

A47 corridor improvement scheme
Public consultation report
A47/A11 Thickthorn junction

Road Investment Strategy

A47 / A11 Thickthorn Junction Improvements

Report on Public Consultation

August 2017

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Highways England (HE) is the government owned company charged with operating, maintaining and improving England's motorways and major A roads. Formerly the Highways Agency, HE became a government owned company in 2015.
- 1.1.2 The Road investment strategy (RIS) sets out HE's long-term improvement programme for our motorways and major roads with the stable funding needed to plan ahead effectively.
- 1.1.3 The RIS can be read and downloaded at:
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-investment-strategy-for-the-2015-to-2020-road-period>
- 1.1.4 HE recently launched its annual Delivery Plan 2017 – 2018, which can be read and downloaded at:
- https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/635613/Highways_England_Delivery_Plan_Update_2017-2018.pdf
- 1.1.5 The A47 trunk road forms part of the strategic road network and provides for a variety of local, medium and long distance trips between the A1 and the east coast. The corridor connects the cities of Norwich and Peterborough, the towns of Wisbech, Kings Lynn, Dereham, Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft and a succession of villages in what is largely a rural area.
- 1.1.6 The A47 runs for 115 miles from the A1 west of Peterborough to the east coast ports of Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft.
- 1.1.7 Over half of the road is single carriageway.
- 1.1.8 The cities of Peterborough and Norwich attract additional traffic, particularly during the morning and evening peak periods.
- 1.1.9 There has been rapid growth over the past decade, especially in Peterborough where the population increased by 16% between 2001 and 2011.
- 1.1.10 Further planned growth, including the new City Deal for Norwich, will mean that over 50,000 new jobs and 100,000 new homes are planned for the area over the next 15 years.
- 1.1.11 The A47 has a number of congestion hotspots around Norwich, Peterborough and Great Yarmouth. There is also significant growth predicted in the area which the proposed improvements will help to support.
- 1.1.12 HE is proposing 6 locations along the route for improvements. These are:
- A47 Wansford to Sutton; dualling
 - A47/A141 Guyhirn Junction; junction improvement
 - A47 North Tuddenham to Easton; dualling
 - A47 Blofield to North Burlingham; dualling
 - A47/ A11junction; Thickthorn junction improvement
 - A47/A12 junction enhancements to the following roundabouts: Vauxhall, Gapton

1.2 Purpose of non-Statutory Public Consultation

- 1.2.1 The purpose of the Public Consultation was to seek views on the outline proposals from the general public, Statutory Consultees, including local authorities, and other interested bodies. It was stated that comments received as a result of the consultation process will be considered.
- 1.2.2 The Public Consultation period was from 13 March 2017 to 21 April 2017.

1.3 Purpose and Structure of Report on Public Consultation

- 1.3.1 This report describes the process that was followed for the non-statutory public consultation arrangements, and provides factual information on the responses received.
- 1.3.2 Dialogue by Design, a company that specialises in public consultation and engagement services, was appointed by Highways England, to process and analyse the responses to the Public Consultation.
- 1.3.3 This forms part of a package of information, informing the Preferred Route Announcement.

1.4 A47/A11 Thickthorn Interchange

- 1.4.1 The A47/A11 Thickthorn Junction is located on the south-western edge of Norwich, and provides access to the A47 via the A11 and B1172 Norwich Road for Eaton, Cringleford, Hethersett and Wymondham. The A47 connects Norwich with Great Yarmouth to the east and Peterborough to the west, via King's Lynn and Wisbech. The A11 is the main route connecting Norwich with Thetford, Cambridge and London (via the M11 and A14). The A47/A11 Thickthorn Junction is therefore important for commuter, business and commercial traffic, and for both short and long distance trips.
- 1.4.2 Studies have identified the unsuitability of the current junction layout to accommodate the dominant movements between the A11 northbound to A47 eastbound carriageways and the A47 westbound to A11 southbound carriageways, in addition to the strong tidal movement through the junction on the A11 during both peak hours. This is predicted to worsen in future years due to the future growth in strategic traffic, and growth from the large local residential developments in Hethersett and Cringleford.
- 1.4.3 In developing this scheme HE aim to address these issues by upgrading the existing junction.
- 1.4.4 The scheme will support economic growth by making journeys safer and more reliable.

1.5 Scheme Objectives and Proposals

- 1.5.1 HE's Strategic Business Plan sets out the objectives of the proposed A47/A11 Thickthorn Junction scheme as:

- **Supporting Economic Growth**

Contributing to sustainable economic growth by supporting employment and residential development opportunities. The scheme aims to reduce congestion-related delay, improve journey time reliability and increase the overall capacity of the A47.

- **A Safe and Serviceable Network**

Improving road safety for all road users through being designed to modern highway standards appropriate for a strategic road.

- **A More Free-Flowing Network**

Increasing the resilience of the junction in coping with incidents such as collisions, breakdowns, maintenance and extreme weather. The improved A47/A11 Thickthorn Junction would be more reliable, reducing journey times and providing capacity for future traffic growth.

- **Improved Environment**

Protecting the environment by minimising adverse impacts and where possible deliver enhancements by improving the environmental impact of transport on those living along the existing A47 and by minimising the impact of new infrastructure on the natural and built environment.

- **An Accessible and Integrated Network**

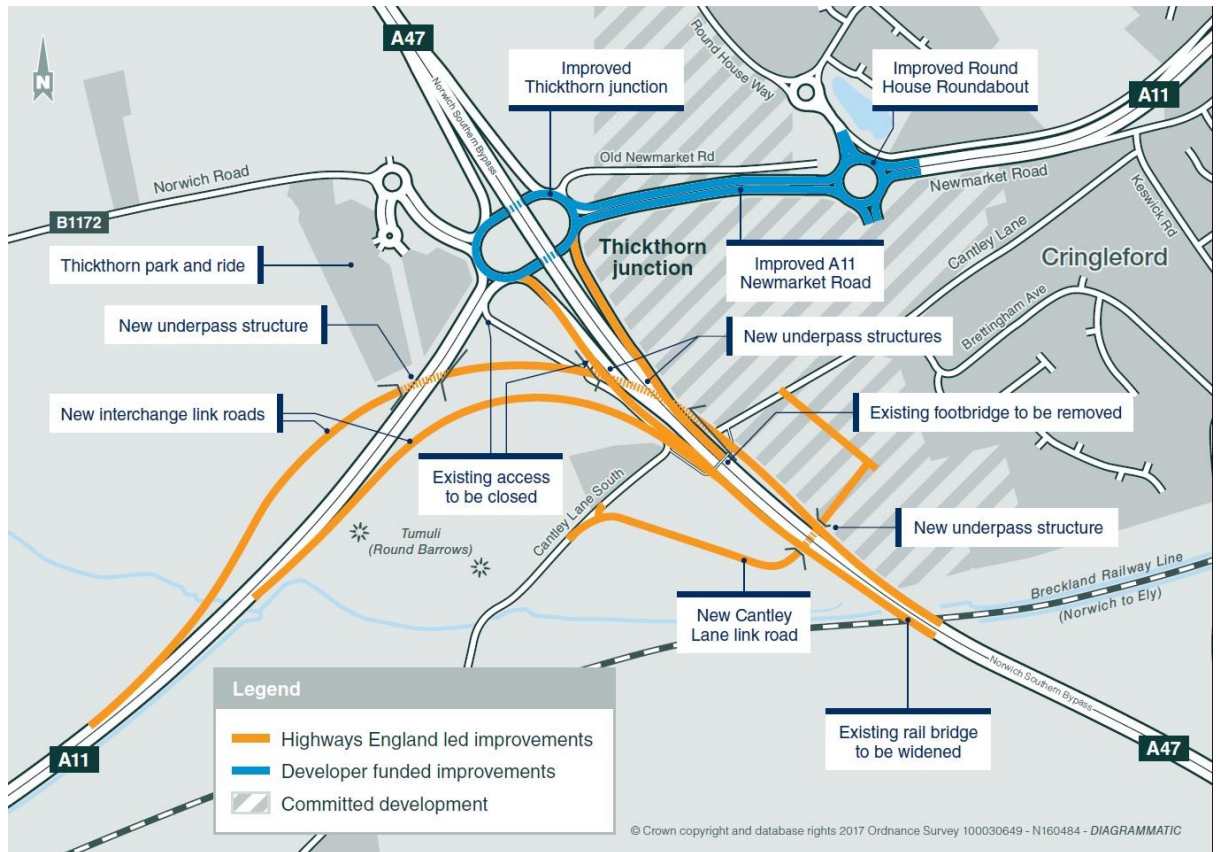
Ensuring the proposals take into account local communities and access to the road network, providing a safer route between communities for cyclists, walkers, equestrians and other non-motorist groups.

- **Value for Money**

Ensuring that the scheme is affordable and delivers good value for money.

2 Proposals Presented for Public Consultation

2.1 The Proposed Option



2.1.1 Our Proposed Option would create new free flow links between the A11 south and the A47 eastern link, provide improvements to the existing A11/A47 signalised junction, improve the existing A11 Round House Way Roundabout and reconnect Cantley Lane north and south of the existing A47 mainline carriageway.

2.1.2 The Option would re-route strategic traffic away from the existing A47/A11 Thickthorn Junction which will release capacity for local traffic movements.

2.1.3 A number of potential alternative options were considered as part of the scheme development process during 2016. These options did not perform well against the objectives therefore were not progressed any further.

2.2 Alternative Options

2.2.1 As part of the supporting information for the consultation a Non-Technical Summary Report was prepared and made available to the general public on the HE's scheme website. This document provided background information on the scheme development prior to the consultation and included details of the alternative options considered along with the reasoning for their rejection.

2.2.2 A copy of the Non-Technical Summary Report can be found at the following website location:

3 Consultation Arrangements

3.1 Brochure and Questionnaire

3.1.1 A copy of the Public Consultation brochure is included in Appendix A.

3.1.2 The brochure includes:

- Information on the scheme proposals
- Details of the exhibition dates and venues
- Contact details to enable comments to be made to Highways England. These consisted of postal address, email and website address, and telephone number.

3.1.3 A separate questionnaire document for respondents to complete and return to the Highways England was prepared. A copy of this questionnaire is also included in Appendix B.

3.1.4 Questions were asked to gain information such as type and location of user, frequency and purpose of use, and to obtain feedback on the proposal shown. Information and analysis of the questionnaire responses received is provided in the following Sections. Respondents were also invited to make additional comments if they wished to do so.

3.1.5 The consultation brochure and questionnaire were distributed to the general public at the Public Information Exhibitions (PIEs) which were held between 25 March 2017 and 28 March 2017 in Cringleford and Hethersett.

3.1.6 Brochures and questionnaires were also deposited at The Forum in the centre of Norwich.

3.2 Advertising

3.2.1 The Public Information Exhibitions were advertised as follows:

- Highways England website for the A47 Improvement:
<http://www.highways.gov.uk/a47Improvement>;
- Highways England press notice (published on 15 March 2017):
[https://www.gov.uk/government/news/have-your-say-on-plans-to-dual-and-improve-
junctions-on-the-a47](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/have-your-say-on-plans-to-dual-and-improve-junctions-on-the-a47);
- Invitation to local MPs, local councillors and other key stakeholders to attend a preview of the Exhibition before it opened to the public, sent on 02 March 2017;
- Advertisements in local newspapers ('EDP', 'Norwich Evening News', 'Diss Wymondham & Attleborough Mercury', 'Norwich Extra') on 16 March 2017;
- Interviews on local television news and radio;
- Notices posted at strategic locations around the Cringleford and Hethersett area before the Exhibition;
- Leaflet drops were undertaken in Cringleford and Hethersett;
- Notices posted at the exhibition venue on the days of the exhibition;
- A 'static' advertisement was set up at the Forum in central Norwich (refer to Section 3.6 for further details).

3.3 Public Information Exhibition

- 3.3.1 The Public Information Exhibitions (PIEs) were held on 25, 27 and 28 March 2017. Details are shown in Table 3.1, including the number of visitors that attended. The exhibition was attended by staff from the Highways England, its consulting engineers AECOM and Norfolk County Council, who were available to answer questions on the proposals from members of the public.
- 3.3.2 The venues were selected with the aim of providing the optimum opportunity for members of the public across the area to attend, as well as offering the most suitable facilities locally to hold such an exhibition.
- 3.3.3 The PIEs presented the scheme proposals on display boards, with a combination of drawings and descriptive text. The display material was based on the brochures, presented to a lesser detail.
- 3.3.4 Copies of the brochure and questionnaire were available at the exhibitions. Members of the public were advised that they could complete a hard copy of the questionnaire and post it back the HE using the Freepost envelope provided or complete the questionnaire online at the website detailed in the brochure.

3.4 Display Material

- 3.4.1 The display material contained information about the scheme and the issues surrounding it. The display material included the following:
- Welcome board (including an introduction to the scheme);
 - A47/A11 Thickthorn junction (including details of why the scheme is needed);
 - Objectives of the scheme;
 - Proposed option (with an illustrative layout drawing of the proposed option);
 - Environmental constraints plan;
 - What happens next? (with board details of the overall scheme programme);
 - How to respond? (with details of the various methods for completing the questionnaire).

3.5 Attendance at Exhibition

3.5.1 The total number of visitors that attended the exhibition is detailed in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 Public Information Exhibitions Details

Venue	Date	Opening Times	Number of Visitors
The Forum Millennium Plain Norwich NR2 1TF	Tue 14 March 2017	1pm – 3pm MPs, Councillor and stakeholder Preview	Not recorded
Willow Centre 1-13 Willowcroft Way Cringleford Norwich NR4 7Jy	Sat 25 March 2017	10am to 2pm	71
Jubilee Youth Club Back Lane Hethersett Norwich NR9 3JJ	Mon 27 March 2017	3pm to 8pm	117
Willow Centre 1-13 Willowcroft Way Cringleford Norwich NR4 7Jy	Tue 28 Mar 2017	3pm to 8pm	69

3.6 Additional material on display

3.6.1 An additional 'static' panel was set up at The Forum in central Norwich during the course of the consultation period. The panel provided details of the proposed Public Information Exhibition events along with details of how to access the consultation material and respond to the questionnaire. Copies of the brochure and questionnaire were also made available at this event for the general public to pick-up.

3.7 Meetings with affected parties

3.7.1 As part of the consultation process, the HE actively sought to discuss the proposals with parties directly affected by the proposals, such as landowners and those with business interests or development proposals in the scheme area. A number of meetings took place and consultation will continue as design progresses.

4 Reporting Methodology

4.1 Data receipt and digitisation of all submissions

- 4.1.1 Consultation responses were handled differently according to the format in which they were received as detailed in the following sections. Consultation responses from all channels were assigned a unique reference number and imported into Dialogue by Design’s bespoke consultation database for analysis.
- 4.1.2 The total number of responses to the consultation was 185 received from the following channels:

Table 1: Number of responses by type

Type of responses	Count
Online response form	78
Response form hardcopy	74
Emails/letters	33
Total	185

- 4.1.3 As a result, the findings set out in the report should be treated with caution and not interpreted as representative of the views of the local population and the surrounding area. Nevertheless, the responses that have been received highlight a wide range of issues detailed later in this report.
- 4.1.4 Emails, letters and any other responses that did not follow the question structure of the feedback form were categorised as unstructured (or non-fitting) feedback. These responses were integrated with the open text responses to the final consultation question (‘Please use this space if you wish to make further comments’). As is common in public consultations, the number of responses per question varied, as not all respondents chose to respond to all questions¹. The table below shows the number of responses by question.

Table 2: Number of responses by question

Question	Responses
4. Are you? (A driver/motorcyclist; a cyclist; a pedestrian; a recreational walker; an equestrian; a local resident; a local business (including farm), a visitor to the area; Other)	147
5. How often do you travel through the A47/A11 Thickthorn Junction?	147

¹ See section 4.3.2 interpreting the charts

Question	Responses
(Daily; Weekly; Monthly; Not at all)	
6. For what purpose do you travel through the A47/A11 Thickthorn Junction? (Local journeys; Long distance journeys; Local business; Commuting)	76
7. How close do you live to the A47/A11 Thickthorn Interchange? (Under 1 mile; Between 1 and 5 miles; Greater than 5 miles)	148
8a. Do you think improvements are needed to the A47/A11 Thickthorn Junction? (Yes; No)	150
8b. Please explain the reason for your response	145
9a. What is your view of the proposed option for through the A47/A11 Thickthorn Junction? (Strongly in favour; Somewhat in favour; Neutral; Somewhat against; Strongly against)	150
9b. Are there any reasons for your choice? Please use the space below for comments.	122
10a. Should provision for pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians and/or other users be improved at the A47/A11 Thickthorn Junction? (Yes; No)	139
10b. Please explain the reason for your response	125
11. Please use this space if you wish to make further comments (including non-fitting letters or emails)	117

Responses via the website

- 4.1.5 Online submissions were downloaded from the consultation website by Highways England and supplied as a .csv file to Dialogue by Design at the end of the consultation period. These files were then added digitally to Dialogue by Design's consultation database.

Paper response forms and letters received via the freepost address

- 4.1.6 A freepost address operated for the duration of the consultation for respondents to submit their response in hard copy. Upon receipt, letters and paper-based response forms were logged and given a unique reference number. Scanned copies were then imported into the consultation database and the content was data entered in the same format as the online responses.

Email responses

- 4.1.7 Responses contained within the body of an email were digitally imported into the consultation database. Responses which were sent through as email attachments were imported into the consultation database and data-entered where necessary.

Responses containing non-text elements

- 4.1.8 Any submissions containing images, maps and other non-text content were made available to analysts as a PDF version of the original submission so this information could be viewed alongside any written responses.

4.2 Analysis Process

- 4.2.1 A coding framework was created to ensure a thorough and fair analysis of the views expressed by respondents. The coding framework enabled analysts to categorise responses by themes and issues so that main ideas as well as specific points of detail could be captured and reported.

- 4.2.2 A senior analyst reviewed an early set of responses to formulate an initial framework of codes. A two-tier approach was taken to coding, starting with high level themes and then specific codes. The top-level themes are listed below.

- Improvements Needed
- Proposed Option
- Non-motorised users (NMUs)
- General
- Consultation Process
- Location
- Other

- 4.2.3 Each code within a theme represents a specific issue or argument raised in the responses. The analysts use natural language codes (rather than numeric sets) as this allows them to suggest refinements as well as aiding quality control and external verification.

- 4.2.4 The application of a code to part of a response was done by highlighting the relevant text and recording the selection. A single submission could receive multiple codes. Where similar issues were raised, care was taken to ensure that these were coded consistently.

- 4.2.5 The coding process enabled all responses to be indexed according to the issues raised by respondents, and enabled a detailed summary of the content by means of this report.

4.3 Reporting

- 4.3.1 Chapters 5 to 9 of this report summarise the main themes raised by respondents to the consultation, including members of the public and stakeholder organisations.

- 4.3.2 Quotes from respondents are used to illustrate particular arguments throughout the report. These quotes are taken directly from consultation responses and any spelling or grammatical errors are those of the respondent and not Dialogue by Design.

4.4 Use of numbers and quantifiers in the report

- 4.4.1 As with all consultation activities, it is important to note that the people and organisations who respond to the consultation constitute a self-selecting sample. This means they have chosen

to reply, rather than being selected to do so as part of a sample designed to be representative of an area or population.

- 4.4.2 Their decision to do so may be affected by any number of factors including awareness of the feedback process, involvement with a local organisation and experience of using certain roads or their property being potentially affected by the proposals. As such, the feedback provides a useful reflection of the views of those who have chosen to reply (185 responses), but cannot be taken to be a representative sample of the local community.
- 4.4.3 This is particularly important in relation to the analysis of responses to closed questions in the report. When considering numbers and views expressed in the report, the reader should keep in mind that those with strong views are generally more likely to respond to a consultation, whether their views are supportive or critical. The numbers shown in charts and cited in the text can only be taken to apply to those who responded to these questions and not generalised to any community more widely.
- 4.4.4 Our approach to summarising qualitative feedback in each section of the report has been to start with the issues raised most frequently or by the highest number of comments. In order to give a general sense of proportionality, we use phrases such as 'some' or 'a few respondents' instead of smaller numbers ('a few' would signify much fewer respondents than 'some').
- 4.4.5 We use indicative quantifiers such as these because of the qualitative nature of the data and variations in respondents' use of the consultation questionnaire. They are only used to indicate the relative number of respondents that raise an issue compared to other issues within a given question. They do not indicate a proportion of the total number of respondents.

4.5 Interpreting charts

- 4.5.1 The following points should be considered when interpreting the charts in this document:
- As a consultation process is self-selecting, those who respond cannot be considered a representative sample. This is why absolute numbers have been used rather than percentages.
 - The values shown in the chart show only those who completed the online or paper questionnaire.
 - Some respondents chose not to answer some of the closed questions on the questionnaire or did not answer the closed question but chose to answer the open question.
- 4.5.2 Please note, therefore, that the proportions shown in the charts cannot be considered as fully representative of all respondents who participated in the consultation, and certainly not representative of any wider community or population. The number of valid responses to a question is indicated on the graph as (n=x).

4.6 Quality Assurance

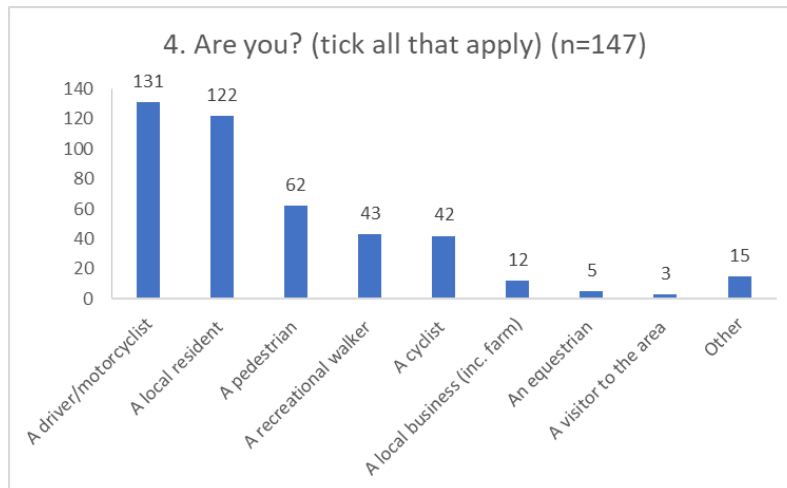
- 4.6.1 Dialogue by Design has a series of quality assurance procedures in place at different stages of the data entry and analysis stages to ensure that representations are accurately captured and analysed.
- 4.6.2 A senior member of staff reviews a sample of the work of all our trained data entry staff. If any errors are identified they are corrected and an increased proportion (up to 100%) of the work is reviewed where a series of errors are found.
- 4.6.3 At the analysis stage, quality assurance procedures are based on regular team meetings and updates to discuss the process and compare working notes to ensure a consistent and accurate approach is taken by each analyst.

5 Questions about Road Usage

5.1 Types of road user

5.1.1 Question 4 asks respondents to select from a set of descriptions which they feel best applies to them, and allows for them to make multiple selections. The responses are shown in the Chart 1 below:

Chart 1: Types of road user

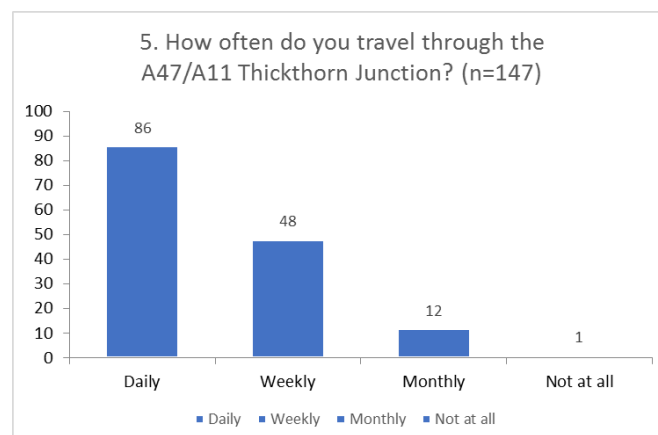


5.1.2 A total of 131 respondents to this question identified themselves as drivers and motorcyclists, 122 as local residents and 62 as pedestrians. A smaller number of respondents selected other descriptions.

5.2 Frequency of travel through the A47/A11 Thickthorn junction

5.2.1 Question 5 asks respondents to select how often they travel through the A47/A11 Thickthorn junction and these responses are shown in the Chart 2 below:

Chart 2: Frequency of travel through the A47/A11 Thickthorn junction

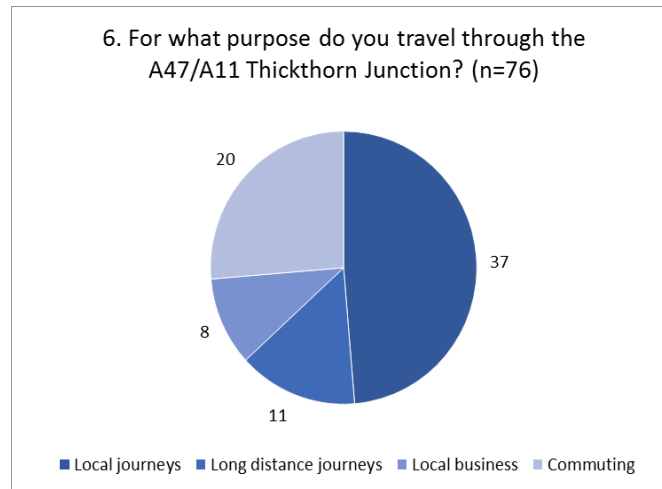


5.2.2 A total of 86 respondents to this question indicated that they travel through A47/A11 Thickthorn junction daily, with 48 indicating that they travel through weekly. The remaining 13 respondents indicated that they travel through monthly (12) or not at all (one).

5.3 Purpose of travel through the A47/A11 Thickthorn junction

5.3.1 Question 6 asks respondents to select the purpose of their travel through the A47/A11 Thickthorn junction and these responses are shown in the Chart 3 below:

Chart 3: Purpose of travel through the A47/A11 Thickthorn junction

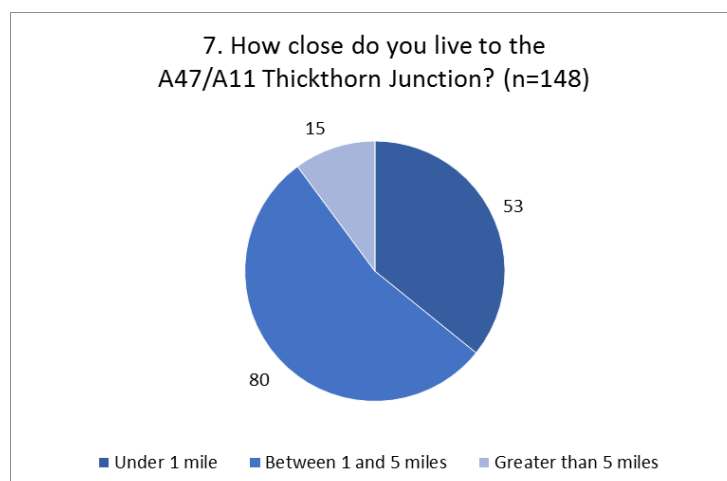


5.3.2 A total of 37 of the respondents to this question indicated that they travel through the A47/A11 Thickthorn junction on local journeys. 11 indicated that they travel through the junction on long distance journeys. Eight respondents selected local business and 20 selected commuting as their reasons for travelling through the junction.

5.4 Proximity to the A47/A11 Thickthorn junction

5.4.1 Question 7 asks respondents to select their proximity to the A47/A11 Thickthorn junction. These responses are shown in the Chart 4 below:

Chart 4: Proximity to the A47/A11 Thickthorn junction



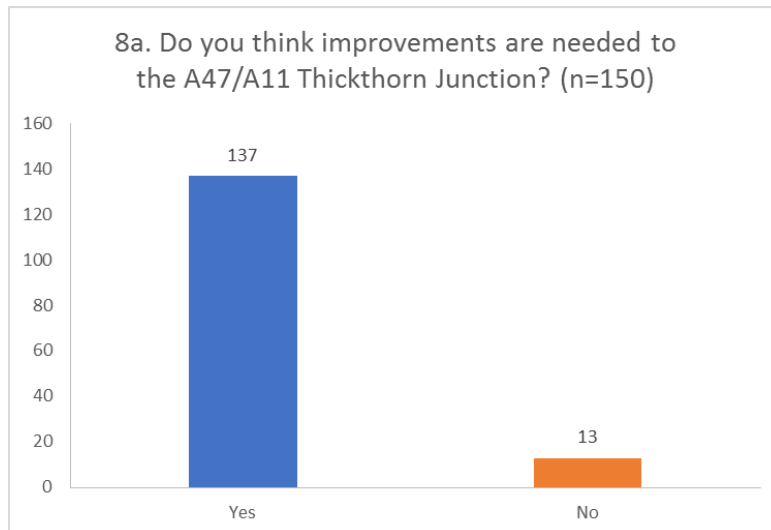
5.4.2 Of the respondents who answered this question 53 indicated that they live under 1 mile away, 80 that they live between 1 and 5 miles away and 15 indicated that they live more than 5 miles away.

6 The Need For Improvements

6.1 Response to Question 8

6.1.1 Question 8a asks respondents to select whether they agree or disagree that improvements are needed and these responses are shown in the Chart 5 below:

Chart 5: Responses on the need for improvements to the A47/A11 Thickthorn junction



6.1.2 A total of 137 respondents indicated that 'yes, improvements are needed' whilst 13 respondents ticked 'no, improvements are not needed'.

6.1.3 Question 8b asks respondents to summarise their reasons for their response to 8a. These are discussed in section 6.2 below which summarises the views of the 145 respondents who answered question 8b as well as respondents who provided comments on the need for improvements within their answers to other questions in the consultation.

6.2 Comments supporting the need for improvements

6.2.1 When respondents comment on the need for improvements at the Thickthorn Junction, the majority agree that improvements to the current design are necessary. These respondents argue that the A11/A47 Thickthorn Junction is a 'key strategic junction' which has an 'overwhelming' case for improvement.

Congestion

6.2.2 Many respondents express their belief that improvements to the Thickthorn Junction are necessary due to concerns regarding the current level of traffic and congestion. They argue that the junction caters for both local and regional traffic, leading to long queues during peak periods. Due to this build-up of traffic, respondents argue that 'rat runs' have become more prevalent, with drivers taking shortcuts through villages to avoid traffic.

6.2.3 Both Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils, along with several other respondents express concerns that new developments around the Thickthorn Junction will lead to increasing congestion as large residential projects take place as well as the construction of the Norwich Northern Distributor Road. They feel that the junction cannot cope with the current levels of traffic, which will significantly worsen as local traffic increases.

“The flow of traffic is already heavy and new housing developments and other demographic factors will make that situation far more serious in the coming years” (User 100140)

Safety

- 6.2.4 Several respondents, including Hethersett Parish Council, argue that safety issues at the Thickthorn Junction need to be addressed as part of any improvement work. They express their belief that the junction is dangerously unsafe, becoming an accident blackspot. Several respondents cite driver behaviour for the danger at the junction, blaming speeding and drivers ignoring signals for a number of accidents that have occurred there.

“The Parish Council has made a number of representations with regard to the safety of local users of the Thickthorn roundabout and the daily occurrences of ‘near misses’ on this roundabout” (Hethersett Parish Council)

- 6.2.5 Many respondents blame the lanes and road markings for making the junction unduly dangerous. These respondents say that the lane markings are not clear, leading to drivers crossing lanes. They say this has resulted in numerous accidents and near misses. Several respondents argue the need for improved lane configuration across the junction to simplify travel, and many say that better signage and markings are required to keep people safe.

Design and layout

- 6.2.6 Several respondents supporting the need for improvements highlight certain aspects of the junction’s design that need urgent attention. Norfolk County Council raises concerns that the B1172 leading to Thickthorn is the only road that does not have a set of lights, meaning very few cars can access the junction. Several other respondents argue the traffic lights are inefficient and often ignored by vehicles. Some respondents raise further concerns that local traffic and trunk road traffic are forced to merge on the junction, disrupting traffic flow.

“At the moment there are no traffic lights on the B1172 at the junction with the round-a-bout and at busy times it is very difficult to join” (User 1366)

- 6.2.7 Several respondents feel that access to and from the junction requires improvement. They raise concerns that Station Lane no longer allows access onto the northbound A11 and that the access onto the A47 slip road has become very dangerous. Some of these respondents argue that slip roads would allow for better access or traffic flow.

Socio-economic

- 6.2.8 Some respondents argue improvements are needed to reduce the impact upon the local community. The primary way they hope to achieve this is by mitigating the noise impact of the junction. They argue the concrete surface needs replacing to dampen the noise of traffic passing through. Some respondents also argue that improving the junction will do a great deal to support economic growth for local businesses as well as Great Yarmouth Port.

6.3 Comments opposing the need for improvements

- 6.3.1 A minority of respondents challenge the need for improvements at the Thickthorn Junction. They argue that, in their experience, they rarely encounter delays at the junction and as such do not believe such improvements are necessary. A few respondents acknowledge problems at the junction, such as a ‘modest safety issue’, however they feel these could be resolved without such a large overhaul of the junction.

"I have not encountered any difficulty or substantial holdups on this roundabout despite the fact that I use it about 3 - 4 times a week" (User 1374)

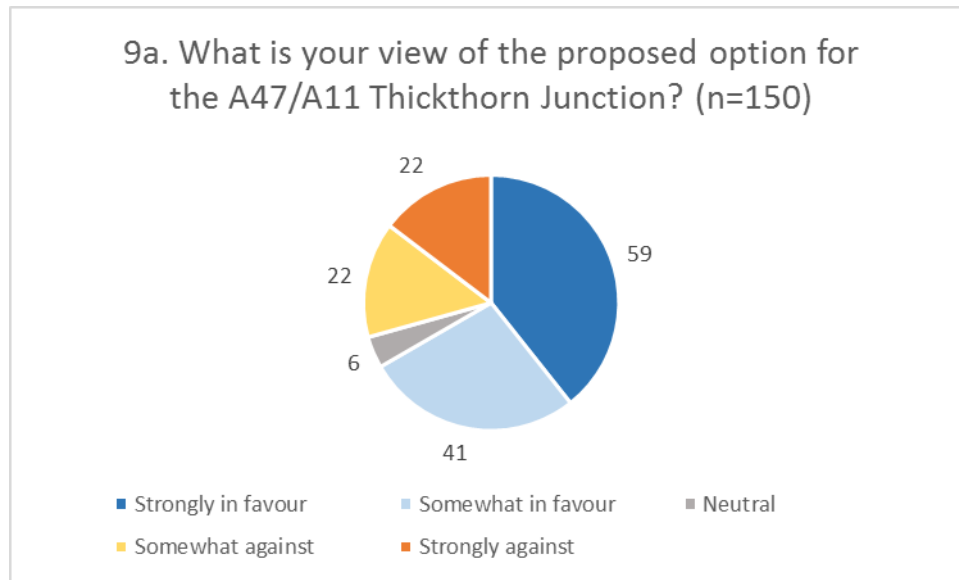
- 6.3.2 Some respondents argue that the development of the Thickthorn Junction will merely create issues elsewhere. They believe that congestion will be shifted further down the road instead of solving the problem. A few respondents suggest work should be carried out elsewhere instead, such as improving the A11 or relieving congestion in East Winch and Middleton.

7 Comments on Proposed Option

7.1 Response to Question 9

7.1.1 Question 9a asks respondents to select their level of support for the proposed option and these responses are shown in the Chart 6 below:

Chart 6: Responses on the proposed option for the A47/A11 Thickthorn Junction



7.1.2 A total of 59 of the 150 respondents who answered this question indicated they are strongly in favour of the proposed changes. 41 said they are somewhat in favour whilst 22 indicated they are strongly against and 22 are somewhat against. Six respondents chose to remain neutral on this question.

7.1.3 Question 9b asks respondents to summarise their reasons for their response to 9a. These are discussed in section 7.2 below which summarises the views of the 122 respondents who answered question 9b as well as respondents who provided comments on the proposed option within their answers to other questions in the consultation.

7.2 Comments supporting the proposed option

7.2.1 Some respondents express support for the proposal, including Norfolk County Council, Hethersett Parish Council. They believe the proposal will help to overcome ‘the current and likely future issues’ at the Thickthorn Junction. Some respondents believe that the proposal will have a positive impact on traffic flow across the junction and praise Highways England for producing an effective scheme.

“Norfolk County Council welcomes proposed improvements on the A47” (Norfolk County Council)

7.2.2 A few respondents support the proposals for the Cantley Lane underpass, providing access between Cantley Lane and Cantley Lane South.

7.2.3 Some respondents support the proposals for new slip roads around the Thickthorn Junction. Suffolk County Council is among those who believe that allowing traffic to bypass the

roundabout is a good solution to the traffic flow problems between the A47 and A11, providing free flow links across the junction.

- 7.2.4 Some respondents, including South Norfolk Council, Cringleford Parish Council, support the proposed Option but add some caveat to their support, mainly challenging the Cantley Lane proposal. This is explained in more detailed in 7.3.

The Council does not believe that there are any other sensible options for improving the Thickthorn junction, and so supports the one option consulted on (with the caveat of the Ketteringham/Cantley Lane suggestion) (South Norfolk Council)

Congestion/Traffic/Capacity

- 7.2.5 Many respondents who support the proposals do so due to the perceived benefits for traffic and congestion. Both Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils believe that the scheme will 'significantly reduce journey times' and alleviate many of the congestion issues that have been identified at the Thickthorn Junction. A few respondents argue that the increased capacity of the new development would further reduce congestion on the Thickthorn Junction, significantly reducing waiting times.

"The proposals would seem to be very helpful in reducing the amount of traffic using the Thickthorn Roundabout" (User 1340)

- 7.2.6 Some respondents support the reconnection of Cantley Lane and Cantley Lane South, saying it will allow faster and smoother travel between the two. A few respondents support the underpass at Cantley Lane as they argue it will keep traffic off the Thickthorn Junction, allowing for more direct access where necessary.
- 7.2.7 Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, as well as several other respondents, argues that providing a free-flowing slip road connection between the A11 and A47 will move traffic off the roundabout, allowing traffic to avoid the roundabout altogether. These respondents believe that keeping traffic flowing will help to alleviate the bottleneck at the roundabout, reducing tailbacks and delays at the Thickthorn Junction.

"The free flowing interchange from A11 Thetford to A47 Yarmouth would reduce congestion on Thickthorn roundabout" (User 100106)

Engineering, design and construction

- 7.2.8 A few respondents express their support for the design as they believe that this proposal is the best value for money according to Highways England's analysis. They argue further that the proposals presented address the projected future flows across the junction, removing the need for upgrades or development in the foreseeable future. A few respondents praise the design of the roundabout for being significantly simpler than the current configuration, with some of these expressing hopes that the lane system will be able to be simplified further once the traffic on the Thickthorn Junction is lighter again.

Environment

- 7.2.9 A few respondents, such as the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, argue that the Thickthorn Junction development will help to improve the local environment. They hope that by ensuring traffic flows through the area, as opposed to sitting, idling in congestion, the local pollution levels will improve. A few respondents express further support for the use of tunnelling, as they believe it will minimise the impact upon the local landscape by hiding the construction, preserving the views and natural beauty of the area.

“The smoother traffic flows should also reduce pollution to a degree” 1359

Socio-economic

- 7.2.10 Several respondents support the proposed developments as they believe that improvements to the Thickthorn Junction will benefit the local economy. South Norfolk Council argues that the overall improvements to the A47 will boost economic growth across Norfolk and Cambridgeshire. Similarly, Norfolk County Council and a few other respondents argue that infrastructure developments such as this are necessary for the economy of the region to reach its full potential and make the area an attractive place to do business. A few respondents also suggest that the improvements to the Thickthorn Junction would directly benefit the local residents, making their lives easier, safer and being more considerate to their quality of life.

“Suffolk County Council believes that the project will make a significant contribution to the local and wider regional economy and that this will benefit Suffolk businesses in the north and east of the county” (Suffolk County Council)

Safety

- 7.2.11 Some respondents support the proposals as they believe they will improve the safety of the Thickthorn Junction. Among them, Suffolk Chamber of Commerce argues that an improved junction could create ‘a safe and serviceable network’. These respondents hope that the junction will be made safer by reducing the traffic load it carries. They suggest removing this dangerous traffic will also allow for the lane system to be simplified, potentially avoiding further accidents.

7.3 Comments opposing the proposed option

- 7.3.1 Several respondents express opposition to the Thickthorn Junction development, arguing that the current proposals offer the wrong solutions to the pressing issues. Some respondents suggest that the proposals do not offer a long-term solution, merely ‘papering over the cracks’ and do not sufficiently address the core problems at the junction.
- 7.3.2 Many respondents, including South Norfolk Council, Cringleford Parish Council, specifically oppose the construction of the Cantley Lane underpass. They feel that such an underpass would not be safe for non-motorised users, would lead to rat runs on Cantley Lane South and would interrupt traffic flow in the area, leading to congestion. These argue that an underpass would be both expensive and unnecessary. Several of these respondents say they would support the scheme at Thickthorn Junction if this underpass was removed from the proposals.

“What was the situation 25 years ago has not changed, Cantley Lane can’t take more traffic and I strongly object to the opening of Cantley Lane being part of the plan” (User 100072)

- 7.3.3 A few respondents object to the construction of the slip roads in the proposal. They feel that the slip roads could potentially be dangerous, and the construction would require the destruction of a great deal of land and woodland. A few respondents argue that there is simply no need for separate slip roads for free-flowing traffic.

Congestion/Traffic/Capacity

- 7.3.4 Many respondents who oppose the overall proposals, believe they will not bring about the necessary improvements to traffic required at this junction, and in some cases will exacerbate these problems. Several respondents, including the Norwich Green Party, argue that

improving traffic flows will encourage more vehicles to use Thickthorn Junction, generating more traffic than at present and making the scheme redundant. Some respondents express concerns regarding the development of rat runs through local roads and villages. Several of these respondents argue that whenever the new development requires repair or realignment, traffic will take shortcuts through these local routes.

- 7.3.5 A few respondents express concern for local traffic, which they feel have been put at a disadvantage by highway traffic. Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital, for example, argue that the closure of the Cantley Lane South slip road onto the A47 will force residents to take long detours, significantly increasing journey times for those who currently have easy access.
- 7.3.6 Respondents argue that turning Cantley Lane into a continuous road using an underpass will significantly increase traffic through Cringleford, which they say is unacceptable. They do not believe that Cantley Lane is capable of taking such an increase in traffic and could lead to severe congestion along this route. Other respondents, such as South Norfolk Council express concerns that this route will also be used as a rat run for traffic avoiding the Thickthorn Junction or that it will become the main access route from South Norwich to Ketteringham. Cringleford Parish Council is among those who strongly oppose such an outcome as they feel it would be severely detrimental to their village and lead to congestion and safety risks.

“The proposed underpass to connect Cantley Lane South and North is not acceptable as Cantley Lane North is not able to accept the additional traffic that would be generated” (User 100147)

Routing

- 7.3.7 Some respondents raise concerns regarding the routing of the proposals and how it would impact on the access for local residents to the junction, highways and their own properties. A few respondents argue that the proposals would hinder their children’s access to their local schools. Several other respondents express similar concerns regarding their access to amenities such as the hospital and Norwich city centre.
- 7.3.8 Some respondents feel the proposed underpass on Cantley Lane will have a significant impact on their ability to travel. They believe that the direct access onto the A47 and subsequently to the A11 from Cantley Lane South will be closed, forcing them to travel through the village of Cringleford instead. Cringleford Parish Council raise concerns that this proposal will push traffic onto small, single-lane roads which will create congestion and rat runs as people find their usual routes closed off.

Engineering, design and construction

- 7.3.9 Some respondents oppose the overall design of the scheme, with some expressing concerns that any widening of the A47 would require major earthworks to compensate for sharp banks on either side. South Norfolk Council raises concerns regarding the impact of the proposed Option on local residents. They insist that the construction must not be allowed to disrupt traffic at the Thickthorn Junction during the development period, nor disturb residents with noise, dust or artificial light.
- 7.3.10 A few question the overall strategy employed by Highways England, noting that traffic will still be forced to negotiate roundabouts at other stages of their journey despite improvements at Thickthorn Junction.
- 7.3.11 Several respondents raise concerns that the cost of the overall proposal is too high in relation to benefits it provides. They feel the ‘limited benefit’ of the scheme does not justify the expenditure by Highways England.

“This is a very expensive project with very limited benefit” (User 1350)

- 7.3.12 South Norfolk Council is again one of several respondents who argue that the proposed development may impact on future developments in the area. This includes a significant number of residential properties alongside Cantley, which respondents argue will be unable to proceed if the Cantley Lane underpass goes ahead. A few respondents, including Cringleford Parish Council, specifically oppose the expense of the underpass in relation to what they see as a limited benefit. Some respondents argue against the design of the proposal, as they feel it would be much more efficient to put a bridge over the A47 to connect Cantley Lane, rather than directing a new road through Cringleford.

Environment

- 7.3.13 Many respondents who oppose the proposed option believe it will have a detrimental impact on the local environment. The most significant of these concerns is the effect on local wildlife and protected habitats. Some respondents argue the proposals will destroy the trees and meadows that were designed to screen the A47 when it was first constructed, which have only recently reached maturity. They feel that without these screens, and with the changes proposed, the landscape will be blighted and noise pollution will be able to spread further across the area. These respondents raise further concerns that any increases in traffic across the Thickthorn Junction will lead to increases in noise and air pollution, as more vehicles pass through the local area.
- 7.3.14 South Norfolk Council in particular identify that the initial air quality assessment states that there may be some worsening in air quality for those properties surrounding Thickthorn Junction. The South Norfolk Council goes on to express concerns that the proposed developments around Thickthorn Junction may introduce artificial lighting to the area, having an adverse effect on residents as well as the local environment.
- 7.3.15 Several respondents argue that the proposed underpass connecting Cantley Lane will severely impact on the local woodland and hedgerows in the immediate area. These respondents insist that such areas must be protected during development, as they form an important wildlife corridor housing a number of protected species. A few respondents also raise concerns about flooding in the Cantley underpass, as they say the area around Cantley Lane has been known to flood in the recent past.
- 7.3.16 Several respondents also raise concerns that the development of the underpass could lead to increases in noise and air pollution in the local vicinity. They fear that the destruction of local woodland will lead to noise travelling much further, compounded by increased traffic passing through Cantley Lane. By directing this increased traffic through the village centre of Cringleford, respondents such as the South Norfolk Council, are equally concerned about the potential harmful increases in air pollution and emissions.

“Cantley Lane is a pleasant, green, lane. It has the look and feel of a rural lane rather than an urban road. I feel very strongly that this should be retained for the benefit of Cringleford residents” (User 100071)

- 7.3.17 Some respondents believe that the construction of the proposed slip roads would have a significant impact on the local environment. These respondents argue that both slip roads connecting to the A11 would destroy local woodland on the north and south side of the A11. A few respondents raise concerns that the southern slip road would come ‘dangerously close’ to a known archaeological site in that area. Several respondents argue that the construction of these slip roads would be ‘further destruction of the landscape’ with embankments, tunnels and slip roads.

Socio-economic

- 7.3.18 Several respondents believe that Highways England have drafted these proposals without recognising the implications for local residents. They believe that locals will be severely

impacted by this development, with a great deal of upheaval for residents both during construction and during the lifespan of the development.

- 7.3.19 Several respondents oppose the suggested land take for the proposed option. They argue that established homes and proposed housing developments adjacent to the A47 will be impacted by the expansion of the junction into these areas. Some respondents argue that planning permission was only granted on the condition of recreational space being provided between the developments and the A47, which will now be lost to these proposals. Several others express concern about the proximity of the development to their homes, which they argue would severely impact upon their quality of life.

“It would literally be just on the other side of our fence in the back garden. I will not have my family in a house so close to the amount of traffic that would be passing” (User 100091)

- 7.3.20 Several respondents, including Norfolk County Council, raise concerns that the proposal for an underpass at Cantley Lane will have an exceptionally high impact on the existing communities of Cantley Lane and the wider community of Cringleford. A few of these respondents believe that residents of Cantley Lane will suffer from increased noise pollution, safety risks and challenges to their quality of life if traffic is redirected down this route. The Norwich Green Party argues that there is no justification for opening a route to the public that was previously solely serving small hamlets and individual houses.

Safety

- 7.3.21 Several respondents who oppose the proposed redevelopment believe it will have a significant impact on safety in the surrounding area. A few respondents argue that the proposals will create ‘dangerous conditions’ for traffic at the junction.
- 7.3.22 Some respondents oppose the Cantley Lane underpass on the grounds of health and safety, as they believe such a development will exacerbate existing safety problems. They argue running a busy road through residential Cringleford will pose a serious hazard to local residents, directing traffic towards cycle lanes and pedestrian crossings. Cringleford Parish Council themselves raise concerns regarding the width of Cantley Lane, which they believe will cause many collisions as vehicles struggle to pass one another.

“Cantley Lane will be opened to through traffic. The southern section to the Fiveways junction is narrow and sinuous, with crossing places but no sidewalk. The inevitable development of more traffic will make this road even more dangerous” (Cringleford Parish Council)

Mitigation

- 7.3.23 A few respondents demand that any impacts on local residents, traffic or otherwise, must be mitigated during the development of the proposals. South Norfolk Council is among those who raise concerns that there is no mention of mitigation in the consultation document, and they request more information as the proposals are developed further.

“The public consultation documents for both the Easton - Tuddenham and the A47/A11 Thickthorn Junction schemes do not make reference to the construction phase and how the impact will be mitigated” (South Norfolk Council)

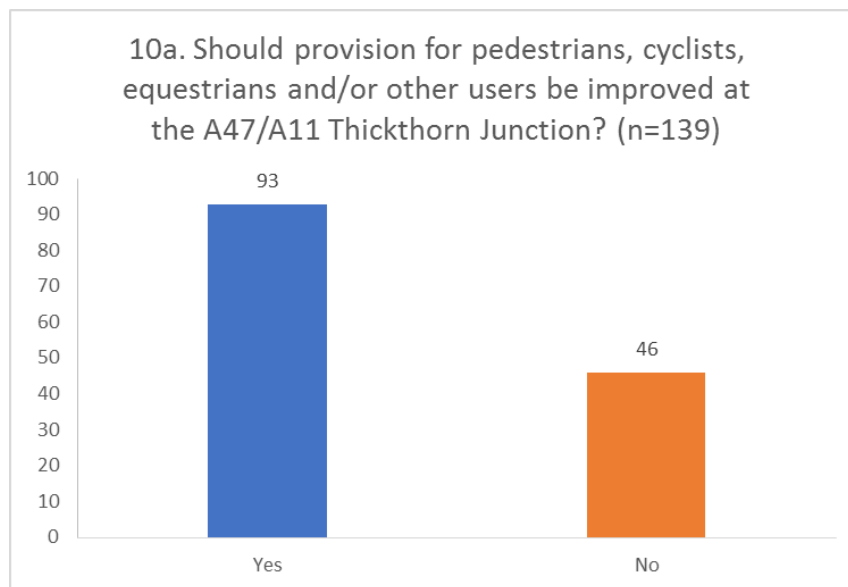
- 7.3.24 Some respondents suggest mitigation methods that Highways England could employ to lessen the impacts that respondents have identified. A few of these respondents suggest incorporating tighter speed limits to slow traffic and prevent accidents occurring on the busy roundabout. They also suggest replanting the woods that will be removed for construction, both for environmental reasons but also to dampen the impact of noise from the development.

8 Provision for Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians and/or Other Users

8.1 Response to closed question

8.1.1 Question 10a asks respondents to comment on whether they believe that provisions for pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians and/or other users need to be improved at the A47/A11 Thickthorn Junction. These responses are shown in the Chart 7 below:

Chart 7: Responses on the provision for pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians and/or other users



8.1.2 A total of 93 respondents who answered this question chose to say 'yes improvements to provisions for pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians and/or other users are needed', whereas 46 indicated they are not required.

8.1.3 Question 10b asks respondents to summarise their reasons for their response to 10a. These are discussed in section 8.2 below which summarises the views of the 125 respondents who answered question 10b as well as respondents who provided comments on provisions for pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians and/or other users within their answers to other questions in the consultation.

8.2 Summary of issues by theme

8.2.1 The Norwich Green Party is among several respondents who argue that provision for 'non-motorised users' (NMUs) is essential to the development of Highways England's proposals. Respondents ask for this proposal to be coordinated with a wider strategy in the Cringleford area for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport. They, along with a few other respondents, suggest improving the area's public transport systems to take more cars off the road and alleviate congestion.

8.2.2 Some respondents suggest that NMUs should be able to bypass the roundabout entirely to separate themselves from the dense traffic on the Thickthorn Junction. They hope this will encourage more NMUs, bring cars off the roads and encourage the public to lead a healthier lifestyle.

Safety

- 8.2.3 Both the Norwich Green Party and Hethersett Parish Council agree that the safety of NMUs across the proposals must be adequately provided for. Several respondents argue that the current Thickthorn Junction is difficult and dangerous for NMUs, with speeding traffic and a lack of safe crossing points. These respondents argue that any improvements to make this area safer would be desirable. A few respondents suggest ways to improve the safety of NMUs, such as the installation of underpass lighting to improve the visibility and subsequent safety of these users.

“This large increase in traffic on Cantley Lane South has made the road very dangerous - particularly for pedestrians, cyclists and horses and motorised transport. [...] - there are no footpaths.” (User 100084)

- 8.2.4 Some respondents, including Cringleford Parish Council, say the proposals will have a detrimental impact on the safety of NMUs. The increases in traffic and traffic speeds would present a significant risk to recreational users of the area. Several of these respondents raise particular concerns regarding the underpass connecting Cantley Lane. They believe that the introduction of an underpass, as well as the redirecting of traffic through a residential area will be unacceptable for the NMUs which currently use this route.

Pedestrians

- 8.2.5 Several respondents express their view that pedestrians are one of the main NMUs that should be provided for as part of any improvements. The Norwich Green Party claim that pedestrians risk their lives crossing the main roads in places where there are no traffic lights, and even where lights are provided respondents feel unsafe. Some respondents argue that footpaths and popular walks must not be impacted by this development and that pedestrian access should be expanded across the area.
- 8.2.6 Some respondents make suggestions for improving pedestrian access across the area. An underpass is suggested as well as retaining and improving the bridge over the A47 at Cantley Lane. Others feel that if the Cantley Lane re-connection goes ahead then a pavement should be included along that route to ensure pedestrians remain safe.

“We need to have a dedicated footbridge from the Cantley Lane side directly on to the old Newmarket road on the Roundhouse side” (User 1336)

- 8.2.7 Several respondents raise concerns regarding the effect the proposal will have upon pedestrians. The proposals regarding Cantley Lane and the underpass are of particular concern to many of these respondents, who fear that increasing traffic through Cringleford will impact on the safety and amenity of walkers in that village. The Norfolk Ramblers fear the underpass will be a danger for pedestrians, especially during the night with a lack of lighting on local roads. The redirecting of the route would also extend the journey time for pedestrians significantly when crossing the A47, through isolated roads. Some respondents argue that the footbridge over the A47 should be retained, even if moved, to preserve pedestrian access to essential services such as the GP surgery in Cringleford.

Cyclists

- 8.2.8 Several respondents argue that the current provision for cyclists around the Thickthorn Junction is inadequate. They feel that cyclists put themselves in danger attempting to cross the junction, which they believe is becoming an increasingly popular cycle route into Norwich or towards local cycle paths. Hethersett Parish Council, as well as a few other respondents, argue that with increasing development in the area, as well as the imminent cycleway from Norwich to Wymondham, more cyclists will begin to use the route and these should be

planned for as part of the scheme. Some respondents suggest that providing cycling provision would encourage them to cycle themselves, bringing cars off the road and promoting a healthier lifestyle for the public. They believe that cycle lanes should be provided, separate to the roundabout to ensure the safety of its users.

“The soon to be installed cycleway from Norwich to Wymondham will increase the number of cyclists using this junction. Adequate provision for their safety needs to be made” (Hethersett Parish Council)

- 8.2.9 A few respondents object to cyclists being provided for under the scheme as they believe the roundabout would be too dangerous for cyclists and they should be encouraged to use local roads and cycle paths. Others feel that cyclists are over represented at the moment and no more money should be spent on them.
- 8.2.10 Some respondents argue that the proposed scheme does not adequately provide for cyclists and believe that many aspects of the proposals will directly impact on cyclist’s safety and enjoyment. The Norwich Green Party, amongst others, express concerns that the Cantley Lane underpass will destroy the safe cycle routes down Cantley Lane South by introducing more traffic and by removing the footpath; cyclists will have limited access to areas that were once open to them. These respondents argue that the risk posed to cyclists will encourage them to use their cars more, deepening the impact the proposals are designed to solve.

Equestrians

- 8.2.11 Some respondents argue that the current bridleway access around Thickthorn Junction is incredibly poor, posing a significant risk to its users. These respondents argue that the bridleway system needs to be revamped to allow equestrians to enjoy the area in safety.

“The current bridleway access through Thickthorn is unusable and should be redone as an essential part of the improvements” (User 1349)

- 8.2.12 A few respondents, however, question the need for such developments in the area as they believe there are very few equestrians who would use the facilities.

Provision not required

- 8.2.13 Several respondents argue that provision for NMUs is not necessary in this development. A few of these respondents argue there is already adequate provision for their needs, including pedestrian controlled lights, so they do not see any difficulties facing this group. Some respondents argue that to develop provision for NMUs would be a waste, as not enough use would be made of them. These respondents give examples of current equestrian access at Thickthorn Roundabout and the cycle lane on the B1172, both of which they argue are rarely used. They believe catering for these groups would therefore be a waste of money.

“I am not aware of any difficulties encountered by these groups” (User 100161)

- 8.2.14 Some respondents express concerns regarding NMUs being allowed to use the junction. They feel that as a busy road, with fast moving traffic, allowing or encouraging NMUs to use the junction would be endangering them. A few respondents argue that this development should be focused solely on vehicular traffic, rather than NMUs. They do not want a compromise with NMU provision to jeopardise the scheme.

9 Additional Comments

9.1 Summary of issues by theme

Timescale

- 9.1.1 Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils, as well as some other respondents, call for the implementation of the proposals at the earliest opportunity. They feel that the improvements proposed are vital and would oppose any threat to their earliest delivery.

Alternative Suggestions

- 9.1.2 Several respondents suggest alternatives to the proposals put forward by Highways England. Some respondents suggest the A11 should bypass the junction completely or tunnel beneath the Thickthorn Junction. They believe this would keep traffic flowing smoothly, alleviating the congestion and hold ups that currently occur at this junction.
- 9.1.3 A few respondents suggest linking Cantley Lane South and Thickthorn Junction with an underpass beneath the two proposed interchange link roads. They hope that this proposal would avoid Cantley Lane and Cringleford becoming a rat run while respecting the landscape protection and zone and reducing the cost of the structure.

“Cantley Lane South must be linked with the Thickthorn junction by means of an underpass beneath the 2 proposed new interchange link roads” (100158, Petition: Cantley Lane Residents)

- 9.1.4 Cringleford Parish Council suggests closing off Cantley Lane South, which they believe will reduce traffic across Cantley Lane and remove the need for the underpass connecting them.
- 9.1.5 They, and a few other respondents, suggest renovating the Station Lane/A11 junction, allowing vehicles to travel in all directions. They feel this will benefit local businesses by enabling higher levels of HGV traffic and again reduce the pressure of congestion closer to the Thickthorn Junction.
- 9.1.6 Some respondents suggest installing overhead signs to avoid confusion regarding lanes on the Thickthorn Junction. They hope this would prevent last minute lane changes and be much clearer for drivers, hopefully reducing the safety risk at this junction.

Other suggestions include:

- direct access from the A47 to the N&N Hospital and surrounding communities via a new access road that connects traffic from A47 to Colney Lane (north) without involving the Thickthorn Roundabout;
- an option, where the A11 bypassed the junction North/South and the A47 east/west;
- change current off A47 Yarmouth slip road onto A11 south middle lane (B) to straight on or left so that Hethersett traffic can get into middle lane.

10 Comments on the Consultation Process

10.1 General

- 10.1.1 Several respondents raise concerns about the consultation process believing it to have been 'completely inadequate'. Some of these respondents argue there should have been more options for the public to choose from. They argue that with only one option available, a public consultation is redundant. A few respondents criticise Highways England for not working with local councils to identify issues and problems that may arise from the proposals.

"It would have been better for local people to see the other options. With only one option it is difficult to see what the point of public consultations is" (User 100117)

- 10.1.2 Several respondents express further concerns regarding the level of communication between Highways England and the general public. They argue that not enough advance notice of the consultation was given, with several respondents only hearing about it days before the deadline for comment. They say this gave residents very little notice, or none at all, of the Public Information Exhibitions, meaning many were unable to attend. These respondents argue that local residents should have been contacted directly by Highways England as they will be affected the most. One of the District Councillors for the Cringleford Ward raises concerns that they were not invited to participate in the consultation, which they believe Highways England should have done to ensure a fair consultation.
- 10.1.3 A few respondents express a lack of faith that their views will be listened to by Highways England. They say they have been ignored in previous consultations regarding the Roundhouse road network, and feel that information is deliberately being concealed from them on the schemes drawbacks or impacts.

10.2 Public Information Exhibitions

- 10.2.1 Some respondents provide positive feedback on the public events they attended. Highways England staff receive praise from several of these respondents who found them helpful and knowledgeable in explaining the scheme and its impacts. A few respondents are pleased that their concerns were addressed at the events, with changes to the proposals and discussions with the staff.

"I was very impressed by the quality of the thinking which has gone into the proposal and by the expertise and helpfulness of staff at the Willow Centre consultation" (User 100095)

- 10.2.2 However, a few respondents are critical of the exhibitions with the primary issue being staff's level of knowledge and competency. They argue that staff's knowledge of the area was out of date and limited to the immediate vicinity of the development. They also raise concerns that the display boards were inaccessible without lengthy waiting times and did not provide enough detail on the scheme.

10.3 Consultation brochure and questionnaire

- 10.3.1 Several respondents criticise the information provided in the consultation brochure. The majority of these respondents argue that some of the information provided is not detailed enough, and in many cases missing entirely. For instance, some of the respondents note there is no mention of Ketteringham or East Carleton in the consultation materials, despite these villages proximity to the development. Both Suffolk and Norfolk County Councils raise

concerns that there is no detail on traffic modelling within the brochure, which they believe to be essential in understanding the conclusions Highways England has come to.

- 10.3.2 Other respondents express concern that the leaflets and materials they received were vague, to the extent of giving people no idea of what the proposals entailed. The Suffolk Chamber of Commerce is among those respondents who feel there was no information supplied in the consultation to demonstrate a cost benefit ratio or give any indication of whether the proposals are value for money.

“This proposal also carries many negative impacts which are not mentioned and should be for a balanced debate and decision” (User 100074)

- 10.3.3 Some respondents express concerns regarding the accuracy of some of the information provided, which they believe to be in error. These respondents argue that the committed zone detailed in the consultation brochure is believed to be inaccurate as it is not permitted to border the A47, requiring a landscape protection zone by law. A few respondents specifically criticise the maps provided in the brochure which they believe to contain several errors, including mislabelling cycle ways as roads.

- 10.3.4 Some respondents criticise the questionnaire itself, accusing it of being biased in favour of the scheme.

10.4 Requests for further information or engagement

- 10.4.1 Some respondents ask Highways England to provide local residents with more detailed information on the scheme. They believe much clearer definition of the proposals is required, as well as fundamental information such as the timetable of the project and its funding.

- 10.4.2 Several respondents, including Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils, request Highways England to conduct further assessments including:

- traffic modelling;
- economic assessments;
- land allocation;
- historic environment (Heritage statement); and
- a full environmental impact survey, including detailed air quality, noise, vibration, lighting assessment.

“This work should include a Heritage Statement (including a desk-based assessment) and full field evaluation (which could include geophysical survey, field-walking, trial trenching and/or other techniques)” (Norfolk County Council)

- 10.4.3 Several respondents request ongoing engagement with Highways England as the scheme progresses. For instance, Norfolk County Council expresses the desire to work more closely with Highways England to ensure the scheme is developed appropriately, on time and addresses their concerns.

11 Issues Raised

11.1 Cantley Lane

11.1.1 Many of the concerns from the public that arose during the Public Information Exhibitions (PIEs), and follow-up meetings, were associated with the proposal for the local road link to reconnect Cantley Lane South to Cantley Lane. These varied depending on the impacts that would be experienced by the affected parties, and some examples of these concerns included:

- Since the A11 Station Lane Junction was converted from an 'at-grade' full movement junction to a 'left-in, left-out' junction, there has been an increase in traffic which now uses Cantley Lane South for their return trip from the Recycling Centre at Station Lane;
- The reconnection of Cantley Lane South to Cantley Lane would increase traffic 'Rat Running' to the A11 via Station Lane. Cantley Lane (north), which is currently a gated 'no through route' is considered by many to be too narrow, and that parked cars often make it difficult for buses to pass;
- There would be environmental impacts on trees and wildlife along the existing Cantley Lane (north);
- There was strong opposition to the development West of Cringleford, which was won on appeal. Some suggested that connection of the development to Cantley Lane (north) was excluded from the detailed proposals;
- The proposed local road link crosses the amenity land / landscape protection zone adjacent to the new development;
- A number of people claimed to use the existing footbridge;
- One resident on Cantley Lane (north), who operates a business at Station Lane (north side of the A11) was surprised that Cantley Lane South was being reconnected to Cantley Lane. He claimed that when the Station Lane Junction was converted to 'left-in, left-out', he had been told to detour via Wymondham when entering his premises;
- A number of people suggested that an underpass at Station Lane should be provided instead of the proposed reconnection of Cantley Lane South to Cantley Lane. This would re-introduce a right hand turn onto the A11 to Thickthorn Junction, for people using the Recycling Centre;
- The owner of the corner of land between Cantley Lane South, the A47, and the Breckland Railway Line complained that the proposed link caused severe severance to his land; and
- Owners of a property on Cantley Lane South, who wish to move, claim that the sale of their house has fallen through as a result of the proposed scheme.

11.1.2 As a consequence of this and other similar feedback, further options to compensate for the reduced connectivity of Cantley Lane South to the main highway network are being considered.

11.1.3 A total of six options developed by AECOM and one suggested by a member of the public are currently being assessed. A full assessment of these options and determination of a preferred alternative will be undertaken in the next stage of the scheme development and the public will have the opportunity to comment on this at the next consultation.

12 Conclusions and Recommendations

12.1 Conclusions

- 12.1.1 A total of 185 responses to the consultation about the redevelopment of Thickthorn Junction has been received.
- 12.1.2 Respondents make comments on the need case for the scheme, identifying current problems with congestion, safety and design of the Thickthorn Junction that they believe justify the need for improvement. Others argue that the roundabout does not require any improvement at all.
- 12.1.3 In response to question 9a about support of the proposed option, 150 respondents submitted their view of the proposed option. Of these, 59 are strongly in favour, 41 are somewhat in favour, 22 are somewhat against and 22 are strongly against, while six respondents are neutral. The respondents who support the proposed option believe it will alleviate congestion problems around the Thickthorn Junction, improve the local environment and socio-economic climate, protect the safety of users and represents the best design and construction process. In their comments, respondents also add caveats to their support and while supporting the proposal in general, they express concern about the Cantley Lane link road and underpass.
- 12.1.4 Respondents who oppose the scheme believe it will increase congestion issues, harm the environment and the socio-economic climate, pose a hazard to users, be complicated and difficult to construct and route vehicles far out of their way. They particularly oppose the Cantley Lane Underpass which they think would severely impact the local residents, while approving of the implementation of slip road interchanges. Respondents do suggest methods of mitigating these impacts as well as a number of alternative suggestions to the design.
- 12.1.5 Respondents comment on the provision for NMUs in the proposals, identifying that cyclists and pedestrians should be provided for. Respondents comment that the issue of safety is most important when discussing NMUs and is the primary reason they should be provided for. Other respondents argue that provision for NMUs is not required, due to safety issues and the current provision available to them.
- 12.1.6 Respondents finish by discussing the consultation process itself, raising concerns about the depths of communication shown by Highways England. They discuss the public exhibitions and the competency levels of the staff who presented them as well as the information available in the brochure, being critical of missing or vague information as well as the accuracy of much of the material. Respondents finally request more information be provided by Highways England, as well as requesting further engagement as the proposals develop.

12.2 Recommendations

- 12.2.1 It is recommended that the proposed option presented at Public Consultation excluding the Cantley Lane link be confirmed by the Secretary of State for Transport as the Preferred Route. Any announcement should clearly state that the design of the Cantley Lane link will be refined and finalised in the next stage of the scheme development and the public will have the opportunity to comment on this at the next consultation.
- 12.2.2 Close engagement with Stakeholders should be maintained throughout the next stage of the scheme development.
- 12.2.3 As the preliminary design of the junction improvements are developed the traffic and economic benefits of the proposals should be continually assessed to confirm the viability of the scheme against Highways England's objectives.

- 12.2.4 The environmental impacts of the proposals should be fully assessed at the next stage of the scheme development and the findings of this and details of required environmental mitigation should be presented at the next consultation.
- 12.2.5 Further assessment of the required provision for non-motorised users shall be undertaken at the junction and surrounding area to ensure that adequate and appropriate facilities are provided. Again the details of this assessment and any proposals for new and improved NMU facilities should be presented at the next consultation.

Appendix A – Public Consultation Brochure

Appendix B – Questionnaire

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