roost have been identified over 80m from the construction foot print. The ES predicts that disturbance associated with the proposals will affect bat roosts in four trees and 5 buildings. The development will also result in the severance of a number of foraging/commuting routes. Bats may also be at risk of fatality as a result of road traffic collisions.

8.10 The council advises that the impacts of major roads on foraging and commuting bats are not fully understood, and the Council appreciates that this has been acknowledged by the ES which anticipates an adverse impact on bats remaining at design year.

Breeding and Wintering Birds

8.11 Wintering and breeding bird assemblages have been identified as being of county value. Impacts on breeding and wintering birds resulting from habitat fragmentation and isolation have been identified. Native tree and shrub planting is proposed as a means of compensating for the adverse impacts of the development upon birds.

8.12 In the opinion of the Council tree and scrub planting is inappropriate and inadequate mitigation for the potential adverse impacts of the development upon breeding and wintering birds associated with open habitats.

Otters

8.13 Paragraph 10.5.32 states that it is not known if any otter 'lying up' sites are present in the works area. It is unclear as to why this is unknown as surveys

appear to have been undertaken. As this species is protected by law and in particular a European protected species, it is essential that the presence of this species and the extent that it will be affected by the proposed development is established prior to the determination of the current application.

Great Crested Newts

8.14 The proposed development will result in the loss of two great crested newt breeding ponds. In addition 2.69ha of immediate habitat will be lost and 12.8 of immediate habitat damaged. 13.5ha of intermediate habitat will also be lost. Adverse impacts are also anticipated to result from the fragmentation and isolation of habitats utilised by this species. The overall impacts of the development upon great crested newts are significant at the local level. The proposed mitigation and compensation however appears to be in accordance with standard best practice. The decision maker must however be mindful of the requirements of the habitat Regulations during the determination of this application.

Barn owl

8.15 The proposed development is likely to have an adverse impact upon barn owls due to the loss of foraging habitat and disturbance and also direct mortality associated with road traffic collisions. The potential significance of road traffic collisions should not be underestimated as research indicates that the impacts of a major road are significant enough to result in the loss of barn owl populations 0.5km either side of the road.

8.16 Those sections of roads at ground level or raised on an embankment are likely to pose the greatest risk to barn owls. In this instance whilst the proposed road profile are referred to in relation to barn in the ES the implications of this are not explained.

8.17 In order to compensate for the residual impacts of the development upon barn owls the applicant proposes to work with the local barn owl group to secure additional habitat creation works away from the proposed road. This approach is acceptable to the Council however it must be ensured that the resources put into this are substantial, fully quantified and secured by means of an appropriate legal mechanism.

Important plants

8.18 Cowbane a nationally scarce plant species has located in pond 62 would be lost to the proposed development. It is proposed to transplant this plant to a newly created pond. The Council would appreciate confirmation that this is feasible and whether this has successfully been undertaken previously.

Conclusion

8.19 The proposed development has been assessed as having a moderate adverse impact on ecology at opening year and a slight – neutral adverse impact on ecology at design year. Locally, significant adverse impacts are anticipated on a number of ecological receptors including running water, otter, bats (general), bats (specific roosts) and barn owls at design year. Therefore in the local context, the proposed development will have a notable residual adverse impact upon ecological interests which is not fully addressed by the proposed mitigation and compensation. This has implications for the determination of this NSIP application in light of the NPPF.

8.20 In the view of the CEC Principal Nature Conservation Officer the proposed development cannot at this time be considered to be fully sustainable in terms of ecology. The CEC Principal Nature Conservation Officer recommends therefore that the residual adverse impacts of the proposed development are 'offset' by means of a commuted sum secured by means of an appropriate legal agreement. It is estimated that this figure should be between £50 – 100K.

8.21 This commuted sum would be used to fund habitat creation/enhancement works local to the proposed scheme. It is envisaged that the result of this process would be that the development proposal can be confidently assessed as being truly 'sustainable' in terms of ecology.

SECTION 9 VISUAL IMPACT

Landscape and Visual

9.1 There are potentially significant landscape and visual impacts within this area of green belt, designated area of county value and local visual amenity impacts.

9.2 As part of the proposed development a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment submission including a examining the baseline assessment, consideration of potential impacts, mitigation and an assessment of residual effects will an important part of the assessment process. A Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment was completed in 2008 and adopted in 2009; this reviews all landscape character types in Cheshire East. Cheshire East has also recently produced a study on existing Local Landscape designations – previously Areas of Special County Value; this identifies and provides information on the special qualities of these locally designated landscapes.

9.3 The proposed development lies in the following landscape character areas. To the west Landscape Character Type 10: Lower Farms and Woods, specifically Character Area LFW3: Arley. To the north Landscape Character Type 10: Lower Farms and Woods, specifically Character Area LFW6: Ashley and to the east Landscape Character Type 9: Estate, Woodland & Mere, specifically Character Area EWM4: Tatton.

9.4 The Lower Farms and Woods character type area is characterised as being low lying with gently rolling topography in a landscape with a mix of medieval and post-medieval reorganised fields with some loss of boundaries, leading to the formation of larger fields with fences added. There are a large number of water bodies, a high density of woodland and a medium density of dispersed farms and nucleated hamlets/villages.

9.5 The Estate, Woodland & Mere character type is characterised as having high densities of woodland, ornamental landscaped features, often associated with large historic houses and estates, meres, mosses and ponds, flat to undulating relief and dispersed settlements.

9.6 The location of the proposed development displays many of these characteristics. There is some development along the existing route of the A556, but the area where the new route is to be located is predominantly rural and uses for agricultural purposes.

9.7 Much of the proposed development will be adjacent to the western boundary of the Rostherne/ Tatton Park Local Landscape Designation, an area that has a coherent and historically complete landscape that also includes Rostherene mere national nature Reserve, Tatton mere and The Mere SSSI.

9.8 Due to the nature of the scheme and rural nature of the area it is considered that the construction of the project will have an effect on both the landscape character and visual appearance of the local landscape, and will need to be carefully assessed. Minimising and mitigating these impacts will need to form an integral part of the assessment process in relation to the consideration of the highway effects of the scheme on the surrounding area.

9.9 Despite mitigation measures, it is considered that the proposals will have a significant landscape and visual impact within this area of Green Belt, Designated Area of Special County Value (ASCV) and may well have significant impacts upon the visual amenity in the surrounding area.

Trees and Woodlands Comments

9.10 Construction of the road impacts on Tabley Pipe Wood, Square Wood, Kennel Wood and Belt Wood. There will also be a loss of a number of hedgerow and free standing field trees. No TPO trees will be felled, but two of the woodlands are SBIs. Mitigation planting for loss of woodland, trees and hedgerows is proposed, but this will not adequately compensate for loss at design year and is in contravention of saved MBC policies NE7 Woodland and DC9 Tree Protection.

SECTION 10 NOISE AND VIBRATION

10.1 The noise and vibration impacts report looks in detail at the estimated impacts from construction and operation from the proposed scheme. The methodologies used for calculation and assessment of the various aspects are relevant and appropriate. The assessment considers the impact on the Environmental Noise Directive First Priority Areas although it does not appear to consider affected routes outside of the study area.

10.2 The assessment indicates that during construction there will be adverse noise impacts at sensitive receptors close to the proposed new route. Some of these properties have been identified as experiencing major adverse noise impacts although these would not occur in the long term. The proposed use of rotary piling would greatly reduce the potential vibration impacts although limited vibration disturbance may be experienced due to earthwork compaction. The assessment states that a number of mitigation measures would be adopted. It is important that these would be implemented alongside good communication with the local authority and residents and a monitoring programme to manage these significant but transient impacts.

10.3 The assessment of operational noise and vibration impacts uses methodologies outlined in DMRB, CRTN (Calculation of Road Traffic Noise) and makes use of an acceptable computer modelling software package. The assessment indicates that many properties, particularly along the existing route, would experience beneficial noise and vibration impacts due to the implementation of this scheme. A significant number of properties near to the new route and other affected routes would be impacted by an adverse change in noise environment with a small number of properties being classed as experiencing a major adverse change. These are predominantly properties not adjacent to existing main roads where the current background noise climate is typical of a rural location. As more properties are predicted to experience a beneficial rather than an adverse change the scheme is considered to be overall beneficial in terms of noise and vibration impacts.

10.4 Mitigation measures have been proposed along the route some of which have the effect of providing noise mitigation. These include low noise road surface, road cuttings, earth bunding and acoustic fencing. These measures have been included in the noise calculations. It is not clear if the mitigation due to the low noise surfacing has been assumed to remain constant and has therefore been applied to the future year calculations. Additionally, there should be more detail on the consideration of the level of mitigation proposed and whether this has been optimised. Further consideration of mitigation should be given for those sensitive receptors predicted to experience adverse noise effects and particularly those most affected.

SECTION 11 PEDESTRIAN/CYCLE INTERESTS (Non-Motorised Users)

11.1 The following comments relate to issues surrounding Public Rights of Way (PROW), wider countryside access and walking and cycling for active travel, referred to in the application documents as provision for Non-Motorised Users (NMUs).

11.2 The PROW, as recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement, anticipated to be affected by the draft Development Consent Order are:-

- Millington Public Footpaths Nos. 6 and 7; and,
- Rostherne Public Footpaths Nos. 9 and 13.

11.3 The PROW, as recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement, anticipated to be adjacent to the development, and therefore which may be subject to temporary traffic regulation orders, include:-

- Tabley Superior Public Bridleway No. 7;
- Tabley Superior Public Footpath No. 6;
- Millington Public Footpaths Nos. 1 and 10;
- Mere Public Bridleway No. 1; and
- Rostherne Public Footpath No. 1.

11.4 Other areas of NMU interest include:-

- NMU facilities along the de-trunked A556;
- Old Hall Lane NMU underpass and connections;
- NMU facilities at junctions of the proposed new A556 and the de-trunked A556; and,
- Continuity of minor roads, new side roads and the Regional Cycle Route.

11.5 The PROW unit of the Council is generally supportive of the proposed scheme, subject to the final detailed scheme design and accommodation works arrangements, in particular in relation to NMU facilities on affected PROW and at junctions, overbridges and the underpass.

11.6 The PROW unit would seek to continue to be involved throughout detailed design of arrangements, structures and accommodation works for the scheme to ensure that the interests of NMUs are protected and promoted. In particular this would relate to the changes proposed affecting Millington Public Footpaths Nos. 6 & 7, Rostherne Public Footpaths Nos. 9 & 13 and the physical connection between Millington Public Footpath No. 1 where it terminates at the proposed side road boundary and the new proposed carriageway.

11.7 The PROW unit would seek to be consulted on the final draft text relating to

PROW and the Rights of Way and Access Plans prior to any Development Consent Order being made.

DRAFT

SECTION 12 WATER

Flood Risk and Drainage

12.1 It is evident from the scoping documents associated with this scheme that the importance of assessing potential flood risk impacts has been captured. The scheme is highly likely to impact on a number of locally important non main river (ordinary) watercourses and other water features. It is evident that there are local surface water flood risk areas potentially affected by the proposed route of this improvement scheme. It will be essential that detailed drainage design and any associated local flood risk impacts are fully assessed and approved by Cheshire East as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and in the interests of managing flood risk to ensure no adverse impacts off site.

12.2 Formal consents may be required under Land Drainage Act 1991 for certain works affecting non main river or ordinary watercourses .Similarly, consents may be required from Environment Agency for works affecting Main River under Water Resources Act 1991.

12.3 Proposals for the detailed drainage design will need to be discussed with Cheshire East Flood Risk Management at the appropriate stage.

SECTION 13 GEOLOGY/SOILS

Materials

13.1 There is likely to be a wider consideration of soil sealing and reuse/restoration which is not within our remit.

13.2 The end use (road) is not considered to be sensitive. However the route goes through a number of areas of potentially filled ground and other historical activities which could give rise to localised contamination.

13.3 The Environmental statement includes a detailed statement on materials. Although detailed plans are not yet available, the scheme aims to minimise the amount of material that has to be moved in /out of the site. CEC will need reassurance that suitable mitigation measure can be implemented to protect watercourses from damage / pollution during construction due to handling, storage and usage of materials. Current proposals indicate a slight excess of material to be removed from the site. The design has been amended to increase the height of the road to remove the need to transport material away.

13.4 We would wish to see a Phase 1 report prepared for the route to identify any areas which may be affected by contamination. This should then make suitable recommendations for further investigations of any areas of concern in order to determine the best option for removal or reuse of soil materials etc. This will need to ensure that the workers, end users (including maintenance workers) and the groundwater and off site receptors (e.g. neighbouring properties) are sufficiently protected. If any areas of contamination are present, consideration of the impact of rainwater runoff and balancing ponds flowing to surface water should be considered.

SECTION 14 ECONOMIC and SOCIAL IMPACT

Socio-economic and community matters

14.1 The scheme is expected to have impacts on the local economy both positive and negative, along with associated community impacts.

14.2 The proposed scheme will impact on a number of farms along the proposed route. The ES does recognise adverse impacts on some farms, varying from case to case. Where possible these have been reduced by design changes since the public consultation.

14.3 The HA do not believe that any farm will cease to be economically viable. A detailed Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey has shown that there will be some loss of land in ALC grades 3a to 1 (classified as 'best and most versatile land') but this has been minimised wherever possible.

14.4 A number of existing businesses that rely on passing trade will be affected by the scheme, either removing or significantly reducing the volume of passing traffic, however the adverse impact is not viewed to be significant;

- At Tabley there is a service area with a café, motel and filling station on the A556 just to the north of M6 junction 19.
- At Bucklow Hill there is a filling station with a small shop, a premier inn hotel, a privately owned public house and a car showroom.

14.5 A number of other businesses and schools may benefit from improved access due to the large reductions in traffic on the de-trunked A556;

- In Tabley a privately owned conference facility (at the end of Moss Lane);
- In Mere the Mere Golf resort and spa;
- Rainbow day nursery in Mere;

14.6 A number of other businesses and schools may be adversely impacted by forecast traffic increases on the A50, these include;

- High Legh primary school and pres school nursery;
- High Legh Garden centre;
- High Legh Park Golf club,
- Brown's furniture shop.

14.7 The National Trust owns two properties close to the scheme, Dunham Massey (to the north of the A56 / A556 junction) and Tatton Park (just north of the A50 and east of the A556). Special events at Tatton Park such as the RHS flower show can attract up to 100,000 visitors over 3 days. Tatton Park have previously raised some concerns about the adequacy of the new access arrangements, particularly for large events such as the RHS show. Reductions in traffic on the de-trunked A556 mean that for average days access to the park is likely to be less stressful; use of the de-trunked Chester Road will be confined to

local users and access to Tatton Park, so there will be less competition with through traffic.

14.8 On event days the new routing patterns will be unlikely to provide any benefits. Depending on the routing strategy used there may be negative impacts on Tatton Park during exceptionally busy events such as the RHS Flower Show. This is due to the congested state that local roads reach during these events. The traffic management plans for these events involve diverting drivers on the A50 onto the A556 (and preventing drivers on the A556 from directly joining the A50) and then using roads such as Rostherne Lane, Cherry Tree Lane and Rostherne Drive. Several of these lanes will lose their access to the trunk road with the new road in place. In short, the A556 scheme would lead to a more restricted choice of routes into Tatton Park and so impose greater constraints on traffic flows on event days.

14.9 Tatton Park and BeWILDerwood (a company behind a sustainable environmental adventure park in Hoveton, Norfolk) are planning to develop a branch of the adventure park within Witchcote Wood at Tatton Park. This seasonal attraction is expected to attract up to 250,000 visitors each year. A transport assessment conducted on behalf of the development came to the conclusion that “there would be no significant highways implications”. Access to the site is planned to be either from the north, on Ashley Road, or from Knutsford on Mereheath Lane, and already account for the impact that the A556 Improvement will have on the area. CEC are currently considering a formal planning application for this development. Given that the peak times for trips to /from the site are unlikely to coincide with the peak times for strategic traffic on the A556, CEC agree that the development is unlikely to lead to any significant highway implications.

14.10 There are no other existing or proposed land-use planning designations within the main communities surrounding the existing A556. The land within the main communities is designated as Green Belt.

14.11 The improved A556 provides better access for Cheshire East residents to employment opportunities in South Manchester, including Manchester Airport which is a key destination in its own right with 20million passengers per year using the airport.

14.12. In addition to the direct impacts of the A556 on businesses in the local study area potentially beneficial impacts could derive from how the proposed scheme affects the physical ease of transport access and journey times to local businesses. These include Tatton Park, a major local employer and businesses in Knutsford.

Severance

14.13 Overall the scheme reduces severance at locations along the de-trunked A556 particularly at Mere and Bucklow Hill. A limited number of individuals are affected by the stopping up of Bucklow Hill Lane reducing access to facilities in Hoo Green. NMU users have improved provision along the de-trunked route and across the new A556.

Summary

14.14 This section has considered different types of impact on people and communities within the study areas at several geographic scales: the local area which is physically impacted by the scheme and the local authority level study area covering the Cheshire East local authority area.

14.15 In the local study area, CEC agree that the impacts on community severance from the scheme are generally expected to be positive, for example, by improving access to community facilities, and the overall balance of impacts is beneficial. The impacts on community facilities and commuting in the local area are expected to be beneficial. The impacts on community facilities, community land and private properties are expected to be neutral. The impacts on commercial properties are mixed but generally beneficial but not significant. There is some loss of commercial land and impacts on agriculture and farms that are judged to be adverse but insignificant. For tourism and recreation there is expected to be a mix of impacts on Tatton Park, generally beneficial but potentially adverse during event days. Regarding development land, there is expected to be a beneficial insignificant impact on the potential BeWILDerwood development at Tatton Park.

14.16 In the local authority level study area the impacts on employment, tourism and recreation and the economy are all expected to be beneficial. With regard to commuting, a mix of impacts is expected. There are significant beneficial impacts and some adverse impacts that are insignificant in their overall effect.

SECTION 15 CONCLUSIONS

15.1 This report has been produced by CEC and considers the impact of the proposed A556 Knutsford to Bowdon improvement scheme on the CEC area.

15.2 This report has been prepared in accordance with advice and requirements as set out in the Planning Act 2008, the Localism Act 2011 and Advice Note one: Local Impact Reports (version 2, April 2012, The Planning Inspectorate).

15.3 The Highways Agency (HA) intends to improve the A556 trunk road between Junction 19 of the M6 motorway, near Knutsford, and Junction 7 of the M56 motorway, near Bowdon with 7.5km of new (offline) or improved (online) road. Most of the scheme would be built to the standard of an all-purpose dual carriageway trunk road, with a short section (approximately 300m long) at the north end to which motorway regulations would apply. Nearside verges throughout would be a minimum of 2.5m wide, grassed and with no footways.

15.4 There would be six junctions along the line of the improvements.

15.5 A number of local roads would be affected by the new road: Old Hall Lane, Bucklow Hill Lane and Millington Hall Lane will be stopped up at the new A556. An alternative longer diversionary alignment will be provided for Old Hall Lane.

15.6 New overbridges would be provided across the new A556 on Millington Lane, Chapel Lane and the A50.

15.7 Where the improvement is off-line, the existing Chester Road would cease to be a trunk road. A programme of 'de-trunking' works would be required before it could be handed over to CEC (the local highway authority) as part of the CEC network. These works have been designed after extensive and repeated consultation with CEC through multiple face-to-face meetings and correspondence, and the proposals include the following:

- a reduction from four lanes to two along the length of Chester Road principally within the two southbound lanes of the existing A556 ;
- Changes at junctions with side roads;
- Changes to traffic signs and signals and road markings;
- Changes and removal of lighting, where it is present;
- Changes to provision for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders; and,

Removal and changes of speed control measures, safety barriers and CCTV/security cameras.

15.8 CEC are generally supportive of the scheme as it improves strategic access to the Motorway network for both CEC residents and businesses as it relieves significant congestion issues along the A556 between the M6 at junction 19 and junction 7 of the M56. However CEC have some concerns over the impact on the local road network that the new road may have, that as yet have not been

resolved that are identified in detail in the full report. Updates on these issues will be provided at the examination stage.

15.9 Traffic levels are forecast to reduce on many local roads including the A5034 Mereside road and the de-trunked A556. Increases in traffic are forecast on some roads including the A50 and A556 south of the M6. There are some negative implications for air quality (negative impact with possible new AQMA), that require mitigation measures to be agreed with CEC.

15.10 The traffic model used by the HA to forecast traffic levels on the scheme is strategic in nature and forecast traffic levels on the local road network, particularly on narrow country lanes is subject to uncertainty. CEC accepts that the model has these limitations and that the flows under normal conditions (average day without incidents on the Motorway / strategic network or events at Tatton Park) will be likely to be close to those presented.

15.11 Initial designs for the proposed junction layouts for the new A556 / A50, A50 / de-trunked A556 (Mere Crossroads) and the A5034 Mereside Road / de-trunked A556 (Bucklow Hill) were considered by CEC and suggested amendments to the designs have been made to address concerns.

15.12 At Mere Crossroads the de-trunked Chester Road would be realigned at the junction to form two T-junctions onto the A50, offset from each other. CEC are looking for network resilience to cater for additional traffic that might be generated by events at Tatton Park and during incidents on the M6 that force traffic to divert onto the A50 / de-trunked A556. Existing restrictions on right-turning movements would be lifted, so that all turns would be possible. CEC are also working with the HA to specify 'intelligent' signal timings to be instigated when incidents occur on the M6, that may be able to address these concerns.

15.13 At Bucklow Hill Junction the existing traffic light signals would be modified to remove signal controls from Chapel Lane and alter the phasing of the remaining lights to reflect the new dominant flow of vehicular traffic (i.e. southbound traffic leaving the A556 at Millington and turning left at Bucklow Hill onto the A5034).

15.14 Full agreement on some aspects of the treatment of road safety issues on the local road network has not yet been reached – discussions are ongoing on the outstanding points..

15.15 CEC's have identified requirements for commuted sums funds for future maintenance of the de-trunked A556, to mitigate for the potential (as yet unforeseen) impacts of the scheme on safety and the environment (particularly air quality). It is agreed that commuted sums will be agreed between the HA and CEC prior to the closure of the examination of the scheme so that they can be included in the inspectors report.

15.16 There are potential issues concerning built heritage that we may wish to raise during the examination process. The new road affects two grade II listed properties and a historic parkland of local significance. Mitigation measures are proposed that address these issues.

15.17 There is a moderate adverse impact on ecology at opening and a slight/neutral adverse impact at design year, locally significant adverse impacts are anticipated on otter, bats, barn owls and running water. Residual adverse impacts could potentially be off set and secured by legal agreement.

15.18 Despite mitigation measures, it is considered that the proposals will have a significant landscape and visual impact within this area of Green Belt, Designated Area of Special County Value (ASCV) and may well have significant impacts upon the visual amenity in the surrounding area.

15.19 The PROW unit of the Council is generally supportive of the proposed scheme, subject to the final detailed scheme design and accommodation works arrangements, in particular in relation to NMU facilities on affected PROW and at junctions, overbridges and the underpass.

15.20 The PROW unit would seek to be consulted on the final draft text relating to PROW and the Rights of Way and Access Plans prior to any Development Consent Order being made.

15.21 It is evident from the scoping documents associated with this scheme that the importance of assessing potential flood risk impacts has been captured. Proposals for the detailed drainage design will need to be discussed with Cheshire East Flood Risk Management at the appropriate stage.

15.22 The proposals are not expected to have any geology or soils issues though reassurance will be sought that suitable mitigation measures are planned to protect watercourses from damage / pollution. A Phase 1 report will be required to ensure that contamination, rainwater run off and balancing ponds are fully considered.

15.23 The scheme is expected to have impacts on the local economy both positive and negative, along with associated community impacts.

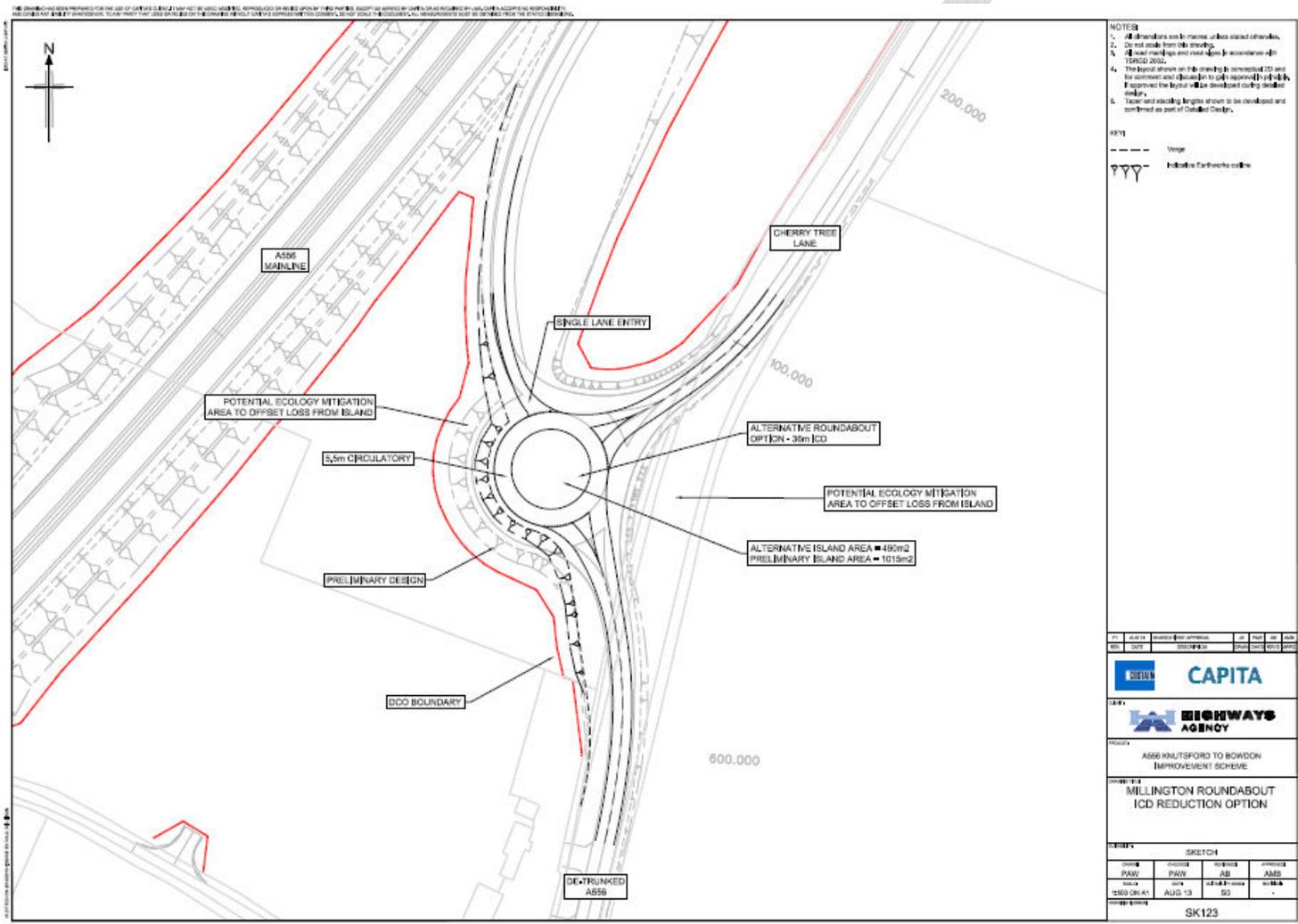
15.24 In the local study area, CEC agree that the impacts on community severance from the scheme are generally expected to be positive, for example, by improving access to community facilities, and the overall balance of impacts is beneficial. The impacts on community facilities and commuting in the local area are expected to be beneficial. The impacts on community facilities, community land and private properties are expected to be neutral. The impacts on commercial properties are mixed but generally beneficial but not significant.

There is some loss of commercial land and impacts on agriculture and farms that are judged to be adverse but insignificant. For tourism and recreation there is expected to be a mix of impacts on Tatton Park, generally beneficial but potentially slightly adverse during event days. Regarding development land, there is expected to be a beneficial insignificant impact on the potential BeWILDerwood development at Tatton Park.

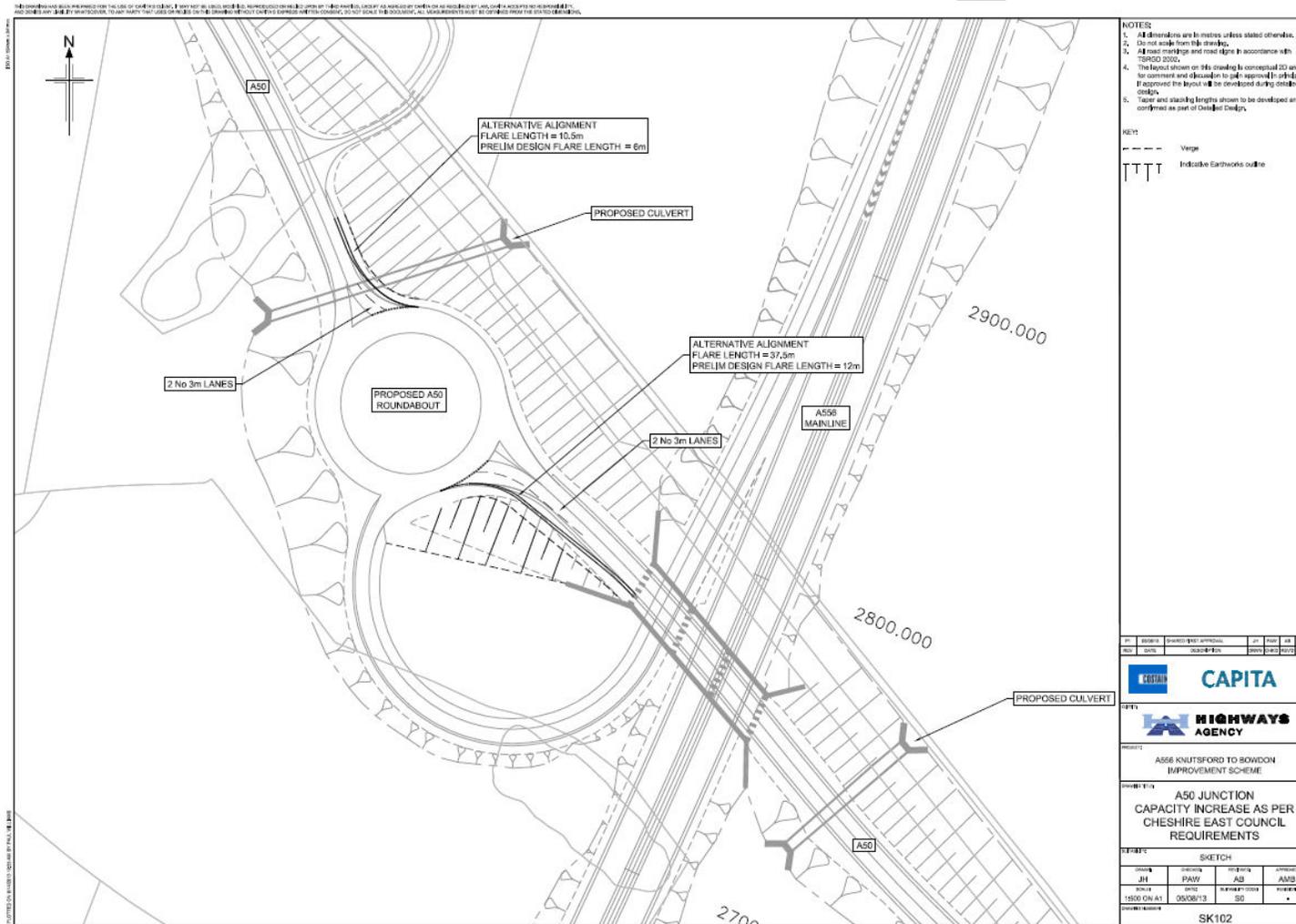
15.25 In the local authority level study area the impacts on commuting, employment, tourism and recreation and the economy are all expected to be beneficial.

15.26 Overall the scheme reduces severance at locations along the de-trunked A556 particularly at Mere and Bucklow Hill. A limited number of individuals are affected by the stopping up of Bucklow Hill Lane reducing access to facilities in Hoo Green. NMU users have improved provision along the de-trunked route and across the new A556.

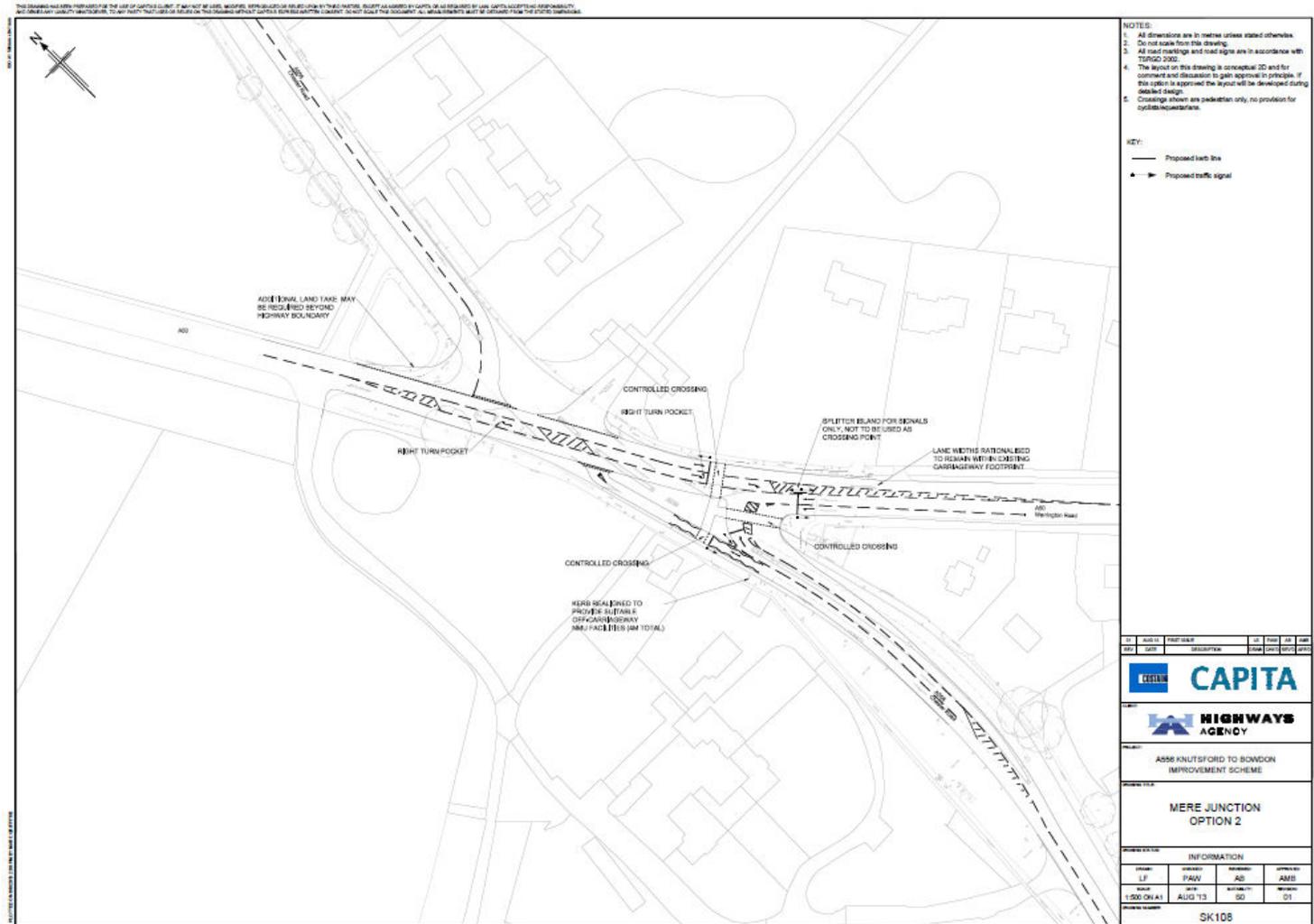
Appendix B Millington roundabout (slip from A556, de-trunked A556 and Cherry Tree Link)



Appendix C A50 / new A556 roundabout junction



Appendix D Proposed layout for A50 /de-trunked A556 Mere crossroads



Appendix E Proposed layout for A5034 /de-trunked A556 Bucklow Hill junction

