

SWAFFHAM NETWORK IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY

Commentary on responses by Ian Parkes, NCC Highways

The responses from Ian Parkes were provided after repeated requests from TAEC that the committee's observations on the draft strategy (dating from January 2020) be taken into account. Judging by these responses, none of TAEC's observations has been followed up. It is unclear whether and when the draft strategy was adopted by NCC. TAEC have not received the final adopted version, despite this being claimed as a strategy for Swaffham's infrastructure network.

HGVs

The note states that the impact of HGVs going through the town, and the scope for alternative HGVs routes, has been considered and dismissed. Work done by TAEC to identify alternative routes - for instance by means of signage from Barton Mills roundabout onwards - has never been evaluated.

Relief Road

The note claims that work done by WSP in 2018 has determined once and for all that there is no case for a relief road. This omits mention of WSP's findings that traffic growth will continue with growth of housing, but the note precludes any readiness to re-visit the traffic count data. The conclusion that 'notwithstanding local support' the case for a relief road is not going to be pursued means that the views of people in Swaffham as recorded in the Neighbourhood Plan are of no significance.

The note advocates working with BDC on their local plan and its updates to determine the scope for a new road. BDC is the planning authority, NCC is the highways authority. To achieve inclusion in the local plan will depend on NCC producing a case for inclusion of the

relief road route, and for this to succeed will require a feasibility study carried out by NCC. In April 2020 an NCC press release quoted Martin Wilby announcing work on 'the possibility of creating a north/south bypass around Swaffham'. Nothing has been heard of this since, and this note makes no commitment to delivering this.

Air pollution

The note states that NCC is working with BDC to deliver the AQAP, and that BDC can provide information to us on this. However repeated requests from TAEC for the provision of mobile monitoring equipment so that measurements can be taken in different areas of the town - for example outside schools - have been ignored.

Parking

There is reference to the need to improve access to Theatre Street car park, subject to funding constraints. This appears to take no account of work already done by the TAEC, endorsed by the TC, to direct traffic to Theatre Street by means of new signage.

Conclusion

Whatever progress we might have made in recent years to develop ideas for a feasibility study for a relief road, this note brings this to a halt. It re-states long standing NCC objections to any work being done to relieve the pressure of the A1065 on the town. Swaffham has attracted funding from Historic England to improve the attractiveness of the town, yet this strategy reveals no broader 'political' view on how to relieve Swaffham of HGVs and thus realise the improved town centre environment that this would bring.

What actions does the TAEC wish to take in response?