

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

Weston Longville Parish Council Reference:20028094

Deadline 9 Submission Statements of Final Position in respect of matters examined

In truth it feels, after six disappointing and dispiriting months, more like 'matters unexamined'. No changes have been offered by the Applicant in response to our concerns, which related to the side road strategy and the Wood Lane junction. Weston Longville Parish Council (WLPC) are left with no more than a Statement of Common Ground (SCG) between National Highways (NH) and Norfolk County Council (NCC) which does not go far enough to ensure that measurable and legally binding mitigation measures are put in place to reduce the volume of traffic passing through Weston Longville if for any reason the Norwich Western Link (NWL) is delayed or does not go ahead. Our concern is that numbers modelled by both NH and NCC, which do not always agree, already bear little relation to the reality on the ground. If there had been no proposal for an NWL then NH would not have been able to pursue the side road closure decisions they have made without considering the wider implications on the remaining roads and since the NWL is far from a 'done deal', the attitude of NH towards these wider implications appears blinkered.

NH's reluctance to incorporate into the SCG the measures agreed at the joint meeting on October 21st, 2021, is difficult to understand. There is little risk in making the commitment if the construction of the NWL is believed to be certain. It seems that having decided that Weston Longville was an '*unaffected parish*' NH has been unwilling to acknowledge the serious consequences of road closures agreed in a piecemeal fashion with other interested parties.

NCC has offered to provide a letter of commitment to the measures agreed at the meeting between NCC, NH and WLPC. Something for which we are grateful. Nevertheless, it is not unreasonable for a small parish to ask for copper bottomed safeguards when dealing with a large organisation such as NH. However, it seems as far as the DCO is concerned WLPC are reliant on the ExA requiring NH to sign up to a more detailed mitigation statement as a condition of recommending the approval of the DCO. WLPC hopes that the ExA will give this serious consideration.

Ruth Goodall

6 February 2022