



Chairman: David Walker

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13 February 2020

Mr Bob Ham
Daventry District Council
Lodge Road
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Northamptonshire
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Dear Mr Ham,

Application No: DA/2020/0001 Land To East Of Kettering Road, Overstone

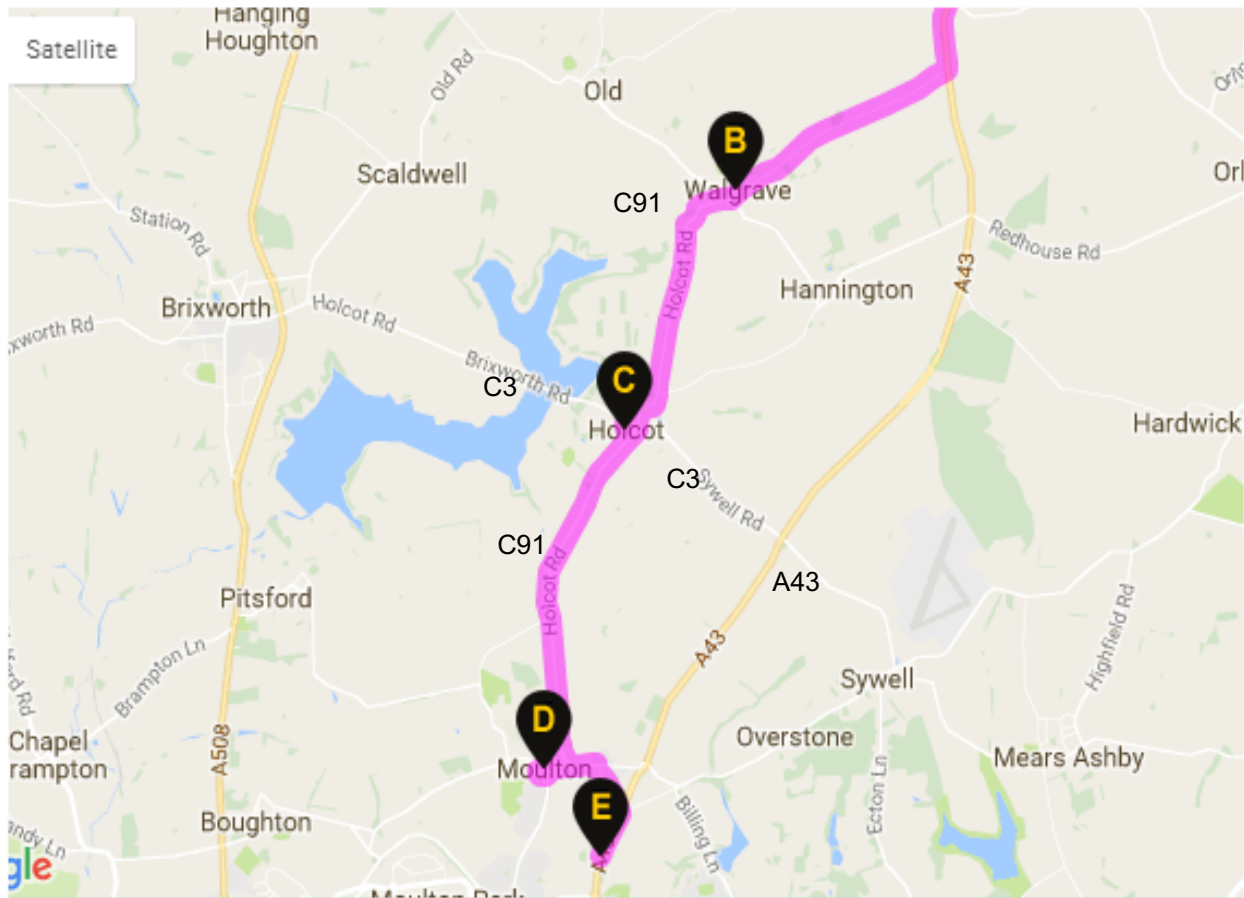
Thank you for your letter dated 16 January. The Parish Council met on 3 February to consider the Application, with the meeting also attended by Parishioners.

As you might expect, the Parish of Holcot believes it will be severely impacted by this Application. The volume of material provided makes it difficult for us to assimilate every point of detail, and we are relying upon you and your colleagues to protect Holcot Parishioners from the impacts of the Application.

Having said that, Parishioners and Councillors have reviewed the documentation provided in support of the Application as far as they are able. Our comments, observations and recommendations are set out below.

Some background

To aid understanding of our comments and recommendations, here is a map of local roads.



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

- (1) part of the 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]
- (2) the southbound/northbound rat-run for A43 traffic through (B) Walgrave/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.

Also, a map of the centre of the Parish.



The roads within Holcot Parish are unsuitable for handling the existing level of peak-hour traffic, as well as speeds of the through traffic, which results from our location in the road system.

Our comments and recommendations:

1. Road Safety

- a. Attention is drawn to the Consultation Statement paragraph 5.4
 - i. *“A Transport Assessment (TA) has been prepared based on the development proposals of circa 1,600 dwellings. **The TA finds the proposed development to be positioned in a sustainable location and identifies that the proposals would not have a severe cumulative residual impact on the surrounding highway network. The development seeks to reduce car dependency, in particular the number of single occupancy vehicle journeys, with a long-term strategy of 15% modal shift away from car use. Details are set out in the TA, which is included as part of the submitted Environmental Statement (ES).**”*
 - ii. As well as being ambiguous, **this statement is not credible**. It refers only to long-term strategies rather than actual planned activity, and there are **no apparent measures in the documentation that confirm how the development will “reduce car dependency”**. Without infrastructure changes, **the location is unlikely to be sustainable**.
 - iii. Our assessment is that Holcot (Sywell Road/Brixworth Road, Sywell Road/Moulton Road, Sywell Road/Back Lane), will be substantially impacted by cumulative traffic movements from this development. These routes represent the primary E-W/S route from the development, and with our conservative estimate of 3000 additional vehicles and multiple daily movements per vehicle, we don't believe this statement to be credible. Even if vehicles from the development don't all use Holcot's roads, there will be knock-on impacts of rat-running from other diverting vehicles. **There IS a substantial cumulative impact**, with no proposals in the Application to even consider these impacts.
- b. In Holcot we have ongoing issues with Road Safety. **This development will exacerbate these**. Our road users include pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.
 - i. Already, traffic travels through the Parish at **excessive speeds**. We have a VASID that is moved around the village roads - see table at Attachment A providing supporting data.
 - ii. We are blighted by **HGVs flouting the 7.5t limit** and significant movements of coaches. The last time we did a survey, we found over 30 vehicles proven to be flouting the limit in 12 hours – there are many other large vehicle movements.
 - iii. There are very apparent general increasing volumes of rat-running vehicles avoiding the bottlenecks closer to Northampton, and rat-running inside the village avoiding the crossroads at peak periods. **Drivers do not drive considering the road conditions** – for instance, high-speed traffic in Back Lane at peak periods where houses open straight on to the road, there is the Parish playing field and village hall.

- iv. This has **worsened substantially** in recent years.
 - v. Whilst we are working, and have worked, with Northamptonshire Highways on reducing the risks, any features we are able to put in place are **fundamentally constrained by funding**. We are currently proposing to use existing S106 funding on a package of measures to help improve signage and put a chicane on Sywell Road. This decision is based on the results of the VASID and the limited funding available.
 - vi. We have tried to work with the Speed Limit Review panel to reduce the speed of traffic through the Parish, including a proposal to make the village a 20mph zone with extended 30mph collars to the extent of the majority of Parishioners properties and businesses. Despite the support of our MP, District and County Councillors, **these have been declined**. Parishioners have noticed that the new wide roads around this proposed development have been set to 30mph and 40mph limits, with wide pathways and protection for pedestrians, and are unable to reconcile this.
 - vii. To help indicate the nature of the problems of vehicles vs parishioners – one example - some of Holcot's roads lack paths. Whilst in some places it is apparent that paths cannot be installed whether funded or not where properties open directly onto roads, without means of funding we are unable to consider extending our paths where they might be achievable.
 - viii. **We find that Parishioners have changed their habits because of the poor control of vehicles and increased volumes, leading to them driving short distances, avoiding walking etc.**
- c. There are no apparent traffic solutions offered anywhere in the proposals.
- i. Although there is a stated aim to reduce car dependency, there are **no apparent firm measures to achieve this**. Car usage within the development (walking, cycling) is mentioned.
 - ii. **There are no transport proposals that effectively provide alternatives to the car**. For example, a bus service by diverting existing routes is mentioned, but there is little sense that this will support the modal shift desired, or indeed be achievable. We know in villages that the bus service has reduced substantially, so people cannot rely on a bus service being available.
 - iii. **There is no apparent overarching strategy that supports this development** – it makes little sense to have each development wishing to create traffic solutions in isolation.
- d. **Our recommendations:**
- i. **We recommend that the Application is refused unless work does not commence until the impacts on Holcot (and other local parishes) are properly assessed and measures designed, funded and put in place that mitigate the risk for Parishioners arising from the increased traffic movements.**
 - ii. **Additionally, we recommend that development does not start until the road infrastructure is built to cope with increased traffic loading from this development and the remainder of the**

NNSUE, and the stated objectives of sustainability and reducing car dependency are achievable. For instance, a transport hub and the NNOR and A43 improvement were to be in place *before* this development when the SUE was proposed, allowing it to achieve its benefits. **Infrastructure-led development is essential if Holcot and other Parishes are not to be severely impacted, and road safety maintained for Parishioners. This will require all Authorities and developers to work together to a single plan.**

- iii. **We also recommend that development does not get approved unless there are firm and implementable proposals as to how traffic and alternative traffic solutions are to be achieved for this (and all other NNSUE) development.** If this does not happen, there will be escalating traffic issues, and a requirement for the Unitary Authorities to resolve the issues after the development. The benefits expected from the development and whole SUE will not be achieved.

2. Environment

- a. **It is not apparent from the proposals what the impact will be on the water supply in the area.**
 - i. This is of increasing importance with **climate change**, increasing risk of drought etc.
 - ii. It is recommended that **Anglian Water confirm their ability to supply the increasing volume of homes whilst maintaining supply to surrounding Parishes** before the proposals are approved.
- b. Parishioners are concerned about the extent of light pollution arising from the development. **We recommend that the developers be required to put in place measures that minimise light pollution.**

3. Infrastructure

- a. With our other comments, you will understand that **we are firmly of the view that infrastructure should come ahead of development.** You will not be surprised that this is **not the first time Holcot Parish has said this in respect of NNSUE developments.**
 - i. **We recommend that infrastructure-led development be adopted, and this development be refused unless that happens.**
 - ii. Infrastructure in this sense is broad - to include roads, transport links, utilities, NHS services, schools, community centres, retail and employment services.

4. Construction

- a. **There is nothing apparent of how the developer will deal with the impacts during the construction process.** For Holcot, this is likely to encompass;
 - i. Construction traffic using Holcot roads, **flouting the 7.5t limits.**
 - ii. **We recommend that the developer be required to put in measures, including visible monitoring, to ensure that HGVs for the site do not come through Holcot and other villages as a condition of approval.**

- iii. **Rat-running through the Walgrave-Hannington-Holcot-Moulton C roads** to avoid issues on the A43 (this of course would only be exacerbated if not resolved through improved infrastructure prior to houses being occupied)
- iv. Resolution of this issue will **only be improved if the road infrastructure is improved as recommended above**. At the moment, any tailback or blockage on the A43 leads drivers to travel through Holcot, giving rise to the road safety issues mentioned above.

5. Holcot

- a. There was a consultation process run by the developer.
 - i. Whilst Holcot is within a short distance of the development, and will be impacted, **we were not consulted**. Indeed, the consultation statement says at 6.2 “Whilst there was a low response rate to the consultation, it is considered that every effort was made to raise awareness of the opportunities for local residents and business owners to get involved with the consultation process.”
 - ii. Many of the comments noted in the consultation statement are similar to ours. However, the final paragraphs do not develop commitment and firm actions to address the comments.
 - iii. We contend that the consultation process was ineffective, **and therefore recommend that it be rerun to include all impacted Parishes prior to any approval**, and that clear remedial actions be put in place prior to detailed planning approval being considered.

6. Site design

- a. Whilst the detail of the site design was the not the thrust of our issues, there were some observations;
 - i. Can the site really accommodate 1600 dwellings, with the ability for a community to form and sustainability to be achieved?
 - ii. The phasing of community features (school, community centre, shops, open space etc) should be built and in place before houses are occupied to ensure community cohesion.
 - iii. The package of social and other services appears to be the wrong end of the site, so would benefit from being closer to the other main developments (ie; southern rather than northern end). There may be detail in the broader plan that ameliorates this comment.

We hope these notes are useful. You will appreciate that the impacts on Holcot have not been assessed as part of the proposal, and we consequently propose that the Application is refused until they are and measures put in place, or the Application is approved but with robust conditions that satisfy our recommendations above.

Thank you in anticipation of your support.

Yours sincerely,

David Walker
Chair
Holcot Parish Council

Cc: Chris Heaton-Harris MP
Holcot Parish Councillors
Cllr Lesley Woolnough
Moulton Parish Council
Hannington Parish Council

Keith Thursfield
Cllr Judy Shephard
Holcot Parish Website
Walgrave Parish Council

Attachment A : Road Safety – Summary of VASID results

The Parish has a VASID paid for by S106 funding. It is moved locations around the village every 4-8 weeks, with the objectives of educating drivers and reminding them of the speed limits.

Here is a summary of latest measures. These are all Parish roads, 30 mph limit, with and without pathways.

Road	Location, facing	Direction	Dates	V85	Speed violations%	Max speed
Brixworth Road	Opposite Glebe Close, facing crossroads	Arriving	7-24/1/20	31	15	64
		Departing		31	17	85
		Arriving	24/1-6/2/20	30	14	68
		Departing		31	17	59
Main Street	Outside Church Room, facing crossroads	Arriving	13/9-3/10/19	24	1	44
		Departing		25	1	42
		Arriving	16/10-21/11/19	24	1	53
		Departing		25	1	47
Moulton Road	Next to footpath, facing Moulton	Arriving	15/12/18-8/1/19	29	11	60
		Departing		31	17	63
		Arriving	6-19/6/19	29	10	62
		Departing		34	28	78
Sywell Road	Opposite Back Lane, facing Sywell	Arriving	17/12/19-3/1/20	32	22	63
		Departing		35	50	61
		Arriving	5-17/12/19	32	21	56
		Departing		35	49	64
Walgrave Road	Half-way along on northern side, facing Walgrave	Arriving	23/3-1/5/19	26	1	43
		Departing		25	1	46
		Arriving	29/5-5/6/19	25	0	40
		Departing		25	0	41

Notes to support interpretation

- The Direction column – ‘Arriving’ means heading towards the VASID with speed indicator and messaging shown to driver, ‘Departing’ is the opposite direction.
- V85 – 85% of recordings indicate vehicles travelling at or below this speed.
- Max Speed is the maximum speed of a vehicle recorded.
- Colours – this is a heatmap, based on the relative scale of the measures