

At the compulsory acquisition hearing 2 on Wednesday 3 November and the issue specific hearing 2 on Thursday 4 November, I presented representations on behalf of my client the Food Enterprise Park (FEP) in respect of our desire to construct an adopted road from the western boundary of the FEP to connect to the south-western spur of the southern roundabout shown on sheet 12 of the applicant's Environmental Masterplan – Document ref: TRO10038/APP/6.8.

This issue is also marked as –Hearing Action Point 5' from the Issue Specific Hearing 2 for the applicant to respond to.

I presented at both the hearings that there is a clear need for all vehicular traffic to and from the commercial development at the FEP to be provided with a direct connection onto the grade separated junction/spur road of the A47. This provision of a new road is supported by Broadland District Council, Norfolk County Council, and the local Parish Councils. Without a direct access to the A47 the substantial vehicular traffic, including HGV's, delivery and staff vehicles associated with the FEP, will have no alternative but to manoeuvre through the rural road network. This includes Church Lane, past the listed church into the village of Easton and then gain access onto the A47 westbound by doubling back along the slip road to the southern roundabout. Alternatively, traffic will gain access onto the A47 eastbound, by passing through the centre of the village of Easton; and vice versa.

The FEP is being developed following the designation of a Local Development Order (LDO) covering 19 ha for growth of the agri-food, agri-tech and food and drink production sectors, subject to conditions. The FEP comprises development both operating and under construction, with seven further plots that are currently undeveloped, but it is anticipated these will be developed in the near future. The expectation with the development of the LDO is that all traffic to and from the FEP will achieve a direct access onto the A47, to remove the pressure on the rural road network. Indeed condition 2.20 of the LDO required a scheme of highway works to be agreed. In 2018 a scheme of highways works including widening Church Lane and the closure of Blind Lane was approved. These works are to be carried out once a floorspace trigger of 10,000 m² of development floorspace on the LDO had been completed, or if a high traffic generator is proposed within the LDO, or if direct access to the A47 can be achieved. Therefore, the lack of a direct access onto the A47 is likely to limit the development aspirations of the FEP.

As stated at the hearings, my client has submitted a planning application (ref: 20211335) for the direct vehicular connection onto the south-western spur of the southern roundabout of the A47 shown on sheet 12 of the applicant's Environmental Masterplan, as the applicant's proposals do not include any connection from the A47 to the FEP. The planning application is currently undetermined and although Norfolk County Council Highway Authority has no objections to the proposals, subject to conditions, details raised by other consultees are being dealt with and revised plans will be issued for re-consultation.

We heard at the hearing from the applicant's representative that the proposed A47 design does have adequate capacity to accommodate the vehicular traffic from the FEP. My client's desire is for the applicant's plan to be revised to identify a spur connection onto the proposed grade separated junction to enable the essential direct road connection to the FEP to be provided.

The offer from the applicant's representative to discuss how this could be achieved is welcomed and awaited.