NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This Non Technical Summary summarises the findings of the Environmental Statement (ES) submitted on behalf of Persimmon Homes (Wessex) Ltd., for the construction of a new road link and associated works between the A361/B3105 roundabout at Hilperton Road/Trowbridge Road and a new roundabout junction at Wyke Road, Canal Road & Horse Road at Hilperton Marsh, known as the Hilperton Relief Road (HRR).

The A361 Trowbridge Road links the town to the A350 at Semington. A section of the A361 has already been diverted to the south of Hilperton village to serve the housing development at Paxcroft Mead. The proposed allocation for residential development at land south of Paxcroft Mead will continue the new road network southwards through the new housing area, and link to the new road serving the proposed business park ("land north of West Ashton Road") and connect to West Ashton Road. Completion of the various sections of road will achieve an eastern distributor road network for Trowbridge, which will help relieve the town centre of traffic and improve cross town movements. It will divert traffic away from Hilperton village, and also accommodate the additional traffic flows arising from the various proposed new housing and employment allocations and commitments at East Trowbridge.

Following discussions with the District and County Councils, consideration was given in this Environmental Statement to potential alternative routes for the Relief Road. The alternative routes assessed in outline are all aligned to the east of Hilperton village, and are shown on the figure overhead. They are the Hilperton Relief Road (HRR) Hilperton Northern Relief Road (HNRR), Marshmead, Horse Road and Kings Arms options, and the Far Northern Relief Road (FNRR).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The study area is centred around the north eastern fringe of Trowbridge and Hilperton village, within the broad river valley landscape of the Avon, which passes to the north of Staverton and Trowbridge. The study area is marked by land at about 60m AOD along the A361 / B3105 in the south, which gently slopes towards the Avon, falling to around 35-40m AOD in the north of the study area in the vicinity of Hilperton Marsh and the Kennet and Avon Canal.

Outside of the main settlements, the study area is mainly in agricultural uses, both arable and pastoral. The land is generally open, with few areas of woodland. The study area is generally accessible on public rights of way, including footpaths, a bridleway between Trowbridge and Hilperton village, and a byway open to all traffic between the A361 and Whaddon Lane.

The road would comprise a single carriageway road, 7.3m wide, with a design speed of 85kph (approximately 52mph). A 3m wide footway / cycleway would be provided on one side of the road. The highway boundary would be fenced, and the road corridor would be integrated into the local landscape by the planting of predominantly native trees and shrubs.

EXISTING TRAFFIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Hilperton village straddles the B3105, which is subject to a 30mph speed restriction. The existing two-way traffic flow on the B3105 through Hilperton village is approximately 4,200 vehicles per 12-hour weekday, with 9.0% of the traffic comprising heavy goods vehicles. The two-way peak hour traffic flows are approximately 500 vehicles per hour.

The road through the village is sub-standard with restricted width, a 90 degree bend at the Whaddon Road junction, properties fronting the footway and road, and numerous cars parked on-street. Heavy goods vehicles passing through the village experience difficulty in passing other vehicles in the narrow sections and negotiating the 90-degree bend. There are no pedestrian crossing facilities in the village and footpaths are located immediately adjacent to passing traffic.

Without the construction of the new road the current environmental impacts on the local residents of Hilperton village, including noise, vibration, pollution, community severance and poor road safety are likely to be made worse in the future as a consequence of increased traffic growth. Construction of a Hilperton Relief Road, with appropriate traffic management measures, would be likely to remove the heavy through traffic from the existing road through the village, reduce the overall traffic speeds of the remaining local traffic and further enhance the environment for pedestrians and cyclists, with a corresponding and significant improvement in the village environment. In addition, the new road would improve transport links within Trowbridge, shortening journey times and distances and provide improved access to existing and proposed employment land, including Canal Road Trading Estate.

COMPARISON AND EVALUATION OF ROUTE OPTIONS

Preliminary studies were carried out in respect of traffic and environmental issues relating to each route option. The results are summarised as follows:-

- In terms of traffic issues, the Hilperton Relief Road (HRR) option is the preferred route as it provides the shortest route option, which would attract most vehicles away from the existing route through Hilperton village. Residents of Victoria Road and Horse Road would also benefit most from the HRR option over the alternative options, by decreased traffic flows.

- All of the route options cross public rights of way, with the HNRR (Marshmead) having the least impact and the Far Northern Relief Road (FNRR) having the most impact in terms of severance of rights of way.

- The HRR option would lead to visual intrusion to more residents than the alternative routes. The FNRR option would have least visual impact to residents, but most impact on open countryside.

- The HRR option and the HNRR, Marshmead and Horse Road options are of comparable length and may have similar ecological impact, although the HRR would also impact on Water Voles. The HNRR, Kings Arms option and the FNRR option are likely to have most impact to ecology by virtue of their greater length.

- In terms of hydrology and drainage, the HRR crosses a stream and indicative floodplain. The other routes do not cross floodplain but the FNRR option crosses a tributary of the River Avon.

- In terms of archaeology and cultural heritage, the extent of archaeological interest along the HRR has been...