

A140 Long Stratton: Hempnall Crossroads Junction Improvement

Public Consultation Results

C1.0 - Background

C1.1 - A public consultation was in place between 1 March 2018 - 10 April 2018. This was publicised in the Eastern Daily Press and on Norfolk County Council's Twitter and Facebook pages. The consultation comprised a short questionnaire linked from the website www.norfolk.gov.uk/hempnallcrossroads which contained more detail on the scheme including a drawing showing the proposed layout. There was also an email link provided for any queries. Posters were also circulated to a number of local businesses and community buildings; these contained a telephone number for people to use if they needed information in an alternative format.

In addition, 57 people/organisations were directly contacted by post or email including Parish Councils in the immediate area, local businesses, bus operators, emergency services and other interest groups. A full list of consultees can be found at the end of this document.

C2.0 - The questionnaire

The following questions were asked in the online questionnaire:

C2.1 - *What is your name?*

C2.2 - *What is your email address?*

C2.3 - *Are you responding as a local resident, on behalf of a local business, on behalf of a local organisation, someone who works in the area, a visitor to the area, someone who travels through the area or on behalf of a community organisation (with an option to provide its' name)?*

C2.4 - *How often do you currently use the Hempnall Crossroads? (every day, 5-6 days a week, 3-4 days a week, 1-2 days a week, once a fortnight, once a month, less often, never).*

C2.5 - *How far do you agree or disagree with our plans to improve the Hempnall Crossroads? (strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, strongly disagree, don't know).*

C2.6 - *Why do you say that? (open text box)*

C2.7 - Please tell us about any local information or issues that you think would help us to plan the works, any specific issue you think we haven't addressed or any concerns you may have about the potential impacts of our proposed design (open text box).

C3.0 - Results

C3.1 - A total of 456 responses to the online questionnaire were received. A further 7 responses were received via the email link, all of which supported the scheme. Excluding multiple emails from the same person, an additional 4 emails were received. One of these supported the scheme but had concerns regarding Tasburgh traffic (others reported similar concerns - please see items C5.9 and C5.10 below for details). The Campaign for the Protection of Rural England supported the scheme but requested that street lighting be omitted.

C3.2 - Specific results from online questionnaires

C3.2.1 - Are you responding as...

Status	Number
Local resident	335
On behalf of a local business	26
On behalf of a local organisation	14
Someone who works in the area	56
A visitor to the area	8
Someone who travels through the area	177
On behalf of a community organisation	4
Not answered	5

(Please note that many consultees chose more than one category hence the total above exceeds the total number of responses)

C3.2.2 - How often do you currently use the Hempnall Crossroads?

Frequency	Total number	Percentage
Every day	86	18.9
5-6 days a week	76	16.7
3-4 days a week	106	23.3
1-2 days a week	92	20.1
Once a fortnight	46	10.1
Once a month	21	4.6
Less often	21	4.6
Never	1	0.2
Not answered	7	1.5
Total	456	100

C3.2.3 - How far do you agree or disagree with our plans to improve the Hempnall Crossroads?

View expressed	Total number	Percentage
Strongly agree	350	76.7
Agree	76	16.7
Neither agree or disagree	14	3.1
Disagree	6	1.3
Strongly disagree	5	1.3
Don't know	0	0
Not answered	4	0.7
Spoilt/abusive response	1	0.2
Total	456	100

C4.0 - Analysis of results

C4.1 - The results show that over 93% of respondents either agree or strongly agree with the proposals. Of the 5 that strongly disagreed the following views were given:

- One gave no reasons
- Traffic signals would be a more cost effective and safer solution and also there are concerns about increased traffic using minor roads during construction
- Disagreement with the location of the roundabout and the request that it be constructed in the centre of the existing junction
- One resident of Newton Flotman thought the scheme would result in fewer gaps in the traffic on the A140 which would make it more difficult to travel to and from Newton Flotman
- The roundabout will increase delays and lead to more accidents as a result of drivers making poor decisions due to frustration caused by the delays

C4.2 - Most of these issues were raised as concerns by those who were supportive of the scheme and are considered further in section 5.0 of this document entitled 'Other Feedback Received'. In relation to the query on the position of the roundabout, building it in the centre of the existing junction would cause the maximum amount of disruption to road users during construction. The roundabout has been sited 'offline' so that as much construction work as possible can take place without disrupting existing traffic.

C4.3 - Of the 6 that disagreed the following views were given:

- From Hempnall it will still be difficult to exit the junction. Traffic lights are preferred and will cause less disruption as take less time to install
- Concern from a business about getting an articulated vehicle and trailer through the new junction

- Concerns about the impact on traffic trying to turn right out of Church Road Tasburgh which is already difficult
- It will still be difficult to exit from the minor roads onto the roundabout. Traffic signals would resolve this problem.
- The roundabout will delay A140 traffic. Request for the A140 to be widened through the junction and right turn filter lanes added instead of a roundabout

Most of these issues were also raised as concerns by those who were supportive of the scheme and are considered further below in section 5.0.

C4.4 - In relation to the comment about the articulated vehicle, the roundabout has been designed in accordance with all relevant standards and computer-aided simulations of vehicle movements have been carried out to demonstrate that these manoeuvres are possible.

C5.0 - Other Feedback Received

Although there is strong support for the scheme many respondents made further comments, with some raising particular concerns or issues. These are summarised below:

C5.1 - There were many comments that related to the developer-led Long Stratton bypass scheme, and in particular, queries as to why the proposed bypass links south of the proposed roundabout rather than to it. Many respondents requested that the bypass join the A140 at the proposed Hempnall junction roundabout.

C5.1.1 - The current Long Stratton Bypass scheme is a separate developer led proposal. A bypass corridor and the need to improve the existing Hempnall crossroads is set out in the adopted Long Stratton Area Action Plan that has been through an independent examination process. Whilst the previous county-led scheme incorporated an improvement at Hempnall the developer proposal does not, but it will need to contribute to the cost of the Hempnall scheme. There is no overriding technical requirement to extend the bypass to Hempnall so this cannot be required as part of the Hempnall roundabout scheme.

C5.2 - There were also queries about whether the construction of the roundabout could be coordinated with the construction of Long Stratton Bypass.

C5.2.1 - The latter is a developer-led scheme for which a planning application has recently been submitted but funding is not currently secured and there is no delivery programme in place. Norfolk County Council has been allocated funding for the Hempnall roundabout scheme which must be spent within a specified time frame. It will not therefore be possible to coordinate the two projects.

C5.3 - There were many concerns raised about increased traffic on the A140 as a result of proposed development in Long Stratton.

Some of these related specifically to the impact on villages to the north of the site and increased traffic flows making it harder to make right turns.

C5.3.1 - Long Stratton bypass is a separate scheme and these comments will need to be considered as part of the assessment of the planning application for the Long Stratton Bypass scheme.

C5.4 - There is a strong perception that the existing junction is dangerous and that improvements are long overdue. There were many references to people taking risks in order to travel through the junction.

C5.5 - Concerns about the impact of the construction of the roundabout in terms of increased congestion on the A140. Also the impact of likely increased traffic, including HGVs, using the minor roads in the area during construction, particularly if this was during winter.

C5.5.1 - It is inevitable that there will be some disruption during construction, however, the roundabout design has been developed to try and minimise impact on the existing highway. Discussions are already underway to try and agree a traffic management proposal that will keep disruption to a minimum. This consultation also gave people the opportunity to tell us about any particular events that may be affected by the construction of the scheme and parish councils have been asked for their comments.

C5.6 - Many respondents told us that they regularly use minor roads in the area in order to avoid the Hempnall Crossroads junction. Some predicted a reduction in traffic using these minor roads when the scheme is completed.

C5.7 - There was some support for an alternative traffic signal scheme, on the basis that it would be cheaper, quicker to construct and also the perception that it would result in shorter delays exiting the minor roads.

C5.7.1 - A traffic signal scheme would cause greater delay to traffic as it would be operating at all times, including during off-peak periods. A roundabout therefore causes far less disruption and delay. A traffic signal junction is also likely to result in an increased number of collisions compared to a roundabout. Research has indicated that on average roundabouts are safer than other junction types and on average the proportion of fatal accidents at roundabouts is 0.35% compared to 0.88% of all other junction accidents.

C5.7.2 - Although there will be some delay as vehicles on the A140 will need to slow to negotiate the roundabout, the disbenefit to A140 traffic is significantly outweighed by benefits afforded to minor road traffic and the safety benefits at the junction.

C5.7.3 - A signalised junction is also a relatively unusual form of junction for a high speed rural road and would not be expected by drivers and there is longstanding local support for a roundabout.

C5.8 - One respondent raised concerns about the absence of facilities for non-motorised users, stating "*exclusion of NMU facilities is a massive missed opportunity to provide safe crossings and only serves to maintain the barrier of the A140 to the non-car users of communities either side of the road.*" Another respondent requested a cycle path from Long Stratton to Tasburgh.

C5.8.1 - NMU facilities have been considered as part of the design process. There are currently no pedestrian or cycle facilities in the area that could link to provision at the roundabout. However, sufficient land will be acquired that will allow facilities to be installed in the future if funding and other associated infrastructure improvements are in place.

C5.8.2 - In relation to the request for a cycle path, this is beyond the scope of this scheme and such requests can be made via the Parish Council or comments made to South Norfolk Council, the Local Planning Authority for the Long Stratton development proposals (South Norfolk Council Planning references 2018/0111 and 2018/0112).

C5.9 - A number of respondents raised concerns about the junction of Church Road in Tasburgh, stating that it is already difficult to turn right out of the junction and that the roundabout scheme and development at Long Stratton will make this worse. Some respondents requested improvements at this junction. However, other users thought that the roundabout would provide 'natural traffic calming', slowing traffic heading north past Tasburgh and aid the right turn manoeuvre.

C5.10 - As a result of the above it was thought that traffic heading south from Tasburgh may choose to use Church Road and Low Road to join the A140 at the new roundabout rather than making the right turn onto the A140 from Tasburgh. There are concerns that these minor roads are not suitable for additional traffic volumes

C5.10.1 - Concerns about increased traffic as a result of development at Long Stratton should be directed to South Norfolk Council. The roundabout at Hempnall will cause vehicles to slow and gaps will be created in A140 traffic due to vehicles using the roundabout to access the minor roads. It is considered that the roundabout scheme will not make the right turn from Church Road in Tasburgh any more difficult.

C5.11 - There were also a number of concerns raised, and requests for improvements to, the junctions between the A140 and the access roads to/from Newton Flotman (Flordon Road is specifically referred to in some responses). Some people have said that there are currently delays caused by traffic waiting to turn right into Newton Flotman and there are difficulties accessing the A140 from Newton Flotman.

Some expressed concern about villages to the north of the site in general, including Swainsthorpe and Saxlingham Nethergate, in relation to gaining access to the A140

C5.11.1 - Concerns relating to increased traffic as a result of development at Long Stratton should be made to South Norfolk Council. There is currently a feasibility study underway looking at access between the A140 and Newton Flotman although there is no funding available at the current time to implement a scheme here.

C5.12 - More than one response raised the concern that traffic levels, including HGVs, will increase in Hapton, anticipating that the route from Wymondham via Hethel and Fundenhall will become busier. There was a request for traffic calming and a weight restriction. It was noted that the C497 was downgraded from a B road many years ago and a query was raised as to whether this status would remain and whether the road will continue to be maintained to its' current standard

C5.12.1 - There are no plans to upgrade the C497. The impact of the roundabout scheme on the adjacent road network will be monitored post-construction.

C5.13 - Some respondents thought that the roundabout would not help reduce the wait time to exit the minor arms

C5.13.1 - Traffic modelling has been carried out which shows a significant reduction in wait times for traffic exiting the minor arms

C5.14 - One respondent suggested that a speed restriction, instead of a roundabout would be a better use of money. Many respondents suggested additional reductions in speed limits on the A140 would be beneficial (e.g. to 40mph), with some requesting further reductions on the B1527 Hempnall Road. One respondent opposed any reduction in speed limits.

C5.14.1 - Speed restrictions alone will not bring the safety benefits associated with the roundabout. Restrictions also need to be suitable for the immediate highway environment in order to achieve good levels of compliance.

C5.15 - Two respondents indicated they would likely use businesses/amentities in Hempnall and Long Stratton much more if the roundabout was constructed.

C5.16 - There was one concern raised about the proposed agricultural access off the roundabout, in terms of other traffic not expecting agricultural vehicles to be making this manoeuvre

C5.16.1 - The junction has been designed to the appropriate design standards including for visibility. It is not unusual to have a farm access off a roundabout.

C5.17 - There were some comments requesting that signing at the junction is considered to avoid encouraging vehicles to use the minor roads as short cuts.

C5.17.1 - Comments are noted and signing will be considered at the detailed design stage.

C5.18 - Many respondents referred to the success of the roundabout scheme on the A140 at Pulham Market

C5.19 - There was a request for a 'slip road' (segregated left turn lane) from the A140 to the B1527 Hempnall Road

C5.19.1 - Traffic modelling work has concluded that a segregated left turn lane is not necessary.

C5.20 - Eight responses made reference to street lighting. Of these, 5 supported the proposed lighting, including an adjacent Parish Council. One was unsure why lighting was proposed; another suggested lighting as an option. One response, from the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), expressed concern about the impact that street lighting would have on Norfolk's dark skies and asked that it be removed from the proposal.

C5.20.1 - The existing Hempnall Crossroads junction is lit and the lighting continues on the A140 northwards for approximately 3.9km to immediately north of the residential area of Newton Flotman. If the lighting were to be omitted from Hempnall roundabout this would mean that drivers heading southbound would travel through a long lit section of the A140, including through a rural 'non-eventful' section of carriageway immediately north of the roundabout, with lighting then ceasing just prior to the roundabout. Having driven through a rural lit section drivers are unlikely to expect to encounter a roundabout immediately after street lighting ceases and this could result in accidents. Due to the adjacent environment and existing lighting arrangements it is considered the inclusion of street lighting is appropriate in this case.

C5.20.2 - An unlit roundabout in this location may be suitable only in the context of a substantial length of unlit A140 either side of the roundabout, which would require the decommissioning of a substantial number of lighting columns. Such proposals would require a wider strategic review of lighting along the A140 which is beyond the scope of this scheme.

C5.21 - There was general support for the scheme to start as soon as possible and to be completed in as short a time period as possible

C5.22 - It is intended to commence the construction of the scheme as soon as possible during 2019. This will be dependent upon successful planning and other consent processes, necessary utility diversions, etc. The speed at which the scheme is constructed will depend to some extent on traffic management measures.

Road closures enable works to complete more quickly but cause more inconvenience to the public. A balance between making expedient progress and minimising disruption to road users is required.

C6.0 - Conclusion

There has been a significant number of responses to the consultation and there is overwhelming support for the proposed scheme. Many respondents have raised some useful and interesting comments which will, where feasible, be considered during the detailed design stage.

List of Consultees

Cllr Alison Thomas, Local Member for Long Stratton and Deputy Leader of the Council
Cllr Foulger (Forehoe)
Cllr Spratt (West Depwade)
Cllr M Stone (Clavering)
Cllr B Stone (Loddon)
Cllr Thomson (Henstead)
Martin Wilby, EDT Committee Chair
The Parish Councils of Long Stratton, Tasburgh, Morningthorpe and Fritton, Hempnall, Tharston and Hapton
BACT Community Transport
CTC (Cyclists' Touring Club)
Denton and Alburgh Community Bus
East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust
Environment Agency
Equal Lives
First Buses
Freight Transport Association
Galloway
Hall Farm Workshops
Hapton C of E VA Primary School
Hempnall lawn mower centre
Hempnall Primary School
Highways England (Kier)
Jack in the Box Nursery
King's Lynn Internal Drainage Board
Konectbus
Long Stratton High School
Manor Field Infant & Nursery School (& childrens' centre)
Mow Direct
Natural England
NCC Countryside Access manager
NCC Countryside Access Strategy Officer
Norfolk Chambers of Commerce and Industry
Norfolk Constabulary
Norfolk Fire Service
Norfolk Homes & Norfolk Land Limited
Preston CE VC Primary School
Road Haulage Association Ltd
Royal Mail
Semmence Coaches
Simonds
South Norfolk Council
South Norfolk Cycling Forum

South Norfolk Cycling Forum
Spratts Coaches
St Mary's CE Junior (Academy)
Sustrans (East of England)
The affected landowner, their agent and legal representative
The Hollies Care Home
UK Power Networks
Wroxham and District Angling Club

Posters were also provided to the following with a request for them be displayed or provided to the public:

Hall Farm Workshops
South Norfolk Council
Long Stratton Library
Hempnall area mobile library
Old Mill & Millgates Medical Practice
Swan Lane Surgery, Long Stratton Medical Partnership
Morningthorpe main recycling centre
Hempnall Post Office
Hempnall Veterinary Surgery
Long Stratton Cooperative store
Long Stratton Shell / Stratton Motor Company