

WOODBIDGE TOWN COUNCIL ORAL PRESENTATION

ISH (2) – TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT – (Part 1)

Wednesday 7 July 2021

I am Councillor Robin Sanders of Woodbridge Town Council and have been requested to present our position at this issue specific hearing on traffic and transportation.

In our Deadline 3 Written Representation we raised matters with respect to both the road and rail transport strategy that the Applicant has proposed in its originally DCO Application, approved Change 1 and in its discussions with the Town Council. Since that time the Applicant has published for Deadline 4 on 2 July its version 4.0 of the Consolidated Transport Assessment document. The Council has undertaken its initial review of that document as to how it alters the Applicant's position and how its impacts upon our Deadline 3 Written Representation and Woodbridge and its residents. As a Town Council we have also reviewed the Written Representation of various parties presented at Deadline 3, notably that of Network Rail, East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council.

As an overview WTC remains concerned at the apparent failure of the Applicant to have progressed development of its rail strategy expediently with Network Rail in the past and the impact this has on the consolidated strategy and impact on those living alongside the East Suffolk Line. This view is expressed by others, notably Suffolk County Council.

It is readily apparent from Network Rail Written Representation that the Applicant's rail strategy is not developed adequately for it to assess the viability of proposed freight train numbers on viability of the draft timetables that the Applicant has presented, and this will not be determined during the Examination period. Numerous agreements with Network Rail will also not be determined during the Examination period.

The Applicant's version 4 of its Consolidated Transport Assessment reveals that it remains unclear as to what is feasible for its peak freight train use, despite assurances at the meeting held with the Council well before the publication of this version 4.0 that it would not be progressing the full number of freight train passages in its Change 1. The Applicant's report states it is still wishing to progress up to 10 freight train passages daily and in 11.4.4 acknowledges that at least two timetabled passenger trains would need to be axed. This is wholly unacceptable. Despite all the above uncertainties the road strategy and the Applicant's traffic assessment remains based on road HGV traffic based on the full Change 1 rail proposals.

In WTC's view the Applicant position on traffic and transportation is far from robust and will remain in that position throughout the Examination period.

I now address specific issues. The Applicant and Suffolk County Council along with numerous Interested Parties have accepted that there are peak time capacity issues

at junctions 26 - 28 around Woodbridge which are inherent with even current traffic levels.

Version 4.0 of the Consolidated Transport Assessment contains an update on traffic modelling for the Change 1 strategy. In examining this document WTC note that there has been revision to the assessment and output from modelling in particular with regard to Junction 26 the A12/B1438 roundabout. The summary of modelling for peak morning and afternoon periods given in Table 9.67 now shows significant queuing issues at peak morning and after periods in 2023 both northbound and south bound on the A12 with delays in early years of up to 330 seconds with Sizewell C/EA 2 traffic as compared to 30 seconds with the current traffic, referred to as the reference year. This is despite the modelling adopting the lower traffic numbers in the Brightwell Lakes development traffic models which ignore growth factors. The 2028 position is similar, up to 358 seconds delay although the reference traffic for 2028 gives 103 seconds delay.

These are significant delays as now recognised by the Applicant in the report. The report appears inconsistent between sections in the delays occurring, but the Applicant has stated that in 8.7.25 that

“the modelling is indicating that actual flow throughput in congested areas (such as the A12 at Woodbridge) is reducing but that this traffic is being held in a queue on that same route (rather than rerouting onto alternative roads”.

This is not a junction specific statement. Junction 26, unlike Junction 27 and 28, have a viable and commonly used diversion route via the B1438. Observed behaviour with even current queuing is that some traffic diverts to the B1438 either at Junction 26 or via Junctions 23 and 24 onto the pre Martlesham Bypass, A1093 and A12, east of Tesco and through Crown Point. This connects into the B1438 east of Junction 26 thus avoiding the queuing.

WTC believe that the modelling has not taken into account the intended roadworks that Suffolk County Council has consulted upon and wishes to instigate along the A12/A14 junction at Seven Hills and Woods Lane (Junction 28) to ameliorate congestion. SCC is applying for monies from central government for these works but in its Deadline 3 submission considers as the Applicant's traffic will be causal of imminent congestion issues if the DCO application is approved, the Applicant should be required to fund the improvements.

These works however funded are on-line improvements to the A12 and, as with all online road improvements, considerable traffic management and lowered speed limits will apply through the works. This will be particular the case between Junctions 26 and 25 where works will be occurring not just at the junctions but to the highway between these two junctions resulting in a long stretch of reduced speeds from the current mainly 60 or 70mph to probably 30 mph.

The current SCC programme, assuming no delays in that programme, states works will not be completed during 2026 and thus early years Sizewell C traffic will have to navigate these works including AiL traffic. WTC consider it is reasonable to assume

such works will severely impact traffic modelling assessments and yet no attempt appears to have been made to assess such impact.

WTC consider these improvement works will further exacerbate diversion onto the B1438 during early years yet there is no consideration by either the Applicant or SCC to incorporate in the Section 106 agreement works along the B1438 to mitigate the impact or along other possible rat runs south of Woodbridge and within Woodbridge itself. This is unacceptable.

Passing onto the rail proposals. Only illustrative timetables are presented in the report. However, they can be examined as to viability. WTC questions the viability of these whilst maintaining the current passenger timetable.

The Applicant's strategy shows the intention for rail freight is to have empty uptrains from Saxmundham pass through the single-track line before loaded down trains passage north through the single-track section. For the early years where 3 trains a night are proposed Table 11.2 shows the first uptrain leaving Saxmundham junction at 22:00 arriving at Westerfield at 23:55. This is an appropriate passage travel time but to achieve this the last down passenger train ex Ipswich at 2212 would have to be axed as that does not arrive in Saxmundham until approximately 2255.

For the peak period with four train movements Table 11.4 shows the first up train is timed to leave within a minute or two of the arrival in Saxmundham of the last down train from Ipswich. As WTC mentioned in our Deadline 3 submission this train is quite frequently held at Ipswich station awaiting the delayed mainline ex Liverpool Street 2100 train. The timetable assumes that either the East Suffolk train is dispatched regardless of transiting passengers from London or the freight train is delayed. If the former the passenger train operator would be obliged to taxi everyone, transiting from London, to their destination up to as far as Beccles.