

Local Impact Report for A11/A47 THICKTHORN JUNCTION by South Norfolk Council

Our reference TR010037

Introduction

This Local Impact Report (LIR) has been prepared by South Norfolk Council in accordance with the advice and requirements set out in the Planning Act 2008 (as amended) as, 'a report in writing giving details of the likely impact of the proposed development on the authority's area (or any part of that area)'.

In preparing this LIR the local authority has had regard to the DCLG's *Guidance for the examination of applications for development consent* (2015) and the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note One, *Local Impact Reports* (2012).

The LIR relates to the alterations to the single-lane free-flowing link road connecting the A11 northbound to the A47 eastbound via two underpasses (under the A11 and A47 respectively) and identifies the most relevant policies and the main issues the Council has concerns over.

Details of the proposal

The Proposed Scheme includes:

A single-lane free-flowing road connecting the A11 eastbound to A47 eastbound via two underpasses (under the A11 and A47 respectively).

Improvements to the Thickthorn Junction including:

- Widening the southern section of the Thickthorn roundabout from three lanes to four
- New traffic lights on the approach to and from the junction with the B1172 Norwich Road
- New road signs and road markings throughout the junction
- Removal of the Cantley Lane South direct connections between the A11 and A47 exit slip roads
- A new link road connecting Cantley Lane South with the B1172 Norwich Road to the north and construction of two new bridges. The new link road it will have a 40mph speed limit
- From the Thickthorn junction to Hethersett, a 40mph speed limit on the B1172 Norwich Road and a new junction connecting to Cantley Lane Link road
- Improvements to the junction of Station Land and the A11 eastbound
- A 30mph speed limit on Cantley Lane South
- A new junction connecting Cantley Lane South to Cantley Lane link road
- The existing Cantley Stream and access track will be realigned and one new stream culvert constructed
- A new bridge over the A47 for walkers, cyclists and horse riders approximately 45m east of the existing footbridge (which will be demolished). The bridge will have higher railings to help improve safety for horse riders
- Paths for walking and cycling proposed along the new Cantley Lane link road giving access to local amenities and links to other recreational routes
- Access to the Park and Ride from the Cantley Lane link road for walkers and cyclists

Relevant Planning history

Hethersett:

2011/1804 – Land north of Hethersett Village Centre, Little Melton Road., Outline planning for residential led mixed use development of 1196 dwellings and associated uses including Primary School, Local Services (up to 1,850 sq. mtrs (GIA) of A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, D1 & B1 uses) comprising shops, small business units, community facilities/doctors' surgeries, sports pitches, recreational space, equipped areas of play and informal recreation spaces. Extension to Thickthorn Park and Ride including new dedicated slip road from A11. Approved conditionally.

2015/1059 – Land north of Hethersett Village Centre, Little Melton Road Reserved matters application following outline planning permission 2011/1804/O for road layout. Approved conditionally.

2015/1594 – Phase A1-A Land north of Hethersett Village Centre, Little Melton Road Residential development of 95no dwellings with associated open space and infrastructure. Approved conditionally.

2015/1681 - Land north of Hethersett Village Centre, Little Melton Road Reserved Matters for appearance, layout, scale and landscaping of the first phase of development for 126 dwellings in relation to outline permission 2011/1804. Approved conditionally.

2016/2230 - Land north of Hethersett Village Centre, Little Melton Road Reserved Matters following planning permission 2011/1804 (Mixed Use Development) - Structural Landscaping. Approved conditionally.

2017/0151- Land north of Hethersett Village Centre, Little Melton Road Reserved matters following outline planning permission 2011/1804/O - proposed residential development (phase A1-B) comprising 91 dwellings including 20% affordable housing and associated open space and infrastructure. Approved conditionally.

2017/1104 - Land north of Hethersett Village Centre, Little Melton Road Reserved Matters Application following 2011/1804/O for phase B1-B - appearance, layout, scale and landscaping for 107 dwellings. Approved Conditionally.

2018/2326 - Land north of Hethersett Village Centre, Little Melton Road, Reserved matters application for proposed residential development (phase A2) comprising 181 no. dwellings. Including 20% affordable housing and associated open space and infrastructure following 2011/1804. Approved conditionally.

2018/2326 - Land north of Hethersett Village Centre, Little Melton Road, Reserved Matters following outline planning permission 2011/1804 for detailed structural landscaping to areas SL9, SL10, SL11, SL12 & SL13. Approved conditionally.

2021/0758 - Land north of Hethersett Village Centre, Little Melton Road Outline planning application (all matters reserved) for an 'uplift' of up to an additional 200 dwellings (market and affordable units) on Parcels A4 (part) and B4 of Phase 4 of the Hethersett North village expansion area (subject of approved planning consent 2011/1804/O). Pending consideration.

2021/1965 - Land north of Hethersett Village Centre, Little Melton Road Reserved matters following outline planning permission 2011/1804 for residential development (Phases A3 & A4) comprising 200 no. dwellings including 20% affordable housing and associated open spaces & infrastructure. Pending consideration.

Wymondham:

2011/0505 – Land North of A11, Silfield Road, Outline planning permission for proposed development to include up to 500 dwellings, Community facilities, site infrastructure including new access roads, public rights of way and drainage, green infrastructure including public open spaces and structural landscape planting. Approved conditionally.

2015/1280 - Land North of A11, Silfield Road, Phase 1 development for 10 dwellings including site Infrastructure, drainage and green infrastructure following outline planning permission 2011/0505. Approved conditionally.

2015/1649 - Land North of A11, Silfield Road, Reserved matters for 129 dwellings with details for Appearance, Landscape, Layout and Scale. Approved conditionally.

2015/1760 - Land North of A11, Silfield Road, Reserved matters for proposed development for 90 new dwellings including parking, garages, road infrastructure, drainage and green infrastructure. Approved conditionally.

2015/1766 - Land North of A11, Silfield Road Reserved matters application following outline planning permission 2011/0505/O for road layout. Approved conditionally.

2015/2380 - Land North of A11, Silfield Road Reserved matters for Proposed development for 150 new dwellings including parking, garages, road infrastructure and green infrastructure. Approved conditionally.

2016/2557 - Land North of A11, Silfield Road Reserved matters following planning permission 2011/0505 - Public open spaces, green infrastructure and structural Landscaping. Approved conditionally.

2016/2586 - Land North of A11, Silfield Road Reserved Matters following Outline permission 2011/0505 - Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale for 121 Dwellings. Approved conditionally.

2012/0371 - Land To The East And West Of Rightup Lane. Outline planning permission for Mixed use development of up to 730 dwellings, up to 128 bed care home / homes (in one or two buildings), up to 250 square metres of retail / commercial floor space, a new primary school together with all other associated temporary and permanent infrastructure and green infrastructure, including new access arrangements, sports pitches, allotments and community orchard. Approved conditionally.

2015/2168 - Land To The East And West Of Rightup Lane, Reserved Matters for Phase 1 of development following planning consent 2012/0371 - Development of 153 Residential Dwellings, Access, Public Open Space and associated Infrastructure. Approved conditionally.

2020/2434 - Land To The North And South Of Rightup Lane, Reserved matters following outline permission 2012/0371/O for the construction of vehicular and pedestrian access points, network of pedestrian and cycle routes, informal public open spaces, formal sports provision, play spaces, location of pumping station, biodiversity measures, strategic planting and grassland, allotments, orchard and sustainable drainage ponds, basins and swales. Pending consideration.

2021/0054 - Land To The East And West Of Rightup Lane Reserved Matters application following outline planning permission 2012/0371/O for the erection of 33 dwellings. Pending consideration.

2021/0055 - Reserved matters following outline planning permission 2012/0371/O for the erection of 219 residential dwellings. Pending consideration.

2021/0125 - Land To The East And West Of Rightup Lane Reserved Matters application following outline planning permission 2012/0371/O for the erection of 231 dwellings. Pending consideration.

Cringleford:

2013/1793- Land South-west Of Newfound Farm, Colney Lane, Outline planning permission for a development for up to 650 dwellings together with a small local centre, primary school with early years facility, two new vehicular accesses off Colney Lane, associated on-site highways, pedestrian and cycle routes, public recreational open space, allotments, landscape planting and community woodland. Approved conditionally.

2018/1389 - Land South-west Of Newfound Farm, Colney Lane, Reserved Matters details for phase 1 relating to the internal spine road with associated drainage infrastructure and landscaping (Outline Planning Permission 2013/1793). Approved conditionally.

2018/2200 - Land South-west Of Newfound Farm, Colney Lane, Reserved Matters details of appearance, layout, landscaping and scale of 650 dwellings with a local centre, land for educational use, associated on-site highways, pedestrian and cycle routes, public open space, play space, allotments and community woodland. Approved conditionally.

2013/1494 - Land East Of A47, West Round House Way And North Of A11; And Land To The South Of A11 To The East Of A47 And West Of Cringleford, Outline planning application with all matters reserved (save access) for the creation of up to 650 residential dwellings (use class C3), up to 2,500 sq mtrs of use class A1, A2, A3, A4, A5 and D1 floorspace, together with highways works, landscaping, public realm, car parking and other associated works. Refused, Appeal Allowed.

2017/0196 - Land East Of A47, West Round House Way And North Of A11; And Land To The South Of A11 To The East Of A47 And West Of Cringleford, Variation of conditions 5, 6, 11, 28, 35, 36, 37 and 38 of permission 2013/1494 (Outline planning application with all matters reserved (save access) for the creation of up to 650 residential dwellings (use class C3), up to 2,500 sq mtrs of use class A1, A2, A3, A4, A5 and D1 floorspace, together with highways works, landscaping, public realm, car parking and other associated works.) - to facilitate greater flexibility in the delivery of the scheme. Approved conditionally.

2017/2120 - Land East Of A47, West Round House Way And North Of A11; And Land To The South Of A11 To The East Of A47 And West Of Cringleford Variation of conditions 1, 3, 4, 7, 10, 13, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 33, 36, 38, and 39 following application 2017/0196 which relates to - (Outline planning application with all matters reserved (save access) for the creation of up to 650 residential dwellings (use class C3), up to 2,500 sq mtrs of use class A1, A2, A3, A4, A5 and D1 floorspace, together with highways works, landscaping, public realm, car parking and other associated works.) - to facilitate the development coming forward on a phased basis. Approved conditionally.

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2018/2404 - Land East Of A11 And North And South Of Round House Way, Reserved matters application for appearance, landscaping layout and scale following outline

permission 2017/2120 for the first section of access road and 7 dwellings with associated landscaping. Approved conditionally.

2018/2835 - Land North Of A11 & South West Of Round House Way, Reserved Matters application for appearance, layout, scale, landscaping and access road following outline permission 2017/2120, comprising 203 dwellings for the southern development parcel phase 2. Approved conditionally.

2018/2836 - Land North Of A11 & South West Of Round House Way, Reserved Matters application for appearance, layout, scale, landscaping and access road following outline permission 2017/2120, comprising 90 dwellings for the northern development parcel phase 3. Approved conditionally.

Big Sky Developments

2018/2783 - Area BS1 South Of Newmarket Road, Reserved Matters details of appearance, layout, scale and landscaping following outline permission 2017/2120, for RM-APP-1 comprising 67 dwellings together with associated landscaping and infrastructure. Approved conditionally.

2018/2784 - Area BS2 South Of Newmarket Road, Reserved Matters details of appearance, layout, scale and landscaping following outline permission 2017/2120, for RM-APP-2 comprising 79 dwellings together with associated landscaping and infrastructure. Approved conditionally.

2018/2785 - Area BS3 South Of Newmarket Road, Reserved Matters details of appearance, layout, scale and landscaping following outline permission 2017/2120, for RM-APP-3 comprising 62 dwellings together with associated landscaping and infrastructure. Approved conditionally.

2018/2786 - Area BS4 South Of Newmarket Road, Reserved Matters details of appearance, layout, scale and landscaping following outline permission 2017/2120, for RM-APP-4 comprising 56 dwellings together with associated landscaping and infrastructure. Pending consideration.

2018/2787 - Area BS5 South Of Newmarket Road, Reserved Matters details of appearance, layout, scale and landscaping following outline permission 2017/2120, for RM-APP-5 comprising 23 dwellings together with associated landscaping and infrastructure. Pending consideration.

2018/2788 - Area BS6 South Of Newmarket Road, Reserved Matters details of appearance, layout, scale and landscaping following outline permission 2017/2120, for RM-APP-6 comprising 21 dwellings together with associated landscaping and infrastructure. Pending consideration.

2018/2789 - Area BS7 South Of Newmarket Road, Reserved Matters details of appearance, layout, scale and landscaping following outline permission 2017/2120, for RM-APP-7 comprising 42 dwellings and approximately 500 sq metres of commercial floorspace, together with associated landscaping and infrastructure. Pending consideration.

2018/2790 - Area BS8 South Of Newmarket Road, Reserved Matters details of appearance, layout, scale and landscaping following outline permission 2017/2120, for RM-APP-8 comprising 765 sq metres of commercial floorspace (Use classes A1,A2,A3,A4,A5,D1) together with associated landscaping and infrastructure. Pending consideration

2018/2791 - Area BS9 South Of Newmarket Road, Reserved Matters details of appearance, layout, scale and landscaping following outline permission 2017/2120, for RM-APP-9 comprising of the formal and informal landscaping areas, including areas for formal sport pitches and a sports pavilion, and associated infrastructure. Approved conditionally. **This planning consent is directly affected by the proposed DCO works.**

Relevant development plan policies, supplementary planning guidance etc

The following policies are considered relevant to the consideration of this application (relevant extracts of each policy are attached as Appendix 1).

Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (JCS) adopted in March 2011, amendments adopted January 2014.

Policy 1 : Addressing climate change and protecting environmental assets

Policy 2 : Promoting good design

Policy 5 : The economy

Policy 6 : Access and Transportation

South Norfolk Local Plan (SNLP)

South Norfolk Local Plan Development Management Policies, adopted October 2015

DM3.8 : Design Principles applying to all development

DM3.11: Road safety and free flow of traffic

DM3.13 : Amenity, noise, quality of life

DM3.14 : Pollution, health and safety

DM4.2: Sustainable drainage and water management

DM4.5 : Landscape Character Areas and River Valleys

DM4.6 : Landscape Setting of Norwich

DM4.8 : Protection of Trees and Hedgerows

DM4.9 : Incorporating landscape into design

DM4.10 : Heritage Assets

South Norfolk Landscape Assessment (SNLA) (2001, reviewed and confirmed 2012).

Greater Norwich Local Plan

Also of relevance is the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP). The Plan which covers Broadland, Norwich City and South Norfolk Councils has been submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination anticipated to be undertaken between November and December 2021. It is expected that the GNLP would be adopted in Autumn 2022.

The relevant issues are considered to be as follows:

Highways England propose to upgrade the existing Thickthorn Junction by providing a new free-flowing connector road between the A11 eastbound and the A47 eastbound. The new connector road will re-route traffic away from the junction and flow it under via a new underpass. The existing footbridge over the A47 will also be removed and a new footbridge for walkers, cyclists and horse riders will be provided as part of the Proposed Scheme.

The current Thickthorn Junction results in congestion, frequent delays and high levels of slow-moving traffic particularly during peak hours, at the junction and the roads that feed into it. With planned growth within the existing and emerging Development Plan, together with the consented developments, it is anticipated that these issues would be exacerbated due to the increase in vehicular traffic using the strategic highway network.

The District Council therefore fully supports the principle of the scheme to upgrade the Thickthorn junction. The delivery of the Thickthorn improvement is a significant piece of infrastructure required to enable planned growth and the need to upgrade the junction was established in the Greater Norwich City Deal.

The Council considers that the benefits, in combination with the wider programme of A47 improvements being proposed by Highways England, are considered to include but not limited to:

- Help support economic growth by supporting employment and residential development in a large part of East of England and contribute to national economic growth.
- Reduce delay, congestion and inefficiency.
- Attracting more customers for businesses and attracting new businesses.
- Supporting existing businesses to grow and become more productive and profitable.
- Allowing businesses to invest with confidence.
- Encouraging more visitors to the region.
- Creating more jobs.
- Safer route between communities for cyclist, walkers, horse riders and other vulnerable users of the network.

The importance of these economic benefits are increased in the light of the COVID19 pandemic and the need to support the economy as part of the post pandemic recovery.

Heritage Assets

Policy DM4.10 is relevant to the determination of the proposal.

The Council is broadly happy with the EIA Cultural Heritage Statement chapter. The Council's main concern is the protection of the grade II listed milestone along Norwich Road. The submitted statement indicated the scheme has been designed around retaining this in place and it will be protected during construction, this approach is endorsed.

The scheduled ancient monument to the south is close to the new link road between Norwich Road and Cantley Lane South, however the Council is aware that the applicant has been liaising directly with Historic England and so we would defer to Historic England's view on the matter. Likewise, other archaeological features potentially impacted upon that require assessment, mitigation and consideration in the planning balance in determining the application are being picked up by Norfolk County Council in their representations on the application.

There are some former estate houses next to the lodge on Norwich Road and along Cantley Road South (the latter quite altered) which have not been identified as non-designated heritage assets. The Council does not consider that the impact will be that significant on these properties in terms of heritage significance to make changes to the scheme, however we would question why these are not identified as Non designated heritage assets (NDHAs) at least potential NDHAs as these too have heritage connections.

Landscape and visual impact

The key landscape and visual impacts will result from the construction activity, cuttings and embankments of the main interchange, the new Cantley Lane Link road and overbridges; and the realignment of a short section of Cantley Stream, in respect of the removal/loss of

hedgerows, areas of woodland and individual trees; and the impact on the landscape character and visual amenities of the area. The proposed highway improvement works are located within the C1 Yare Tributary Farmland with Parkland Landscape Character Area. Policies DM4.5, DM4.6, DM4.8 and DM4.9 are relevant in the consideration of the proposal.

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – The Council is satisfied that the work has been undertaken in accordance with the accepted industry guidance. The viewpoints used within this are as agreed with the Council. It was our suggestion that, as the likely master plan was known for the emerging St Giles Park development, that viewpoint 5 might be better positioned on the known extremity of the housing area, but it remained at the PRow. We do not consider that this has significantly affected the findings of the study. The Council does not dispute the findings of the LVIA in terms of the significance of the anticipated landscape and visual effects.

The Council is concerned about the proposed losses of veteran trees and would welcome any further evolution of the proposal to avoid these. The required removal of veteran trees will reduce the local population of these special features, the characteristics of which are valuable for ecological, cultural and landscape reasons. Notwithstanding the description of themes expressed at 7.3.2 of Chapter 7 of the ES, it will be very difficult (if not impossible) to replace these trees with ones of a similar amenity.

The scheme appears to have differentiated between ‘important’ and other hedgerows (as defined by the Hedgerows Regulations. Seemingly only one short section of ‘important’ hedgerow is proposed to be removed as part of the current proposals and the Council does not contest this.

Noise, Pollution and lighting

The key noise, pollution and lighting considerations are the impacts of the construction of and the operation of the proposal on the amenities on local residents (including future residents of dwellings not yet built/occupied but having a valid planning permission) in respect of air quality, water quality, noise and vibration, light pollution etc as follows:

- Construction Phase - particularly:
 - Air Quality
 - Dust from construction operations
 - Increased traffic emissions as a result of construction operations e.g. traffic congestion and traffic diversions.
 - Noise and vibration from construction works including traffic congestion and traffic diversions.
 - Lighting – it is assumed lighting will be required for the construction operations
- Operational Phase – particularly:
 - Air Quality – any increase in traffic emissions at residential premises (including future residents of dwellings not yet built/occupied but having a valid planning permission) as a result of the proposal once completed.
 - Noise and vibration – any increase in noise and vibration at residential premises (including future residents of dwellings not yet built/occupied but having a valid planning permission) as a result of the proposal once completed.
 - Lighting – it is assumed lighting will be required for the proposal once completed which could be at a significant height relevant to neighbouring residential premises (including future residents of dwellings not yet built/occupied but having a valid planning permission).

Policy DM3.13 and DM3.14 are relevant to the consideration of the proposed development.

The Council considers that the documentation would indicate that the proposal could take place (both the construction and operational phase) without an unacceptable impact on residents, if managed and operated appropriately.

In view of the above, with regards to specified works to be undertaken issues relating to Control of Noise, Air Quality, Artificial Light, Waste Management, Pollution Prevention, Contamination Assessment and Mitigation and Working Hours, it is noted that Requirement 4 of the draft DCO requires an Environmental Management Plan which in turn includes a Construction noise and dust management plan and a Construction communication strategy. This would go some way to addressing concerns regarding the Construction Phase. The Statement Relating to Statutory Nuisance implies lighting will be managed via the lighting plan and thus it would appear sensible for it to be specifically mentioned in Requirement 4 of the draft DCO.

The Council whilst in general agreement, wishes to be assured that issues relating to hours of operation, siting of any standby generators, good practise procedures, prior notification of constructional noise, floodlighting, movement and storage of waste materials, public safety, dust control and emissions should be in place in the final document. The Council appreciates that the exact wording of the listed documentation/conditions will be subject to further discussion. Arguably the issues relating to the operational phase need to be resolved up front as they may be difficult / impracticable to resolve once any DCO is issued.

Socio-economic and community matters

In general, the Council is supportive of the project, recognising the importance of the delivery of the Thickthorn improvement, as a significant piece of infrastructure required to enable planned growth and the need to upgrade the junction was established in the Greater Norwich City Deal.

The economic benefits in terms of investment and job creation are welcomed.

Consideration of the draft order

With regards to the Draft Development Consent Order, the Council in general terms does not wish to raise any concerns, however there are issues and concerns relating to specific requirements/conditions, in particular requirement 4. The Council wishes to reserve its position due to ongoing discussions with the applicant.