

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Norfolk Boreas](#)
Subject: Norfolk Boreas: Oulton Parish Council's submission at Deadline 2. Ref: 20022619
Date: 09 December 2019 22:30:26
Attachments: [BOREAS-Oulton PC Written Questions at D2.docx](#)
[D7 Oulton Parish Council Orsted HOW3.pdf](#)
[Oulton AD Appeal DECISION.pdf](#)

OULTON PARISH COUNCIL: PINS Ref: 20022619

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: NORFOLK BOREAS: Oulton Parish Council's submission at Deadline 2

Please find attached below Oulton Parish Council's response to Written Questions at Deadline 2.

Please also find 2 further attachments which are referred to within the submission:

1. Oulton PC's submission at D7 of the Hornsea Project Three Examination
2. Oulton AD Appeal Decision of 11th June 2014.

In addition, Oulton Parish Council would like to reserve the right to speak at the next Open Floor Hearing, and also at the Issue Specific Hearing in January 2020 relating to onshore matters, and at any other ISH which may include onshore matters on its Agenda.

Many thanks.

Yours faithfully,

Alison Shaw

pp Oulton Parish Council

Oulton Parish Council's response to Written Questions for Norfolk Boreas Scenarios 1 & 2 at Deadline 2

ExA. Q14.0.6

Traffic effects in Cawston and Oulton

The RRs from Broadland District Council [RR-028], Cawston Parish Council [RR-016] and Oulton Parish Council [RR-017] raise concerns about the traffic assessment surrounding the villages of Cawston and Oulton. This includes concerns regarding the same access routes to Norfolk Vanguard, the Proposed Development and Hornsea Project Three during potentially the same time frame, and traffic impacts on the B1145 through Cawston.

6. Broadland District Council, Cawston Parish Council, **Oulton Parish Council** and Corpusty and Saxthorpe Parish Council to highlight the specific areas of the Applicant's assessment that you have concerns with. Outline what else the Applicant would need to take into account when assessing the effects of traffic in Oulton and Cawston.

Oulton Parish Council apologises in advance for the inclusion of several screenshots of tables, charts and plans in this submission, but we have tried to provide evidence of our sources from primary documentation for all observations made, for ease of reference for the ExA.

1. Link 68 traffic assessments

During Norfolk Vanguard's (NV) Examination, the baseline daily total traffic movements were estimated at 1,000. This number was later changed by NV, when they were given sight of the results of a brief ATC, that had been carried out by Hornsea Project Three (HP3) on Link 68 (HP3's Link 208) on 16th October 2018.

It must be noted that this ATC was carried out on **one single day**, and only after the Applicant for Hornsea 3 was put under pressure for the lack of any proper assessment of the baseline traffic status of The Street, Oulton.

It must also be noted that the baseline traffic numbers for Norfolk Boreas (NB) have also been derived from that same, single-day ATC that was provided by Hornsea Project Three.

Oulton Parish Council (OPC) has consistently maintained that the brief snapshot nature of this traffic count cannot possibly provide an accurate picture of baseline traffic for this particular access route, due to the high volume of agricultural vehicles using The Street and the consequent high *variability* in HGV traffic numbers, *depending on the time of year*. The only change made by HP3 in response to this challenge, was a small upward adjustment to their figures, to account for the existence of what they called "the potato farm" in The Street. This was a completely inadequate response, as the farming activities that actually use The Street include 2 (not one) *major commercial agribusinesses* and a large intensive poultry farm. These agribusinesses are based on the airfield and at Street Farm respectively, and between them they farm thousands of acres in the surrounding area. They generate multiple, sequential, and often overlapping, harvests including cereals, beans, potatoes, carrots, maize and sugar beet. These harvests begin in June and go on **continuously** until Christmas and beyond.

OPC remains extremely frustrated at the persistent failure of both Applicants to grasp or acknowledge the true scale of the existing agricultural traffic that will be competing with either or both of these projects at any given time. The Boreas application refers to the construction traffic as working around "local planned events, (e.g. harvests)" (see sources for Point 4. below). Such a statement demonstrates a complete lack of understanding of modern agricultural practices: "harvest" is not an "event" – it is a *process* that generates relentless and intense HGV traffic for 6 months of every single year.

This issue is of particular concern to this community as, if the southern end of The Street (Link 68) becomes regularly congested or dysfunctional because of the proposed construction traffic, then that percentage of the farming traffic which now proceeds out of the village to the south, *will begin to choose instead to come through the north* – the residential end. Traffic, like water, finds its own level.

Were that to happen, it would be intolerable for the residents of Oulton Street, whose cottages almost entirely directly front the roadway, and who are already struggling to absorb the size, noise, and vibration of the *current* level of agricultural HGVs.

OPC has already highlighted the shortcomings of the short time period used for the traffic count as part of Hornsea Project Three and then carried over into Norfolk Vanguard’s DCO, and the dangers inherent in the practice of one developer borrowing already inadequate and flawed data from another developer, thus amplifying persistent errors.

To produce a truer picture of the baseline competing agricultural HGVs routinely using the southern end of Oulton Street, the Applicant would have to set up its own ATC and operate it for a series of several weekly periods, dotted throughout the months of June to December.

Sources:

From Hornsea Project Three:

***For Link ID 208 (Oulton), baseline 2022 data was obtained from additional traffic count surveys undertaken in Oulton in October 2018.*

From Norfolk Boreas ES Chapter 24 (APP-237):

Link 68	The Street / Heydon Road	727 Total	40 HGV	2018 HP3 ATC
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From Hornsea 3 Appendix 8 – Main Construction Compound Access Strategy VISSIM Modelling Update Jan. 2019:

“ 2.1 Create has commissioned independent traffic survey company MHC Traffic to undertake following surveys along The Street between its junction with The Street/ B1149 Junction and The Street/ Main Construction Compound Access junction **on Tuesday 16th October 2018:** Manual Classified Counts (MCC) between 07:00-10:00 and 16:00-19:00; Queue Counts; Journey time surveys; and Automatic Traffic Counts – all day.”

[Our emphasis]

From Hornsea Project Three:

NV Link	Hornsea Three Link	2022 Base		HOW03 Construction		Norfolk Vanguard		Other Tier 2 Schemes		HOW03+NV+Tier 2 Percentage Increase	
		Total	HGVs	Total	HGVs	Total	HGVs	Total	HGVs	Total	HGVs
2	Link ID 129: A47 at Honingham	29,944	2,928	336	176	693	312	2,433		11.6%	17%
3	Link ID 157: A47 at Bawburgh	48,143	3,435	351	176	527	312	5,907		14.1%	14%
4	Link ID 144: A47 between A140 and A146 junctions	55,089	3,157	570	159	394	312			1.7%	15%
5	Link ID 137: A47 East of A1270 junction	45,233	2,882	438	37	704	639			2.5%	23%
8	Link ID 141: A146 from A47 SE	15,801	2,026	114	20	340	312			2.9%	16%
11	Link ID 197: A1065, North of Swaffham	8,336	530	218	124	69	0			3.4%	23%
12	Link ID 195: A1065, east of Wessingham	5,580	485	218	124	38	0			4.6%	26%
13a	Link ID 198: A148 between A1067 and A1065 junction	10,832	1,446	456	242	474	671			8.6%	63%
13b	Link ID 34: A148 west of Holt and east of Letheringsett	11,466	691	295	156	569	520			7.5%	98%
14	Link ID 36: A148, east of the B1149 rbt and west of Station Rd	12,242	612	205	122	491	420	2,822		28.7%	88%
18	Link ID 81: A1067 north of Bridge Rd and east of Little Ryburgh	9,451	543	157	85	401	335			5.9%	77%
19	Link ID 31: A148 from edge of study area to B1354	12,887	1,105	102	40	756	721			6.7%	69%
24	Link ID 109: A1067 from Bawdeswell to Great Witchingham	9,399	1,086	158	86	579	431			7.8%	48%
29	Link ID 110: A1067 through Great Witchingham and Attlebridge	13,065	884	270	92	450	335			45.5%	48%
30	Link ID 111: A1067 between Attlebridge & Fir Covert Rd junction	8,995	626	379	104	447	335			9.2%	70%
32	Link ID 59: B1149 at Edgefield N of village hall & S of Hempstead Rd	4,637	173	291	153	275	235			12.5%	224%
33	Link ID 76: B1149 from Saxthorpe rbt to Heydon Rd junction	5,787	178	394	162	390	235			13.5%	223%
34	Link ID 89: B1145 in Cawston	3,477	127	370	127	394	240			22.0%	289%
36	Link ID 114: B1149 between NDR and Buxton Rd junctions	11,400	594	635	187	347	235			8.6%	71%
37	Link ID 78: B1145 east of the B1149, west of Cawston Park Hospital	4,634	163	82	0	180	96			5.4%	59%
39	Link ID 118: A140 between A1270 and B1145	14,967	484	431	149	364	134			5.3%	58%
40b	Link ID 49: A140 south of Roughiton & north of Topshill Rd junction	12,041	593	471	149	374	192			7.0%	57%
41	Link ID 190: B1436, east of Felbrigge	9,665	488	471	149	542	478			10.6%	129%
58	Link ID 204: A1270 NDR between A140 and A47 junctions	22,933	1,461	855	190	536	503			5.2%	47%
59	Link ID 202: A1270 between A140 and B1150	25,656	1,087	855	190	521	503			4.6%	64%
60	Link ID 201: A1270 NDR between B1149 and A140 junctions	25,000	1,593	678	187	402	335			4.3%	33%
68*	Link ID 208: The Street between A1149 and Oulton airfield access	727	36	248	118	176	96			58.3%	594%

2. Link sensitivity for Link 68

From Norfolk Boreas (APP-237) ES Chapter 24 Traffic & Transport:

Low 'An A-road, B-road or minor road that can accommodate a high volume of traffic and / or has limited sensitive receptors. There is minimal, including sporadic, frontage development and footways are wide and / or buffered.'

OPC disagrees that LINK 68 is of **low** sensitivity: there is one property which will be wholly affected by ALL traffic from Hornsea Project Three, Norfolk Vanguard and Boreas, namely 'The Old Railway Gatehouse', of which the frontage is directly on the road. The fact that HP3 & Vanguard have agreed to a road mitigation scheme for The Street, involving several passing places and other significant alterations, indicates that this route is unable to accommodate the increased traffic flow without such measures. However, notwithstanding the mitigation scheme, OPC remain of the opinion that The Street will not cope with the cumulative impact of the competing HGV/staff traffic/ agricultural vehicles and abnormal loads going into and out of HP3's Main Construction Compound.

To illustrate just one example: Hornsea Project Three requires the use of 1,121 cable drums for the completion of the project. Because of their likely use of HVAC technology, these cable drums are larger and wider than those proposed for Vanguard/Boreas and will be delivered as Abnormal Indivisible Loads (AILs). HP3 intends to use a different construction model to that used by NV/NB and *will deliver all or most of these AILs direct from the port to its Main Construction Compound at Oulton*. This process will go on relentlessly, as the cable drums will be delivered in batches of 36 "every 3-5 weeks" to the port, over the entire two and a half years of HP3's active construction period. In reality, if they are to construct the cable corridor within their own declared window of 2.5 years, then these deliveries to port will have to take place every **four** weeks, or else the whole project will over-run.

Under pressure to demonstrate the feasibility of the regular deliveries of these AILs to the compound at Oulton, especially in-combination with NV/NB traffic, HP3 produced a traffic simulation. Although based on the flawed baseline traffic data discussed above, this modelling still effectively demonstrated that these AILs could not *exit* the Oulton compound (for onward delivery to the cable route) without closing the southern end of Oulton Street, and holding the traffic on the Holt Road in both directions for over 5 minutes, to allow each AIL to depart, and that *this could cause dangerously long tailbacks -up to 67 vehicles- on the B1149 Holt Road*.

The suggested solution was that all or some of these AILs should be delivered **at night**. This "solution" is of course hugely alarming to local residents, as it effectively opens the door to 24-hour operation of the Main Construction Compound for a minimum of 2.5 years.

For a full description of this AIL scenario **please see, attached below, OPC's submission to the Hornsea Three Examination at Deadline 7**, Point 1.3.1, including the final chart illustrating the likely pattern of AIL deliveries.

The residents of The Gatehouse will be highly sensitive receptors to all traffic going past their property. During the Examination of Hornsea Project Three, the Applicant changed the sensitivity of Link 68 (their Link 208) from Low to Medium as it finally acknowledged that cumulative traffic, *with Vanguard*, would impact the smooth functioning of the road, and impact the residents of the Old Railway Gatehouse.

It appears from the Application that Norfolk Vanguard and Norfolk Boreas have not assessed LINK 68 as **medium** sensitivity, nor taken into consideration cumulative impacts, as was the case for Hornsea Project Three.

Sources:

From Hornsea Project Three LINK 208:

"Link ID 208 at Oulton was defined in Annex 7.2 – Description of Network Links and Sensitivity from the Environmental Statement (APP-160) as having receptors of negligible sensitivity. However, to enable a cumulative assessment with Norfolk Vanguard, as well as to respond to feedback from Broadland District Council, Norfolk County Council and Cawston Parish Council, and the Applicant's own further consideration of

the link during additional site visits, it was agreed by all parties that this link should be considered a receptor of 'medium' sensitivity for the purposes of this updated cumulative assessment and the assessment below has therefore been undertaken on this basis."

From Boreas Link 68 sensitivity:

Link ID	Other ID	Location	Sensitivity	Description
66	-	Wendling – Dereham Road	Medium	A local access road that feeds into Scarning. Evidence of direct housing frontage as well as bus stops. A narrow discontinuous footway on the northern edge lines the route.
67	-	North Walsham Road / Happisburgh Road	Low	A local access road with no frontage development.
68	-	The Street / Heydon Road	Low	The Street, a local access road with sporadic frontage development.
69	-	Little London Road	High	A local access road that links into Bacton Road. Narrow road with evidence of direct frontage development.
70	-	Plantation Road	Low	A local access road with no frontage development.

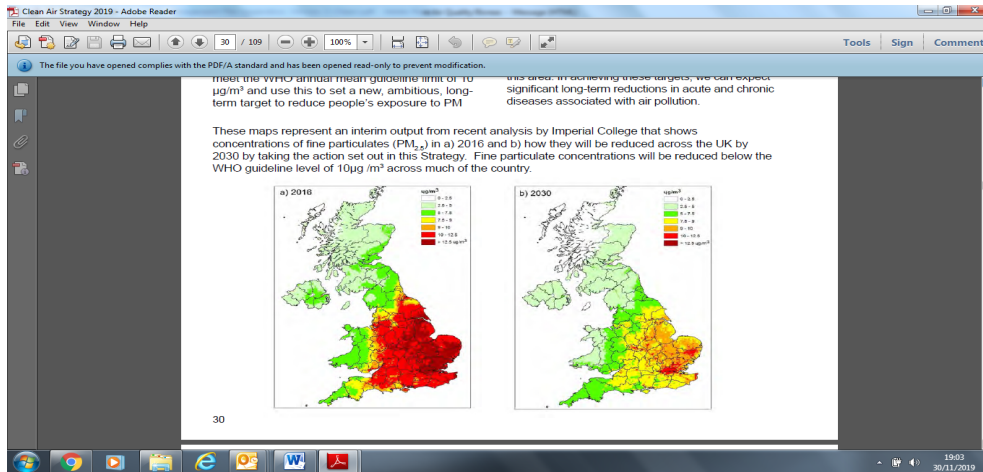
3. Air Quality

LINK 68 and LINK 75 are missing from air quality assessments and maps for Scenarios 1 & 2. Link 68 is impacted by cumulative traffic and was assessed for HP3/Vanguard. One residential property is within 2 metres of a road where they will be exposed to the full impact of cumulative traffic, including a massive percentage increase in emissions.

The Applicant has failed to transfer data collected as part of the Norfolk Vanguard DCO, which would be relevant to the Norfolk Boreas DCO.

Given the government’s proposed clean air strategy (see Table 1 below) and the World Health Organisation annual limits for PM2.5 (to be reduced to 10ug m3 by 2025), will the Applicant be able to comply with air quality standards during the years they intend to construct this project, for proposed traffic movement numbers, in isolation and cumulatively?

Table 1



4. Link 75 Blickling Rd

OPC are intrigued by the traffic numbers proposed for Link 75 for Norfolk Boreas Scenario 1. These appear to be, for Scenario 1 - 110 (all traffic), 70 HGVs, and for Scenario 2 - 70 (all traffic), 70 HGVs. During the Norfolk Vanguard examination, we were given the numbers as 72 (all traffic), 72 HGVs, for the whole of the Vanguard project.

OPC therefore seeks to understand why there is a daily increase of 40 vehicles on Link 75 for Boreas Scenario 1?

Link 75 is a rural unclassified road and very narrow, with awkward bends and no centre line in parts; it has a weak bridge with priority signage; several properties directly front this route; and there are 2 listed buildings - Oulton Lodge and Blickling Hall (National Trust). This route is also the main access for all visitors to Blickling Hall, who on occasion will have to be diverted from Aylsham via Saxthorpe roundabout (a long detour) due to trenching of the Blickling road. This route is also used by local farms at all times of the year.

It is noted that there is provision to manage traffic demand and to stockpile materials in an effort to reduce HGV movements during 'events and harvests' etc.

OPC would like to know whether this will increase the intensity of construction traffic at *other* times, if such traffic is to be reduced for events - and whether this means using other routes.

Regarding stockpiling of materials: where will they be kept and does this mean the Cable Logistics Area (CLA) will be used more often than OPC were given to believe?

If so, OPC seeks assurance from the Applicant that they remain committed to *never* using the northern residential end of Oulton Street e.g. to cut through from the CLA to the trenched road crossing and the Horizontal Direct Drilling of the Bure River valley near Aylsham Old Hall.

Sources:

From Norfolk Boreas: LINK 75 from OTMP version 2 at Deadline 1

"Managing traffic demand during major events on the highway (e.g. bike races, parades, etc.) and around public holidays. The Contractor will ensure that a stockpile of materials is maintained to allow HGV movements to be reduced during planned major events whilst not impacting upon the construction programme. The Contractor will also work closely with the local liaisons groups to identify the dates of local planned events, (e.g. harvests) that could impact upon the project and seek to effectively manage deliveries during these events. Special provisions will be made in the Communications Plan for events relating to the Blickling Estate (Link 75)."

Norfolk Boreas Link 75 scenario 1

EN010087-001303-8.8 Outline Traffic Management Plan Appendices (Version 2) (Clean).pdf 5 / 88

Link ID	Link description	Norfolk Boreas Scenario 1 Construction Vehicle Movements	
		All Vehicles	HGVs
60	NNDR - Link c	117	117
61	B1436 - Roughton Road	20	0
62	A1042	35	0
63	A1151	5	0
64	A12	72	70
65	A47	323	323
66	Wendling - Dereham Road	109	69
67	North Walsham Road / Happsburgh Road	104	64
68	The Street / Heydon Road	105	65
69	Little London Road	81	**61
70	Plantation Road	50	30
71	Vicarage Road / Whimpwell Street	51	31
72	Dereham Road / Longham Road - Dillington	54	34
73	Hoe Road South	49	29
74	Mill Street, Elsing Road - Swanton Morley	50	30
75	B1354 - Blickling	110	70
76	High Noon Road / Church Road	51	31

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27/11/2019

Norfolk Boreas Link 75 scenario 2

EN010087-001303-8.8 Outline Traffic Management Plan Appendices (Version 2) (Clean).pdf 10 / 88

Link ID	Link description	Norfolk Boreas Scenario 2 Construction Vehicle Movements	
		All Vehicles	HGVs
60	NNDR - Link c	400	313
61	B1436 - Roughton Road	76	0
62	A1042	164	0
63	A1151	67	0
64	A12	299	291
65	A47	639	637
66	Wendling - Dereham Road	192	152
67	North Walsham Road / Happsburgh Road	159	80
68	The Street / Heydon Road	160	80
69	Little London Road	260	**48
70	Plantation Road	284	184
71	Vicarage Road / Whimpwell Street	64	30
72	Dereham Road / Longham Road - Dillington	184	136
73	Hoe Road South	158	96
74	Mill Street, Elsing Road - Swanton Morley	103	72
75	B1354 - Blickling	72	72
76	High Noon Road / Church Road	92	72
77	Hall Lane - North Walsham	92	**72
78	Ryburgh	92	72

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27/11/2019

Norfolk Vanguard Link 75 traffic numbers:

Link	Description	Link sensitivity	Background 2022 flows (24hr AADT*)		2022 construction vehicle movements		Percentage increase	
			All vehicles	HGVs	All vehicles	HGVs	All vehicles	HGVs
74	Mill Street, Elsing Road – Swanton Morley	Medium	878	33	103	72	11.7%	218.3%
75	B1354 - Blickling	Medium	2194	77	72	72	3.3%	93.5%
76	High Noon Road / Church Road	Low	549	22	92	72	16.7%	327.4%
77	Hall Lane – North Walsham	Low	549	22	92	72	16.7%	327.4%
78	Bylaugh	Low	549	22	92	72	16.7%	327.4%
79	B1145 / Suffield Road	Medium	2194	77	92	72	4.2%	93.5%
* AADT – Annual Average Daily Traffic								
** Links with traffic deliveries utilising smaller vehicles								
% Exceeds GEART screening thresholds								

185. In accordance with GEART, only those sensitive links that show greater than 10%

5. B1149 (Holt Road) trenched crossing

It is noted that there have been changes to the proposed road works to the trenching on B1149. These changes appear in the Applicant's Outline Traffic Management Plan appendices (version 2) submitted at Deadline 1. There are changes to the width and length and M3 required for resurfacing the area; these differ from the plans as submitted at Deadline 8 for the Norfolk Vanguard DCO.

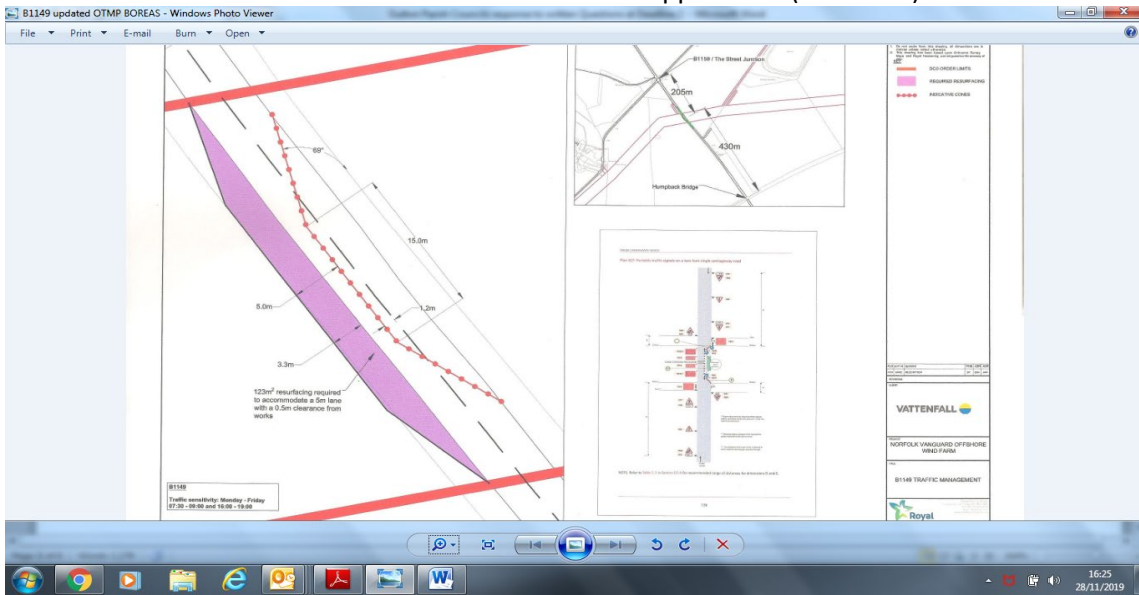
OPC queries whether this would mean the need to use more of the verge to produce the increased road width, and if so, is this land secured within the DCO?

OPC also queries whether these revised plans have been accepted by Norfolk County Council, given their negative response at deadline 9 of the Norfolk Vanguard examination?

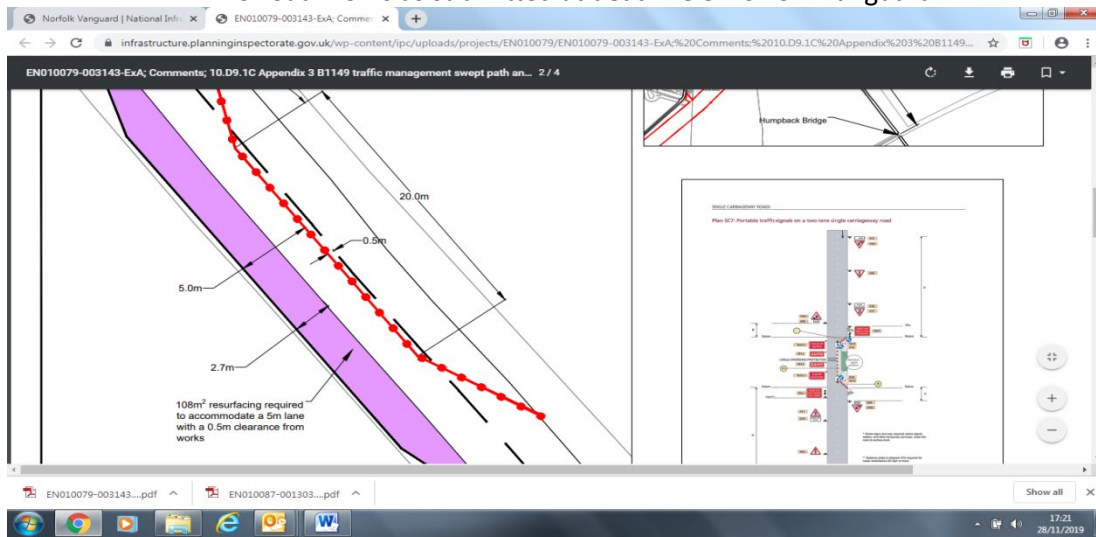
Is the separation between the B1149 junction with The Street and the proposed road works (205m) sufficient? Has the Applicant also taken into consideration the cumulative impact of Norfolk Boreas Scenario 2 with Equinor's Dudgeon and Sheringham Extension project, if they were to be constructed during the same time period? The cable corridor for the latter will pass extremely close to this trenched crossing.

Sources:

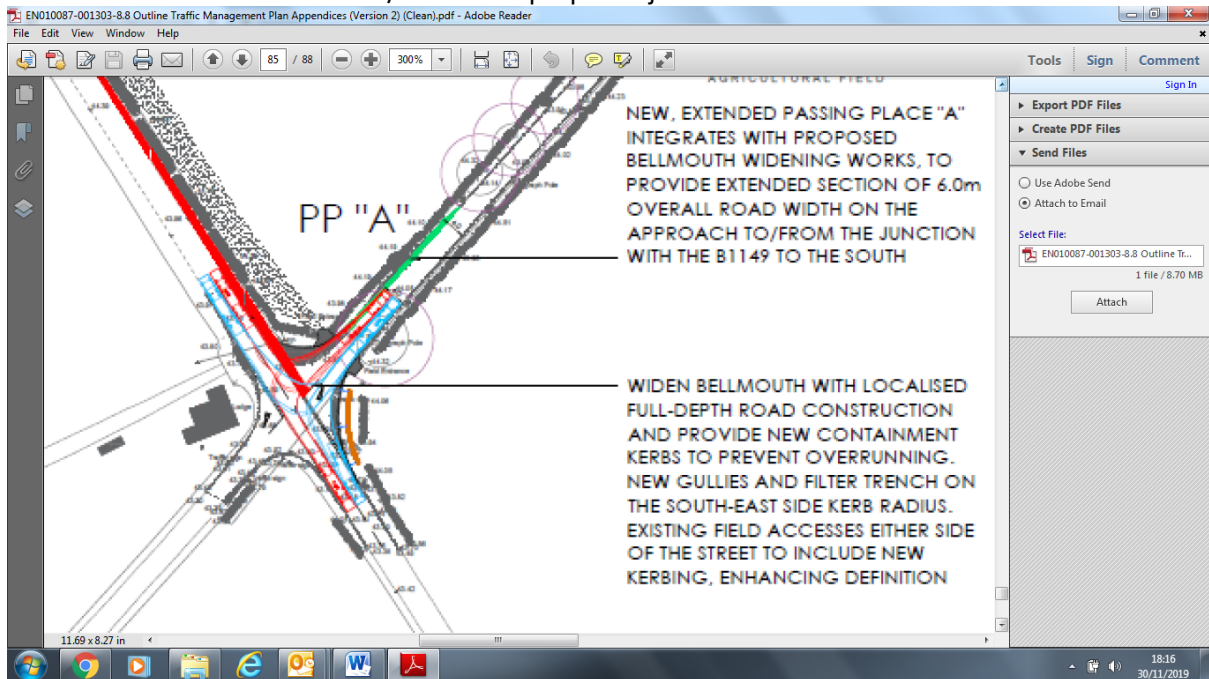
B1149 road works Norfolk Boreas OTMP appendices (Version 2) deadline 1



B1149 road works as submitted at deadline 8 Norfolk Vanguard



B1149/The Street proposed junction modification



6. Cable Logistics Area

OPC seeks assurance that the use of the Cable Logistics Area(CLA) is to be limited to occasional use for Scenarios 1 & 2. Currently OPC have been told that cable drums will be delivered directly to the jointing bays and that the CLA will only have cable drums stored on site if there is a hold-up during the cable pulling phase.

OPC notes the statement below* which refers to managed traffic during events and harvest periods. As Oulton is an entirely agricultural area, with harvest periods extending over approximately 6 months of every year, does this mean more concentrated use of the Cable Logistics Area, or is it referring to Mobilisation Areas, - or both?

** "The Contractor will ensure that a stockpile of materials is maintained to allow HGV movements to be reduced during planned major events whilst not impacting upon the construction programme.*

The Contractor will also work closely with the local liaisons groups to identify the dates of local planned events, (e.g. harvests) that could impact upon the project and seek to effectively manage deliveries during these events."

Would this mean a more concentrated traffic flow at certain times of the year: i.e. have traffic movement numbers been averaged out?

7. Road Intervention Scheme

It had been noted with concern that there were omissions from the proposed road intervention scheme for LINK 68 in earlier submitted documents. OPC confirms that these have now been included as part of the Applicant's Deadline 1 submission and now form part of the OTMP (version 2).

8. In view of points 1 (Link 68), 2 (sensitivity) and 3 (air quality) above, OPC would like to draw the ExA's attention to the **AD Appeal Decision document of 2014** which relates entirely to this stretch of road, and which is **appended to this submission**. We would in particular draw the ExA's attention to the Planning Inspector's detailed description of the deficiencies and dangers of using Passing Places as a traffic management solution for the difficulties presented by the regular use of a single-lane road for large numbers of daily HGV (and other) traffic *in two directions*. Furthermore, the Inspector lays out a vivid deconstruction of what it might actually feel like to be a *human* 'receptor' trying to live in a dwelling directly fronting this lane.

9. Norfolk Vanguard decision

Finally, OPC assumes that the ExA is aware of the Secretary of State's recent announcement (6/12/19) to delay her decision on the Norfolk Vanguard application, pending further information from the Applicant and responses from Interested Parties. This delay will clearly have implications for the Examination of Norfolk Boreas.

OPC would in particular draw the attention of the ExA to the fact that the Secretary of State has requested further information not only on offshore matters, but also on several **onshore** issues including "unresolved traffic matters", some of which relate to issues we have described above.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Hornsea Project Three](#)
Cc: [Sarah Drljaca](#)
Subject: Registration Number 20010316 - Oulton Parish Council's submission to PINS at Deadline 7
Date: 14 March 2019 11:16:39
Attachments: [Orsted Deadline 7 APPENDIX 1-VISSIM screenshots.docx](#)
[Orsted Deadline 7 Appendix 2-AIL Table.xlsx](#)

Hornsea Project Three

Oulton Parish Council (OPC) welcomes this opportunity to comment on the current status of traffic and environmental issues since Deadline 6, the ASI on March 5th and the Issue Specific Hearing on March 8th.

1. VISSIM

Since Deadline 6, the Parish Council has had sight of the VISSIM traffic modelling scenarios in video format and the council would like to thank the Applicant for making this possible. These are the “large video files” referred to by the Applicant at 3.21 in Appendix 8 (Main Construction Compound Access Strategy VISSIM Modelling Update) containing the models that sit behind the data that have been received by the ExA and by NCC Highways.

At 4.6 in Appendix 8, the conclusion is reached that:

“VISSIM model for future scenario shows that the entire study network including The Street/B1149 junction would operate satisfactorily with delays of only 38 seconds to the journey from The Street to the B1149.”

Please note: a range of screenshots from the VISSIM, with explanatory captions, has been attached in Appendix 1, at the end of this submission.

OPC would like to make the following observations on the scenarios we have studied:

1.1 We are obliged to observe that there are significant inaccuracies in the baseline data used to construct the model of the southern section of The Street, Oulton, such that it renders almost all the data produced as a result of the simulation unreliable at best, and invalid at worst.

1.1.1 The width of the roadway all along its length, from the junction with the B1149 to the site entrance at Saltcarr Farms, appears to have been modelled as if 2 cars, and even a car and an HGV, can pass each other without slowing down. This is quite simply not the case. If it were the case, then there would be very little need for passing bays at all.

Although the width of The Street does vary a little here and there, there is no point along its entire length where a white line has been placed down the middle of the carriageway. This indicates in itself that NCC Highways is of the opinion that the roadway is not wide enough for 2 cars to pass safely without slowing down. This is especially true of the very narrow section immediately to the north of the Old Railway Gatehouse.

1.1.2 Many inaccuracies flow from this baseline modelling error:

- Many of the cars are shown passing each other at speed, thus invalidating the “average delay” data generated by the model;
- Scenarios frequently occur where a car and an HGV pass each other with ease, away from a passing bay. Since this is impossible, “average delay” data is further invalidated;
- Further scenarios occur where 2 HGVs pass each other away from passing bays. Since this is impossible, this also and very significantly – would impact on the “average delay” data generated.

1.1.2 Vehicle response to the priority signage at the “hump” beside the Railway Gatehouse appears very frequently to malfunction in the VISSIM, such that cars are shown passing each other on the hump, a car and an HGV are shown passing each other on the hump, and even sometimes 2 HGVs are shown passing each other on the hump. These scenarios are neither possible in real life (given the width of the road) nor are they considered to be desirable by the applicant.

1.1.3 The Parish Council is mystified as to how these major inaccuracies can have been allowed to persist within the modelling, but we must stress that the “average delay” data will be significantly distorted because of them. We are obliged therefore to challenge the validity of the Applicant’s statement, quoted above, that:

“VISSIM model for future scenario shows that the entire study network including The Street/B1149 junction would operate satisfactorily with delays of only 38 seconds...”

This has not been proven.

1.2 Even with these baseline inaccuracies, which obviously help to ‘improve’ vastly the apparent flow of all types of traffic along The Street, the VISSIM still generates some pinch points and dysfunction e.g. where too many vehicles are shown following behind each other to be adequately contained in a passing bay when meeting oncoming traffic. Please see Appendix 1 below for a sample screenshot.

1.3 Notwithstanding the above, there is one scenario demonstrated by the VISSIM that does yield some useful information, as it does not involve 2-way competing traffic. A screenshot of this scenario is in Appendix 1 attached below.

1.3.1 The scenario in question is of an Abnormal Indivisible Load (AIL) – in this case a cable drum – leaving the compound, travelling south down The Street and entering the B1149. In this scenario *all* traffic was stopped from travelling north along The Street whilst the abnormal load travelled south. Meanwhile, all traffic on the B1149 was *stopped in both directions*. The abnormal load exited onto the B1149 with the queue of traffic that had built up behind it. When all traffic from The Street had exited, the held traffic on B1149 was released. The observed delay for traffic on B1149 was 5 mins 42 seconds. More alarming even than this, however,

is that during that time, depending on the time of day, the tailback of traffic on the B1149 was between 37 and 67 vehicles, *in each direction*, always including several HGVs.

Clearly, it could never be safe to allow that sort of tailback to build up, so close to the unsighted humpback bridge on the B1149.

[OPC recommend that NCC Highways view the video format of this AIL scenario in the VISSIM at their earliest opportunity.]

1.3.2 Please note: this southbound AIL scenario is not, to our knowledge, referred to at all in the Appendix 8 document. At 4.7 in App. 8, reference is made only to an AIL travelling “in a northbound direction” - when of course the traffic is only held back further up The Street, but is NOT held back on the B1149, thus producing a much less dangerous scenario. We should hardly need to point out, however, that what goes into the compound must also come out.

It would seem that, in Appendix 8, the southbound AIL scenario has been “scoped out” – much as the noise of the AILs has been “scoped out” of the Noise and Vibration Assessment that will be discussed later.

1.3.3 OPC has to assume that the Applicant is aware that the southbound peak time AIL scenario presents so many dangers to other road users that it would never be permitted, but the council would have appreciated that fact being drawn to our attention, so that we could have had a frank discussion, while NCC were also present, about the likelihood of Abnormal Loads being regularly delivered during the evening and at night. Given the sheer numbers of loads involved, it would probably not be possible to fit them all in to ‘quieter’ periods of the day.

1.4 OPC seeks, at this late stage, absolute clarification on the exact time-periods being referred to in the various scenarios of “off-peak”, “outside normal working hours”, “evening” and “night-time” in relation to the movement of Abnormal Indivisible Loads.

1.4.1 We should also not be confused by the word “abnormal” into thinking that these AIL movements will be exceptional or occasional. On the contrary, given the scale of the project (1,121 cable drums = 1,121 AILs) it will be the *norm* that several of them will have to be moved, either separately or in convoys, most weeks, day and/or night, throughout the whole two and a half years.

1.5 The Parish Council would like to draw the ExA’s attention at this point to the Table in Appendix 2, attached to this submission. This table has been created by OPC in an attempt to represent, as an indicative illustration, the real density and regularity of these Abnormal Load movements, constrained as they will have to be into the 30-month “active construction period”.

The pattern of AIL movements portrayed is based on information provided by the Applicant. 36 cable drums will be delivered to the port every 3 – 5 weeks; the Table illustrates the median scenario of a delivery every 4 weeks. [See Appendix 2]

1.6 In view of all of the above, the Parish Council is now significantly concerned that NCC Highways will be forced, because of the traffic dysfunction that would

otherwise be created, to conclude that this density of AIL movements over such a long period, will have to be permitted only in the evenings and at night. Such a conclusion would have disastrous consequences for the restful sleep of the residents of the Railway Gatehouse, and of hamlets and villages all over North Norfolk as these Abnormal Loads criss-cross the county from port to compound to cable corridor work front.

If the Applicant responds with: “but not all cable drums will go to the Main Construction Compound...”, then this will still afford little comfort to the residents disturbed all along the direct route from the port to a particular section of cable corridor. In any case, the Applicant has offered, and we have to consider here, in common with all planning processes, the worst-case scenario.

1.7 Conclusion of this section:

To our great consternation, the Parish Council is finding that the more we learn about the real nature of the types, volumes and movement patterns of the construction traffic for Hornsea Project Three, the more alarmed we are becoming.

How these narrow lanes and small communities can be expected to absorb the sustained impact of the intensity of it – spread throughout a long working day, and probably several nights, for 6 days of every week, and for two and a half years - is barely comprehensible.

2. Noise and Vibration Assessment at The Old Railway Gatehouse

2.1 At the ISH on 8th March, OPC sought clarification on the issue of the rationale behind the averaging of daily construction traffic noise over an 18-hour period, even though the additional traffic created by Hornsea Three is proposed to be confined to a shorter working day of 11 hours (excluding mobilisation). The council may have to accept that this is some sort of “standard measure” but is keenly aware that averaging anything over a longer period always conveniently brings the average down.

2.2 The further point made by OPC at the Hearing was that human receptors never actually experience “average” noise but only individual or grouped noise “events”, interspersed with silence or lower background noise.

2.3 Both these points were addressed by the Planning Inspector in 2014, when dismissing the Appeal for an AD that proposed to use this same stretch of road as its access route, and to the same site as the compound.

[Ref:APP/K2610/A/14/2212257]

At point 18 in the Appeal Decision, the Inspector challenges the relevance of using “statistical smoothing” in situations such as this, stating that this approach “understates the effects upon the human receptor of separate, sudden bursts of sound which conventional practice recognises to be potentially disturbing.” She goes on to refer to the recently-issued national Planning Practice Guidance on noise, stating that “it does not rely upon numerical measures but on qualitative descriptors”. She continues (point 20) that at harvest time “the traffic noise

generated by the appeal proposal would be at the very least *noticeable and intrusive* and...at times *noticeable and disruptive* as perceived by any residential occupiers of the dwelling.”

The Inspector concludes (point 21) that the passing of the HGV tractor/trailer combinations would “be likely to result in **material harm** to the living conditions of residential occupiers of the Old Railway Gatehouse, *with reference to noise and disturbance.*”

2.4 The response of this Applicant appears to be that because each passing HGV generated by the Hornsea Three proposal will not (on average) be individually more noisy than existing individual HGVs, the project therefore introduces no (or a very low) increase in traffic noise. This approach completely ignores the fact that the increase in total daily *numbers* of HGV traffic movements will be substantial (+118), as will the increase in car movements (+130). *Each* of these additional daily movements will be experienced by the residents as *a separate and additional daily noise disturbance.*

2.5 Perhaps of even more concern is the fact that, at point 4.25 of Appendix 23 to Deadline 6, the Applicant has chosen to “scope out of this assessment” entirely *the noise generated by Abnormal Indivisible Loads (AIL) at night.* The rationale provided for such an omission is given as the fact that, within the OCTMP, the Applicant will have to agree such movements in advance with NCC and that they will commit to notifying OPC and the residents of the Old Railway Gatehouse “of any known night-time AIL movements to minimize the disturbance.”

Knowing in advance that one is going to be severely disturbed during the night, is not the same as having a restful night's sleep. OPC is again mystified, and struggles to understand how the applicant can allow itself to conflate these two situations.

2.6 In addition - knowing what we now know about AIL movements, as detailed in Section 1 above - it is becoming clear that ***noticeable and intrusive*** AIL movements are almost certainly going to be passing right next to the Railway Gatehouse ***on many nights of every week, of every year, for two and a half years.***

2.7 Mitigation: the Applicant has proposed as mitigation for the residents of the Gatehouse:

- that the grading of the “hump” outside their house (which will avoid the grounding of Hornsea Three low-loaders) should be finished with a special surface that reduces both traffic noise and vibration;
- and that there will be priority signage on either side of the hump, so that only one vehicle at a time will ever pass right next to their house.

At the Hearing on 8th March, we were informed, during the discussion about Cawston, by the EHO from BDC, that the special road surface referred to was only effective in reducing noise and vibration when vehicles were travelling at *more* than 30 mph. In this case, there will be a speed limit of 30 mph introduced for the duration of the construction period, which will negate the beneficial effect of the

road surface.

As to the priority signage, this may well create *more* disturbance for the residents, with the constant braking and transmission noises of HGVs stopping and starting.

2.8 At the Hearing on 8th March, reference was made by the Applicant to an “offer” of further mitigation measures for the residents. The residents pointed out that such an offer had not yet been made.

2.9 OPC also believes that it would be wise for a structural survey to be carried out on the current condition of the Railway Gatehouse, so that the baseline situation in terms of potential vibration effects can be established.

3. Traffic numbers by type and function

At the Hearing on 8th March, the Applicant was asked by the ExA to provide at Deadline 7 a detailed breakdown of the vehicle numbers so far provided for the daily movements generated by the compound.

The suggestion of the ExA was that such a breakdown might include the numbers of vehicles carrying, for example:

- aggregate
- sand
- ducting
- cable (AILs)
- other HGVs
- all other vehicles e.g. cars and vans

- and that separate numbers should be clearly provided for IN and OUT movements.

At the end of the Hearing, the Applicant demurred and indicated that it would be unable to provide such figures.

OPC is obliged to comment that it can in no way understand why such a breakdown of figures should be so difficult for the Applicant, for two reasons:

- this developer is not a novice in the field and has constructed cable corridors before;
- the Applicant has consistently provided to OPC over many months now the daily vehicle movement figures for the compound as 118 HGVs and 130 staff vehicles.

If the Applicant is unable to break these numbers down into different vehicles by

type and function then what are we to understand by this?

Have these numbers not been derived from detailed planning by their construction engineers - and, if not, are they therefore meaningless?

Oulton Parish Council would hope that the ExA will persist in encouraging the Applicant to make sense of its own figures, and to share this understanding with stakeholders.

4. Appendices.

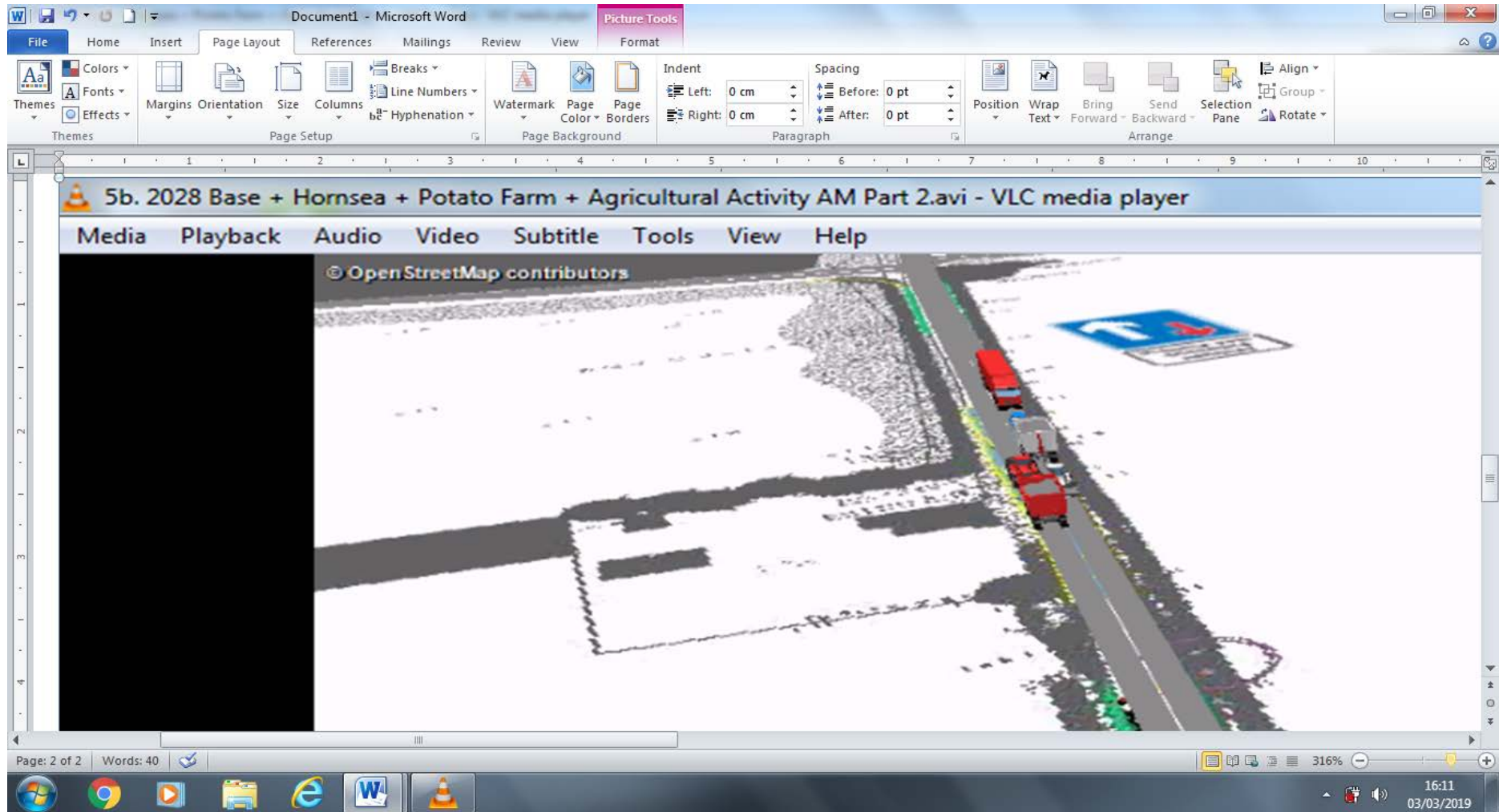
Appendix 1. VISSIM Screenshots/notes.

Appendix 2. Abnormal Indivisible Load (AIL) Data.

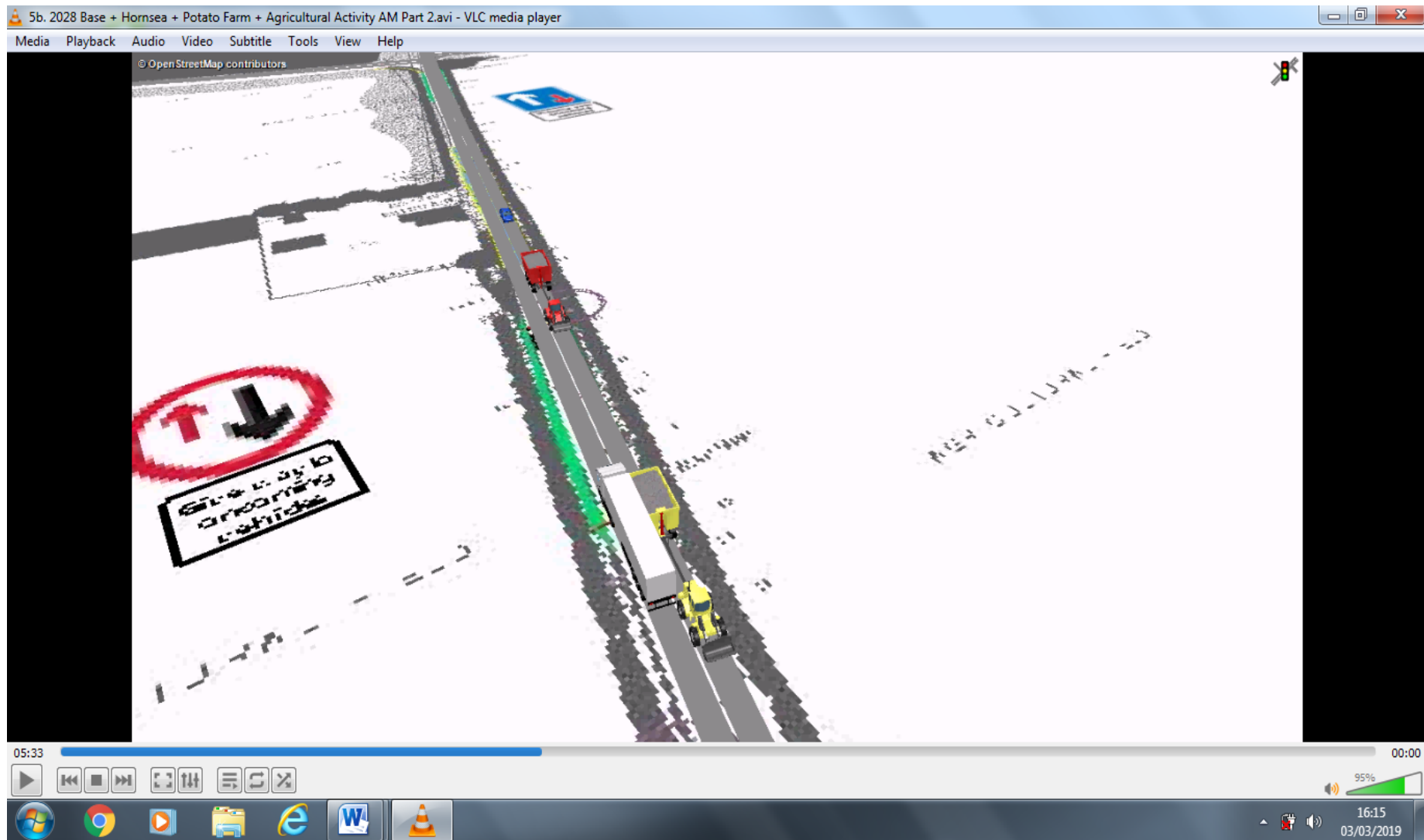
Paul Killingback

Chair

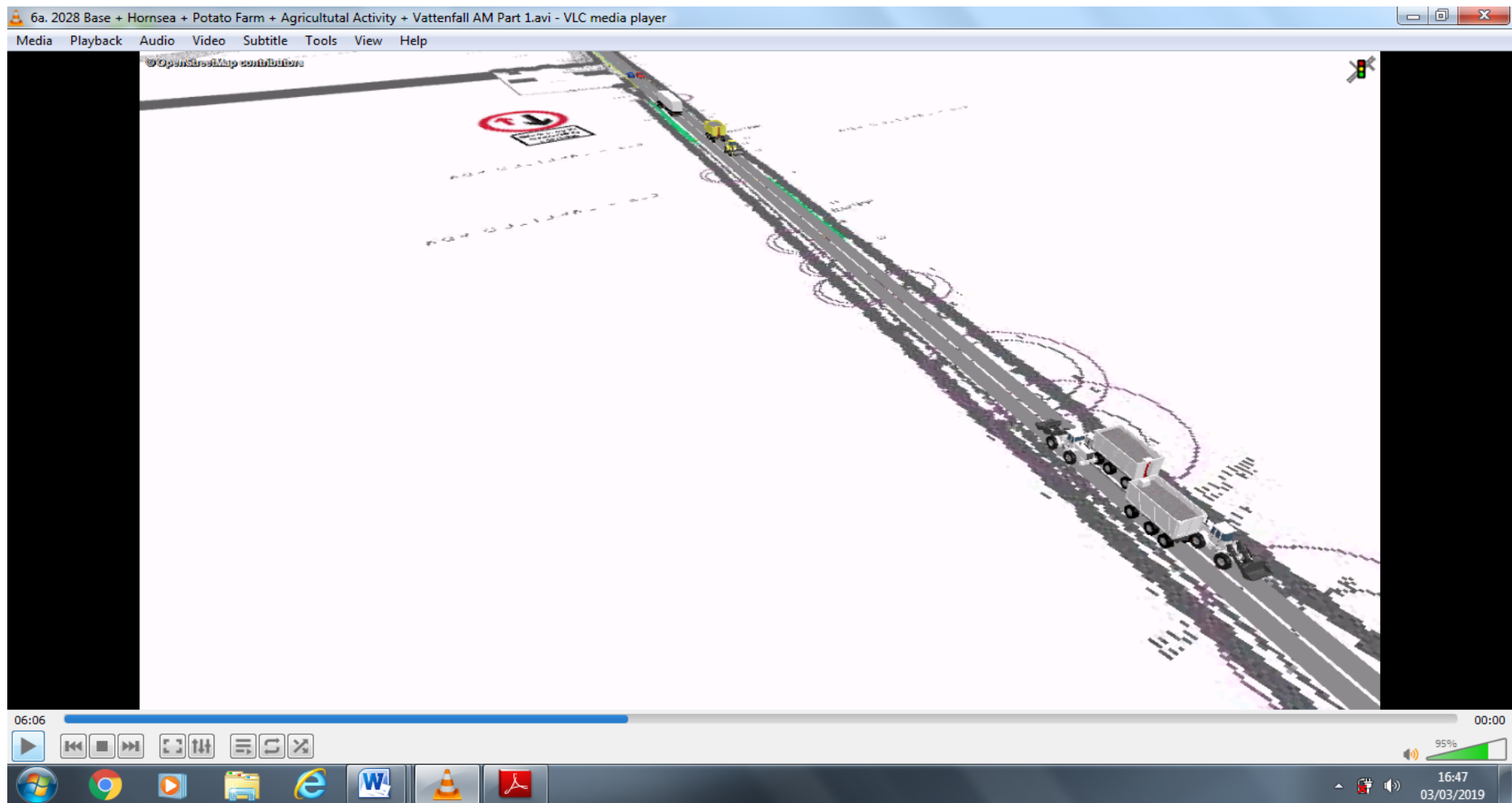
Oulton Parish Council



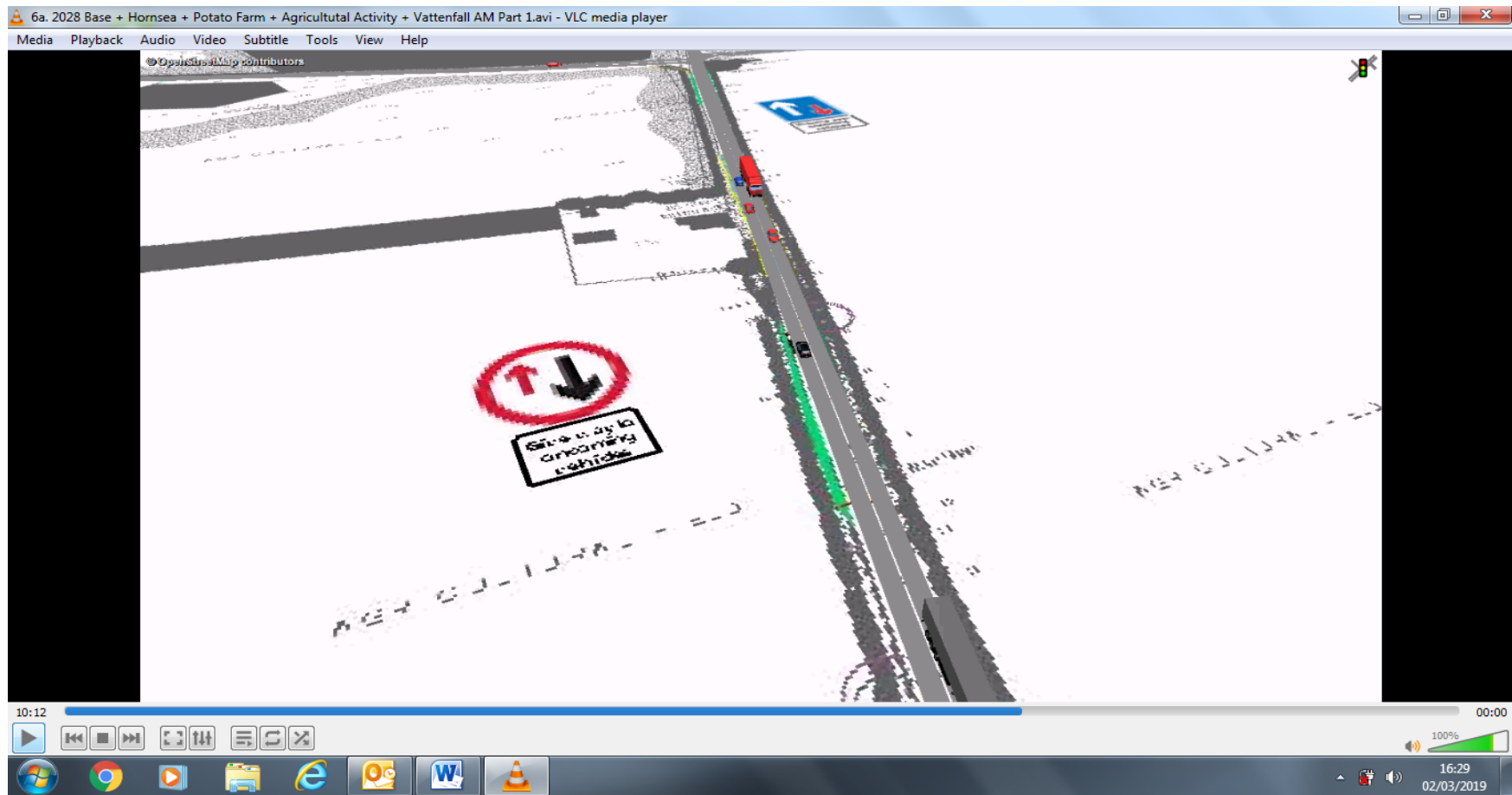
*Priority signs at the hump next to the Railway Gatehouse not working: it would not be possible for two tractor/trailers or HGVs to pass at this point. The road width at this point is planned to be the same as currently.



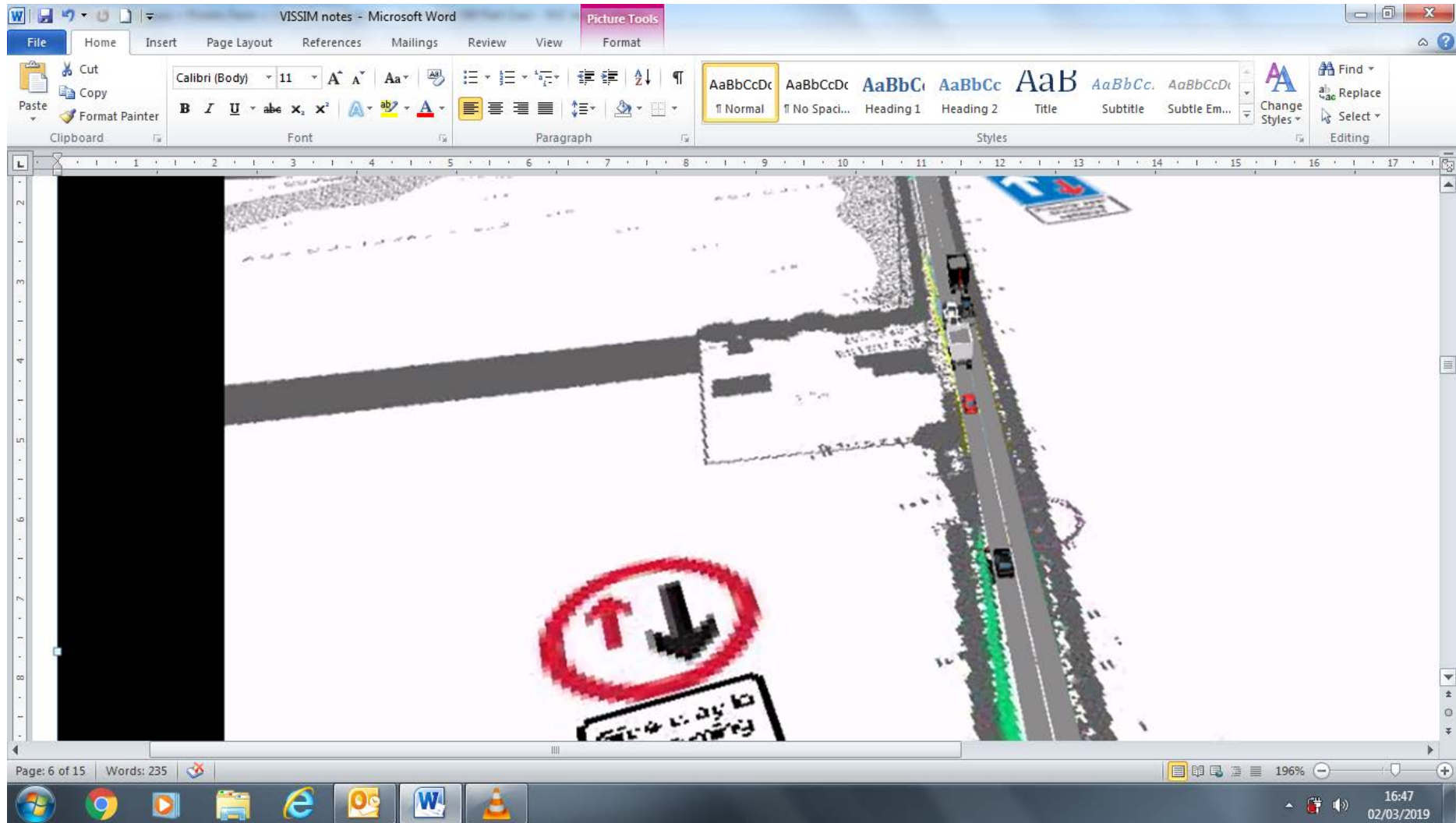
Data input error: one HGV and one tractor/trailer passing each other without use of passing place. This is impossible - the road is too narrow.



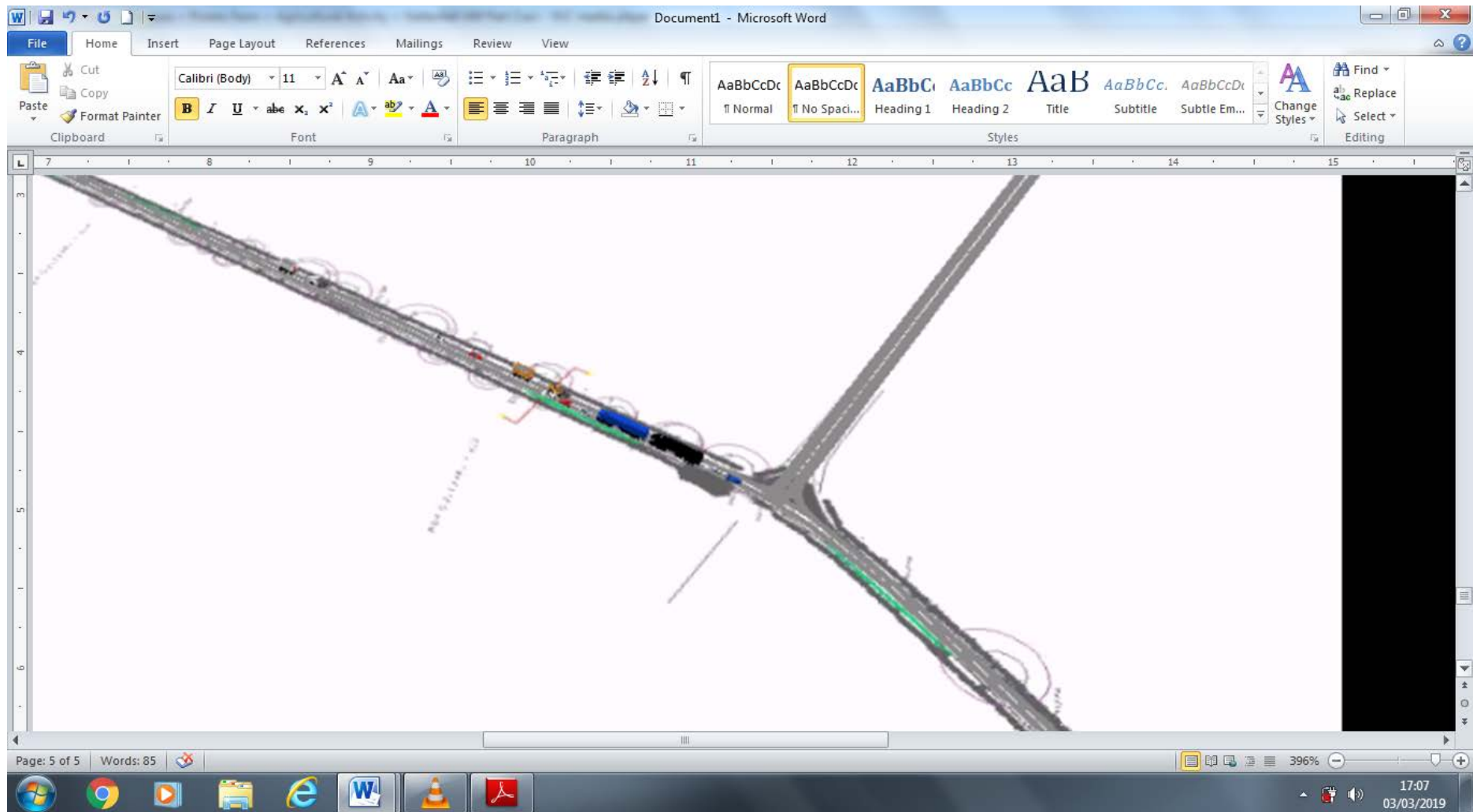
Two tractor trailers passing outside of passing places – this is impossible.
[6a 2028 Base + Hornsea + potato Farm + agricultural activity + Vattenfall AM part 1.]



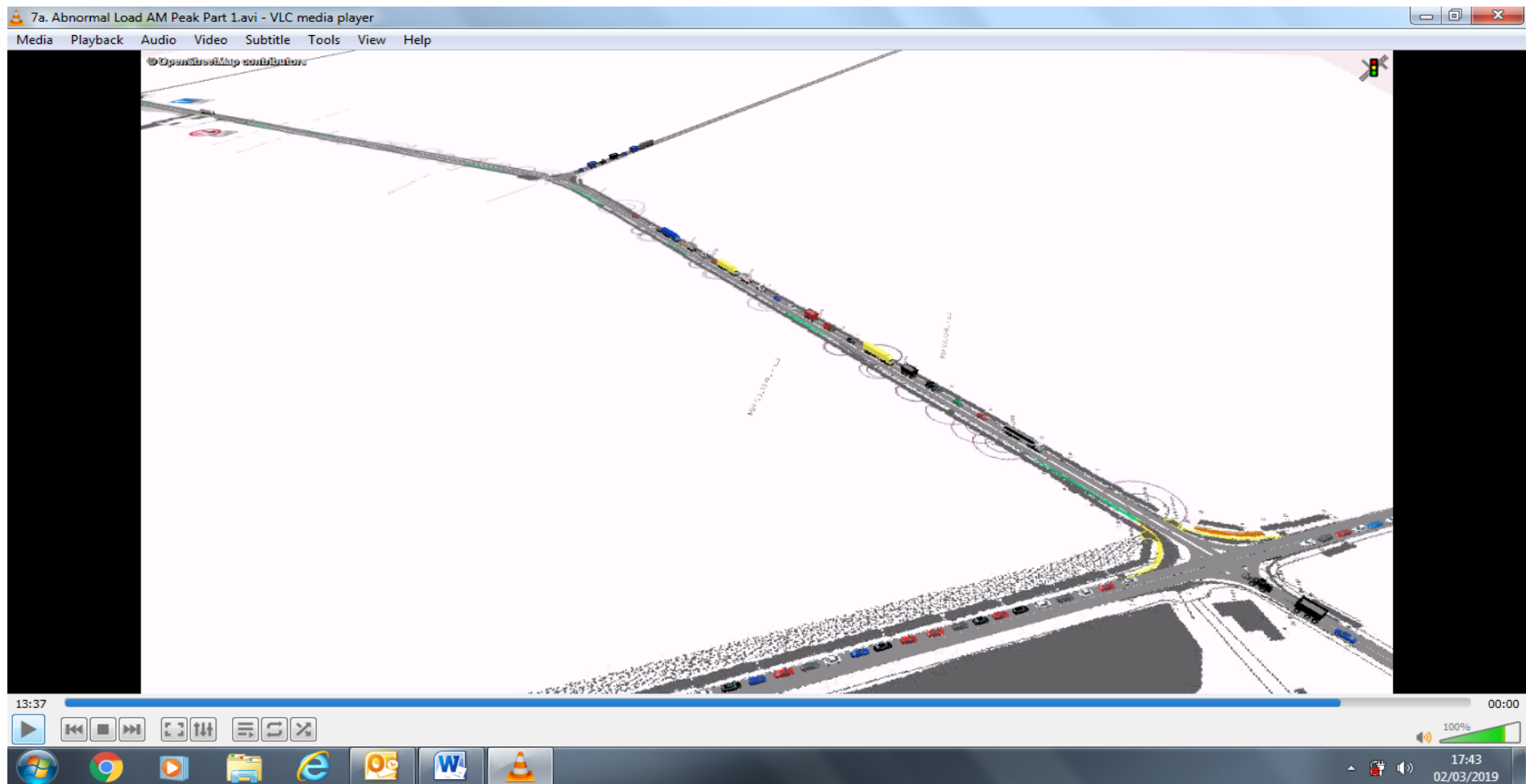
Priority signs not working at the hump: it is impossible for an HGV and a car to pass at that location.



(ABOVE) Two tractors outside old railway gatehouse, potential for vehicles to overrun side of road and, in any case, the road width proposed makes such a passing impossible.



(Above) Enlarged view of bend. [6b 2028 Base + Hornsea + Potato Farm + Agricultural activity + Vattenfall AM part 2]...shows 2 cars 1 HGV in passing place 1 HGV & 2 Cars outside of passing place at bend, waiting for oncoming traffic.(3.33sec)



(7a AM) Screenshot above: Abnormal Load (cable drum on low-loader) having left Main Compound travelling SOUTH, as it approaches the B1149 traffic halted on The Street (then allowed to follow AL) and traffic halted on the B1149. Traffic was stopped at 9.50 on video still waiting at end of video(15.00sec).....5.10secs plus part two of video which ran for a further 32seconds before traffic on B1149 was allowed to move off having waited for traffic exiting The Street behind the abnormal load. Total wait time was 5min 42 seconds. Tailbacks on Holt Road: 43 cars/1tractor/trailers in queue from Saxthorpe direction....37 cars /3 HGVs in queue from Cawston roundabout (Humpback Bridge).

(7d PM) This showed an abnormal load leaving the Main Compound peak PM, traffic stopped at the Northern end of 'The Street' and on the B1149 in both directions. Similar timescale as for AM for traffic waiting on the B1149 but observed the traffic in the queue was greater.

Observed 63 cars/6 HGV's from Saxthorpe direction & 67 cars/ 8 HGV's from Cawston roundabout direction.

TABLE SHOWS				
1,121 Cable drums are needed for the project.				
36 cable drums arrive at a port and are delivered to the Main Construction Compound.				
The 36 cable drums are delivered TO the Main Construction Compound at a rate of 8-12 a day over 3-5 days				
The cable drums are then delivered to the cable route FROM the main compound over three week before the next shipment arrives				
This is a 4 week scenario to fit 1,121 cable drum delivery into the 30 month active construction period.				
week 1	week 2	week 3	week 4	week 5
36 cable drums IN	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	36 cable drums IN
week 6	week 7	week 8	week 9	week 10
12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	36 cable drums IN	12 c/drums OUT
week 11	week 12	week 13	week 14	week 15
12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	36 cable drums	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT
week 16	week 17	week 18	week 19	week 20
12 c/drums OUT	36 cable drums IN	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT
week 21	week 22	week 23	week 24	week 25
36 cable drums IN	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	36 cable drums
week 26	week 27	week 28	week 29	week 30
12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	36 cable drums IN	12 c/drums OUT
week 31	week 32	week 33	week 34	week 35
12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	36 cable drums IN	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT
week 36	week 37	week 38	week 39	week 40
12 c/drums OUT	36 cable drums IN	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT
week 41	week 42	week 43	week 44	week 45
36 cable drums IN	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	36 cable drums IN
week 46	week 47	week 48	week 49	week 50
12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	36 cable drums	12 c/drums OUT
week 51	week 52 (1yr)	week 53	week 54	week 55
12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	36 cable drums IN	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT
week 56	week 57	week 58	week 59	week 60
12 c/drums OUT	36 cable drums IN	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT
week 61	week 62	week 63	week 64	week 65
36 cable drum IN	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	36 cable drums IN
week 66	week 67	week 68	week 69	week 70
12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	36 cable drums IN	12 c/drums OUT
week 71	week 72	week 73	week 74	week 75
12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	36 cable drums IN	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT
week 76	week 77	week 78	week 79	week 80
12 c/drums OUT	36 cable drums IN	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT
week 81	week 82	week 83	week 84	week 85
36 cable drums IN	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	36 cable drums
week 86	week 87	week 88	week 89	week 90
12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	36 cable drums IN	12 c/drums OUT
week 91	week 92	week 93	week 94	week 95
12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	36 cable drums	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT
week 96	week 97	week 98	week 99	week100
12 c/drums OUT	36 cable drums IN	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT
week 101	week 102	week 103	week 104/2nd Yr	week 105
36 cable drums IN	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	36 cable drums IN
week 106	week 107	week 108	week 109	week 110
12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	36 cable drums IN	12 c/drums OUT
week 111	week 112	week113	week 114	week 115
12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	36 cable drums IN	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT
week 116	week 117	week 118	week119	week120
12 c/drums OUT	36 cable drums IN	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT
week 121	week 122	week 123	week 124	week 125
36 cable drums IN	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	36 cable drums IN
week 126	week 127	week 128	week 129	week 130/6mth
12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	12 c/drums OUT	//////////	30 MONTHS



Appeal Decision

Hearing held on 9 April 2014

Site visit made on 9 April 2014

by Susan Holland MA DipTP MRTPI DipPollCon

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 11 June 2014

Appeal Ref: APP/K2610/A/14/2212257

Oulton Airfield, The Street, Oulton, Norfolk

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Black Bridge Energy Ltd against the decision of Broadland District Council.
 - The application Ref 20130860, dated 28 June 2013, was refused by notice dated 6 November 2013.
 - The development proposed is an anaerobic digestion renewable energy facility, associated landscaping and vehicular access.
-

Procedural Matters

1. Notwithstanding the description of the proposed development as stated on the application form, the development is described on the Council's decision notice and on the Appeal form as a *biomass renewable energy facility*. It was confirmed at the Hearing that the development is designed and intended to process purpose-grown crops of maize and grass, and is neither designed nor adaptable to process food waste. The description given on the decision notice and on the notice of appeal is more accurately representative of the proposal, and the appeal is dealt with on the basis of the description as amended.

Decision

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effects of the proposed development (a) upon highway safety and convenience; and (b) upon the living conditions of neighbouring residents at The Old Railway Gatehouse with reference to noise and disturbance; in each case arising from the proposed vehicular movements to and from the site.

Reasons

Issue (a): Highway Safety and Convenience

4. The appeal site is located on land to the rear (west) of an existing turkey farm comprising around a dozen large poultry houses, and to the south-west of a farm depot for crops (peas, beans, barley, wheat, potatoes, sugar beet, and carrots) grown on the surrounding agricultural land. These establishments have separate accesses to Oulton Street (the lane). The proposed biomass

- plant would have its own separate access to the lane, taken from an existing hard-surfaced track. Adequate new visibility splays at the access junction with the lane have recently been formed, by the repositioning of a hedge and fence.
5. In addition to the turkey farm and the agricultural depot, the lane serves the neighbouring residential settlement, also known as Oulton Street (Oulton Street), and the village of Itteringham to the north. For these settlements and for the existing enterprises, the lane serves as the means of access to the B1149 Holt Road. The appeal scheme would add, to the traffic generated by these sources, the traffic associated with the proposed biomass plant.
 6. The biomass plant would be fuelled principally by a purpose-grown maize crop – by a particular variety of maize grown for its properties as a fuel crop. Grass and rye would form alternative/additional feedstocks. This restricted range of material would ensure the required consistency of fuel input. The maize would take a place in the normal rotation of food and fodder crops grown on the 10 subscribing farms: the number sufficient to produce a regular harvest, each year, of the overall quantity required to fuel the anaerobic digestion plant. Harvested maize would be transported to the appeal site and stored in silage clamps. The by-products of the energy generation process, in the forms of solid digestate fertiliser and liquid fertiliser, would be returned to the subscribing farms and to the land.
 7. On an annual basis, 30,000 tonnes of input biomass would be delivered to the site, by tractor and 15-tonne trailer units. 17,500 tonnes of liquid biofertiliser would be transported from the site in 27-tonne tankers. Additional movements would be required for the removal of solid digestate fertiliser. Some removal of the solid digestate could take place in the empty trailers, so saving on movements; but the overlap would be limited, and outgoing movements would take place throughout the year. However, the maize harvest itself would be concentrated into a 2-month period of the year, in September-October, and the grass harvest, somewhat earlier, from June to early August. During the harvest period, tractor/trailer movements would be frequent, at about 8 trips per hour (4 in, 4 out) over a continuous 10hr-14hr day.
 8. Though 2 cars may pass each other, if driven with care, over much of the lane, the carriageway is not wide enough for a vehicle larger than a car to pass any other vehicle except at the existing informal 'passing places'. These have been formed over time by overrunning and consequent erosion of the low banks and grass verge. (There is no footway on the lane). Approximately halfway between the site access and the junction with Holt Road the lane bends sharply, preventing visibility between the passing places on either side of the bend. Elsewhere on this stretch, the lane runs straight and visibility is good. At the point where a former railway line crossed the lane, now marked by a broad elevation or 'hump' in the surface, stands the cottage known as The Old Railway Gatehouse.
 9. The proposal is to formalise several of the existing 'passing places', and to reposition and/or create others, to provide 6 individual passing places in all. The Highway Authority is satisfied that, subject to some repositioning, 6 passing places would meet the need; that opposing HGV tractor/trailer units would be able to pass each other at the new passing places; and that intervisibility between passing places would be adequate.

10. It is acknowledged that in this highly agricultural area, some movement of crops in large vehicles - tractor/trailer combinations, tankers, or other HGV - is 'normal' and to be expected by other road users. Nevertheless, the traffic movements generated by the appeal proposal would be problematic for the following reasons. Firstly, they would be very frequent and concentrated on this particular stretch of lane over a period of several months each year. Secondly, during that time the movements would continue at high frequency over a very long working day, extending from early morning until late evening, and into periods of dusk and darkness. Thirdly, the existing mix of traffic on the lane, revealed by the surveys submitted with the transport assessment, includes domestic cars, agricultural vehicles, tankers and other HGVs: the existing turkey farm and agricultural depot themselves generating HGV traffic.
11. Fourthly, each passing place proposed would not be long enough to contain more than 1 HGV at a time: so that the driver of any vehicle following one of the Appellant's tractor-trailer units would have to anticipate, accurately, the arrival of an opposing vehicle in order to avoid being left facing such a vehicle on the narrow part of the lane. In such cases the only option would be to reverse the length of the previous stretch, to gain refuge in the earlier passing place: a manoeuvre which would be difficult for some drivers and for the drivers of some large vehicles, including tractor-trailers, and particularly in conditions of poor light, dusk and darkness. The consequences of a mistake could be especially severe in the area around the passing place closest to the junction with the B1149 Holt Road. Here, northbound traffic positioned on the B1149 ready to turn right into the lane could be left stranded and exposed in that position while waiting for 2 HGVs to pass on the lane itself close to the junction, and would be unable to exit the B1149 whilst the first passing place was still occupied; or, worse, might turn into the lane unaware that a HGV was about to exit.
12. The proposed arrangement would markedly intensify and exacerbate the difficulties presented by the current arrangement, in which the drivers of vehicles are obliged to engage in a form of 'musical chairs' or 'running the gauntlet' on the narrow lane. The provision of more formal passing places would neither eliminate nor sufficiently ameliorate the consequences of the proposed increase in traffic movements of the most problematic form of vehicle and at the most problematic times.

Conclusion on Issue (a)

13. The conclusion is therefore that the proposed development would be likely to result in material harm to highway safety and convenience. The proposal would fail to comply with statutory saved Policy TRA14 of the Broadland District Local Plan Replacement 2006 in that it would *endanger highway safety [and] the satisfactory functioning of the highway network*; with companion Policy GS3(d) in respect of highway safety; and with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) at paragraph 32, in that despite the proposed improvements to the highway network the cumulative impacts of the proposed development would be *severe*.

Issue (b): Living Conditions at The Old Railway Gatehouse

14. The current occupier of The Old Railway Gatehouse initially objected to the appeal proposal, but has since withdrawn her objections following receipt of an e-mail dated 4 April 2014, in which *Philipp Lucas, on behalf of Blackbridge*

Renewable Energy Ltd, confirmed agreement to buying my property, should the above appeal be successful. Firstly, however, no legal agreement has been submitted to ensure the purchase of the property, and it could not be made the subject of a condition on any planning permission that might be granted. Secondly, the factors relating to living conditions would apply no matter who might be the residential occupier of the property: and so the issue would be likely to continue to arise even after such purchase.

15. The Old Railway Gatehouse is a small, single-storey building positioned directly adjoining the verge at the carriageway edge, and immediately adjacent to the raised platform in the carriageway which marks the route of the former railway. The windows to all habitable rooms either, in the front elevation, face directly onto the carriageway or, in the side elevations to the dwelling, face up and down the lane at close quarters to the carriageway edge. The only window which faces the rear garden is a small window belonging to a bathroom. (There is also a skylight in the open roof to the main living-room/kitchen).
16. The existing windows are double-glazed. Even so, during the site visit the sound of each vehicle which passed the cottage was clearly audible indoors with the windows closed. These vehicles were cars. Sounds of the proposed tractor-trailer units, whether laden or not, would be likely to be louder and to be perceived as disturbances. Their frequent occurrence as separate bursts of loud sound, including vibration with passage over the 'hump' in the carriageway, over long periods of the day from early morning to late in the evening at harvest time, would be likely to be a source of genuine disturbance.
17. Whilst acknowledging that when superimposed upon the existing pattern of traffic movements on the lane, *noise from [up to 8 vehicle movements per hour] would be perceived as a series of separate events rather than a continuous noise*, the Appellant insists upon an approach which works by averaging surveyed noise levels over time. On the basis of an 18-hour average (L_{Aeq}), the predicted increase is calculated to be 3dB(A) and so said to be 'minor'. The Council has followed an approach which emphasises peak flows, with the proposed 8 tractor-trailer movements per hour to be added to existing flows, and uses the L_{max} measure: in this way the Council calculates that there would be an increase of 7dB(A), which would be noticeable and intrusive. In assessing the magnitude of the noise impact, therefore, the Appellant and the Council disagree.
18. The Appellant's submitted noise evidence has been prepared using perfectly conventional measurements and numerical representations of noise. However, such representations inevitably incorporate some degree of statistical smoothing: and so in themselves understate the effects, upon the human receptor, of separate, sudden bursts of sound which conventional practice recognises to be potentially disturbing. Where such bursts of sound – as in the proposed passage of heavy tractor-trailer units – are not continuous but are frequent and regular, the human response is to expect, predict or anticipate the interruption, so that the anticipation itself adds to and prolongs the disturbance when it comes. Thus, the response is not only to the increased level of noise, but includes the anticipation of the increased noise. The presence of the hump in the road outside the Old Railway Gatehouse would intensify the bursts of sound and their suddenness.
19. Recently-issued national Planning Practice Guidance on noise does not rely upon numerical measures but on qualitative descriptors. *Noticeable* noise

ranges from *noticeable and intrusive* noise, which can be *mitigated*, to *noticeable and disruptive* noise, which should be *avoided*. The first *causes small changes in behaviour ... e.g. speaking more loudly; where there is no alternative ventilation, having to close windows for some of the time because of the noise*. The second *causes a material change in behaviour .. e.g. avoiding certain activities during periods of intrusion; where there is no alternative source of ventilation, having to keep windows closed most of the time because of the noise. ... Quality of life diminished due to change in acoustic character of the area*.

20. Having visited the interior of The Old Railway Gatehouse, listened to the sound of passing traffic on the lane, and observed the layout of the property, the nature and position of the windows, and the condition of the lane, I have no doubt that the levels and character of the traffic noise generated by the appeal proposal during periods of harvest would be at the very least *noticeable and intrusive*, and almost certainly, at times, *noticeable and disruptive* as perceived by any residential occupiers of the dwelling. The property already has double glazing: so that there is no mitigation which could be easily specified as part of a planning permission. It is possible that an alternative interior layout of the dwelling might provide appropriate mitigation: but such action is beyond the scope of conditions upon a planning permission and there is no evidence that it could be achieved.

Conclusion on Issue (b)

21. The conclusion is therefore that the proposed development would, on balance, be likely to result in material harm to the living conditions of residential occupiers of The Old Railway Gatehouse with reference to noise and disturbance. The proposal would fail to comply with the requirements of statutory saved Policy GS3(d) of the Local Plan that the surrounding highway network should be able to *accommodate the traffic likely to be generated without significant detriment to the amenity of nearby occupiers*.

Other Matters

Noise (other sources) and Odours

22. As part of the appeal site visit, the site of an existing biogas plant of similar construction, at Spring Farm, Taverham, was also visited. Odours are said to have been a problem at that site: however, it was not demonstrated that the biogas plant itself was the source. At the time of the visit the Spring Farm site was odour-free. The digestion process itself is contained within the dome of the tank; the gas produced is said to be odourless; and the silage clamps have a smell similar to other such installations on farms.
23. The turbines themselves are noisy, but they are contained within a well-insulated building. Extractor outlets also produce a noise which might carry; but the proposed layout would place buildings between these and any potential residential receptors in the settlement of Oulton Street.

Character of the Area

24. The surrounding area is rural and largely agricultural in character. The immediate surroundings include a number of extensive agricultural buildings, including the adjacent cluster of turkey sheds and, not far beyond, the buildings of the agricultural depot. From the site boundary, other large farm

buildings are visible. The proposed anaerobic digestion plant would be marginally higher than these, but any visual impact would be lessened by the adjacent tree belt and, from the available viewpoints, perspective would have the effect of reducing its apparent height.

25. The site occupies part of a former airfield. The National Trust claims that this is a heritage asset; and also cites links with the Grade 1 Listed Building of Blickling Hall. The Hall is separated from the site by several kilometres and by intervening woodland: so that the proposal would have no visual impact upon it. As for the airfield, though the turkey sheds have been built upon parts of it, the runway layout continues to be reflected in the arrangement of field boundaries and tracks, and is clearly visible in aerial photo representation. The appeal proposal would not interrupt that layout, but would occupy one of the fields. No evidence has been submitted sufficient to demonstrate that the appeal proposal would interfere irreparably with the historical authenticity of the airfield.

Renewable Energy Policy

26. The proposed biogas plant would generate clean, renewable energy from local biomass: sufficient energy (electricity) for around 4,000 homes. The Framework states clearly, at paragraph 97, that *to help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy, local planning authorities should recognise the responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable or low carbon sources;* and at paragraph 98 that *they should recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions.*
27. In this case the Council has, in its approach to the proposal, complied with the requirements of the Framework, and has acknowledged the contribution of the proposal to providing renewable energy. The Council has granted planning permission for other such developments locally, including those put forward and operated by the current Appellant. However, in stating that *local planning authorities should ... approve the application (unless material considerations indicate otherwise) if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable,* the Framework necessarily and appropriately qualifies its encouragement for renewable energy development. The Council's refusal of the current proposal is based upon the impacts of the traffic generated by it, and to that extent the proposal would not comply with the provisions of the Framework.

Overall Conclusion

28. Whilst some relevant matters are in favour of the proposal or at least neutral in their effect upon it, these are both individually and collectively insufficient to outweigh the conclusion based upon consideration of the main issues: which is, on balance, that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Holland

INSPECTOR

APPEARANCES

FOR THE APPELLANT:

Mr Trevor Ivory	Solicitor, of Howes Percival, Norwich
Mr Alan Presslee	of Cornerstone Planning Consultants, Cringleford
Dr William Mezzullo	Associate Director, Project Development at Future Biogas
Mr Jon Myhill	of Future Biogas
Mr Adrian James	Noise Consultant, of Adrian James Acoustics Ltd, Norwich

FOR THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:

Ms Ruth Sainsbury	Senior Planning Officer, Broadland DC
Mr Graham Parry	Noise Consultant, Accon UK Ltd, Aldermaston
Mr John Shaw	Senior Highways Engineer, Norfolk County Council
Cllr Claudette Bannock	Councillor (Taverham South ward), Broadland DC

INTERESTED PERSONS:

Mr Paul Killingback	Chair, Oulton Parish Council
Ms Alison Shaw	Former Chair, Oulton Parish Council
Mr Sam Booker	Local resident, Oulton Street
Ms Anne Roy	Local resident, of The Old Railway Gatehouse

DOCUMENTS

Documents submitted by the Appellant

- 1 Appeal Decision APP/K2610/A/13/2195384 Reepham Road, Felthorpe
- 2 Completed S106 Planning Obligation by Saltcarr Farms Ltd and Black Bridge Energy Ltd