

Wansford Parish Council

Deadline 4 Submission

ISH3 Agenda Item 3

Traffic Modelling of the Wansford Western Roundabout

A47 Wansford to Sutton Dualling

In Issue Specific Hearing 3, the Examining Authority raised the matter of the modelling of the traffic flows on the Wansford Western Roundabout. He correctly observed that the actual measured 2019 traffic flows northbound on Old North Road did not correspond to the flows predicted by the traffic model. When National Highways (NH) were challenged on this, they seemed to respond that the results of the modelling had to be accepted even though they did not match reality.

Wansford Parish Council (WPC) alerted NH to this problem more than two years ago. The process by which NH has arrived at their predicted traffic flows is complex and clearly there is an error somewhere. WPC has repeatedly suggested that NH do a sensitivity test either by taking the base year Old North Road flows and applying a simple growth factor or taking all the base year flows and simply increasing them all by the average of the flow increases predicted by the existing model. Either of these simplified tests would give a “sanity check” on the modelling. In the hearing, NH seemed to state that such sensitivity tests could not be done.

In their earlier submission, NH claimed that adding an additional exit lane eastbound from the western roundabout would improve the flow by giving more spaces for vehicles exiting Old North Road. In reality the opportunities to exit Old North Road are the result of gaps in the flow of traffic entering the roundabout westbound and gaps in the flow entering the roundabout from the A1 and then heading westbound. Neither of these flows is influenced by the eastbound exit lanes.

Numerically the main delays on the western roundabout are to vehicles entering the roundabout heading east along the A47. This flow is interrupted by vehicles arriving westbound on the A47 and then heading north up the A1 and by traffic leaving Old North Road and either going north or east, as the majority of it does.

Clearly the modelling of the Wansford Western roundabout is suffering from the “rubbish in rubbish out” problem as the inputs and the outputs do not correspond with reality or common sense.

The results of this modelling contribute to the overall travel time through the scheme and therefore have the potential to undermine the benefits of the scheme.