

NORTHAMPTON NORTH-WEST RELIEF ROAD - A ROUTE TO LOCAL GROWTH AND RESILIENCE

ABSTRACT The societally essential need for housing is under public scrutiny with ambitious targets set and critical infrastructure improvements required. However, planning and regulatory bottlenecks and need for acquisition of land often restrict and prevent developments from progressing.

The completed Northampton North-West Relief Road showcases the efficient delivery of key infrastructure needed for local housing and economic growth. The road facilitates the construction of approximately 6,000 homes, provides resilience to the highway network and relief to existing pinch points. Adopting a clear strategy was key to managing risk, as was acknowledging workstream interdependencies and need for a collaborative whole-team approach to deliver:

- Engineering design
- Planning and sustainability
- Transport, business case and funding
- Land acquisition
- Procurement and construction

The site presented significant engineering challenges and key benefits of collaborative governance included:

1. Working in partnership with the landowners and developers to deliver an earthworks balance. 160,000m³ import mitigated, £4m saved plus associated carbon savings.
2. Engagement with Network Rail and Environment Agency to realise mass haul solutions. 60,000 lorry movements mitigated.
3. A deliverable solution included in the Environmental Statement facilitating consultation with key statutory and non-statutory stakeholders.
4. Land requirements and licence agreements built into land acquisition processes.
5. Early engagement with design and construction partners to deliver and exceed sustainability targets. Added value resulted from relationships established across a portfolio of projects, open book delivery and shared achievement of project goals.
6. Social value a key part of procurement with £350k of social value delivered and a local spend from the works of £9.4m.

This paper demonstrates what can be achieved when societal, environmental and technical challenges are resolved by all parties, led by Civil Engineers, working together for the common good. Although ultimately successful, the paper critically evaluates the project, identifying key lessons and delivery improvements for future projects.