

Sutton Parish Council

<http://www.suttonparishcouncil.gov.uk>

Parish Clerk: Mrs D McCumiskey



Email: clerk@suttonparishcouncil.gov.uk

21st December 2022

The Rt Hon Richard Holden MP
The Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 4DR

Dear Minister,

Application by National Highways for an Order granting Development Consent for the A47 Wansford to Sutton Project

As a parish we will be directly affected by this project and as an adjacent parish to Wansford we totally support in principle the comments and statement made in their letter to you dated 4th December 2022.

Wansford and Sutton parish councils have worked closely together in trying to get the best for this project, which we totally support. We have tried to work closely with National Highways since the start of the project and have freely shared local knowledge.

The geo-technical risks now acknowledged by National Highways, which is locally known as the Wansford Slip, was highlighted to NH in 2017 and should have been taken more seriously from the start. Historical knowledge of construction slippages towards the river of the Anglian Water pumping station and BP garage reinforced the seriousness of construction risks so close to the river and what we know as a limestone shale edge. Both structures needed substantial remedial groundwork reconstruction to prevent further slippage which seemed to be ignored in both the route alignment and identified risks. To raise it at this stage and to quote changing the slope and putting hard structures at the toe with all the environmental impact it will cause is frankly unacceptable.

We recognise there are some obvious factors which create limitations as to what can be done such as the SSSI (Sutton Heath), River Nene, County Wildlife Site and Scheduled Monument. However the intransigence of Historic England, despite significant pressure and input from the two parish councils, has limited the alignment for NH away from the river which has a significant impact on the project as we now know. Why has the engagement by National Highways to Historic England been so one sided, Historic England seem to have all the power. We heard during the Planning Inspectors consultation phase that archaeological opinion as to the value of the "Barrow" in the southern part of the monument site strongly differs and until recently was an arable field with annual deep ploughing. Further encroachment into the field is an obvious solution and would enable the profile of the road at the mid-section to be aligned further from the river and slippage risk. This clearly would dramatically reduce the risks now acknowledged by National Highways and potentially save millions of taxpayer funding.

In the constructive manner in which we have always tried to engaged with National Highways and the project, we respectfully request and suggest the following:

1. Strong engagement with Historic England at Ministerial level.
2. Eastern section alignment remains as it is proposed with connectivity improvements for Upton.
3. Western end roundabout poses a specific problems which disappointingly have not been addressed as part of this project. To take full advantage of the benefits of this project should be addressing asap.
4. Mid-section, should be aligned as far north as possible whilst minimising the potential land loss to the current owner.
5. Historic England should be challenged to give land as appropriate to sensibly align the road.

The above action should result in:

Dramatically reduced geo-technical risks

Significant saving to the taxpayer

Further reduce the impact on the County Wildlife Site and river valley environment.

Now National Highways have acknowledged the risk, we sincerely hope that the DCO submission will be approved with conditions that the above issues will be sensibly resolved and acted upon.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Michael Grange

Chairman of Sutton Parish Council

Copy to:

The Rt Hon Shailesh Vara, MP for North West Cambridgeshire

House of Commons

London SW1A 0AA

Ward Councillor: [REDACTED]

Email to: transportinfrastructure@dft.gov.uk - Attn Ms Dominey