

# **BEXHILL TO HASTINGS LINK ROAD**

## **Farming Circumstances**

August 2004

# 1. INTRODUCTION

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- 1.1 This technical report sets out an assessment of the potential effects of the two road proposals between Bexhill and Hastings. The proposals are illustrated at Appendix KCC 1.
- 1.2 The assessment is to Stage 3 as set out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Volume 11 Section 3 Part 6 (DMRB). This report covers loss of land and soil resources, the type of land management and farming practices currently operated and the potential effects on these, and matters such as severance, disturbance and disruption. It covers both construction phase / short term effects and the operational/permanent/long-term effects.

## Methodology

- 1.3 The methodology has involved:
- i) study of available published soil, geology and climate data, land quality records and topographic information;
  - ii) study of plans showing the proposals and land referencing information;
  - iii) a detailed Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey of the route options;
  - iv) face to face interviews with all of the affected farming occupiers.
- 1.4 The affected farmers were interviewed on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2004. The assessment is based upon plans provided by East Sussex County Council.

## The Authors

- 1.5 The report has been prepared by Kernon Countryside Consultants (KCC) on the instruction of LANDLOOK of WESTPORT HOUSE, BENTLEY, FARNHAM, SURREY GU10 5HY. KCC specialises in assessing the effects of development proposals on agricultural businesses, and in farm development and rural planning issues.

## 2. BASELINE CONDITIONS

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2.1 Baseline conditions can be divided into:

- inherent conditions, ie. those not influenced by man to any significant degree, such as soils and land quality;
- land-use conditions, which are those generally of a more transient nature, such as farming occupation and management.

### Inherent Conditions

2.2 This Stage 3 assessment looks at two separate route options:

- **Option 1-** Both route options share the same starting point just north of Glovers Farm, however route 1 takes a more northerly route for the first 2000 metres running to the north of Actons Farm before rejoining with Option 2 to the west of Adams Farm. Both routes share the same corridor for approximately 600 metres before Option 1 takes a southerly route rejoining Crowhurst Road to the south of Upper Wilting Farm.
- **Option 2** takes a north easterly route from Glovers Farm skirting round the most westerly part of the SSSI to the south of Actons Farm before rejoining with Option 1 to the west of Adams Farm. Option 2 then takes a more northerly route passing to the north of Upper Wilting Farm before joining the B2092 just north of Crowhurst Road.

2.3 The inherent soil resources, interacting with factors such as climate and topography, influence the extent to which land can be exploited for agricultural purposes. As a means for measuring and comparing land in different locations, the Former Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) (now Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs DEFRA) have devised a system of Agricultural Land Classification. This subdivides land from Grade 1 "excellent quality" to Grade 5 "very poor quality". Planning Policy Statement 7: "Sustainable Development in Rural Areas" (2004) identifies grades 1, 2 and 3a as "**best and most versatile agricultural land**".

- 2.4 The area of land proposed for improvements is shown on the 1:250,000 published "provisional" Agricultural Land Classification Sheet as a mix of Grade 3 and 4 land. With Grade 3 being predominately on the west of the study area and Grade 4 on the east.
- 2.5 Published Plans are only for use in strategic planning and cannot be relied upon for assessing accurately the quality of any particular site. Accordingly, using the recommended methodology, a detailed ALC survey of the route options has been undertaken and is presented as a separate LANDLOOK report.
- 2.6 The ALC concludes that:
- a mix of Grade 2 and sub-Grades 3a and 3b are represented along the study area along with a small area of non-agricultural land;
  - in the district much of the land away from the floodplains will be mainly covered with loamy over clayey soils with a wetness limitation and will fall principally into the sub-grade 3a. Small patches of freely drained ground associated with the sandstones will give very good quality land (Grade 2) locally on convex brows but these are not generally extensive enough to make up the soils over entire fields.

### **Land Use Conditions**

- 2.7 The two options involve predominately agricultural land. The route options pass through an area of mixed arable and pasture land.
- 2.8 The boundaries of the holdings have been provided by land referencing plans, and have been used for assessing potential impacts. The main affected farming occupiers have been interviewed in person. Summaries of the affected agricultural holdings are set out below.
- **Glovers Farm** – A mixed arable and pasture farm extending to approximately 95 hectares (235 acres). Until 1997 the farm had operated as a dairy unit. The farm now crops 40 hectares (100 acres) of arable crops, the remaining land is permanent pasture land. Approximately 28

hectares (70 acres) comprises part of the SSSI and is grazed by cattle that are normally bought-in as stores. However, in years such as this when store prices are high the farmer rents out the land for grazing. The better quality land is used for horse grazing and the production of hay. The farm runs a successful livery business (representing more than 50% of farm income). The farm provides stabling for 30 horses and an indoor manege that have been converted from redundant farm buildings. A mix of arable and pasture land is affected by Options 1 and 2.

- **Buckholt Farm** – An organic 141 hectare (350 acre) mixed beef and arable unit, comprising of 101 hectares (250 acres) of farmland and 40 hectares (100 acres) of woodland. The majority of the woodland forms part of a commercial pheasant shoot. Option 1 severs two fields on the south eastern edge of the farm that are currently in pasture use.
- **Acton's Farm** – A small holding extending to 18 hectares (46 acres) a further 12 – 16 hectares (30 – 40 acres) are rented in Crowhurst on annual grazing agreements for hay and silage. The holding runs only a small livestock enterprise comprising of 14 breeding ewes and 14 Suckler Cows. The unit also supports a Native Pony Stud that extends on average to 16 ponies. Due to the size of the agricultural enterprises operated this unit is not a full-time viable agricultural unit. Indeed one of the partners works part-time off the holding to supplement the farm income.
- **Hillcroft Farm** – 65 hectare (160 acre) mixed arable and stock farm. The main enterprise is a 40 hectare (100 acre) arable enterprise. The farm also either rears approximately 45 calves per year which graze the SSSI and arable reversion land or rents out the grazing. The family also undertake contract work for local farmers.
- **Land at Adams Farm** - Block of rented arable and pasture land extending to 20 hectares of which approximately 8 hectares is arable land and the remaining land is pasture land. The land is occupied on a Agricultural Holdings Act Tenancy and is farmed in conjunction with 30 hectares at Lower Hill Farm. The farm is run as a part time business in

connection with a haulage business and a fencing business. The pasture land is rented out to a local farmer for summer grazing.

- **Decoy Farm** – Beef and Sheep unit extending to approximately 36 hectares (90 acres) and a further 36 hectares (90 acres) are rented at Battle on a grazing agreement. The farm, which is predominately pasture, land supports a herd of 38 Suckler Cows plus off-spring and finishes approximately 50 fat lambs per year.
- **Upper Wilting Farm** – A 90 hectare (220 acre) tenanted arable and livestock unit. The farm crops approximately 28 hectares of arable crops and runs 20 Suckler Cows. All off-spring are sold once weaned. The farm also runs a DIY livery yard with 20 stables.

### 3. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The assessment methodology considers the effects both during construction and longer term. There are a number of construction phase impacts, which can also become long-term impacts. The assessment has divided the effects as shown in the table below:

**Table KCC 1 : Construction Phase Impacts**

Potential Impact	Description
Crop Loss and timing	The potential losses which may have a knock on effect for other enterprises
Construction Severance	Short-term severance of accesses which have time limiting implications for the management of agricultural and diversified activities.
Construction phase disruption to services and drainage	These effects may be for the duration of the construction period. Disruption to either will have consequential land management implications
Disease transmission and bio-security	Generally problems during the construction phase only
Generation of Noise and Dust	Could effect crops, grazing livestock or diversified income.

**Table KCC 2 : Operational Impacts**

Potential Impact	Description
Land Quality and Take	This is the effect of the national agricultural resource of the loss of farmland in policy terms.
Land Take by Farm	The effect on individual farm holdings due to permanent land take.
Severance	The effect of dividing land by the construction of a road
Access and Workability of remaining land	Associated effects such as post construction changes to field shape, size and time to access.
Drainage	Long term effect on land where drainage may be affected.
Water Supplies	Water from natural or mains / private farm supply.
Noise	The effects on grazed and housed livestock, and diversified businesses.
Farm Diversification	The effects on any farm diversification activities.
Sporting	The effects on shooting.

3.2 Each effect is described in detail. The effects have been assessed against the significance criteria set out in Tables KCC 3.3 and 3.4 below.

**Table KCC 3.3 Significance Criteria for Assessing the Effect of the Scheme on the National Agricultural Resource**

Impact Magnitude	Definition	
	Impact on Soils	Impact on Agricultural Businesses
Major Negative	The proposed scheme would directly lead to the loss of over 50 hectares of "best and most versatile agricultural land" (Grades 1, 2 and 3a)	The impact of the scheme would render a viable agricultural business non-viable either through land loss or other impacts;
Moderate Negative	The proposed scheme would directly lead to the loss of between 20 and 50 hectares of "best and most versatile agricultural land" (Grades 1, 2 and 3a)	The impact of the scheme would not render a viable agricultural business non-viable but would require significant changes in the day to day management / structure of the business, either through land loss or other impacts;
Slight Negative	The proposed scheme would directly lead to the loss of less than 20 hectares of "best and most versatile agricultural land" (Grades 1, 2 and 3a)	The impact of the scheme would not render a viable agricultural business non-viable but would require minor changes in the day to day structure of the agricultural business either through land loss or other impacts; or the scheme would have significant effects (ie termination) on a small non-viable business.
Negligible	No direct impacts upon agricultural land	No direct impacts upon agricultural businesses



**Table KCC 3.4 : Significance Criteria for Assessing the Effect of the Scheme on Farm Viability (Local Impacts)**

Overall Significance	Definition	
	Impact of National Significance	Impact of Local Significance
Significant	Major Impact on soil resources	/
Moderately Significant	Moderate impact on soil resources	A major impact on at least one farm business or at least five or more farms moderately affected.
Not Significant	Slight or negligible impact on soil resources	Less than five farms moderately affected or any number of farms with slight or negligible impacts on farm businesses

**Assumptions**

3.3 We have made a small number of assumptions in assessing the potential effects:

- i) that any direct accesses onto the road would be unacceptably dangerous and would not be possible once works had been completed;
- ii) when calculating land take it is assumed that the new single carriageway route will be approximately 30 m wide.

## **4. CONSTRUCTION PHASE IMPACTS**

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### **Crop Loss and Timing**

- 4.1 The potential route options involve a mix of arable and grassland. In most cases the crops on the arable land will be planted in the August – October period (autumn sown) for harvest in July – August the following year. In many cases, and dependant upon the weather, the land will be cultivated and next crop sown within a few weeks of the harvesting of a previous years crop. Grass for hay and silage is normally cut in May, June and July. Accordingly there is the potential for crop loss at most times of the year.
- 4.2 The provision of reasonable periods of notice is normal practice. With arable land, the effect of loss of crop is generally an economic consideration. Where pasture land is used to produce either hay or silage to feed livestock during the winter months, the supply of winter fodder may be affected, which could have a knock on effect on the ability of the farm to feed the livestock over winter.
- 4.3 Effective mitigation is not generally feasible. Compensation for losses should enable farmers feeding livestock on homegrown produce to purchase alternative supplies.

### **Construction Severance**

- 4.4 It is normal practice to provide continued access for both machinery and livestock across the construction area for the duration of the construction period.

### **Construction Disruption to Services and Drains**

- 4.5 During construction there could be severance of land drainage schemes. None of the land is known to have been drained in recent years. However most farmers are aware of a Victorian drainage system that runs into the marsh, however there are no records of where these pipes run, or indeed if they are all still effectively operating.

- 4.6 However, if any drainage schemes are found during construction, it is standard practice to connect new headers or collector pipes to all affected pipes, thus channelling the water along an appropriate alternative route and mitigating the effect of severance. Such work, if necessary, should generally take place during the drier months when drains are not flowing and soil damage will be minimised, and checked for effectiveness the following winter.

#### **Disease Transmission / Bio-Security**

- 4.7 There is a need for tight bio-security measures to prevent the spread of diseases, both animal and plant, between farms, together with the spread of weeds and soil borne pathogens.

- 4.8 In general terms:

- soils to be retained for restoration should not be moved between farms;
- construction plant should be cleaned between holdings;
- plant and staff should remain within the construction easement.

#### **Generation of Noise and Dust**

- 4.9 Most agricultural enterprises are not sensitive to normal amounts of noise or dust during construction.

## 5. OPERATIONAL PHASE IMPACTS

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5.1 This section of the report covers those effects of long term or potentially permanent nature.

### Land Take and Quality

5.2 Option 1 involves the irreversible development of about 11 hectares of agricultural land and Option 2 the irreversible development of about 10.5 hectares of agricultural land.

5.3 To assess this significance of this loss, Planning Policy Statement 7 "Sustainable Development in Rural Areas" (2004) identifies the "best and most versatile agricultural land" BMV as that in Grades 1, 2 and 3a.

5.4 The detailed ALC survey has identified the quality along the proposed routes, and graded its utility for agriculture under the system of ALC. Table KCC 5 below sets out the grading along the route, assuming a 30 m carriageway width. No allowances have been made for landscaping, bunding or balancing ponds as details are not yet known.

**Table KCC 5 : Distribution of ALC Grades along the Route Options**

ALC Grade	Option 1			Option 2		
	Metres	HA	%	Metres	HA	%
2	760	2.3	21	950	2.9	27
3a	1700	5.1	46	1300	3.9	37
3b	940	2.8	25	1050	3.2	30
Non-agricultural	310	0.9	8	200	0.6	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>3710</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3500</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>100</b>

### **Potential Effects on Farms (land take, severance and workability)**

5.5 The potential effect on individual farm holdings will principally be a combination of land take and severance. Accordingly the two factors are

considered together. For example, the loss of 0.5 ha from a field may not of itself have a significant effect on the farm, but if the consequence is that a further 2.5 ha of the field is severed and cannot be farmed, the cumulative impact is 3 ha and much greater.

- 5.6 The potential effects of each route option on farm businesses are set out below.

### **Option 1**

- 5.7 Option 1 will affect seven agricultural businesses, of which five are run as full-time agricultural units. The effects on all six agricultural units are set out below. The effects on businesses are assessed as the scheme currently stands ie with no direct access for livestock or machinery on or off of the link road. The effects have also been assessed if some mitigation measures are implemented.
- 5.8 **Glovers Farm.** For the purposes of this assessment it has been assumed that access into the farm will still be available over the existing railway bridge. Option 1 will result in parts of three fields being severed from the farm buildings. Access to the severed land, which is predominately arable land, will only be possible via Glovers Lane and Buckholt Lane. This will mean that internal journeys by large farm machinery will no longer be possible.
- 5.9 The road proposal is unlikely to jeopardise the viability of the farm business, with the main enterprise (livery enterprise) being relatively unaffected. There will however be significant workability issues on the arable enterprise, with fields being reduced in size which increases the costs and time of field work and internal farm traffic such as grain trailers having to take a significantly longer journey to fields via Glovers Lane and Buckholt Lane. The effects on the business are deemed to be **Moderate Negative**.
- 5.10 **Buckholt Farm.** Option 1 severs the eastern boundaries of two fields currently used for grazing. However they have in recent years formed part of the arable rotation. Access to the severed parcels would still be possible off the access track to Actons Farm. However due to the size and shape of the

severed parcels of land, they will be awkward to farm and are unlikely to remain in agricultural production

- 5.11 Due to the nature of the land take ie from two edge of holding fields the effects on the farm business will be slight. There may need to be a slight adjustment in stocking rates to accommodate the loss of land, but the scheme will not affect the type or range of enterprises run by the farm. The effects on the business will be **Slight Negative**.
- 5.12 **Actons Farm.** The owners of Acton Farm have an informal agreement to graze cattle over the old water works that adjoin their small holding. Option 1 will cut this small area in half. The effects on the Acton Farm will have limited significance as the land is not occupied on any formal agreement. Option 1 will also sever the bridleway to Hillcroft Farm. The occupiers of Acton Farm use this access (on an informal agreement) to access land that they rent in Crowhurst. If access was no longer possible then there would be a significant increase in travel times to this rented land.
- 5.13 The effects on this business due to its unviable nature are deemed to be **Slight Negative**.
- 5.14 If access could be provided the impacts would be reduced to negligible as the farm has no formal rights to graze the old water works.
- 5.15 **Hillcroft Farm.** Option 1 severs parts of two fields in arable production and the majority of the pasture land from the main holding. If access is not provided then the majority of the pasture land will no longer be able to be directly accessed from the farm. It is assumed that access will be provided to the residential properties at Actons Farm and therefore the only way in which Hillcroft Farm will be able to access the severed land will be by making a significant journey around the lanes and accessing the severed land from the other side of the proposed link road via the bridleway.
- 5.16 If no access is available across the road along the bridleway there will be significant workability issues associated with the farming of the remaining block of land. However the impacts are not likely to prejudice the viability of the main arable enterprise / agricultural contracting enterprise.

- 5.17 The effects on the farm business are deemed to be of **Moderate Significance**.
- 5.18 Even with access provided there would still be workability issues but these would not be of such significance as without access but would still be deemed to be of **Moderate Significance**.
- 5.19 **Adams Farm.** Option 1 runs straight through the middle of this block of off-lying tenanted land. With the exception of a small block of arable land to the north of the road access to all parcels of land (which is currently through the yard area) will no longer be possible. Thus the majority of this unit will no longer be able to be farmed. However due to the nature of the occupation of this holding (the arable land forms part of a small part time non-viable arable unit and the pasture land is rented on a short term non-secure basis by a local farmer) the effects on the farm business will be of **Slight Significance** as the land does not form part of a full-time, viable unit.
- 5.20 If access was provided to both the pasture land and arable land, (possibly down the route of the old railway line) then it is likely that the majority of the land would remain in agricultural use, however there would still be workability issues.
- 5.21 **Decoy Farm.** Option 1 severs the farm in half. Unless access is given across the road the unit will have lost a large part of its grazing land. Although much of this is poorer quality grazing land that forms part of the SSSI, it still represents a large part of the farm's grazing land, with most of the better quality land being used for hay / silage production.
- 5.22 If access is not provided to the southern part of the farm, the future viability of this beef unit could be jeopardised with stocking having to be considerably reduced to take into account the loss of land. The effects are deemed to be **Major Negative**. If access across the road for cattle and machinery was possible then the farm would still remain viable but there would be workability issues. The affects would be **Moderate Negative**.
- 5.23 **Upper Wilting Farm.** Option 1 severs the majority of the arable land and cattle grazing land (arable reversion land and SSSI) from the main farm

buildings. Without access to this severed land, the viability of the farm would be jeopardised. The effects would be **Major Negative**.

5.24 If access can be given across the road for both cattle and machinery then the farm would still be viable but there would be significant workability issues with fields being more difficult and costly to farm because of their shape and size. However the farm would still be viable the effects would be **Moderate Negative**.

5.25 In summary the magnitude of the effects of Option 1 on farm businesses without mitigation are 3 farms affected to a slight negative degree, 2 farms affected to a moderate negative degree: and the option would have major negative impacts on 2 farms. The Significance of the impacts before mitigation is Moderately Negative. With appropriate access provided across the road the magnitude of effects would be downgraded to 1 farm having negligible impacts, 2 farms having slight negative effects and 4 farms moderate negative effects. Therefore the significance of the impact on farm businesses after mitigation is Slight Negative.

### **Option 2**

5.26 Option 2 will also affect six agricultural businesses of which four are run as full-time agricultural units. The effects on the businesses are set out below.

5.27 **Glovers Farm.** For the purposes of this assessment it has been assumed that access into the farm will still be available over the existing railway bridge. Option 2 will result in a larger amount of land being severed from the main holding than Option 1. Access to the severed land, which is predominately arable land, will only be possible via Glovers Lane and Buckholt Lane.

5.28 Although the road proposal is unlikely to jeopardise the viability of the farm business, with the main enterprise (livery enterprise) being relatively unaffected, there will just be a slight reduction in the accessibility of off road exercising available with the northerly arable fields having to be reached via Buckholt Lane. There will be significant workability issues on the arable enterprise, with fields being reduced in size which increases the costs and time of field work and internal farm traffic such as grain trailers having to take



a significantly longer journey to fields via Glovers Lane and Buckholt Lane. The effects on the business are deemed to be **moderate negative** although to a greater degree than Option 1 because the blocks of land that are left to the south of the option are of less workable sizes than those left by Option 1.

- 5.29 **Acton's Farm.** Option 2 would sever this small holding into two separate blocks. The majority of the farm would still be accessible from the main farm buildings. If access can not be provided to the severed block of land to the south of road, the farm will have to decrease stock numbers to reflect the decrease in grazing.
- 5.30 However this farm even without the presence of a road is not a viable unit, and as such lesser weight need be given to the effects than those on viable agricultural units. As such the effects are deemed to be of **Slight Negative Significance**.
- 5.31 Even with access provided across the road the farm will have significant workability issues, but again due to the unviable nature of the business the effects are only deemed to be **Slight Negative**.
- 5.32 **Hillcroft Farm.** Option 2 severs predominately pasture land from the main holding. If access is not provided then the majority of the pasture land will no longer be able to be directly accessed from the farm. It is assumed that access will be provided to the residential properties at Actons Farm and therefore the only way in which Hillcroft Farm will be able to access the severed land will be by making a significant journey around the lanes and accessing the severed land from the other side of the proposed link road via the bridleway.
- 5.32 If no access is available across the road along the bridleway there will be significant workability issues associated with the farming of the remaining block of land. However the impacts are not likely to prejudice the viability of the main arable enterprise / agricultural contracting enterprise.
- 5.33 The effects on the farm business are deemed to be of **Moderate** significance. However the effects of Option 2 are less than Option 1 as less arable land will be severed from the main farm buildings.

- 5.34 Even with access provided there would still be workability issues associated with the management of the pasture land. Whilst reduced in severity the impact would still be deemed to be of **moderate significance**.
- 5.35 **Adams Farm.** Option 2 runs straight through the middle of this block of off-lying tenanted land. With the exception of a small block of arable land to the north of the road access to all parcels of land (which is currently through the yard area) will no longer be possible. Thus the majority of this unit will no longer be able to be farmed. However due to the nature of the occupation of this holding (the arable land forms part of a small part-time non-viable arable unit and the pasture land is rented on a short-term non-secure basis by a local farmer) the effects on the farm business will be **slight negative**, as the land does not form part of a full-time, viable unit.
- 5.36 If access was provided to both the pasture land and arable land, (possibly down the route of the old railway line) then it is likely that the majority of the land would remain in agricultural use.
- 5.37 **Decoy Farm.** Option 2 severs the farm in half. Unless access is given across the road the unit will have lost a large part of its grazing land, albeit much of this is poorer quality grazing land that forms part of the SSSI, it still represents a large part of the farm's grazing land, with most of the better quality land being used for hay / silage production.
- 5.38 If access is not provided to the southern part of the farm, the future viability of this beef unit could be jeopardised with stocking having to be considerably reduced to take into account the loss of land. The effects are deemed to **Major Negative**. If access across the road for cattle and machinery was possible then the farm would still remain viable but there would be workability issues. The affects would be **moderate negative**.
- 5.39 **Upper Wilting Farm.** Option 2 severs the northern part of the farm from the farm buildings including a field to the north of Crowhurst Road. All of the land is in pasture use. The loss of this land is not likely to prejudice the viability of the unit, however there would be significant workability issues with stocking numbers (either cattle or horses) having to be decreased as a result of the

loss of grazing land. The arable enterprise would be unaffected. The effects would be **Moderate Negative**.

- 5.40 If access can be given across the road for both cattle and machinery then the effects would be reduced with stocking rates being able to remain relatively unchanged. But there would still be workability issues with cattle probably having to be transported by vehicle to the other side of the road and fields being more difficult shapes to maintain. The effects would remain at a **Moderate Negative** degree but to a lesser extent than without mitigation.
- 5.41 In summary the magnitude of impacts of Option 2 on farm businesses without mitigation are 2 farms affected to a slight negative degree, 3 farms affected to a moderate negative degree (however two of these are to a lesser degree than Option 1) and the option would have major negative impacts on 1 farm. Therefore the Significance of Impacts on farm businesses is Moderate negative. With appropriate access provided across the road the magnitude of effects would be downgraded to 2 farms having slight negative effects and 4 farms moderate negative effects (however these are too a lesser degree than option 1). With the significance of impacts being downgraded to Slight Negative.

#### **Drainage and Water Supplies**

- 5.42 None of the land is believed to have been under drained in recent years. However, if any such schemes were found during the construction period these will have to be made good by the use of new connectors and headers. It will be important to ensure that dykes and other water courses that currently run into the marsh are adequately re-routed otherwise there could be significant flooding of agricultural land up-stream.

#### **Farm Diversification**

- 5.43 Glovers Farm and Upper Wilting Farm both operate successful farm diversification livery enterprises. The livery yard at Glovers Farm will be relatively unaffected by both Option 1 and 2. However access to some of the farm riding (headlands around the arable fields) will be severed from the buildings and will only be able to be accessed off of Buckholt Lane.

- 5.44 Option 1 will sever access to riding on the SSSI for livery users, however some traffic will be removed from local roads making them safer to exercise on. Option 2 will sever some of the available grazing from the stables. This could affect the number of horses that can be stabled.

### **Sporting**

- 5.45 Only Buckholt Farm has an active commercial shoot. The shoot is not run by the farmer and therefore it is not clear how the shoot would be affected by Option 1. There may be a need to modify some drives as a result.

### **Other Effects**

- 5.46 Buckholt Farm, Hillcroft Farm and Upper Wilting Farm have land entered into the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. Buckholt Farm is an organic unit.

## 6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

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- 6.1 This assessment has looked at two separate road improvements between Bexhill and Hastings. It has looked at the effects on two key areas, namely agricultural land quality and the effects on farm businesses.
- 6.2 Option 1 will involve approximately 11 hectares of agricultural land of which approximately 7.4 hectares (67%) is "best and most versatile agricultural land" as defined in PPS 7. Option 2 will involve approximately 10.5 hectares of agricultural land of which approximately 6.8 hectares (64%) is "best and most versatile agricultural land".
- 6.3 The Significance of the loss of agricultural land is **Not Significant** for either option. However Option 2 affects less BMV agricultural land than Option 1 and in total affects approximately 0.6 hectares less land than Option 1. Therefore on land quality grounds Option 2 is more favourable than Option 1, although the areas concerned are very small.
- 6.4 Option 1 will affect seven farming occupations. Without mitigation the magnitude of impacts on farm businesses are:
- 3 farms affected to a slight negative degree,
  - 2 farms affected to a moderate negative degree and the option would have
  - major negative impacts on 2 farms.
- 6.5 The significance of these impacts is **Moderate Negative**.
- 6.6 With appropriate access provided across the road the magnitude of impact of effects would be downgraded to
- 1 farm having negligible impacts,
  - 2 farms having slight negative effects and
  - 4 farms moderate negative effects.
- 6.7 The Significance of these impacts is **Not Significant**.

- 6.8 Option 2 will affect six farm businesses without mitigation farms are the magnitude of affects is as follows
- 2 farms affected to a slight negative degree,
  - 3 farms affected to a moderate negative degree (however two of these are to a lesser degree than Option 1) and
  - major negative impacts on 1 farm.
- 6.9 The Significance of these impacts is Moderate Negative.
- 6.10 With appropriate access provided across the road the magnitude of effects would be downgraded to
- 2 farms having slight negative effects and
  - 4 farms moderate negative effects (however these are too a lesser degree than option 1).
- 6.11 The Significance of these effects is Not Significant.
- 6.12 Therefore in summary Option 2 affects fewer farm businesses than Option 1 and the affects that it does have on farm businesses are less significant.