



# A46 Newark Bypass – Winthorpe Position Statement

29 December 2020

Winthorpe Residents' A46 Consultation Group

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# A46 Newark Bypass – Winthorpe Residents’ Group Position Statement

## Introduction

On Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2020, Highways England (HE) published a non-statutory consultation presenting two options for the route of the proposed improvements to A46 Newark Bypass. The closing date for this consultation is the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021, a period of just eight weeks.

Both options are predominately along the existing corridor of the A46. Option sifting had already occurred prior to this consultation eliminating a number of other potential routes, the analysis of which was presented in A46 Newark Bypass – Options Summary Report<sup>1</sup> published on the HE website as part of the consultation.

The purpose of this non-statutory consultation was to gauge views on the two proposed options. No further choices or alternatives were presented and both options are very similar with only minor changes at the Newark Cattle Market Roundabout and the alignment between the A1 and Winthorpe Roundabout. Although it was not made clear in the consultation documents, these two options presented at these two key locations can be treated separately. Maps of various scales were presented as part of the consultation documents both electronically on the HE website and as part of the Consultation Brochure<sup>2,3</sup> delivered to residents of Winthorpe in the two weeks following the consultation launch date.

This document deals only with the proposed options at the North East end of the scheme where the proposed improvements pass by Winthorpe Village.

Very little, if any, early engagement of affected landowners or nearby residents was undertaken by Highways England prior to the 9<sup>th</sup> December. A number of concerned and affected residents immediately launched a campaign to promote knowledge of the proposed scheme and consultation amongst the village, this culminated a week after

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the consultation launch of the formation of the Winthorpe Residents' A46 Consultation Group.

An initial meeting between a number of affected residents and Highways England designers demonstrated that a number of external factors such as proposed local developments had not been accounted for in the options proposed and could have a potential significant impact on the cost-benefit and effectiveness of the options proposed.

It is the view of this group and associated villagers that neither Option 1 or Option 2 presented in the consultation fully recognises the historic significance and Conservation Area status of Winthorpe village. As presented both options are likely to have significant effects on the quality of life within the village including, noise, air quality, light pollution, loss of parkland and potentially property demolition. We would like to investigate alternative route options for the improvement scheme that both lessen the impact on the village, but also offer greater benefits to both the Trunk Road and local highway networks.

Option 1	New A46 dual carriageway overpass over the A1 north of the existing A1 northbound slips, crossing diagonally towards fields to the rear of Lowood. New dual carriageway would merge with existing A46 around Hargon Lane, and continue on the existing alignment to an enlarged A46 Winthorpe roundabout. A smaller overbridge over the new A46 duals would be required to enable traffic to join the A46 northbound from the Friendly Farmer roundabout. This route would go through the existing Mint Leaf restaurant and adjacent filling station.
Option 2	Similar initial alignment to Option 1 over the A1 and adjacent to Lowood, but the new dual carriageway would continue parallel to the existing road all the way to A46 Winthorpe roundabout, bringing the road much closer to the village, adjacent to existing parkland and require removal of two properties at the end of Hargon Lane.
Table 1 – Options Summary	



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## Position Statement

Winthorpe Residents' A46 Consultation Group recognises the local strategic need for improvements to the A46 around Newark to improve flow, reduce journey times and reduce accidents. However, Highways England are narrowly focusing on the A46 in isolation. We believe the issues go beyond the A46 and also include issues associated with the capacity and safety at the A1 junctions, and also future industrial and commercial development on the A17 and Newark Showground locations.

When we met with Highways England on 16th December, they acknowledged that they had not factored in development plans around the A17/showground area. Appendix 1 presents a list of planning proposals both in progress and rumoured based on local Parish Council knowledge associated with the A17 and Showground side of the existing A46 route.

Furthermore, both the proposed options fail to give a significant benefit cost ratio based on the preliminary information presented in the Options Summary Report. In fact, Option 1 scores less than 1.0 on this measure. Neither option considers the wider network much beyond the A46 corridor and some effects modelled are detrimental to the adjacent local network e.g. increase of traffic on A17. With additional future development planned in this area but not currently included in the modelling, it is likely that the local network will become worse because of the proposed scheme whatever of the options presented is chosen. Appendix 2 presents further commentary on the Options Report.

In summary our concerns include;

- Winthorpe's status as a conservation village is not properly acknowledged.
- Both proposed schemes come too close to the village envelope, including encroachment on Grade II listed properties and other notable historic houses.
- The road will have a dramatic visual impact on historic parkland enjoyed by the village in Winthorpe Park.
- There will be significant increases in noise, vibration and light pollution to the south side of the village, especially Lowood, The Spinney, and Hargon lane.

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- One proposal will result in the demolition of a village house and garage.
  - The new underpass to Newark will be 80 meters long (5 times longer than it is currently), raising concerns about anti-social behaviour.
  - There are no clear plans to provide mitigation measures for those affected.
  - Not enough effort has been made to explore alternative options.

## **Project Brief**

**Winthorpe Residents' A46 Consultation Group would like to propose the following additional analysis to be undertaken;**

**Review of discounted options in particular the 'Do-Minimum' approach for comparison with the Options presented. Do Option 1 or 2 offer the significant benefits over the 'Do-Minimum' as suggested?**

**Consider the possibility of an alternative route along the Winthorpe area of the scheme that would offer larger benefits, particularly considering future commercial developments in the area and their potential integration with the A46 scheme including effects on the local road network.**

**The parameters for this alternative option would include;**

- **Retain route through existing preferred corridor.**
- **Move A1 crossing as far from Winthorpe as possible.**
- **Minimise impact of noise/ air pollution/ light pollution to Winthorpe.**
- **Potentially move the main carriageway between Friendly Farmer roundabout and Winthorpe roundabout to Showground side of existing road.**
- **Expand remit of scheme to include A1 junctions and A17 to get wider stakeholder benefit.**
  - **Reduction of accidents at A1 junctions (and increase reliability)**
  - **Account for expanding commercial area of A17 and Newark Showground**
  - **Alleviate the predicted increase in traffic on A17 as result of current proposals**
  - **Improve access to Showground and improve flow during events for local network**

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## Appendix 1 – Recent and Potential Planning Developments

### Recent Planning applications/known developments

- A new Starbuck's drive through coffee house and restaurant has been approved for construction behind the Friendly Farmer building adjacent to the Shell Garage this will obviously increase the amount of traffic around the current A17/A46 roundabout. (The Parish Council have not objected to this development).
- A major new development (Newlink Business Park) is proposed for construction next to the current Curry's Know How building which when complete will ultimately be approximately equal to the size of the current Curry's site. Planning permission has been sought for one building so far although the overall proposal is for five buildings in total. The plans for the first building include parking for dozens of HGV's and trailers. At this stage it is not known what the construction of the other buildings will involve but it is likely to include similar storage/distribution type activities. (The Parish Council has objected to this development).
- Planning permission has already been granted for changes to the Esso Garage on the A46 opposite the Shell Garage. This includes the erection of a new larger shop facility, increased canopy height and extra lighting. (The Parish Council did not object)
- An additional roundabout is to be constructed adjacent to the A17 near the proposed Newlink Business Park. It is felt that this may slow traffic in this area and create decreased flow of traffic at certain times of day.
- A new Agricultural Machinery dealership/servicing depot has been given planning permission for construction next to the Wirtgen building. (The Parish Council did not object).
- From outline plans which have been produced for some of the proposals above, it is clear that significant development is also proposed around the current Wirtgen site and although nothing further has come forward as yet looks to include a variety of commercial buildings (including a hotel) all of which will involve more traffic.

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- The owner of High Lees (2 Gainsborough Road, Winthorpe) has submitted plans for the erection of 5, 2 bedroom holiday cottages on land between High Lees and the A1133. Although of course a minor impact on traffic this would still increase car volumes. The Parish Council has objected on the grounds of access from Gainsborough Road.

#### Other possible developments currently under discussion

- N&SDC are currently discussing whether the HGV Lorry Park currently situated close to the Sugar Beet Factory Roundabout should be re located to the Newark Showground 'Triangle'. Very little is known about this at present but given the impact of the A46 dual carriageway in this area, it would seem likely that this would happen.
- There are also similar discussions around the relocation of the Newark Cattle Market again to the Newark Showground area
- It is currently unknown what part of the showground site is proposed for these options but no doubt thought has already been given by N&SDC and it is suspected to be in an advanced position.

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## Appendix 2 – Comments on A46 Newark Bypass Options Summary Report

### Summary

The Winthorpe Residents' A46 Consultation Group emerged in response to the proposals by Highways England concerning the A46 bypass; their analysis of the report emphasizes concern for the local environment and the impact that the shortlisted options will have on communities; there are grave concerns about the current shortlisted options being presented.

Observations are noted below, with reference to the relevant sections of the 70+ page Options Summary Report<sup>1</sup> where appropriate.

The conclusion is that key factors have changed over the past 2 years which makes the proposed widening of the A46 even less economically viable than originally estimated by Highways England, and that the “Lowest Cost Option” (5.6) should be re-visited and presented as a serious and preferable solution to the current and future traffic flow requirements of the A46 around Newark.

The 2 “options” are presented as a “fait accompli” – choose the least bad one – but in reality both options carry a higher cost of disruption and ongoing environmental / cultural impact than is acceptable.

### **What has changed to warrant a reassessment of the plans?**

#### **Traffic Projections should be reduced.**

Projections for this plan were taken using 2017 flows as a baseline (4.6.2)

The traffic flow increases (on which this proposed work depends in order to deliver any benefits) are in conflict with the recent Government target of reducing CO2 emissions and to reduce the distance travelled in cars by 20% by 2030.



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Covid-19 has had a dramatic effect on travel routines and this is likely to be a semi-permanent change, given the huge number of businesses that have committed to change their ways of working viz-a-viz travel, on a permanent basis. Covid has been an accelerant in the move to virtual working for many of us, which in itself necessitates a review of previous assumptions for highways development.

Section 4.6 claims “significant increases in traffic flow” for the 2 options but no figures are provided. It is noted that current journey timings through the proposed route show a 5 minute saving between peak and non-peak hours, over an 85 minute journey time for the total “through route” – which is assumed the route modelled for the Business users who will make up 60% of the beneficiaries, having the “highest value of time” (4.6.24).

The “valuable time saving” delivered is potentially to the detriment of local residents.

A 5 minute saving between Peak and Non-Peak on an 85 minute journey does not suggest massive overcrowding of the road.

### **The 2 proposed shortlist options are now even less likely to be economically viable**

Option 1 (Same A46 route with Flyovers) shows a BCR of 0.93 (4.6.30) suggesting that the cost outweighs the benefit – which was itself the primary reason for not progressing the “Lowest Cost Option” to the short list phase of the options (5.6).

Option 2 (Through roads plus additional dual carriageway impinging on Winthorpe) shows a BCR of 1.23 for the higher cost (risk) option.

However, the sensitivity test (4.6.32) shows that if traffic flow is less than forecast then the BCR drops by 32% to 0.84 and then drops further to 0.77 for a high carbon cost for greenhouse gases.

If we then add in a high carbon cost for greenhouse gas emissions, the benefits picture looks bleaker still, to the tune of a further 8 – 12%.

So overall we could be looking at a reduction in benefits of around 50%, and both options looking decidedly poor investments.

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The impact of the 2 options will result in Winthorpe Village and its residents carrying a disproportionate burden of the social costs plus major impact on the environment and biodiversity (4.7)

Section 4.7 provides a list of negative impacts of these proposed schemes.

The direct impact on Winthorpe village, which has a significant historical significance, has been largely overlooked.

There will be significant adverse effects on landtake and views, both of a temporary and permanent nature (4.7.24) (4.7.25). In Option 2, this includes the demolition of one house, and removal of a garage and part of a garden for another, not mentioned in 4.7.72.

There will be a likely significant adverse effect on the River Trent, which is a key environmental resource of high value. The River Trent and its floodplain is the greatest biodiversity resource within the Trent and Belvoir Vales National Character Area (4.7.46) (2.8.7)

There will be notable visual noise impact to Winthorpe residents at the South end of the village (e.g. The Spinney). There is already a Noise Important Area (NIA) on the A1 above the Winthorpe/Newark underpass (2.9.21) and average noise levels are given (from the schematic on the referenced link) as:

- The Spinney            55-60 dB
- Low Wood              65-70 dB

A flyover across the A1 in close proximity to here, with the usual prevailing wind direction, will make the noise levels worse still.

Both options will include landtake around Winthorpe, but Option 2 would introduce an extra dual carriageway in each direction located between the current A46 and the village. This will significantly increase noise levels to the whole village, as confirmed in the Public Consultation brochure delivered to a number of directly affected homes.

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## Other areas of concern.

### *Safety (4.6.26 & 4.6.27)*

The current scheme shows half the national average of serious or fatal injuries for this type of road, as a proportion of total reported accidents (2.3.5). The report does not indicate whether the total number of reported accidents is higher or lower than the national average.

The proposed scheme itself is safer than the current system, but this is more than offset by the safety impact of consequential traffic flow changes peripheral to the scheme (such as additional traffic flow on the A17 (more than doubling), on the A46 east of Winthorpe, and on the A617 / A616 north of the Cattle Market roundabout (4.6.16) (4.6.26).

So the proposed new schemes will result in an overall increase in danger and anticipated accidents than we see today, as indicated in the accident reduction impacts being given a negative score (Table 4.11).

The statement in (4.6.28), which refers only to in-scope safety to be misleading for those of us who will be subject to these safety conditions for many years to come.

### *The Journey to zero emissions*

Introducing a scheme which will add an extra 9,000 – 12,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year (4.7.83) seems to conflict with the desired direction of Government and the UK population.

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## Should the “Lowest Cost Option” (5.6) be Re-visited?

If forecasted traffic flow is uncertain, given the changes noted above, then it would seem prudent to re-evaluate the “Lowest Cost Option” since this:

- Performs well if traffic growth is less than previously forecasted
- Costs £82m rather than £460m and is therefore a less risky project in terms of overall financial benefit (or loss)
- Will have significantly less impact on nearby residents and the environment overall

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## Bibliography

1. *A46 Newark Bypass – Options Summary Report, Highways England, 2020*
2. *A46 Newark Bypass – Public consultation, Highways England, 2020*
3. *A46 Newark Bypass – Public consultation Response form, Highways England, 2020*