



Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan Reconvened Examination

Additional "Matter 5" Statement – Settlements and Sites – Main Towns – Wisbech Fringe (Policy F3.1)

Response to the Inspectors "Additional Matters, Issues and Questions"

12 March 2024

Introduction

1. This statement is a response from the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Council (BCKLWN) to the following issues and questions raised by the Inspectors relating to Matter 5 of the examination into the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan relating to Monitoring and Implementation.
2. References used in this statement (e.g.[F10],[D10]) relate to documents held in the examination library as either a submission document or as part of the wider evidence base.

Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Responses to Matter 5 Additional Questions

Issue 5: Are the proposed settlement and site allocations policies justified, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and are they positively prepared in meeting the Borough's development needs, effective in terms of deliverability over the Plan period and consistent with national policy in enabling sustainable development?

Main Towns

Wisbech Fringe: Land east of Wisbech (west of Burrettgate Road) (Policy F3.1)

AQ34. The most recent Updated Position Statement on the Wisbech Fringe (March 2023) [F52] states in paragraph 14 that works are likely to begin in April 2023 on improvements to the A47/Broadend Road roundabout. Have these works commenced and if not, what is the updated position in respect of these improvements?

No. Proposed works to the A47/Broadend Road roundabout have not commenced. A position statement was duly sought from National Highways, Cambridgeshire County Council/ Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority and Fenland District Council.

The A47/ Broadend Road junction proposals are a specific project, to replace the existing staggered junction with a roundabout, referenced in the Wisbech Access Strategy [F35, para 3-4]. These are also referenced in National Highways' National Highways' Road Strategy Initial Overview (RSIO), May 2023. It is accepted that there has been some slippage in the likely delivery timeframe since publication of the updated Position Statement.

On 4 March 2023, the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority provided an email position statement (below), regarding the Broadend Road/ A47 junction.

The current phase of the Wisbech Access Strategy has largely been completed. This phase of the scheme included the following:

- *Completion of the detailed design for three schemes – Elm High Road/A47, Broadend Road/A47 and Elm High Road/Weasenham Lane.*
- *Completion of the Outline Business Case*
- *Securing the relevant agreements*
- *Acquisition of land required to undertake the scheme.*

This work has been funded by the CPCA. There is some work still ongoing to complete on the final land parcels required for the delivery of the scheme, which will complete this phase of the scheme.

Further funding is required in order to move the project forward to a construction phase and therefore, until such time as funding becomes available, we are unable to progress the scheme further.

AQ35. With reference to paragraph 15 of the Updated Position Statement, has National Highways undertaken early assessment phase work with the options consultation which was planned for later in 2023?

No. National Highways position statement (AQ34) does not specifically reference further consultations regarding future improvements to the A47, beyond those already committed (RIS1, 2014).

National Highways' Road Strategy Initial Overview (May 2023) and latest Delivery Plan 2020-2025 only reference those improvements already approved through RIS1. Although the Initial Overview does acknowledge longer term strategic needs for improvements to the A47 near Wisbech, it does not refer to specific projects that may be put forward through forthcoming RIS3 consultations (2024-2025). National Highways' February 2024 statement explains that direction is currently awaited from the Department for Transport regarding the next steps.

On 27 February 2024, National Highways provided the email position statement below, regarding the A47/A1101 Elm Road Junction project.

The A47/A1101 Elm Road scheme is one of more than 30 schemes identified by National Highways and the Department for Transport (DfT), being considered as part of the Road Investment Strategy 3 (RIS3) pipeline or beyond.

We submitted our work to the DfT in autumn last year, something we periodically do for all the projects in the pipeline. We're now awaiting direction on next steps.

In March 2023 the Government announced that work on the future pipeline of schemes that have been earmarked for RIS3, covering 2025 to 2030, will continue to be

developed in line with our statutory processes but will now be considered for construction as part of RIS4 beyond 2030.

All schemes in the pipeline remain uncommitted, and no decision on the future of the A47/A1101 Elm Road scheme has been made yet. We're awaiting guidance from the DfT.

The A47/ A1101 Elm Road scheme remains under consideration by National Highways.

AQ36. With the Elm High Road Junction Scheme currently uncommitted (paragraph 16 of the Updated Position Statement), what would be the implications, if any, for the delivery of the site at Wisbech Fringe?

National Highways has recently published a list of current projects underway along the route, between Wansford/ Thornhaugh (Peterborough) and Lowestoft ([A47 programme of overall improvements - National Highways](#)). These were derived from the 2014 Road Investment Strategy (RIS1), are referenced in the latest [Delivery Plan 2020-2025](#) and include:

- Junction improvements between East Dereham and Great Yarmouth (currently subject to ongoing judicial review)
- Wansford to Sutton dualling – work commenced late-2023.

Other specific measures such as the Elm High Road Junction scheme remain uncommitted. Notwithstanding, the A47 Alliance has identified longer term priority Dualling Schemes, including Peterborough to Wisbech (incorporating the A1101 Elm High Road junction). National Highways' [Road Strategy Initial Overview](#) (May 2023) provides an assessment of route context, current constraints on the route, and opportunities for improved connections with local roads and rail links.

During 2022-23, National Highways was considering design options for improvements to the A47/ A1101 Elm High Road junction. It is anticipated that RIS3 (which may include the junction improvements) will be published during 2024, but it is accepted that at present these proposals remains uncertain. In January 2024, National Highways produced an A47 update, appended to this response.

Pending planning application

On 19 February 2024 National Highways submitted a “holding objection” to Fenland District Council in response to the determination of the hybrid application for early development phases (F/YR22/1256/F – 325 dwellings). This holding objection requested that no determination be made until 18 March 2024, with reference to updated Wisbech Traffic modelling Outputs (A47/ A1101 Elm High Road junction capacity assessment).

National Highways' requires the developer (of the 325 dwellings development phase, F/YR22/1256/F) to identify appropriate mitigation measures to demonstrate that the impact of any development can be mitigated in accordance with the requirements of Circular 01/2022 in the event that the RIS scheme does not go ahead. This indicates that East Wisbech/ Wisbech Fringe development could still come forward, even if the RIS3 scheme does not go ahead, provided that satisfactory mitigation measures can be provided.