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3 August 2017

Northampton Northern Orbital Consultation,
Northamptonshire Highways

Sent by email to nw@kierwsp.co.uk

On behalf of the Parishioners of Holcot Village, please find below the Holcot Parish Council (HPC) response to the questions in your online survey relating to the Northampton Northern Orbital Route.

In addition to many Parishioners and Councillors attending the various exhibitions organised by Highways, we had an open evening with a display of the plans in the village, and debated this at length in our most recent Parish Council meeting.

This response is based on the feedback of Parishioners and the composite view of the community.

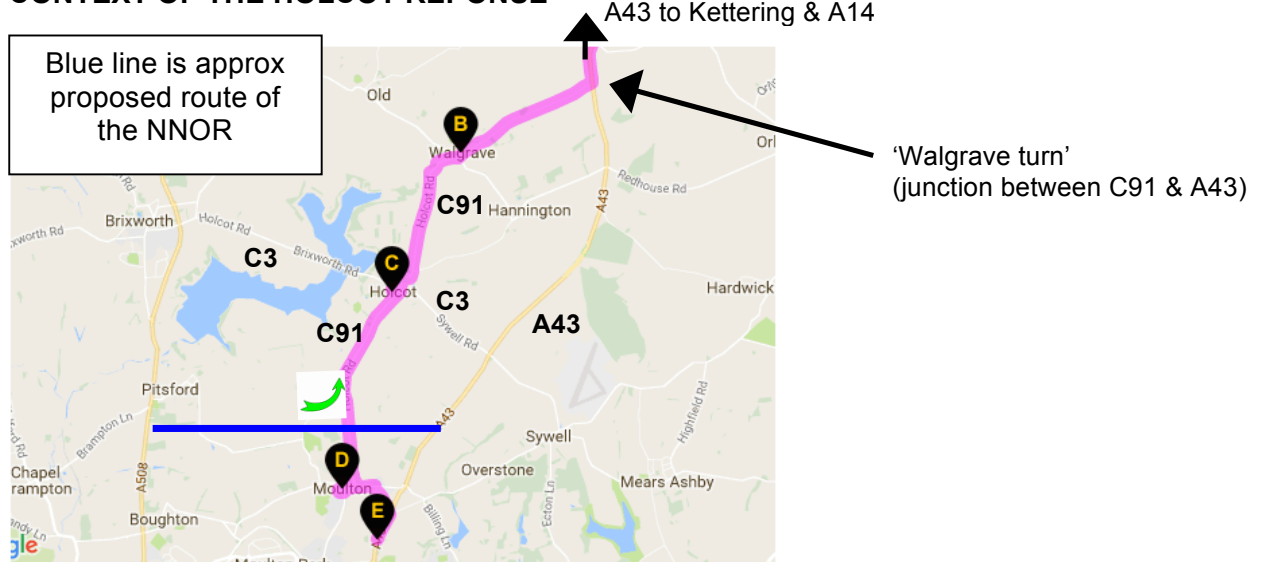
- *1. Do you support the need for the NWRR? **Yes**
- *2. Do you support the need for the NNOR? **Yes**
- *3. Which NNOR route option do you prefer? ***Of the options on the table, Option 7***
- *4. Which NNOR Spur option do you prefer? ***Spur B***
5. Do you have any other comments, questions, or concerns? **Yes**
Please see attached full response from Holcot Parish Council
- *6. Are you happy with us contacting you in the future with updates and progress? **Yes**

Yours faithfully,
Lisa Callan
Clerk Holcot Parish Council

cc : Chris Heaton-Harris, MP
Judy Shephard, County Councillor
Ann Carter, District Councillor
Holcot Village Website
Moulton Parish Council
Hannington Parish Council
Walgrave Parish Council

FULL RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION FROM HOLCOT PARISH COUNCIL

CONTEXT OF THE HOLCOT REPOSENSE



The above map shows how Holcot is located on the crossroads of two roads which are class 'C', but in reality are:

- part of the CURRENT de facto north Northampton outer by-pass – being the east-west-east link between the A43 (at the Sywell/Holcot roundabout) and the A508 (at the roundabout on the Brixworth by-pass) [C3]
- the southbound/northbound rat-run for A43 traffic through (B) Walgrave or Hannington, (C) Holcot and (D/E) Moulton [C91] whenever there is congestion on the A43 – such as (i) almost every morning peak-time between the Sywell/Holcot roundabout and the Overstone Lane roundabout, and (ii) whenever there are roadworks or accidents on the A43 **anywhere** between the 'Walgrave turn' and the Round Spinney area

The roads within Holcot Parish are unsuitable for handling the existing level of peak-hour traffic and speeds of the through-traffic which results from its above location in the road system. Holcot residents have expressed extreme concerns for the safety of pedestrians, including children at peak hours particularly.

HOLCOT RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION

Q2: Because of point (i) above, Holcot strongly welcomes the plans to construct the NNOR, which it hopes will reduce traffic volumes on the C3, and so congestion, noise and pollution around the crossroads in the centre of the village.

Q3: If other, less-intrusive, options (such as those proposed by other Parish Councils which focus mainly on upgrading existing roads) were equally viable, Holcot would prefer these.

Having established this point, the rest of our response below focuses solely on the options proposed in this year's consultation:

Q5, main comment from Holcot (initial version):

Because of point (ii) above, **just as in the April 2016 consultation,**

HOLCOT OBJECTS IN THE STRONGEST POSSIBLE TERMS TO THE PROPOSED ROUNDABOUT/JUNCTION WHERE THE NNOR WOULD CROSS THE C91 MOULTON TO HOLCOT ROAD.

Holcot insists on simple bridge at this point - as where the A508 Brixworth by-pass passes under C3 at the eastern entry to Brixworth - ie, a grade-separated intersection, with NO interchange links between the NNOR and C91.

We note that two of the consultation charts include a text-box which specifically attempts to pre-empt that objection by claiming that “Modelling indicates that a junction here will be most effective in reducing traffic through Holcot”. Holcot rejects the results of this modelling as completely unrealistic as we believe this junction will, on the contrary, **encourage more traffic through Holcot**.

Rationale:

- Residents’ existing experience of real-world driver-behaviours - as described in point (ii) above - tells us that it is unrealistic to expect all drivers to stay on the NNOR to its end-point where it meets the A43.
The green curved arrow on the above map clearly illustrates the temptation for NE-bound drivers ‘take a short-cut’ by leaving the NNOR ‘early’ at the proposed roundabout/junction with the C91 - and then rat-run through Holcot and Walgrave or Hannington (and vice-versa for SW-bound drivers).
Sat-navs may also take vehicles – including HGV’s - along that ‘short-cut’.
- At the moment, the bottle-necks of Moulton village (whether entering directly on Holcot Rd or via Boughton Fair Lane) may be acting as some kind of limiter on the extent of the rat-running along the C91 through Holcot.
However, the NNOR will provide improved flows for SW-NE and NE-SW traffic, plus improved access to Moulton College and Moulton Park, so that, if anything, the proposed roundabout/junction with the C91 will tempt **even more** drivers to use the C91 as a rat-run to get to/from the NNOR.
- This will all be exacerbated by:
 - the queues which will inevitably build-up in peak hours at the roundabout where the NNOR will terminate at the A43
 - the works which are planned on the A43 for the next 5 (10?, 20?) years to dual it from that roundabout to the Walgrave turn
 - the risk that, when any local through-roads are closed, even temporarily due to accidents, HGVs will be re-routed through the village. Holcot already has a major problem (confirmed by research with Police Safer Roads Team) with drivers flouting its ban on HGVs - even becoming wedged in its narrow lanes.

Holcot PC has lodged a ‘freedom of information’ request regarding this modelling; pending receipt of a FULL answer to that request, we request you to review the data input on your modelling, taking into account all the above concerns.

Q5, updates to main comment from Holcot (following HPC discussions with Highways at 14th July Moulton Exhibition):

This exhibition provided an opportunity:

- to obtain from Highways staff some clarification of the thinking behind the box on consultation charts claiming that “Modelling indicates that a junction here [where NNOR crosses C91] will be most effective in reducing traffic through Holcot”
- and to develop alternative solutions to the issues behind that thinking:

- (a) The modelling assumes that the NNOR will have been completed in 2023, and is for traffic flows for the year 2031.

This suggests that the model is based on the scenario of a free-flowing A43 - having by that date been dualled to (or beyond) the Walgrave turn.

The well-known funding-challenges for dualling this section of the A43 mean that for many, many, years there will be SOME part of this section which will either remain single-carriageway, or be a construction-site for dualling-work – and so lead to rat-running along the C91 through Holcot.

THIS MODEL IS THEREFORE UNREALISTIC, and Holcot PC **INSISTS** that the note on the exhibits regarding the C91/NNOR junction be withdrawn from all future documents, and this output from the 2017 modelling **MUST NOT** be used as evidence to drive decisions about the NNOR.

- (b) Completely separate from (a) above, there was the following very cooperative and constructive discussion with Highways' Chris Wragg, which he kindly agreed could be noted in Holcot's response:

In response to Holcot's query how the junction/roundabout between the NNOR and C91 might reduce traffic through Holcot, he surmised that the major factor might be that traffic between the A43 and Moulton College, which currently must pass through Holcot, could instead use the NNOR from its roundabout on the A43.

Assuming such existing traffic was the issue to be resolved, he suggested that if this junction could be replaced by a simple bridge where the NNOR crosses the C91, the access to Moulton College from the NNOR could be via a junction with Boughton Fair Lane, with no direct access to Holcot.

The additional cost of a bridge might to some extent be offset by savings on land-acquisition needed to accommodate a roundabout or 4-way junction.

Alternative constructive ideas developed independently by HPC *after* meeting Chris Wragg:

(1) Idea for the access to Moulton College from the NNOR:

- For option 7: via the 'signalised junction' marked with the red box on the consultation chart
- For option 8: by a junction on the spur-road connection to Moulton Park where it crosses Pitsford Rd, as on the consultation chart

In both cases, most importantly, with access between Holcot Rd and Boughton Fair Lane being blocked-off

(2) Idea for the 'simple bridge' where the NNOR will cross Holcot Rd, Moulton:

In option 7, this cross-over is very close where there is a natural dip in the topography, and so in the current level of Holcot Rd,

Subject to the stream in that dip, smart exploitation of the dip could further reduce any additional costs for the bridge by assisting the grade-separation (less excavation and/or less embankment-work)

Q5, supplementary comment from Holcot regarding the "Connection to New Roundabout on A43":

This consultation does not yet include any details regarding the layout of this junction.

HPC would like to forward an idea developed by several Parishioners which it fully supports:

To minimise the risk of queues backing-up along the NNOR from this "connection", Holcot formally requests that serious consideration be given to providing a dedicated/segregated filter lane for traffic turning left from the NNOR onto the A43, so that it could then merge with A43 traffic following the pattern of a motorway slip-road (ie a lane which does not involve a 'give way' at the roundabout itself).

Assuming that NNOR will be a single carriageway road with one lane in each direction for most of its length: to keep left-turning traffic away from any right-turning/straight-ahead traffic queuing to enter the A43 roundabout, we recognise that this lane would need to start an appropriate distance along the NNOR before the roundabout; the cost of the additional width to that short section of the NNOR would be more than justified on the grounds that - without this feature - the effectiveness of the whole NNOR in meeting its congestion-reduction objectives for the region would be considerably undermined.