

# A47 Wansford to Sutton Dualling

**Scheme Number: TR010039**

## **Volume 9** **9.41 Applicant's Comments on Deadline 9** **Submissions**

Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010  
Rule 8(1)(c)

Planning Act 2008

July 2022

Deadline 10

Infrastructure Planning

Planning Act 2008

**The Infrastructure Planning  
(Examination Procedure) Rules 2010**

**A47 Wansford to Sutton  
Development Consent Order 202[x]**

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**9.41 APPLICANT'S COMMENTS ON DEADLINE 9  
SUBMISSIONS**

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1.1 The Development Consent Order (DCO) application for the A47 Wansford to Sutton Scheme was submitted on 05 July 2021 and accepted for examination on 02 August 2021.
- 1.1.2 The purpose of this document is to set out National Highways' (the Applicant) comments on Deadline 9 submissions.

## 2 WANSFORD PARISH COUNCIL (REP9-017 TO REP9-019)

	Response	Applicant's Response
REP9-017- Comments on Historic England's Responses to the ExA's Additional Questions (ExQ3)		
1	<p><b>Comments on Historic England's Responses to the ExA's Additional Questions (ExQ3)</b></p> <p>In the view of Wansford Parish Council, Historic England's response completely fails to answer the Examining Authority's clearly worded question.</p> <p>Historic England is well aware that there is a possible route for the upgraded A47 through the southern part of the Scheduled Monument that does not impinge on any of the recognised features on which the scheduling is based. Using this alignment actually leaves a greater clearance to the main features of the Monument than the scheme proposed by National Highways. Clearly this alignment does not do substantial harm to the Monument. It does not "result in the total loss of a number of key burial features that make up the late Neolithic and early bronze age burial cemetery" as claimed by Historic England.</p> <p>At a meeting between the Parish Councils and Historic England (Highways England were invited to attend but declined) held in Cambridge on the 23rd January 2020, Historic England stated that they had not carried out a spatial analysis of the features of the Scheduled Monument and instead had relied on the work done by Wansford Parish Council. That work resulted in the Alternative Visions document, as already seen by the Examining Authority, which was displayed by Historic England at the meeting. Having the Alternative Visions document in their possession, and having accepted its contents sufficiently to rely on it, it is very difficult to see how Historic England can make the statements that are in their response. Either they have not researched the matter</p>	<p>The Applicant has addressed comments relating to the location and extent of the Scheduled Monument in previous submissions, including, but not limited to the Applicant's response to Issue Specific Hearing (ISH2) Points 3.1 – 3.3 within the Applicant's Written Summary of Oral Submissions at Hearings (<b>REP4-018</b>); the Applicant's Response to Wansford Parish Council Point 3.1, within the Applicant's Response to Written Representations (<b>REP3-026</b>); and the Applicant's Response to Wansford Parish Council Point 5 within the Applicant's Comments on Deadline 7 Submissions (<b>REP8-026</b>). Please also see Historic England's submissions into the Examination <b>REP2-074</b>, <b>REP2-075</b> and <b>REP8-037</b>.</p>

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	<p>properly or they are deliberately trying to avoid giving a detailed response.</p> <p>Throughout the development of the A47 dualling scheme, Historic England have shown a curious lack of interest in the contents of the Scheduled Monument. As an example, when they reviewed the boundaries, following a request from Highways England, they actually excluded an area from the east side of the monument which both the aerial photographs and the geophysical survey show to contain a number of interesting features.</p>	
<b>REP9-018 - Comments on the Applicant's Response to the ExA's Recommended Amendments to the Draft Development Consent Order Document 9.37</b>		
1	<p>In response to the Examining Authority's recommendations that Wansford and Sutton Parish Councils should be included in consultations about further stages in the scheme, the Applicant wrote:-</p> <p>"The Applicant resists consultation with the parish councils not only due to concerns about delay, as has been noted by the ExA, but also on the basis that parish councils often do not have the administrative resource and are therefore not equipped and do not have the required expertise to consider details to be approved. Also, where practicable, the relevant highway or planning authority may seek the views of parish councils. In no other circumstances, such as the grant of planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act regime, are parish councils usually named on the face of planning certificates to approve details. Moreover, neither the M25/J8 DCO nor the M54/M6 DCO have reference to parish councils being consulted."</p> <p>This response displays a complete disregard for the contribution that the two Parish Councils have made to the development of the</p>	<p>The Applicant has correctly consulted with Wansford Parish Council, Sutton Parish Council and Historic England, both informally and formally throughout the development of the Scheme. Details of consultation are set out in the Consultation Report (<b>APP-023</b>) and its Annexes (<b>APP-024 – APP-038</b>).</p> <p>The Applicant has continued to engage with Wansford Parish Council throughout the Examination through its responses to comments at various deadlines and also through the development of a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) (<b>REP8-021</b>).</p> <p>As stated on page 36 of Applicant's Comments on Deadline 4 Submissions (<b>REP-019</b>), the Applicant will continue to engage with the parish councils throughout the detailed design and construction of the Scheme.</p> <p>However, it remains inappropriate and unprecedented for parish councils to be formally consulted in the context of a</p>

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	<p>scheme so far. The two Parishes have provided a level of continuity that Highways England/National Highways have been unable to manage (see reference to the alignment selection meeting in 2017).</p> <p>National Highways have no knowledge of the administrative resources or the expertise available to the Parish Councils and yet they use this as the basis for resisting the Examining Authority's recommendation. Both Parish Councils have shown that they can draw on expertise that on occasion has been demonstrated to be better than that used by National Highways. The communities that the Parish Councils serve are full of very highly qualified people working for a number of major consulting engineers, contractors and public bodies. The Parish Councils regularly draw on this pool of expertise.</p> <p>There is a distinct similarity between the National Highways approach to this as to that shown earlier when the Parishes were excluded from meetings with Peterborough City Council, the Environment Agency and Historic England on the basis that the meetings were for "professionals". In reality the team that the Parishes would have fielded had better professional qualifications than the Highways England team of that time. Had the Parishes been included in those meetings, many of the disagreements that are still going on could have been avoided.</p> <p>Reference is made to the ability of the Highway Authority to consult the Parish Councils. In this case, Peterborough City Council is under considerable financial stress and they are therefore seeking to pass as much as possible out to the Parish Councils.</p> <p>With regard to precedents for including the Parish Councils, it is Government Policy that all planning and development matters</p>	<p>DCO. In respect of these further comments, the Applicant notes that parish councillors are elected, and therefore there are no assurances as to what asserted expertise a particular parish council may have at any particular time. For the avoidance of doubt, there is no statutory or policy provision which indicates that Government policy is for parish councils to be formal consultees in respect of DCOs.</p>

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	<p>should be dealt with at the lowest level competent within the various tiers of government. Continuing to involve the Parish Councils is exactly in line with that policy and can be seen as an evolution of the earlier DCOs.</p> <p>One reason for the Parish Councils wanting to remain involved is that National Highways' predecessors have a very unfortunate track record of going back on agreements made earlier when they got to the detailed design stage. In Wansford this resulted in a direct complaint to the Secretary of State and a considerable amount of rework to a scheme that was close to completion.</p> <p>The two Parish Councils request that the Examining Authority continues with his wish to include the Parish Councils in the next stages of consultation.</p>	
<b>REP9-019 - Comments on the Applicant's Responses to the ExA's Additional Questions (ExQ3) Section 3.4.1 Scheduled Monument North of A47</b>		
1	<p>It is not surprising that National Highways cannot find information from a meeting in 2017. The Wansford to Sutton section of the A47 upgrades is now on its fourth set of design consultants and its third project manager. Such lack of continuity inevitably degrades the overall scheme development and leaves the current project manager in a very difficult position.</p> <p>The Applicant's response is full of general comments and makes no specific reference to the actual features of the Monument. These features are very well displayed in a geophysical survey commissioned by the Applicant in 2017.</p> <p>The document Alternative Visions written by Wansford Parish Council using outside help and delivered to Highways England in 2018 clearly shows that the road could be constructed through the</p>	Please see the Applicant's Response to REP9-017 above.



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	<p>Scheduled Monument without any work close to any burial mounds referred to by the Applicant.</p> <p>The Applicant claims that "It is very clear that earthworks, disturbance and operational impacts from a road traversing 4.865ha of a scheduled monument consisting of burial mounds could cause complete loss of archaeological artifacts and thus the loss of the significance of the heritage asset". It is not clear exactly what they are referring to as this Scheduled Monument has an overall area of approximately 6.3ha and the area covered by the road is approximately 0.6ha (a corridor 215m long and 27m wide). As the road is close to ground level and on good geology there is no need for disturbance outside this corridor. The monument contains no burial mounds as it is a level field. It does contain the remains of ring ditches and possible mounds but none of these would be touched by the alignment through the Monument.</p> <p>It is very difficult to see how an alignment that does not touch any of the features of a Scheduled Monument can be described as doing substantial damage.</p>	