

From: [REDACTED]@oversealparishcouncil.gov.uk
To: [Oaklands Farm Solar](#)
Subject: Further Submission Deadline 5 NSIP Oaklands Solar Project Open Hearing 22/10/24 representations as requested by the Planning Inspector
Date: 30 October 2024 21:20:05
Attachments: [Speech to Oaklands NISP Inspector's Meeting 22nd October 2024.doc](#)
[Overseal Parish Council Report on the A444 - DRAFT 2.doc](#)

Good Evening Sir,

I now attach my speech from the Open Hearing and the Overseal Parish Council Report on the A444, which I mentioned in my speech. You will note that the Report is still draft and not all annexes are complete. I have included amendments agreed at our residents meeting on 17th October, some amendments are still coming in. I expect the report to be finalised and agreed at our next Parish Council Meeting on 7th November.

You asked about equestrian numbers in the area. Sadly neither the British Horse Society nor the major equine veterinary practice in the area were able to give me firm horse numbers, so I have gathered numbers from friends in the area, as follows:

Overseal 39 (Church Farm 2, Valley Road 3, Lullington Road 3, Drift Farm 2, Green Lane 10, Sealwood Lane 6, Shortheath Farm 8, Shortheath Lane 1, Linton 4)

Grangewood 70 (Seal Brook Farm Livery 23, Grangewood Livery 20, Woodside Farm Livery 15, Hunts Lane 2, Botany Bay 10)

Lullington 42 (Lullington 7, Borough Fields 15, Edingale 20)

Coton 36 (Lullington Road 6, Church Road 10, Burton Road 2, Coal Pit Lane 3, Crafty Flats 15)

Rosliston 16

So at least 203 horses in the area in total and in many parts there is no off road riding.

The British Horse Society Figures for 2023 show a total for the country of 3345 horse/road incidents, which included 50 horse deaths and 3 people killed. They also calculate that each horse owner contributes £6887 to the local economy - so £1,398,061 in the area impacted by the Oaklands Solar Project.

Finally, I would like to bring your attention to yet another BESS planning application (Application ref. DMPA/2024/1131) this time at Overseal. If this goes ahead it will add still more to the cumulative traffic impact on the A444.

Regards,
Ann Hughes,
Chair, Overseal Parish Council.

Good evening. I am Ann Hughes, Chair of Overseal Parish Council and speaking on behalf of the residents of Overseal. If it helps, I will forward you a copy of my speech.

Overseal is not in the immediate vicinity of this proposed infrastructure project but we believe that as a village we will be significantly adversely affected by it, primarily due to the increased traffic that it would cause. I am surprised that there has been no official consultation with us, or consideration of the impact on our Main Street, indeed there is no mention in any of the traffic routes of vehicles coming through our Village. Overseal was a mining village but has been transformed through the National Forest and Black to Green Project so that many of its local employment opportunities are now in tourism, hospitality and outdoor recreational activities.

We are in favour of solar power but it needs to be in the right place. Recognising that there is easy access to the National Grid at Drakelow, then solar panels should have been a requirement on every house, and other buildings, being built as part of the new estate there; put them over car parks, with easy charging for electric vehicles; on factory and office roofs; or on brownfield sites: but not on prime farm land.

Whilst we need power, we also need food. Councillor Wheelton has explained far better than I could, how and why this application would take some of the highest quality agricultural land out of production, permanently reducing our ability to feed ourselves.

In addition, its prominent position, the lack of provision for proper maintenance of rural hedges and ditches etc., coupled with the apparent lack of understanding of the range of heritage assets nearby, mean that its impact would be one of huge urbanisation of the area. This is in direct conflict to the recently launched National Forest Vision of being a magnet for tourism, a wide range of attractions, outdoor activities, hospitality and all the associated jobs.

However, there is another reason why this proposal is in the wrong place, and that is one of access, or rather lack of it. Whilst the A38 is part of the Strategic Road Network, the fact that the new bridge over the Trent at Walton has not yet been built – and it is quite possible that it will not be, at least in the foreseeable future - coupled with the weight limits on other Trent Bridges, means that HGV access to this proposed solar farm from the A38 involves going through heavily congested Burton upon Trent. Inevitably this will lead to much more of the heavy construction traffic approaching from the South East and the M42/A42 in particular, which leads me to Overseal's concerns.

Our main concern relates to the further additional traffic that this would place on the A444, which is our village Main Street and bisects the village. Main Street, Burton Road and Acresford Road are all road names for the A444 within the village. The road is fronted by listed buildings, houses, shops, businesses, churches and the Robin Hood Pub. It has to be crossed by children going to and from the village school, older children catching buses to secondary schools, is used by the elderly going to the Post Office to collect their pensions and shop at the village shop, by dog walkers, by cyclists and equestrians on their way to

quieter roads, and off road walking and riding. In summary, a typical rural village Main Street.

In places in Overseal, the A444 is only 6.8m wide and has narrow pavements. We already have lorries coming through that have only a total of 18" spare when they pass one another – that is 6 inches at each side of the road and 6 inches in the middle. Parents are walking their children to school with HGVs passing them with six inches to spare, at 30 mph! We do now have children who refuse to walk to school because of this, and who are now taken to school by car – so much for Derbyshire County Council's promotion of Active Travel and also, with respect, so much for the nation's net zero policies. We have houses with no real off-road parking (ie they use the pavement), vans delivering to houses and businesses, bus stops and currently only one pedestrian crossing, at the traffic lights – we are asking for more, together with more central pedestrian refuges.

There has been a significant cumulative increase in traffic, especially HGV traffic, with the development of Mercia Park at J11 of the M42/A42; the Drakelow development, that has been allowed to continue without the new Walton bridge, meaning that traffic cannot easily use the A38 and uses the A444 in its place; and, the significant additional traffic from the Pallet Network logistics operation in Swadlincote. I consider myself to be a newcomer to the village – I'll soon have lived here 15 years – but even in that time, and specifically over the last couple of years, I have seen a huge increase in the traffic on the A444. It is within easy living memory that my home, Church Farm, on Main Street (the A444) was a working farm, with the farmer herding his cattle along the A444 for milking. I still have horses on my land, and all rides have to begin and end on the A444.

The Parish Council was so concerned that we established a Working Group which has been monitoring traffic levels and the loss of amenity that it is causing. I can send you our Report for information, if that would be helpful. In addition to the noise, pollution, congestion and reduction to our house values, we are now beginning to see changed behaviour as people are driving more, rather than walking, and even dogs not wanting to walk along the road. Our Report commits us to trying to ensure that the situation does not get any worse and is also likely to ask for significant amendments to the A444 which may include:

Additional pedestrian crossings, and/or pedestrian refuge islands

Average Speed Monitoring and reduced speed limits

Re-surfacing the road to reduce noise

In addition to the construction of the solar farm itself, there are several applications for BESSs at or near the site. The construction of these will bring even more heavy traffic into the area.

In the planning documentation, Route 8 is the one which causes concern. It starts at J11 on the M42 and comes up the A444 as far as Acresford. It then goes cross country skirting Netherseal, Grangewood to Coton in the Elms. The route is then not specified, which in

itself is worrying as it has obviously not been assessed. However, for those who are not familiar with the area, these are small country lanes which I would frequently ride along with my equestrian friends. Coton in particular is an inappropriate route for HGVs – I would avoid taking my 7.5 tonne horse box through Coton to get to Catton Park for events, due to the tight corners, narrow lanes and parked cars. One road in Coton does indeed have a 7.5 tonne weight limit on it and police have recently stopped HGVs using it. This being the case, we do not believe that HGVs will use this route.

The alternative, which we believe HGVs will use, is for them to continue up the A444 and go through Overseal. This is what concerns us. Many residents feel very strongly about the situation and some are here this evening to support our aims of ensuring that it is not permitted to get any worse than it already is. We believe that if a route, that avoids our village, is prescribed, that it will be unenforceable and that we will still have to suffer the consequences.

Vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, wheel-chair/mobility scooter users, parents with children, dog walkers, cyclists and horse riders have no facilities to get around the village other than using the A444 with its narrow, and in places non-existent, footpaths. There are no cycle tracks or facilities for horse riders.

However, there is also concern for motor vehicle drivers and passengers. We know that the village and the A444 is built on a warren of mine shafts and tunnels, but as far as we are aware there has not been any investigation as to their current state and capacity to withstand the weight of several 44 tonne vehicles. A major sinkhole did open up on Acresford Road (A444) in the village in 1992 which seriously damaged a listed house and closed the A444 for several weeks. In the last couple of years there have been two smaller sinkholes on Moira Road which meets the A444 in Overseal. In addition the developer of the new Acres Estate in the village had planned to build on the land close to the A444, but was unable to do so because of its instability. Development on the other side of the A444 off Valley Road has also been prevented due to the instability of the land.

The possibility of another major sinkhole opening up with heavy traffic on it is horrifying in its potential for a long-term road closure, serious damage to properties, life-changing injuries and potentially even deaths. At the very least, if the A444 is to be used for this traffic, there needs to be a full survey of its ability to withstand the weight of multiple large HGV vehicles. We now regularly have over 900 vehicles per hour going through the village.

There is no mention of any route from J11 on the M42, other than the original through Coton. We believe this is misleading and would like clarity about what is being proposed and how it would be enforced. Should the proposed routes prove unworkable, can you please ensure that all work stops until a full survey of any new route is undertaken, as a minimum similar to that done for the published Coton route, but also including a detailed structural survey to ensure the A444 through Overseal is safe, if that is to be considered at a later date.

Whatever route was determined, should the proposal go ahead, we need to know what powers and mechanisms are in place to ensure that the agreed route is followed? The proposed financial penalties for vehicles using alternative routes is pointless without a methodology to identify them and enforce the agreed routes.

In conclusion, whilst we support the move to more sustainable energy, this proposal is in the wrong place (taking away valuable food production land) and, currently without appropriate access, as all local bridges across the Trent from the nearest Strategic Road Network road (the A38) have weight restrictions on them except for the two bridges in Burton upon Trent, which many drivers will be unwilling to use due to the traffic delays in Burton. Alternatively, if this project does have to go ahead, it should wait until the new bridge at Drakelow is completed.

Thank you.

Overseal Parish Council

Report on the A444

October 2024



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Introduction

Overseal Parish Council has been concerned at the increasing volume of traffic (especially HGV vehicles) on the A444, which bisects the village, and has established a Working Group to address the issue. (See Annex A for membership) Many residents feel very strongly about the situation and the Robin Hood helpfully hosted a public meeting for all views to be heard.

There seems to be general agreement that the key issues are noise, volume and speed, with concern also being expressed regarding air quality and environmental impacts. However, there are also voices supporting the jobs that some of the developments causing the increases provide, and the view that the A444 is an A road, so “what do people expect”. We have data (see Annex B) supporting these issues, and also information on the classification of roads and their intended capacities (Annex C). However, we also want to demonstrate the impact that this has on our residents. We therefore include a number of Case Studies in Annex D. These are anonymised for publication but have all come from Overseal residents.

There are a range of potential solutions suggested. However, these can be split into “aspirational” outcomes such as a by-pass and/or down-grading of the road, and activities that might be achievable in the shorter/medium/long term, such as better road surfacing and lower speed limits.

The Parish Council is determined to address this issue with the County Council, which is responsible for highways. However, we are aware that we need to build our case on firm evidence, anticipate and counter any objections, and will have to fight hard for the funding to be spent on this issue. Residents have therefore all worked together on this very significant task and this Report is the major outcome.

The purpose of this Report is to present our concerns, work, findings and potential solutions to all those affected by, or in a position to influence and/or implement our proposals. In considering these, readers need to be aware of the history of Overseal and how this has led to an extremely welcoming and cohesive village, but one which is determined to protect its nature and rural environment.

Brief History of Overseal

During the early part of the 19th century Overseal was a small village with most employment based on agriculture. There would be the odd artisan bricklayer or woodworker/wheelwright, who built or repaired carts or horse drawn carriages, as well as a village blacksmith. The way of life had probably not changed for centuries, but big changes were on the horizon. The Burton to Market Bosworth turnpike ran through the centre of the village and what was regarded as an asset to village life would 200 years later turn into a nightmare for some. There were no places of worship in the village, the nearest Anglican Church was in Netherseal. St Matthews Church was built in 1840/41 to be followed by Baptist and Methodist churches in the early 20th century. A school was attached to the church in 1875, paid for by the Lord of the manor, it closed around 1954 and pupils transferred to the council school in Woodville Road.

The 1841 census shows a population of just over 500 persons, mainly agricultural labourers, but a new occupation was shown by later census returns as that of a labourer at the coal mine. During the late 19th century housing development was mainly by the Moira Coal Company to provide housing for mineworkers who had to be attracted to the area from other parts of the country. Expansion of the coal industry led to a greater demand for labourers, and by the end of the 19th century Overseal had become a mining village along with Donisthorpe, Measham and the new village of Moira. The railway arrived with a line from Leicester to Burton, coal trains and passenger services operated alongside each other. During the 1920's various bus companies provided transport to Ashby, Burton and Swadlincote, in the 1960's passenger services on the railway were withdrawn. The public health acts of the 19th century demanded sewer systems to be introduced in major towns and cities. As some of the best deposits of fireclay lay within the

boundaries of the South Derbyshire Coalfield a number of manufactories, or 'Pipe Yards' were quickly established providing for the needs of the nation for over a century to come.

Population figures from census returns show a steady growth from the 500 of 1841 to over 2,000 by 1921. Employment was mainly in the coal and clay industries. Shops in the village provided for all our daily needs, with an occasional trip to Swadlincote or Ashby for other requirements. Salt Brothers shops in Swadlincote were the Harrods of South Derbyshire, if they didn't sell it, it was probably not made. Up until 1877 Overseal was in fact in Leicestershire, a reorganisation moved Overseal into Derbyshire and Measham in the opposite direction. At the start of the 20th century there were three public houses in the village.

After World War 2, housing development was severely restricted due to the effects of mining subsidence. It wasn't until the late 1960's that new council housing was considered. Bailey Avenue was the main development with some infill on Woodville Road and Lullington Road, the latter two developments replaced miners houses known as Green Fortune and White Houses. Most of the private housing developments were towards the end of the 20th century and into the 21st century. Overseal has become an ideal of what village life is in many people's eyes, there are plenty of organised activities for all ages, we are in the Heart of the National Forest with primary education provision of the highest standard.

The National Forest has changed the appearance of the area so much that anyone who hasn't visited since the late 1980's would not recognise the new landscape. In the early 1990's the Ashby Woulds Forum brought together Mining Businesses, Local Councils (including Overseal Parish Council) and local voluntary organisations to find a solution to the high level of derelict land that existed. The early exchanges were very heated with so many different views being put forward. Eventually an agreement was found that allowed 10 years of mineral extraction to take place in return for a high quality restoration of not only the new open cast sites, but to include restoration of the neglected derelict land.

'From Black to Green' was a 21st century lottery funded programme that built on the success of the National Forest, creating signposted areas of historic industrial heritage and highlighting the immense changes that have occurred. Existing trails such as Conkers Circuit and Ashby Woulds Heritage Trail were 'Joined-Up' and Sustrans cycle routes well signposted and promoted. A new group for young people, 'Youth Landscapers Collective' was established as well as 'Heart of the Forest Heritage' to record the industrial history of the area.

Overseal is now blighted by the presence of the A444 – a road that effectively cuts our community in half. Traffic continues to increase in volume causing more delays and damage to the road surface. The Parish Council has been working with residents living along the A444 to carry out vehicle counts and record damage to the road surface and the infrastructure. These surveys will hopefully lead to some improvements that will help improve the quality of life for those living close to this busy road and also for all those who use the road, have to walk along it and/or cross it including children, pedestrians, dog walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

Traffic Volume and Capacity

We have collected data on traffic volumes from a range of sources and our own observations, which initially focussed on HGVs. Some of the other sources include all vehicles and do not necessarily show direction. We have subsequently bought a traffic monitoring camera which identifies HGVs, cars, two-wheelers and pedestrians.

Derbyshire County Council's yearly growth rate report shows average monthly vehicle figures rising from 12,661 in 2014 to 14,298 in 2023 – a 12.9% increase over the nine years, with an understandable dip during the pandemic.

Our own manual count of vehicles over a 24 hour period earlier this year shows 13,140.

Our camera monitored vehicle numbers for the total week commencing Sunday 22nd September and showed over 900 vehicles per hour every day except Sunday, with an estimated total number of vehicles for the week of 82,000. Assuming this was a representative week, it would suggest a huge monthly increase since last year when DCC's September figure was 15,499.

The data is shown in Annex B.

We have also looked at road classifications. These take into account the general description of the road, the speed limits, number of side roads, access to roadside development (properties), parking and loading, pedestrian crossings and bus stops. The A444 is very different from the A42, A511, A50 and A38. It is a two-way single carriageway road with two lanes. It has more than 2 side roads per km (22 in 8.7km), has unlimited access to houses, shops and businesses, unrestricted parking, pedestrian crossings at grade (ie not bridges or sub-ways) and bus stops at kerbside. We believe this puts it in one of the two lowest A road categories. See Annex C for details.

In addition, we have measured the road at the Main Street pedestrian crossing where it is 7.82m and a resident has also measured it at Acresford Road where it is only 6.8m. Depending on the width and final category used, this would give it a maximum capacity of between 900 and 1300 vehicles per hour. Bearing in mind that the Community Speed Watch Group recorded 1007 vehicles between 14.00 and 15.00 on a Wednesday afternoon (hardly a peak time) it is already at, or over capacity.

Speed

The A444 has different speed limits along its length and the village itself includes sections at 30 mph and at 40 mph. Residents of the Acres estate are keen that their access to the A444 should be included within the 30 mph section. It is thought that a single low speed limit would reduce noise as vehicles would not have to brake and then accelerate, although that would still be an issue with the traffic lights in the centre of the village. This would also enable average speed cameras to be used, which have proved successful in Measham.

We were disappointed to hear that Derbyshire County Council (DCC) had again rejected a resident's request for the 40 mph limit to be reduced to 30mph from Rickmans Corner. We are aware that there have been several accidents on that stretch of road, including two fatalities. DCC argue that speed was not necessarily a factor in these accidents, however, any crash, whatever its cause, will do less harm at a lower speed than at a higher speed. The argument that the vast majority of drivers on that stretch of road drive within the current 40 mph speed limit was given as evidence that the speed limit is correct. However, an alternative interpretation of that data is that the majority do not exceed 40 mph because they do not feel it is safe and that they may well comply with a 30 mph limit.

There is a perception that lorries "speed" through the village but a session with the Community Speed Watch Team did not find any HGV vehicles sufficiently over the speed limit to report. In addition, it is thought unlikely that many do exceed the speed limit as they are monitored by the tachographs.

However, we have heard that there are children who are too frightened to walk along the A444, with adults, to go to and from school, because the "lorries are going so fast". So they are being driven to and from school, thus adding further to the traffic. So we then need to consider if the speed limit is too high. At the very least, the 40 limits should be reduced to 30 mph and it is suggested that, bearing in mind the perception of 30 mph being "too fast", we should ask for a 20 mph limit.

Safety

Highways are not just for motor vehicles, we do need to consider all road users.

There have been a number of fatalities on the A444 within Overseal in the last few years, one is too many.

Looking first at vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, including children, wheel-chair/mobility scooter users, dog walkers, cyclists and horse riders: in many places footpaths are too narrow, non-existent and/or change sides of the road. There are no cycle tracks or facilities for horse riders. In order to encourage more “active travel”, facilities for all these road users need to be improved. Pavements could be widened sufficiently to become multi-user tracks, although in many areas this would require the road to be narrowed and in some parts to require a move to alternate direction of flow.

However, there is also concern for motor vehicle drivers and passengers. We know that the area covers a warren of mine shafts and tunnels but as far as we are aware there has not been any investigation as to their current state and capacity to withstand the weight of several 44 tonne vehicles. A major sinkhole did open up on Acresford Road in the village in 1992 Which seriously damaged a house and closed the road for several weeks. In the last couple of years there have been two smaller sinkholes on Moira Road. In addition the developer of the Acres Estate had planned to build on the land close to the A444, but was unable to do so because of its instability. Development the other side of the A444 off Valley Road has also been prevented due to the instability of the land.

The possibility of another major sinkhole opening up with traffic on it is horrifying in its potential for multiple deaths, life-changing injuries and serious damage to properties.

Air Quality

We had a helpful meeting with the District Council regarding the monitoring of air quality and gained a greater understanding of the situation and issues. Monitors are in place and we now have the raw data and understand the manipulations done to meet national criteria. However, these just give monthly averages and not the peaks. We are also still concerned that the monitors are not in the correct positions to monitor the greatest pollution, where traffic is queueing on the A444, and would like to see them moved.

In addition, particulate monitoring is not currently undertaken due to the need for the monitors to have a power supply. However, we understand that the District Council is keen to look further at this and we have volunteered Overseal as a pilot site.

We are aware of several residents who have experienced significant deterioration of their respiratory health as traffic has increased. One of our case studies in Annex D demonstrates the distressing impact that this has had on the individual’s life.

Noise and Vibrations

Vehicles themselves can be noisy, especially when braking and accelerating at the traffic lights. Much of the noise is caused by lorries going over potholes and ironworks where previous repairs have sunk and/or degraded. Ideally the whole road needs resurfacing with material which reduces noise.

The Working Group has reported all potholes/issues on the A444 throughout the village. We know that many residents report potholes themselves and we are keen that they should continue to do so. A number of potholes have now been repaired, including one on Acresford Road. Those still not addressed have

been re-reported and we are asking the County Council to prioritise them. It is disappointing to see that the A444 is not on the recently published DCC list of roads for re-surfacing in 2024-2025.

Noise has increased especially at night, since The Pallet Network operation has been running. This is causing residents distress due to lack of sleep and we were particularly concerned for a young person who was unable to sleep due to the vehicle noise at night in the run up to and during their examinations.

We have undertaken some monitoring of traffic noise levels, with initial results showing disturbingly high kerbside noise for much of the day. The results are included in the Data Annex B.

In addition the increasing number of very heavy vehicles is causing vibrations within houses. These have caused items to fall from their fastenings on the walls and to create additional noise (buzzings) within homes.

Economic Benefits

We are aware of some benefits from some of the developments that are contributing to the increase in traffic, such as employment and accessibility of products. However, there are other economic activities which are in danger of suffering such as tourism, hospitality and outdoor recreation of many types.

The village has transformed itself since the closure of the coal mines. The Black to Green project and the National Forest have done a splendid job in reinventing and enabling residents to live in the renewed rural landscape. This progress must not be lost in the next wave of industrialisation.

It may be that, if this industrialisation is to continue, a bye-pass would be the way forward. However, that is a very long term solution and one which would be likely to bring its own problems by way of reduced farm, national forest and public open spaces, to say nothing of the impact on local wildlife. This is itself, likely to reduce tourism and outside recreational activities/businesses.

Stop it getting Worse

We are fighting against the tide and need to put a halt to any new developments that will increase traffic still further on the A444. We encourage as many residents as possible to help with this. Whenever there is a development consultation and/or planning application we ask everyone who can, to please submit their responses. A lot of objections to proposals will be seen and taken note of – just sheer numbers do matter. We recognise that this is not always easy and endeavour to help by notifying people of forthcoming consultations and providing details of how to object and the deadline, and a form of words that could be used if desired.

We objected to the proposed Mercia Park extension and have expressed the view that S106 funding should be required if the development is allowed to proceed. This would be earmarked for A444 safety improvements such as additional pedestrian crossings and average speed monitoring.

Highways, and especially Highway Safety, were discussed at the Derbyshire County Council Parish and Town Council Liaison Forum in April. There was considerable debate and we were represented at a further meeting in June solely on this matter. It is evident that we are not the only area which feels that insufficient notice is taken of the views of residents when setting speed limits etc. It seems that DCC Highways emphasis is to support motor vehicles rather than vulnerable road users.

We have had telephone discussions with the MD of The Pallet Network (TPN) and attended a meeting at the Pallet Network depot in Swadlincote, along with district Councillors and staff. Suggestions included asking drivers to make greater use of the A511, accessed by the regeneration link road to avoid the centre of Woodville, rather than the A444. It was agreed that a direct e-mail address would be set up at Pallet

Network for complaints. They did have some influence over drivers and vehicles, including vehicle maintenance issues such as squeaky brakes. It was agreed that there would be further meetings but these have not yet taken place and we would like to see them reinstated.

The Parish Council had a stand at Gala Day and residents were able to complete a questionnaire giving their views on the A444 and could volunteer case studies.

There is concern that further logistics hubs (such as Riva and GXO) are opening up, without our seeing any planning applications from them. We are therefore unable to object to the additional traffic that they are putting on the A444. In addition, where routes are agreed that avoid Overseal, there does not appear to be a means by which they can be enforced.

Proposals Table

| Proposals | Short/Medium /Long Term /Aspiration | Would Improve | Any Conflicts/Problems |
|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Avoid Further Development that would increase traffic on the A444 | Short | | We can raise objections to development proposals but it is not our decision. |
| Press for further meetings with Pallet Network and for the agreed actions to be completed. | Short | | |
| Average Speed Monitoring | Medium | Safety | Additional traffic lights/pedestrian crossings |
| Lower Speed Limit to 30mph for whole Derbyshire section, with 20 mph within the Village | Medium | Safety and Air Quality | Ave. speed monitoring |
| Redirect most HGV traffic to the A511 and A5/A38 and away from the A444 | Medium | Safety, Air Quality, Noise and Volume | Difficult to enforce unless we get a weight limit on the A444 |
| Ask SDDC to undertake additional air quality monitoring on the A444 itself | Medium | Air Quality | |
| Provide additional Pedestrian Crossings and | Long | Safety | Air quality, noise |

| | | | |
|---|--------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| refuge islands | | | |
| Traffic Lights at Valley Road/Moira Road/A444 Junction | Long | Safety | Ave. speed monitoring, air quality, noise |
| To re-surface the A444 with noise reducing tarmac | Long | Noise | |
| To have a geological/structural survey of the A444 to determine its ability to cope with 44 tonne lorries and have a weight limit | Long | Safety, Air Quality, Noise and Volume | |
| To have the A444 downgraded | Aspirational | Safety, Air Quality, Noise and Volume | |
| To consider the pros and cons of a by-pass for the Village | Aspirational | Safety, Air Quality, Noise and Volume | Loss of amenity of farm/National Forest land. May allow further development along new road. |

Next Steps

This Report will be published on the village Facebook and distributed to County and District Councillors, our local MP, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the East Midlands Mayor, together with a request for a meeting to discuss it.

We will continue to notify residents of developments and encourage participation in consultations to endeavour to avoid the situation becoming any worse.

ANNEX A - WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

Councillor Bob Cox

Councillor Ann Hughes

Councillor Carole Knight

Mr. Graham Knight

Councillor Steve Sharpe

Mr. Alan Lees

Mrs. Judith Lees

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ANNEX B - DATA

Still to complete

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ANNEX C - CATEGORISATION OF ROADS

The A444 is not part of the Strategic Road Network (SRN), previously known as Trunk Roads, managed by Highways England, it is an ordinary A Road, part of the Primary Road Network (PRN) managed by the County Council; for the section of it we are interested in, Derbyshire County Council. However, none of the Primary Destinations within Derbyshire are served by the A444. It provides a route from Nuneaton (Warwickshire) to Burton upon Trent (Staffordshire), which nowadays could equally well be made by taking the A5 and A38.

Derbyshire County Council* say that they try to keep their roads open and available to all traffic wherever possible. However there are some circumstances where weight restrictions are imposed for environmental or structural reasons. Environmental reasons include:

- to prevent damage to the highway infrastructure (carriageway, footways, street furniture) and buildings
- protect the character and environment of rural areas, villages and residential estates
- manage congestion on our roads
- reduce risks to vulnerable road users, including pedestrians and cyclists

They state that they would not normally consider imposing a weight restriction on A and B classified roads which are generally of a very high quality and are intended to carry large volumes of all types of traffic, including heavy goods vehicles. They also state that all major highway bridges in Derbyshire have been assessed to check that they are capable of carrying full highway loading. The majority of the bridges which failed this assessment have already been strengthened to meet the latest requirements.

However, we are aware that several bridges over the River Trent do have weight restrictions on them that means that heavy vehicles from the A38 need to either go into Burton and use one of the bridges there, or approach from the M42/A42 in the south and use the A444.

We do not know whether assessments have been done on the A444 since the introduction of 44 tonne vehicles on our roads in February 2001 and believe that it is important that they are done due to the warren of old mine-workings, known unstable land and history of sinkholes in the Village.

The Highways Agency advice note TA 79/99 has analysed traffic flows on urban trunk roads in Greater and Outer London to assess the capacities (maximum sustainable flow of vehicles passing in one hour under favourable road and traffic conditions) that can be achieved for different road types and widths.

The tables below are taken from Transport for London's Roads Task Force Thematic Analysis Technical Note 10.

* [Weight limits - roads and highways - Derbyshire County Council](#) – accessed 14/10/2024

| Feature | ROAD TYPE | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| | Urban All-purpose | | | |
| | UAP1 | UAP2 | UAP3 | UAP4 |
| General Description | High standard single/dual carriageway carrying predominantly through traffic with limited access | Good standard single/dual carriageway road with frontage access and more than two side roads per km. | Variable standard road carrying mixed traffic with frontage access, side roads, bus stops and at-grade pedestrian crossings | Busy high street carrying predominantly local traffic with frontage activity including loading and unloading |
| Speed Limit | 40 to 60 mph for dual & generally 40 mph for single carriageway | Generally 40 mph | 30 mph to 40 mph | 30 mph |
| Side Roads | 0-2 per km | More than 2 per km | More than 2 per km | More than 2 per km |
| Access to roadside development | Limited access | Access to residential properties | Frontage access | Unlimited access to houses, shops & businesses |
| Parking and loading | Restricted | Restricted | Unrestricted | Unrestricted |
| Pedestrian Crossings | Mostly grade separated | Some at grade | Some at grade | Frequent at grade |
| Bus stops | In lay-bys | At kerbside | At kerbside | At kerbside |

The highlighted sections apply to the A444 through Overseal. We could not describe the A444 in Overseal as a busy high street, and need to remember that the table was produced for London. However, the A444 is our Village Main Street and as such is used by pedestrians to access village facilities such as the shop/Post Office, the Co-op, the Robin Hood Pub, the chippy, the Churches, bus stops and for children to get to school. The road width is variable, but in places is only 6.8m. The Transport for London document suggests the following capacities (vehicles per hour):

| Width | 6.75m | 7.3m |
|-------------|-------|------|
| UAP3 | 1110 | 1300 |
| UAP4 | 900 | 1140 |

The document does note that the capacity of lower width roads will be significantly reduced by parking and that the lowest widths are unlikely to be suitable for significant volumes of heavy goods vehicles.

ANNEX D - CASE STUDIES

Still to complete

DRAFT