



## Stapleford Parish Council

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Cambridgeshire County Council

[PlanningDC@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:PlanningDC@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

18 August 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: Proposed realignment of A1307/Haverhill Road junction; construction of new active travel routes; and an at-grade unsignalised crossing point for active travel users; and turning modifications between Haverhill Road and Wandlebury Country Park; associated lighting, engineering, and landscape works. Application No: CCC/22/072/FUL**

I write with reference to the above planning application which relates to sites within the parish of Stapleford.

Stapleford Parish Councillors have previously participated in discussions relating to this scheme at Local Liaison Forum meetings, submitted comments to the associated consultation in Nov 2021<sup>1</sup> and communicated directly with Martin Meehan at Greater Cambridge Partnership.

We recognise (and, as Stapleford residents, also regularly experience) the problems that the current layout poses. In principle, we agree with improvements to road user and active travel safety. However, we have several concerns which we do not believe are appropriately addressed in the planning application, specifically:

1. the impact of no right turn from Haverhill Road on journey times and the volume of traffic using Babraham Road/Cherry Hinton Road/Hinton Way roundabout, particularly at peak times
2. the impact of traffic avoiding the realigned junction on alternative routes through Stapleford/Great Shelford
3. an excessive use of street lighting in an area currently unpolluted by artificial light
4. multiple speed limits on Haverhill Road and around its junction with the A1307
5. a missed opportunity to reduce on-road parking by Magog Down users
6. insufficient attention given to the impact of modifications outside Wandlebury Country Park on vehicles exiting/entering the park.

Each of these is addressed in turn below.

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://staplefordparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Stapleford-PC-consultation-response-A1307-Haverhill-Road-Nov-2021.pdf>

### **1. The impact of no right turn from Haverhill Road on journey times and the volume of traffic using Babraham Road/Cherry Hinton Road/Hinton Way roundabout, particularly at peak times**

Documents submitted in support of the planning application refer to the 2.4km diversion that vehicles (a) no longer permitted to turn right from Haverhill Road onto the A1307, or (b) driving to the Gog Farm Shop from the south must travel relative to the current road layout. This will have several impacts:

- most significantly, it will increase traffic volumes at Babraham Road/Cherry Hinton Road/Hinton Way roundabout, which already experiences substantial congestion during peak times and will add to an unacceptable increase in journey times, particularly for those who use the route for a daily commute
- it will increase congestion and hence journey times for those using buses to access Addenbrookes and Cambridge Biomedical Campus, putting them off using public transport
- drivers will seek alternative routes, particularly at peak times, to avoid the congestion. They will either exit the Stapleford area via Hinton Way instead of Haverhill Road, with a concomitant impact on traffic volumes on Hinton Way (and again at Babraham Road/Cherry Hinton Road/Hinton Way roundabout), or they will add to traffic travelling south on the A1301 and contribute to additional peak time congestion through Sawston and Babraham, and at the roundabout with the A505
- vehicles travelling north on the A1307 diversion will attempt a dangerous U-turn at the first opportunity.

The planning application suggests that the 2.4km diversion will only take 2mins to do. This is impossible unless travelling at 72km(45miles)/hr. This would break the proposed speed limits of 40-50mph on the A1307 between the junction with the A1307 and Babraham Road/Cherry Hinton Road/Hinton Way. Anyone who has used this section of road during peak times knows that such speeds are seldom anywhere near achievable.

### **2. The impact of traffic avoiding the realigned junction on alternative routes through Stapleford/Great Shelford**

Mott McDonald's Transport Assessment accompanying the planning application only considers the impact of the proposed changes at four locations. It does not address the impact of vehicles taking alternative routes to *avoid* the realigned junction. From Stapleford, most of the traffic doing this will use Mingle Lane (circumventing the level crossing at Shelford Station) to access Hinton Way roundabout. Mingle Lane is part of the National Cycle Network Route 11 and no consideration has been given to the impact of additional traffic on this, particularly at the pinch point around St Andrew's Church and junctions with Church Street and Gog Magog Way.

Vehicles destined for Wandlebury Country Park, Babraham Research Park or the A11 northbound may also re-route via Sawston and Babraham. Particularly at peak times, these diversions might be quicker than using Mingle Lane/Hinton Way or following the realigned Haverhill Road/A1307 junction. They have not been – but should be – evaluated in the Transport Assessment.

### **3. An excessive use of street lighting in an area currently unpolluted by artificial light**

Although light pollution from Cambridge City is visible in the distance from the area targeted by the planning application, the area itself is currently devoid of artificial lighting. This is an important feature of Wandlebury Country Park and Magog Down. These locations are meant to provide protected natural habitats for wildlife and will be affected by the installation of *twenty-six* artificial lights around the Haverhill Road/A1307 junction.

Light pollution affects migration patterns, wake-sleep habits, habitat formation and attracts insects. Large numbers of insects, a primary food source for birds and other animals, are drawn to artificial lights, killing many of them upon contact or exposing them to predators.

We strongly suggest that installing 26 lights around the junction is out of all proportion to the scale of the problems for road users at the junction, particularly since these problems should be largely mitigated by realigning the junction. If the realigned junction is still so dangerous that it merits 26 lights, then one must question whether it is achieving its aims. We also urge better analysis of the impact of 26 artificial lights on local wildlife before the planning application is accepted.

#### **4. Multiple speed limits on Haverhill Road and around its junction with the A1307**

The planning application proposes a speed limit for the section of Haverhill Road at and near the junction with the A1307 of 40mph. Therefore, a vehicle driving towards Stapleford from the south on the A1307 will reduce from 50mph to 40mph when approaching the junction with Haverhill Road, increase to 50mph after passing the entrance to Magog Down carpark on Haverhill Road, reduce again to 40mph after 1mile and then to 30mph upon entering Stapleford village. If turning immediately right into Gog Magog Way, drivers would then face a further speed reduction to max. 20mph. Such multiple speed limit changes on a stretch of road 2miles in length, taking approx. 3 minutes to drive by car, are confusing and dangerous.

If the speed limit on the A1307 around the junction with Haverhill Road is to be reduced to 40mph then we emphatically request that the same speed limit is applied to the full extent of Haverhill Road until it reduces to 30mph just outside Stapleford village. Stapleford Parish Council has set out this argument multiple times in the past, most recently in our response to the consultation in Nov 2021 which preceded this planning application.

#### **5. A missed opportunity to reduce on-road parking by Magog Down users**

We are concerned about the potential size of the verge created between the road edge and the proposed highway/application site boundaries on the north side of Haverhill Road from a point by Magog Down carpark extending towards the A1307 (as illustrated in 'General Arrangement – Plan View A'). This will encourage the already dangerous practice by some visitors to Magog Down of parking on the verge rather than in the pay-to-use carpark, including after dark when the carpark is closed. These antisocial parking habits reduce road width and visibility, and block field access. Often, multiple cars are parked on the verge for several hours at a time.

We request that the planning application acknowledges this problem and seeks to address it.

#### **6. Insufficient attention given to the impact of modifications outside Wandlebury Country Park on vehicles exiting/entering the park**

We suggest that proposed road layout changes opposite the entrance/exit to Wandlebury Country Park have not been given sufficient attention in the planning application. They have been principally designed to offset the impact on vehicles of not being able to turn right out of Haverhill Road or Gog Farm Shop onto the A1307, rather than the needs and safety of vehicles and active travel users entering and leaving Wandlebury Country Park. The latter should not be compromised to accommodate the former, yet they have been: in Mott MacDonald's Transport Assessment, the 'do something' scenario creates greater delays to Wandlebury Country Park access relative to the 'do minimum' scenario.

## Summary

Whilst Stapleford Parish Council welcomes safety improvements at the junction of Haverhill Road and A1307, the planning application seeking to achieve this is over-engineered for its rural location, introduces a significant amount of light pollution in an environmentally sensitive area of otherwise comparatively dark skies, and does not fully consider the impact of the junction's realignment on diversions through the wider neighbourhood. It also misses the opportunity to tackle speeding and parking issues along Haverhill Road.

Stapleford Parish Council submits that clearer crossing points for active travel, and minor road and junction redesign to reduce traffic speed and enforce compliance, could achieve similar benefits to this far more expensive proposal.

Yours faithfully,

Belinda Irons

Clerk to Stapleford Parish Council

Submitted by email to [planningdc@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:planningdc@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)