

Planning and Highways Delegations Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 August 2021 at 10am
in the Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

Voting Members Present:

Cllr Martin Wilby (Chair)	Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure
Cllr Andy Grant (Vice-Chair)	Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste
Cllr Graham Plant	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy

Non-Voting Members Present:

Cllr Brian Long	Planning (Regulatory) Committee Chair
Cllr Paul Neale	Planning (Regulatory) Committee Green Group Spokesperson
Cllr Eric Vardy	Planning (Regulatory) Committee Vice-Chair

Officers Present:

David Cumming	Strategic Transport Team Manager
John Jones	Head of Environment

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 No apologies were received. Cllr Mike Sands and Cllr Steve Riley were absent.

2. Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2021 were agreed as an accurate record with an amendment to state that resolutions were agreed by voting members to ensure clarity on the decisions made.

3. Declarations of Interest

- 3.1 There were no interests declared.

4. Urgent Business

- 6.1 There was no urgent business discussed.

5. Applications for Development Consent Orders

- 5.1.1 The Committee received the report dealing with an opportunity to submit Written Representations to the Planning Inspectorate on proposal by Highways England to upgrade the A47 as part of the Planning Inspectorate's examination of Highways England's proposals, and on the future Development Consent Order (DCO) application for the Sheringham and Dudgeon Windfarm Extension Projects, due to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in Q3 2021. The proposals were deemed to be Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) and applications for development consent would be determined by the relevant Secretary of State.

- 5.1.2 The Strategic Transport Team Manager introduced the report to the Committee:
- Highways England, now called National Highways, were taking forward proposals for a number of schemes on the A47 to be determined by the Secretary of State; each scheme had a different timescale for submission and determination.
 - If the applications for the schemes on the A47 were granted, the work could start in early 2023 with completion by the end of the 2024-25 financial year
 - The Committee had agreed representations for the A47 North Tuddenham to Easton and A47/A11 Thickthorn Junction schemes at its 3 June 2021 meeting and for Blofield to Burlingham scheme at its 23 February 2021 meeting. The Thickthorn Junction representation had not yet been submitted. The deadline for this was 13 October 2021.
 - Since considered in June 2021 by the Committee, changes to the representations for the A47 North Tuddenham to Easton and A47/A11 Thickthorn Junction schemes were considered required, as set out in section 3.3 of the report. The points in relation to flood and water had been raised verbally in the examination hearing for the Blofield to Burlingham scheme, the deadline for written submissions having passed.
 - Members were also asked to agree updated comments to the Sheringham and Dudgeon Windfarm proposals; the amendments required to this scheme were set out in paragraph 3.3 of the report and if agreed would be submitted to the planning inspectorate for the next stage of consultation on the scheme.

- 5.2 The following points were discussed and noted:
- Officers confirmed that members were not being asked to reconsider the representation regarding taking over the old trunk road and confirmed that the previously agreed representations for schemes stated that assets should be brought into good commission before being taken on by the Council, as well as requesting a commuted sum in subsequent years. Officer discussions continued with the applicant to reach an agreement on such assets.
 - A discussion was held over the work of Dr Packman into the Barbastelle bat population around the A47, of which she had not yet released the data. A Member was concerned about the implications this could have for future development of National Highways schemes. The Strategic Transport Team Manager replied that if the results of Dr Packman's surveys were released then this information would be considered at the time including if there was any implication for the Council's representations. Norfolk County Council had commissioned ecologists to seek evidence on bat populations in respect of its own projects.
 - A Committee Member asked about shortfalls in the survey details discussed in the report; officers reported that data for the report was collected from a range of officers, some of whom had identified that the applicant's surveys could have covered additional information. This would all be submitted in the written representation from the council and considered in the Planning Inspectorate's examination of the schemes.
 - Cllr Neale asked for the Committee to "confirm that it will be making a recommendation to NCC to make application for 1) SAC accreditation in relation to the land situated within the Wensum Valley which has recently been found to be the home for a super colony of barbastelle bats, and/or 2) an amendment of the conservation objectives of the River Wensum SAC to include the commuting and foraging routes of the barbastelle bats found to be situated within the immediate area of the SAC. In answering this question the committee needs to keep in mind that 1) the presence of these bats has

been corroborated by NCC's own surveys, and 2) the protected status of the bats under Annexes II and IV of the European Communities Council Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora warrants designation of a SAC, as was the case in Chilmark Quarries SAC and Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC". The Chair replied that the Committee this was not relevant to the Committee.

- It was discussed that it was important to focus on the information that was known at that time in order for the Committee to make their decision.

The voting Members of the Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1. Agree Written Representations / Local Impact Reports for the applications for Development Consent Orders on the A47, as set out in the relevant appendices to the report.
2. Agree amendments to previously agreed wording for Sheringham and Dudgeon Windfarm Extension Projects to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate as part of the next stage of the consultation process.

The meeting ended at 10:32

CHAIR



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