

APPLICATION BY HIGHWAYS ENGLAND FOR AN ORDER GRANTING DEVELOPMENT CONSENT FOR THE A47 NORTH TUDDENHAM TO EASTON

Weston Longville Parish Council Reference:20028094

Comment on D1 Submissions by Highways England and Norfolk County Council

TR010038-00054 9.2 Applicant's response to the Relevant Representations RR.004.1

The Applicant states that further consultation with stakeholders occurred following the statutory consultation in February 2020 which led to changes in the side road strategy. It may well be true that HE listened to the desires of individual lobbying groups however there is no evidence that HE then assessed the impact of implementing those individual lobbying desires on the scheme as a whole, for example the impact on remaining side roads. WLPC believes that the HE decision to include the road closures requested by the South of the A47 Taskforce, Easton Parish Council and Ringland Parish Council in the DCO has resulted in an inequitable distribution of side road traffic (RR-010.5). That is not to say the WLPC opposes the closure of Church Lane in Lower Easton or the need for interim traffic calming measures to mitigate the impact of increased traffic through Ringland if the NWL is delayed or doesn't go ahead. What WLPC does object to is the willingness of HE to make the expedient choice of keeping the B1535 and C167 open as the only direct routes connecting the A47 and A1067 as a result of such lobbying. It will mean that the village centre will be in the same position as Church Lane is now if the NWL is delayed or doesn't go ahead. The only difference is that it could be worse and far more households will be directly affected.

Data collected over the last couple of years show that the 2019 base model is being left behind – the data for traffic going through the centre of Weston Longville in the 2019 model was 2100 vehicles per day, but the NCC measuring of actuals in October of that same year showed 2857 vehicles, an increase of 36%. Data from the speed sign situated in Weston Longville shows that – despite a supposed drop in car use due to the pandemic, the average number of vehicles per day is now (Aug 2021) over 3300 – a 58% rise on the 2019 base line. This rise far exceeds the 'organic growth' rate of 3% per annum and has occurred without any of traffic which will be displaced by the implementation of the A47 dualling.

At no stage did HE consult WLPC about the consequences of the closure of Church Lane or the TTRO on Honingham Lane. Nor was NCC informed before publication of the TTRO proposal. The response in RR.004.1 is further evidence of the Applicant's arms length approach of leaving the responsibility for devising mitigation measure to NCC, despite the fact that the problem has arisen as a direct consequence of the dualling of the A47. Claims to have consulted are seriously overstated.

TR010038-00054 Norfolk County Council Written Representation 4.5.4 and 4.5.5

NCC has been working with WLPC on mitigation measures, although it has shown considerable reluctance to consider any radical proposals WLPC might wish to suggest. At least NCC does recognise in its submission that there is an issue to be resolved. However,

the vagueness and lack of specificity of the response is unsatisfactory. It is an earnest of good intentions rather than the legally binding commitment which in meeting after meeting we have been assured would be contained in the DCO. It is alarming and suggests the kind of fudge which will mean the can be kicked down the road indefinitely with nothing resolved or acted upon. WLPC was promised a joint meeting with HE and NCC back in July, but nothing has happened.

It should be pointed out that, on the basis of modelled numbers alone, Ringland PC were able to successfully get the road closure of Honingham Lane, based on the increase the traffic volumes predicted. For WLPC, the model predicted large volume increases yet any action to mitigate this must wait until the damage has occurred and been physically observed before mitigations are implemented. This would seem to be an inequitable response to similar predicted outcomes.

WLPC urges the Planning Inspector to:

1. Convene an Issue Specific Hearing to examine the process and fairness of the side road strategy should the NWL be delayed or not go ahead.
2. Ensure that the DCO contains a detailed description of mitigation proposals with timescales and trigger points agreed by HE, NCC, WLPC and other relevant parish councils, which will result in a fair distribution of traffic flow across the remaining routes between the A47 and the A1067 if the NWL is delayed or doesn't go ahead.

WLPC

September 12, 2021