

WANSFORD AND SUTTON PARISH COUNCILS.

Meeting held at St. Mary's Church, Wansford, on Monday, 19th March 2018, from 7.00 p.m. to 9.15 p.m. attended by many local residents and representatives from Highways England to further discuss the upgrading of the A47.

Chairman: John Stannage (Wansford Parish Council) ("JS") – *Read a prepared paper that summarized where matters had reached.*

Highways England ("HE") introductions – Aaron Douglas (HE Project Manager) ("AD"); Stefan Cracuin (Mott MacDonald Design Engineer); Jackie Foulkes (Environmental Coordinator) ("JF"); Dave Masters (Project Manager on other schemes); James ? (Assistant Project Manager); Paul Kendall (Package Director for all schemes).

Note: Unidentified Questioners below included Phil Jones of Robins Field, Jane Hunt of Old Leicester Rd and Peter Ferguson of Black Swan Spinney.

AD began to go through a series of slides [*A47 Wansford to Sutton; Existing Conditions; Ongoing work – current proposal*]. AD – “we are looking at the other [northern] alignment option but have to progress this”. [Slide: “*A47/A1 Junction*]. The carriageway between the 2 Wansford roundabouts will be dualled in both directions. AD – the speed limit reduction to 20mph within Wansford village will need to be modelled-in.

Richard Clarke (Wansford) ("RC") – It will become very dangerous.

AD – Safety assessment still to be finalized. Looking at a number of things on the western roundabout. Still tinkering with traffic modelling.

Unidentified Questioner ("UQ") – Did anyone think of completely bypassing Wansford to the north?

AD – That was not looked at as part of my work.

RC – They did look at such a scheme very early on but ruled it out.

JS – Wansford is very concerned about the Old North Road entrance onto the roundabout. This needs to be addressed. It is now a “C” road. It must be designed to accommodate all traffic.

AD – The west bound approach to the western roundabout won't be dualled as part of our scheme. Our work will hopefully address the queue.

JS – This issue is very important and will be addressed after AD's introduction.

AD – [Slide: *Key Constraints*] Need to avoid these by going south of the A47. [Slide: *Sutton Roundabout*] Will increase roundabout size and utilize the old A47 to link to the Sutton Heath Road. [Slide: *Scheme Assessment Report* ("SAR")] Apologies for the delay in publication. SAR is a summary of the work done by Amey and HE. Now the route we are showing has moved on

considerably. What is in the SAR is out of date. We are progressing the main alignment from that report.

Clare Eager (Sutton) (“CE”) – Any reason why no appendices yet published?

AD – That is being processed by our IT team.

CE – The SAR was signed off on 22 February by Guy Lewis; why then so long to get it on the website?

AD – Internal governance process. I was out of the country. Work did not cease while I was away but it needed to go through the Coms team.

CE – Is that acceptable?

AD – We did our best in the circumstances.

JS – People have not had time to look at the SAR. We will need more meetings. We can’t comment yet because we’ve had no time to digest the SAR.

Robbie Reid (Sutton) (“RR”) – You promised the SAR mid-December. I only got a copy now.

AD – That was my intention.

JS – We will go forward but can’t agree with you.

Mick Grange (Sutton) (“MG”) – On process, parish councils got the draft version of the SAR because we needed to deal with the Scoping Report. We asked the Planning Inspectorate to delay but they declined our request and we were forced to respond without being able to consult our residents. That has pushed things along without due consultation with the parish councils and the public. PCC had less than 3 days to respond. Your process has put us in a tight position. This is a big point of order and unacceptable.

UQ – Responses [to the Scoping Report] were secret?

JS – They are minuted in the parish council meeting.

RC – Individuals were not allowed to respond to the Planning Inspectorate as not statutory consultees.

Keith Strong (Sutton) (“KS”) – What is the point of today? A lecture?

AD – The SAR is out of date. We are coming with an update and would like comments. There is a lot more information to share.

UQ – What did you send to the Planning Inspectorate?

AD – Details of the land needed.

CE – What of alternative options?

AD – It does not incorporate the northern route. Because of work we are looking at alternative streams. There is a decision-making process and we might need to revise the SAR, delay consultation and go back to the Planning Inspectorate, and delay the project.

UQ – Too late to redraw the red line?

RC – Both parish council responses asked for expansion of the red line.

AD – We await the Planning Inspectorate’s response.

UQ – Timeframe?

AD – Start work September 2020.

UQ – You didn’t listen to us in the non-statutory consultation. Why should we have faith now?

AD – Public opinion is one thing and the process is outlined in the report. We chose the route that delivered the best scheme.

CE – 170 responses. Were we listened to? [Quotes from para 24.6.1 of SAR]

AD – I don’t recall that line.

RC – 170 responses out of 250 households and the SAR says not representative.

UQ – PCC asked you to listen to locals.

UQ – HE should re-evaluate. What will it take to make you reconsider?

AD – The Scheduled Monument (“SM”) was a key factor backed up by legislation.

UQ – You’ve ignored us. Look at us now not the past [with reference to the barrows].

MG – The Preferred Route Decision Minutes. These say some information will be incomplete but you needed to meet timescales. Decisions were taken prematurely. That was admitted to be risky and we are now experiencing the consequences.

[Slide: *Northern Route*]

JS – RAG decision.

AD – I will take detailed questions in writing [after the meeting].

JS – Do that [to the audience] and I will get them to HE.

AD – RAG is a summary. It gives a quick idea of options in relation to each other.

MG – Air quality. Your information is incomplete. You say Option 2 is best and mark Option 3 red. You take results through the SAR but the core information is wrong based on the receptors. No mention of receptors at the River Nene but 6 receptors on the SSSI, Sacrewell, Heath House, etc. You've stacked against Option 3 because you don't have a balance of receptors. How did you achieve that? None in Nene Valley or on the south side of the river. The options here are pretty much the same. We call them both as amber. Importance of dragonflies. Your premise is false from the start.

Dave and Debbie Meaden (DDM)– When I try to phone you to speak I'm told we're irrelevant because you're not going on my land. I want to see other surveys.

JF – We will do other surveys. You will get the results. I am concerned about ecology. It is a County Wildlife Site and will need mitigation.

DDM– It floods every year.

JF – What we do must be passed by the Environment Agency. We will discuss with Natural England.

KS – Nine factors, 6 are rated red for Option 3. Your own report shows no discernible difference in 4 of these. How did you reach that conclusion? It shows Option 3 a non-starter but if that is the basis of the decision then it is misleading. Air quality – negligible difference says your report. No basis to condemn Option 3. Your comments?

UQ – Are you looking at other options?

JF – We run it past our specialists.

UQ – Are you looking north?

JF – If an option comes forward that has not been considered we will look at it, but nothing received yet.

JS – This meeting believes the incorrect information has been used to make your decision. Need to look at Option 3. Something not right here.

Martin Chilcott (Ailsworth & Castor) (“MC”) – Great Kyne is not in the Local Plan. Remind people that northern route discounted because Homes & Communities Agency (“HCA”; now Homes England) don't want impingement on their land. HCA and HE in autumn 2015 meeting. HCA preferred southern route to avoid development land north of the A47. Everything else is a

red herring. This goes back to that meeting. If it is developable land it might save £2 million. Clear from Freedom of Information that HCA rigged it.

JS – HCA land not being developed in Local Plan. Shailesh Vara MP now involved.

MC – If land no longer in Local Plan, why is it a consideration?

AD – We had the same conversation back in September. I confirm we met HCA. They expressed their opinion but decision-making weighted no differently to anyone else.

RR – You didn't meet other landowners.

AD – We need to understand their planning. They were preparing developments so we needed to understand the implications of these for modelling as regards junctions, etc. Western roundabout modelling.

David Longfoot(DL) – Why have you revamped the western roundabout and why a tunnel to Sacrewell? Earlier I was told my field would not be affected, last September.

AD – We need a road to access several properties – a pumping station, perhaps the garage.

DL – Why not in the initial plan? I was only told a month ago.

JS – If the [existing] A47 remained as a feeder or slip road in the northern route this would address many issues. The problem is the SM.

AD – Also the SSSI.

RC – No, there is a gap.

UQ – Take local knowledge.

JS – Option 3 would solve many more problems than it causes.

JF – Very unlikely to get planning permission to go through the Scheduled Monument.

MG – I spoke with Deborah Priddy about work on the SM in September and she said you needed to prove wholly exceptional circumstances. We have had surveyed the whole route. The only issue is the southern barrow. This can be moved. I spoke to Shailesh Vara and he has contacted various agencies and departments, and he says you can apply for permission.

Richard Campbell (Sutton) – Departmental guidance always refers to conservation not preservation. Historic England's guidance states that "the great majority of cases [of] Scheduled Monument Applications are successful." There appears to have been no legal or archaeological information before the PRD meeting last June on the point.

MG – You’ve made an assumption. You knew about this in the 2015 AECOM report.

JS – More work is needed. There is nothing about NMUs.

KS – You’re proposing to spend an extra £6-7 million simply not to go through the SM.

JF – I can get our archaeologists to look at this. It looks thorough [referring to the Upex report]. We’ve had meetings with Historic England. We are looking at the whole environment. My report will not be biased.

UQ – The decision is already made.

JS – We’ve highlighted other possible archaeology over the whole site.

CE – What is the whole site?

JF – Everywhere within the red line.

JS – Not much point in going on until we have more information. We can’t agree with the PRD. We will go to our MP and government bodies. Don’t believe we can continue this meeting. Is the SM the main block on the northern route? Anything else?

AD – SSSI along with the SM. The northern route will impact both.

RC – No. The SSSI drainage can be protected. Not a difficult piece of engineering. Why does the SSSI stop the northern route?

AD – Not by itself does it 100% stop the northern route. Other factors are the SM and SSSI together.

MG – Deborah Priddy says she gets involved at the planning stage. You’re confronted with risks on the preferred route choice.

JF – I will get our senior archaeologist to come and talk to you. I will show him the Upex Report.

MG – Some of the £6 million can be spent on investigation. The DCO boundary is critical. A meeting is needed with Historic England and the DCO boundary needs to be redrawn. Where are you getting the infill for Option 2? You can run [the route] between the barrows.

JF – We had discussions with Historic England and they are against going across. I will have our senior archaeologist come and talk to you.

MG – I accept that offer. And I’d like Aaron there or his boss.

JF – Deborah Priddy was copied in with the Scoping Report. Historic England are very unlikely to address a public meeting. They are pleased we are not going through the SM.

MG – Natural England may get funds from HE if they don't object to the loss of the Nene Valley. The otters.

RC – PCC response to Scoping Report sets out their position.

UQ – If the SM is the only problem then bridge over it. It will be cheaper than going near the river.

RR – I'm perplexed on the design. You're doing the build on mud and soil in a floodplain.

AD - £6 million risk allocation to cover this.

RC – It says not costed.

AD – Not costed in main part of the works not the risk allocation.

RC – This doesn't look right.

AD – Potential risk allocation for the northern route is to allow for archaeology.

RC – Archaeology doesn't stop at the A47. The SM boundary has been nominally drawn.

MG – The Upex Report says there is nothing of significance to the north. You could bridge the SM cheaper than banking the river. Change the DCO; get the appendices on the website; let us get round the table with you and go through the points. Go back to the Planning Inspectorate and expand the DCO. The landscape visuals were only done in March.

AD – I will take the question on when the visuals were done.

UQ – You need to redraw the DCO boundary and look at the western roundabout too. My land is in the red zone but I've had no contact at all. I was at the Sutton meeting. Your traffic lights made it [the roundabout] worse with queueing. When you relook at this put in a slip road from the A47 west to the A1 south. I asked this before and emailed you but got no reply.

AD – We're still assessing the western roundabout.

JS – HE needs to consider the northern route. The DCO boundary – vital to change that. You may end up with the southern route but you must give the northern route a chance.

AD – I will readdress changing the redline boundary but it must go to committee. And we'll have a meeting when all the appendices are on the website, a small meeting. We can still have the meeting without the DCO change. I will be in touch about that. It will happen before the statutory consultation begins.

UQ – Whatever happens with the route I need to know what will happen with the western roundabout.

AD – The statutory consultation will show this. It is planned for summer 2018. Our scheme ends at the junction but we need to assess if our scheme creates problems elsewhere. The traffic modelling area is large and includes the A1.

Charlotte Palmer – I'm from the PCC Highways team. We will liaise with the parish councils and HE. We are in the loop.

JS – A lot more work is needed on the roundabout.

AD – Since last September we found another northern option not in the SAR and this is still ongoing. [Slide: *Northern Route x4*] (This showed a route passing north of but close to the existing route at the eastern end, but going even closer to the River near the SM. A slide showing various junction alternatives involving The Drift was also displayed)

MG – Why not use the existing A47 to move this new option more north?

AD – Online was ruled out earlier; cost and disruption.

Vivien Thorley – Rerouting around Peterborough during construction. There will be a rat run through Wansford.

JS – Most A47 congestion is people getting to work. Disruption will affect everyone badly. Increase the DCO boundary.

UQ – A slip road to the A1 southbound.

AD – Traffic numbers are required to make it value for money and this is not what we have.

UQ – Come and stand at the eastern Wansford roundabout one morning. The number of people westbound and then turning right is very significant.

JS – The dual carriageway going into a single lane is a disaster. A death created those roundabouts.

AD – We're looking at options. **He will recommend that**

- the red line be changed, but the decision will not be his.
- He will get the appendices up on the web site shortly.
- He will arrange for a meeting with their archaeologist to be set up.
- He was asked to forward a copy of the presentation

The statutory consultation is programmed for Summer 2018, but this could change if scheme changes are to be made.

JS – No answers to a lot of questions. We're challenging some interpretations. Thanks to HE for coming tonight and listening.

Rosemary Armstrong (representing Shailesh Vara MP). – Shailish has written to various ministers and awaits responses.