

Wansford Parish Council

Comments on D2 Submission by National Highways

TR010039-000523-7.3 Rev2 Transport Assessment

A47 Wansford to Sutton Dualling

1. Introduction

Wansford Parish Council (WPC) has read with interest Revision 2 of the National Highways Transport Assessment for this scheme. This latest version raises a number of concerns about the data used and the method of calculation of some of the results. This note explains these concerns and why they impact the output from the Transport Assessment.

WPC notes that National Highways (NH) continues to refer to Old North Road Wansford as the A6118. This road was reclassified as the C340 in 2017, something that is known to National Highways as they have altered the local road signs. To avoid confusion, WPC refers to this road as Old North Road (ONR).

2. Traffic modelling

WPC does not have the resources to check the main external inputs to the traffic model but they follow a reasonably consistent pattern with steady traffic growth across the network.

The exception to this is the flow shown within Wansford village which show sudden reductions in flows along Old North Road with a halving of traffic between the 2015 base year and the 2025 opening date. It is also noted that in Figure 7-16 the northbound traffic is shown as halving again between the 2040DM case and the 2040DS case. While such a reduction in traffic would be welcomed by the residents, it does not seem plausible.

In Section 7.9.6 it is claimed that traffic will leave Old North Road northbound because it “will find more gaps in the flow”. There is no obvious reason why this should be so and it is much more likely because the number of vehicles looking for a gap has been halved in the modelling assumptions.

The reason given for these reductions are the introduction of a 20mph speed limit in the village in 2018 and traffic diverting onto the A1 northbound via Peterborough Road Wansford. As already stated in the WPC Deadline 2 submission, measurements show that the 20mph limit made little or no difference to the traffic flows. As also discussed in the Deadline 2 submission, diverting via Peterborough Road is unlikely as the entry onto the A1 is very dangerous with no acceleration lane. A random survey of residents shows that no one uses this access onto the A1, something that is supported by the very low traffic count numbers.

Because one of the traffic flows into the Wansford Western Roundabout appears to be incorrect, the modelling of delays at the roundabout has to be open to question.

WPC has raised this issue repeatedly with NH and suggested at the very least they should run a check scenario where traffic levels in Wansford increase in line with all the surrounding traffic. NH has not done this and it brings the whole traffic assessment into question.

One of the reasons why modelling is carried out is to allow the easy testing of alternative scenarios if the traffic forecasts are wrong, as they most certainly will be to some extent. NH has only reported on a single modelling scenario, apparently making no attempt to test the robustness of the scheme to changes in traffic flows.

3. Overall Journey Time Assessments

The main assessment of journey time savings, the main justification for the scheme, has been described in Section 7.4 of the report. The main figures are in Tables 7-5 to Table 7-9.

When these tables are checked, they only consider the journey times from the Wansford eastern roundabout eastwards. They take no account of delays at the western roundabout even though Section 7.6.13 discusses problems at the western roundabout disrupting the flows on the eastern roundabout.

Time savings from the scheme are not useful if they are negated by delays further along the network. Just treating a part of the road in isolation does not give a realistic measure of the economic benefits of a scheme.

Once the traffic modelling on the western roundabout has been sorted out, the travel times along the route should be re-calculated to include the western roundabout. It is suggested that the main A47 flows should be timed from a point 500m west of the western roundabout to the Nene Way roundabout and A1 traffic from the start of the slip road to the Nene Way Roundabout.

4. Travel times

On a much more minor point, Table 7.2 describes a travel time of 4.4 minutes from Wansford Road to the western roundabout of 4.4 minutes. Figure 7.13 shows this journey as being from Elton to the roundabout, a distance of just over 4 miles. As the journey is on a twisty country road, including two stretches of 30 mph limits, the 20mph Wansford limit and the 120m long single track Wansford bridge, this journey time is completely implausible.

As with the use of the Peterborough Road A1 exit, this seems to be an example of someone doing modelling with no knowledge of the real life situation.