

A47 Dualling – Blofield to North Burlingham

On behalf of Lingwood and Burlingham Parish Council.

Response to Highways England's Deadline Submission 2 - WCHR Assessment and Review Revised July 2021. TR010040-000466/EXAM/9.8

It would appear Highways England has produced this document to serve its own purposes. The document includes erroneous statements and omits crucial information which would support our request for a WCHR underpass beneath the A47 and a path to Acle. (Provisions of GG142, Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, acknowledged.)

It seems Highways England still refuses to acknowledge that the settlements at Lingwood, South Burlingham, North Burlingham and Burlingham Green are one community. Together, we are the Parish of Lingwood and Burlingham which straddles the part of the A47 to be dualled. We all share the same identity and the same local facilities which, generally, are based in Lingwood and Acle, and not in Blofield. Our Parish Council is comprised of people from both north and south of the A47. All parish events are designed for the whole community. All that divides us is the A47!

Clause 1.3 - WCHAR study area. (Assumed should read 'WCAHR'.)

Clause 1.3.1 states, “..... *The study area includes the A47, the villages of Blofield, North Burlingham, Lingwood and the small market town of Acle.*

Why, then, has Highways England ignored essential amenities in Lingwood and Acle?

Clause 1.3.1, Fig 1-1 This defines the 5km area around the scheme and highlights the '*proposed route*' of the A47 between Blofield and Acle. It shows the Parish of Lingwood and Burlingham sitting astride the A47 mid-way between the villages of Blofield and Acle.

Whilst the populations of Acle, Lingwood and Blofield are roughly similar in size, the villages are very different in character and purpose. Blofield and Lingwood have only one small local convenience store each, although Blofield has a farm shop on the edge of the village and a few other specialist shops.

In contrast, Acle is much more commercially developed and has far superior facilities. It is the only village in the area with multiple shops and businesses including a supermarket, a chemist shop, many independent shops and a regular farmers' market. Thus, Acle is generally recognised as a 'market town' which serves all the nearby villages including Lingwood and Blofield. Acle is also home to designated educational and medical facilities serving the Parish of Lingwood and Burlingham.

It is difficult to understand, therefore, why Highways England has (literally) removed Acle from the map and continues to insist most local facilities are situated in Blofield.

Clause 2.5.2 Appendix A: WCH facilities and local amenities. (Assumed should read WCHR.) This clause states, '*It can be seen from the drawing that the majority of the local amenities are located within Blofield*'.

Acle has been cut off this map by Highways England and no amenities or facilities in Acle are highlighted. Why not?

Clause 2.4.1

Table 2.1 – Bus stop locations and services.

Why are only bus-stops in Blofield and Acle listed in Table 2.1? Bus stops in Lingwood are closer to North Burlingham but have been omitted from the list.

LISTED - Blofield bus-stops

2.4 miles walking distance approximately from Main Road, North Burlingham, using the proposed northern footpath and crossing the proposed Blofield overbridge (desk-based exercise).

LISTED - Acle bus-stops

3.5 miles walking distance approximately from Main Road, North Burlingham, using the most direct route on the Burlingham Woodland Trails (desk-based exercise).

If walking along the A47, this distance shrinks to 2.3 miles. However, there is no footpath or cycle path along the A47!!!

OMITTED - Lingwood bus-stops.

1.1 miles walking distance approximately from Main Road, North Burlingham, using existing footpaths crossing the A47.

The 15A is an hourly bus service which runs between Lingwood and Wymondham via local villages and Norwich. The bus-stops in Lingwood are within walking distance of North Burlingham but are inaccessible to pedestrians because the A47 acts as a barrier.

Table 2.1 also mentions Lingwood Train Station which serves North Burlingham. Again, the A47 prevents pedestrians from the north of our parish from accessing it.

The approximate walking distances between Main Road, North Burlingham, and the various stations listed in Table 2.1 are as follows (desk-based exercise): -

Lingwood Station - 1.1 miles using existing footpaths over the A47.

Acle Station – 3.5 miles using existing footpaths.

Or 2.1 miles if a footpath/cycle path is provided along the A47.

Brundall Station – 3.3 miles.

Brundall Gardens Station – 4 miles.

Table 2.1 includes details of cycle storage spaces at these stations. This information is academic since, I am assured by local residents, most cyclists from North Burlingham believe the routes to the stations are too dangerous to navigate.

Clause 2.5 - Key trip generators and local amenities.

Table 2.2.

The column headed '*Approximate Location*' is clearly misleading. It gives a distance between the chosen amenity and the nearest point on the A47, but it does not show the distance of that amenity from any named settlement which might depend upon it.

The list of amenities within the prescribed study area is blatantly incomplete. It would seem Table 2.2 is designed to persuade the reader that Blofield is the main provider for the whole area rather than Lingwood or Acle.

Education facilities. (As listed.)

Lingwood Primary Academy is the designated school for ALL primary-age children from our parish, including those north of the A47. (Confirmed by Norfolk County Council Education Department.)

This school is approximately 1.2 miles from Main Road, North Burlingham, using existing footpaths. However, the A47 is a barrier to pupils wishing to walk or cycle to their school.

If the proposed overbridge is used, the distance will increase to approximately 2.3 miles (desk-based exercise). This journey will necessitate travelling beside convoys of HGVs on the overbridge (seasonal). Once across the overbridge, the children will need to dodge the HGVs turning across their path. Then they will face a journey of 1.3 miles along a narrow, dangerous, winding road with blind hairpin bends and no footpath (Acle Road/Lodge Road, Lingwood.). (Please refer to our Deadline Submission 2 for details of HGVs.)

The Compass School is another school south of the A47. However, this is a special school and does not serve the local community in general education.

Blofield Primary School is NOT the designated school for pupils from the parish of Lingwood and Burlingham. (Misleadingly, this school is listed as being 150m south of the A47 (0.09 miles), whereas it is approximately 2.4 miles walking distance from Main Road, North Burlingham.)

Why are pre-school facilities in Blofield listed, but not those in Lingwood or Acle which serve parishioners both north and south of the A47?

No mention is made of Lingwood Nursery, attached to Lingwood Academy.

No mention is made of Tiny Tots play group which meets in Lingwood Village Hall.

No mention is made of Butterflies play group which meets in Lingwood Methodist Chapel.

These parish facilities are all within walking distance of North Burlingham.

No mention is made of any SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

Acle Academy is the designated secondary school for Lingwood and Burlingham and is within the study area. Why is it omitted from the list of schools?

We would appreciate a safe cycle path to Acle from Lingwood and Burlingham so our children can access their secondary education by bike.

Please note - As mentioned in previous submissions made to the Inspector by Lingwood and Burlingham Parish Council, the statutory walking distance between home and school for children under 8 years is 2 miles. Between 8 and 11 years, this increases to 3 miles. (Govt 'Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance, July 2014'.)

Places of worship.

Why are only Church of England facilities listed in Table 2.2?

No mention is made of Lingwood Methodist Chapel which is within walking distance of North Burlingham but inaccessible on foot because of the A47.

No mention is made of the Methodist and Roman Catholic facilities in Acle. (Roman Catholic worshippers from our parish attend services at Acle St Edmund Church.)

Recreational Space.

Why are only facilities in Blofield listed?

No mention is made of Lingwood's Millenium Green which is a large recreational space with a play park, picnic tables, a trim trail, goal posts, dog exercise area and outdoor gym equipment.

No mention is made of Lingwood's sports fields, official park-run track and floodlit multiple use games area.

These are all parish facilities within walking distance of our residents north of the A47, but they are inaccessible to them unless they can drive.

No mention is made of Acle Recreation Centre and Social Club which houses league standard football, cricket and bowls, and which offers multiple indoor and outdoor sporting facilities.

Community building.

Lingwood Village Hall is the hub of our parish. Unlike the other two buildings which are listed in Table 2.2, (both in Blofield!), our Village Hall is open to the community every day and is fully used. It houses a community cafe, licensed social club, mini produce market, weekly car boot sales, a gym, specialist recycling facilities, various clubs and classes, rooms for private hire and organised community events. Again, our parishioners north of the A47 are unable access any of this without a car.

No mention is made of Lingwood Scout Hut.

No mention is made of Lingwood Reading Room.

No mention is made of Lingwood St Peter's Church Hall.

No mention is made of Lingwood Methodist Hall.

Allotment

Why is only Blofield allotment listed?

No mention is made of Lingwood Parish Allotments, some of which are held by North Burlingham residents who need a car to get here.

Library.

Why is only the small library at Blofield mentioned?

No mention made of Acle Library which offers more services than Blofield Library.

Medical facility.

Why is only Blofield doctors surgery listed?

No mention is made of Acle Medical Partnership which serves most of the residents of North

Burlingham and Burlingham Green. (Information supplied by Blofield and Acle surgeries.)

Clause 2.6 - Future trip generators

Clauses 2.6.1/2.6.2 refer to Broadland District Council's Joint Core Strategy, 2011. Again, only Blofield is mentioned and it is suggested very little future development will take place there.

No mention is made of outstanding planning allocations in Lingwood and Acle. (Figures not checked.)

No mention is made of the Greater Norwich Local Plan, 2021, which runs from 2018 – 2038. This is currently with the Planning Inspector and allocates land for development until 2038. Proposed allocations within the study area are as follows:-

Blofield - 316 homes.

Lingwood – 137 homes.

Acle - 540 homes.

This amounts to 993 new homes which are '*likely to be future sources of the WCHR trips*', in contrast to the '*50 houses as a minimum*' mentioned in Clause 2.6.

Clause 2.9 – Site visits and usage information

Clause 2.9.2 acknowledges the '*severance effect*' of the A47.

Clause 2.9.7 - "*During the Sunday survey periods, a maximum two-way flow of 10 users was recorded using Burlingham FP3, the majority of which crossed the A47.*"

Highways England recorded several other people crossing the A47 at other points and other times, which proves pedestrians and cyclists do need to cross the road. Most local walkers and cyclists would not try.

Highways England has ignored a petition signed by over 1,000 people who say they would use an underpass or footbridge if there was one. Also, it would appear Highways England has ignored previous submissions and remarks made to the Inspector by Lingwood and Burlingham Parish Council, by individual walkers and cyclists, and by various interested organisations.

A detour from the point where FP3 meets the A47 to the corresponding point north of the A47 using the proposed overbridge at the B1140 is approximately 2 miles. (Desk-based exercise.) How many pedestrians would (or could) add this distance to their walk through the woods?

Clause 2.9.11 - "*The surveys recorded high usage of Burlingham FP1, which runs north to south from Main Road to the north of North Burlingham, A maximum two-way flow over the 12hr survey period of around 70 users was observed on a weekday whereas the maximum flow on a Sunday was around 90 users.*"

There is a car park at the start of FP1 which would account for the high usage. If some of the people using FP1 had been asked where they had travelled from, Highways England would have learnt that many people from Lingwood like to walk in Burlingham Woods, but we are forced to drive to North Burlingham because we cannot cross our parish on foot!

Several published guides lead walkers across the A47.

Norfolk County Council's official guide to Burlingham Woodland Trails states, “*There are a variety of walks to suit all abilities allowing you to choose a short, medium or longer walk, or even circular or linear. They will take you through the quiet hamlet of Burlingham Green, the parishes of Lingwood and Burlingham, Hemblington, South Walsham and the thriving historic market town of Acle.*”

It goes on to say, “*The walks can be accessed at a number of start points, including from North Burlingham (parking off the A47 opposite St Andrews church at the west end of the village), Acle, Fairhaven Gardens and Lingwood (requires crossing A47 to join the main network of paths). They are also easily reached by public transport, with train stations at Acle and Lingwood plus regular bus services to both.*” (Please note, since Norfolk County Council produced its map of Burlingham Trails, a new wood – Peter's Wood - has been established as part of the trails in Lingwood, south of the A47.)

Norfolk's local newspaper, the Eastern Daily Press, published an article on 27th December, 2020, entitled, “*7 of the best places in Norfolk for a winter walk*”. The article included Burlingham Woodland Walks and advised, “*You can start in North Burlingham, Acle ..., Fairhaven Gardens or Lingwood.*”

'Walking World' has this to say about part of the the trails, “*The route then heads through the Church Plantation and past North Burlingham Church After crossing the A47 the route takes a more Norfolk Countryside appearance as it follows field edges to Lingwood and then over to Beighton*”.

Appendix B - WHC opportunities. (Assumed WCHR.)

Opportunity P6/C3 - “*Provide a pedestrian and cycle crossing to link the Burlingham Trails network north and south of the proposed A47*”

Opportunity P8 - “*Provide a new footway on the northern frontage of the new A47 alignment between South Walsham Road and the junction with The Windle*”.

The Revised Assessment does not include decisions made concerning these opportunities but attaches another Appendix, the previous WCHR Review dated 11th August, 2020. That document makes it clear Highways England will not fulfil opportunities P6/C3 and P8.

Why not?

Cathy Pye
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