1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider the Council’s response to the Northampton Northern Orbital Route Options Consultation.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet agrees the proposed response to the Northampton Northern Orbital Route consultation set out in Paragraphs 3.1.9 – 3.1.14 of this report.
3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

The Northampton Northern Orbital Road

3.1.1 At its meeting on 12 January 2016 Northamptonshire County Council’s Cabinet agreed that the Council’s next priorities for development of major roads schemes on its road network to facilitate planned and future growth, beyond those already prioritised, will include the Northampton North West Relief Road (previously the North West Bypass)/Northern Orbital Road. The Cabinet also agreed to undertake a public consultation on options for the Northern Orbital Route. The County Council has now started this consultation.

3.1.2 The Northampton Northern Orbital Road is a proposal by Northamptonshire County Council for a new road which will relieve traffic from the north of Northampton and the surrounding villages. While other roads, such as the Northampton North West Relief Road, will relieve traffic from some parts of north-west Northampton they will not provide a complete ring road around the north of the town. The County Council has identified the need for such a road, both to deal with current traffic problems and to provide the capacity needed to accommodate further development.

3.1.3 While a preferred route has still to be determined, the proposed new road will link the A5199 and Northampton North West Relief Road between Kingsthorpe and Chapel Brampton with the A43 north of Moulton. The new road will also connect with the Moulton Park industrial estate.

3.1.4 A public consultation is being held on four possible route options. The four possible route options are shown in Appendix 1 to this report.

3.1.5 The County Council has identified the following benefits of the scheme. By completing a new ring road to the north of Northampton, the new road will reduce the amount of traffic passing through northern parts of Northampton, and a number of surrounding villages such as Boughton, Moulton and Pitsford. The road will create a new route for traffic heading to the Moulton Park industrial estate. The Northampton Northern Orbital Road is also needed to support the growth proposals to the north and west of Northampton where some 10,000 new homes are to be built at sites such as Dallington Grange, Buckton Fields and Northampton North. The road is expected to create capacity for future development beyond that already planned.

3.1.6 The County Council has not provided any costs of the scheme but has stated that an estimated cost for the scheme will be developed as work progresses. It is anticipated that the road will be funded by a combination of government and developer funding.

3.1.7 The consultation on the Northampton Northern Orbital Route runs until 8 April 2016. A public exhibition was held on 26th and 27th February at Moulton College and between 29th and 12th March at Kingsthorpe Library. The exhibitions boards are available to view on the County Council’s website.
consultation form was available from the exhibitions and an on-line survey is available on the website at: www.northamptonshire.gov.uk.

3.1.8 Following the consultation, a report will be prepared for the County Council’s Cabinet later this year to recommend a preferred route for the new road. Following the decision on a preferred route further work will be needed to design the new road and gain the necessary powers and funding before construction can commence.

The Council’s Proposed Response

3.1.9 The need for a road to the north west of Northampton to address existing traffic problems and provide increased capacity to accommodate the planned new developments is strongly supported. The County Council’s decision to progress the Northampton Northern Orbital Road (NNOR) and undertake the route consultation is welcomed.

3.1.10 Whilst some improvements have already been made to the existing road network in the north west of the town it is considered that further improvements are needed and that a more successful enduring solution is likely to be the construction of a new road between the A5199/ the Northampton North West Relief Road and the A43 (Northampton to Kettering). This road should complete the strategic route from the M1/ A4500 to the A43.

3.1.11 The NNOR is important to the town’s overall economic growth. The objectives of the NNOR should be to reduce congestion and delays for motorists wishing to travel in/ out of the town and within the town itself (including improving access to Moulton Park) as well as removing traffic from residential areas. The construction of the NNOR should also free capacity on the existing urban road network to enable enhanced public transport services and an improved cycling network as well as reducing noise and air pollution. It is important that the route of the NNOR ensures that these objectives are met by providing an effective alternative route from the existing cross country and cross town routes currently available.

3.1.12 Four route options with additional variations are the subject of the consultation. These four routes are accompanied by a map showing constraints in the area and a map showing traffic flows at 2031 with and without the NNOR. In all four options two junctions are shown close to Moulton Park – one at Redhouse Road/ Boughton Lane and one further north on Boughton Lane. In all four options the road starts with a junction at Northampton Road (A5199), near the Windhover Public House.

3.1.13 Some information is missing from the route consultation which means it is not considered possible for the Council to state a preference for one of the routes at this stage:

- No information is provided in relation to the benefits or impacts of the four route options including the impact of the options on the landscape and strategic views.
• Further detail is required in relation to the design of the road, particularly how the road will link into the North West Relief Road and the junctions on Boughton Lane;

• No information is provided in relation to the traffic flows with and without the NOOR at the following junctions in Northampton: A508 Harboorugh Road/ Kingsthorpe Road, A5123 Kettering Road North, Boughton Lane/ Moulton Way, Talavera Way, Booth Rise and Welford Road;

• No information is provided about when the NOOR is required or the expected construction date and phasing; and

• No costs of the different route options are provided.

3.1.14 Further work should be undertaken on each option to address the points listed above and further consultation held once more information is available with which to consider the costs, benefits and impacts of each route option.

3.2 Choices (Options)

Option 1: Agree

3.2.1 This is a strategic road which although not within the boundary of Northampton Borough is very close to it. This road has the potential to bring substantial economic and environmental benefits to the town’s resident population, workforce and visitors. However, it is important that the Council engages in the planning of this road to ensure it meets the need and its impact is as limited as possible. This option to agree the proposed Council response set out in Paragraphs 3.1.9 – 3.1.14 above is recommended.

Option 2: Do not agree

3.2.2 The Cabinet could amend the proposed response to the County Council or decide not to respond to the Northampton Northern Orbital Route consultation. It is important that the Council engages in the planning of this road to ensure it meets the need and its impact is as limited as possible. The option of not responding to the route consultation is therefore not recommended.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 The Northern Orbital Road is not included in the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan Part 1 (2014) because at the time of the Joint Core Strategy’s preparation there was insufficient detail for the proposal to be included. In the County Council’s Northamptonshire Local Transport Plan (2012) “Roads to serve development in north-west Northampton” is identified in the key infrastructure list.
4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 The consultation does not provide any details of the cost of the route options or the funding sources. However, it is likely that the road would be substantially funded through developer contributions including the Community Infrastructure Levy. One option could be to establish a revolving infrastructure fund in a similar way to the fund set up in partnership by Northamptonshire County Council and Daventry District Council for the Daventry Development Link Road. The risks would need to be carefully considered in terms of the consequences if the development expected to contribute to the cost of the Northern Orbital Road did not come forward as expected. Other funding sources may be available including the Local Growth Fund which is administered by NEP and SEMLEP. Further information on the costs and funding will be reported to a later Cabinet when known.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 There are no specific legal implications at this stage of the process for the Borough Council but the Council’s responses will be reported to the decision-maker for consideration as part of the decision-making process.

4.4 Equality and Health

4.4.1 There are no specific legal implications for equality and health arising at this stage but will be further considered at a later stage of scheme development.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

4.5.1 The County Council is carrying out the consultation on the Northampton Northern Orbital Route. Details of the consultation are set out in Paragraph 3.17 above.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

4.6.1 By providing infrastructure to support our economic growth the Northampton Northern Orbital Road will support Priority 1 – Northampton Alive: A vibrant town of the Corporate Plan.

4.7 Other Implications

4.7.1 None.

5. Background Papers

5.1 None.

Appendix 1 – Northampton Northern Orbital Route Consultation: Exhibition Boards