

North Norfolk District Council Local Plan Examination

**North Walsham West**

Proposed allocation of 1800 homes and 7 ha of employment land in North Walsham as set out in policy NW62/A of the submitted North Norfolk Local Plan

**NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL HIGHWAYS  
POSITION STATEMENT  
(in relation to traffic impacts)**

January 2024

**Note** - References in square bold brackets **[xx]** refer to North Norfolk Local Plan Examination Library document numbers. The Examination Library can be accessed at [:www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/localplanexamination](http://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/localplanexamination)

## **Introduction**

Norfolk County Council (NCC), as Highway Authority, has considered the draft Transport Assessment **[EX017 - EX018]** in the context of evidence to support the proposed allocation of 1800 homes and 7 ha of employment land in North Walsham as set out in policy NW62/A of the submitted North Norfolk Local Plan **[A1]**. This response also sets out where the draft allocation policy can be strengthened and clarified in respect of the highway and transport requirements.

The Transport Assessment (TA) has considered potential impacts of the proposed growth and associated link road on traffic patterns in North Walsham, along with key mitigation required to be delivered alongside the allocation. The Transport Assessment has also considered impacts at the wider road network, including the B1150 through Coltishall that requires more detailed analysis and development of mitigation.

As the work is to support allocation of a site in the emerging North Norfolk Local Plan it is not expected that all required mitigation measures are identified in detail, but sufficient information is provided to enable a view to be drawn on the soundness of the allocation. This statement sets out the principles, but a degree of flexibility is required on the detail of the mitigation measures set out. This to enable potential reasonable adjustments to come forward on the basis of more detailed work that will be undertaken as part of the development management process.

The site promoter's consultant, AECOM, has sought the views of the Highway Authority in developing their TA which has provided the County Council the opportunity to shape the scope of the assessment.

The Transport Assessment does not address phasing, and further work will need to be done on this. The Highway Authority's view on the principles for phasing of transport infrastructure are set out in this position statement.

## **North Walsham Assessment**

### **The Link Road**

A high-level study commissioned jointly between NCC and NNDC (North Walsham Western Link Road Feasibility Study **[D19-D21]**) looked at the traffic impacts of a link road associated with the proposed allocation. That work considered a link road from the B1150 Norwich Road passing through the proposed allocation to the southwest of North Walsham and ending at the A149, Cromer Road. The study considered the distributional impacts of the link road and those effects at key junctions in the town. The study further considered options of a southern extension east to the A149, a northern extension through the employment area to the B1145, and the combination of both.

Based on that work NCC as Highway Authority advised that the most likely scenario required to address transport impacts was the link road with a northern extension to the B1145.

The draft Transport Assessment is a more up to date and in-depth consideration of the transport impacts of the proposed allocation and link road in North Walsham based on recent traffic counts and area wide traffic modelling. The key findings of the draft Transport Assessment are:

- A link road from the B1150 to the A149 Cromer Road is required to manage the transport impacts of the proposed allocation. The evidence in the draft Transport Assessment does not support the need for a northern extension to the B1145. The evidence does not support the current policy requirement (point 11) for the delivery of a link over the railway for access to the Lyngate/Folgate Rd industrial estate. However, the allocation should be brought forward in such a way that does not preclude delivery of an extension of the Link Road to Folgate Road at some point in the future should it be required.
- In principle the proposed cross section meets the need to create an attractive street that promotes walking and cycling and is of sufficient scale to fulfil a distribution function.
- Alongside the link road the draft Transport Assessment evidence shows that other network improvements are required in North Walsham.

Specific improvements identified are:

- The B1150/A149 Norwich Road signalised junction
- Improvements at the Aylsham Road railway bridge

Proposals have been developed for these and it has been shown that appropriate schemes can be delivered to mitigate the impacts of the allocation. These specific improvements should be explicitly referenced in the allocation policy as a requirement of the proposed allocation.

### **The B1150/A149 Norwich Road signalised junction**

Other development in North Walsham has contributed towards an improvement at the junction. It is required that improvements are delivered alongside development of the allocation so the improvements should be a specific requirement set in policy. As the proposal provides vehicle capacity and active travel enhancements, the improvement should be delivered in the early stages of development prior to occupation.

### **Improvements at the Aylsham Road railway bridge**

Given current network conditions and the issues the schemes are seeking to mitigate the highway authority would wish to see the Aylsham Road proposals phased to be delivered before Aylsham Road is connected to the wider network by the link road and before commencement of development that would result in increased traffic at Aylsham Road.

### **Walking, cycling and public transport**

Opportunities for improvements have been identified for the walking and cycling and public transport networks. It is expected that the exact nature of the improvements to be delivered will be determined through the subsequent planning application process. As opportunities exist, and no fundamental obstacles to delivery of improvements have been identified, the Highway Authority considers that for this stage sufficient examination of the issues have been carried out. Points 8, 9 and 10 of the draft allocation policy are considered sufficient to require the necessary exploration at the planning application stage.

North Walsham is on one of the routes identified in Norfolk County Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). The proposals will be expected to improve service provision in line with BSIP requirements and this will need to be conditioned at the application stage.

## **Coltishall & Horstead Assessment**

The early link road traffic analysis work was also used to gain an understanding of wider network effects of the proposed growth. Given the high-level nature of the link road analysis and its reliance on pre-covid and lockdown traffic data, it was concluded that whilst it could identify areas of interest it could not provide any quantitative data. An addendum [D21] to the original link road options work identified that further analysis was required of the B1150 through Coltishall and Horstead.

The highway authority has required that the draft Transport Assessment considers the impacts of the proposals at the B1150 through Coltishall, that was identified as the most significant impact, on a sensitive part of the network.

Impacts at Coltishall have been considered in detail and the impacts of growth of 2000 homes in North Walsham has been modelled. The draft Transport Assessment has recognised that there will be impacts at the B1150 and mitigation of these is required. Two specific interventions have been identified:

- 1) provision of a right turn lane from the B1150 to the B1354 just north of the River Bure bridge
- 2) formalised marking out of a bus stop on the B1150 adjacent to the war memorial in the Norwich bound direction.

The evidence shows that appropriate schemes can be delivered to mitigate the impacts of the allocation at the B1150 through Coltishall and Horstead. To test deliverability, these measures have been looked at in detail and proposed solutions have been subject to safety audit.

Because of the importance of securing improvement at Coltishall to cater for additional traffic, the highway authority would want to see policy NW62/A amended to specifically require the identified highway mitigation. Furthermore, it is recognised that as a result of the increased traffic through the village, improvements are required for pedestrians, including delivery of a crossing point. At this time a specific scheme has not been identified but given that this is an allocation it is not considered that a scheme needs to be tabled at this time as it is reasonable to conclude that a suitable scheme can be delivered. To ensure that this issue is properly addressed, and a scheme brought forward as part of any planning application, the allocation policy needs to include a specific requirement to provide pedestrian enhancements and a crossing facility of the B1150 at the centre of the village of Coltishall.

Coltishall Parish Council have recently commissioned a pedestrian crossing assessment on the B1150 at High Street, Coltishall to investigate whether improvements to pedestrian crossing facilities are viable. The study is anticipated to be completed in early 2024. There is also local concern about the speed of traffic entering the village from the north on the B1150. Several speed management measures have been installed in the past, including village gateway signing and vehicle activated signs. A future development proposal is conditioned to provide a pedestrian refuge island and further speed management measures to calm traffic and aid pedestrian crossing movements.

The Highway Authority would also wish the policy to include requirement for pedestrian crossing improvements at the B1150 in vicinity of Lyng Way, Coltishall and its junction with B1354/Mill Road, Horstead.

Given the sensitive nature of this part of the network and to consider the impacts of construction traffic associated with the proposed allocation, the highway mitigation measures in Coltishall should be delivered prior to commencement of development on the allocation.

### **Function of the B1150**

The B1150 is Main Distributor Route in the Norfolk Route hierarchy connecting Norwich to the market town of North Walsham. Main Distributors form important cross-county links for all traffic types. The B1150 also provides a strategic link from Local Access Routes that serve surrounding parishes. The traffic survey on the B1150 at High Street, Coltishall, taken for the Transport Assessment, indicated a 2-way average traffic flow of around 10,000 vehicles/day of which around 3% were Heavy Goods Vehicles. The traffic volume and HGV mix on the B1150 is in line with other B roads in Norfolk that serve similar strategic function. The B1150 is also an important seasonal corridor connecting the strategic road network to North Norfolk and the Broads National Park. It also offers an alternative route to long vehicles that need to avoid the humped back River Bure bridge on the A1151 at Wroxham.

Four personal injury accidents have been recorded over the 2.3km length of the B1150 passing through the parish of Coltishall in the last 3 years (1 fatal, 2 serious, 1 slight). Two occurred within the built-up village and two (including the fatality) on the 60mph section of the B1150 to the northeast. The fatality involved a pedal cyclist colliding with the rear of a stopped vehicle. There are no 'accident cluster sites' within Coltishall and given the traffic flow on the B1150, accidents are not at a level where Norfolk County Council would look to intervene with a Local Safety Scheme.

Nine personal injury accidents have been recorded on the 3.5km section of the B1150 passing through Horstead with Stanninghall Parish (2 serious, 7 slight). Four slight accidents occurred in the built-up village. Two serious and 3 slight accidents occurred in the more rural 50 and 60mph sections south to Crostwick. Accidents are generally scattered with no accident 'cluster sites' warranting further investigation.

Norfolk County Council will continue to monitor the accident record at Coltishall and Horstead and will take further action as required.

The highway authority wishes to continue to work with North Norfolk District Council, the site promoter, and Broadland District Council to secure the highway requirements in policy NW62/A and prepare a statement of common ground for presentation at the forthcoming examination in public of the North Norfolk Local Plan.