

Note Submitted by NNTAG re Q4. on Postwick Hub Traffic

Under Matter 3B, Denise Carlo, NNTAG, asked the Inspector if she could provide a note on traffic aspects in relation to a point on Postwick Hub raised by Eric Cooper of the Highways Agency and the Inspector agreed.

Eric Cooper had stated that sensitivity tests to 2026 showed that Postwick Hub could accommodate JCS growth, a NDR and expanded Postwick Park and Ride.

NNTAG response

Traffic Assessment to 2018 and Sensitivity Test to 2026

An earlier Traffic Assessment for Broadland Gate/Postwick Hub planning application (Ref No, 20081773, Jan 2008) had shown a lack of junction capacity beyond 2018.

Various amendments to the planning application were submitted in August 2008, notably, closure of the A47 off-slip road to A1042 Yarmouth Road and alterations to the proposed bridge across the A47 from Postwick Park & Ride to the new Postwick North roundabout to three lanes southbound and one lane northbound. As a result of these changes, traffic flows through Postwick Hub increased.

In a letter dated 29 November 2009 to Broadland District Council, Eric Cooper confirmed that the Highways Agency was satisfied with the results of sensitivity tests to 2026. The Sensitivity Tests to 2026 are not in the public domain and there has been no independent scrutiny of the results.

It was unclear what changes were made to extend the capacity of Postwick Hub to accommodate traffic beyond 2018 to 2026 – either the design was modified to accommodate the traffic or else more effort was made to shift journeys to other modes.

If the latter, then measures for changing travel behavior should similarly be implemented across the Norwich area as a whole, but without a NDR/Postwick Hub.

However, all fifteen designs for Postwick Hub prepared by Norfolk County Council assumed a NDR. There has been no strategy tested without a NDR. Similarly, the NDR has not been tested as a scheme by itself.

Also, the Postwick Hub proposal has yet to be assessed for suitability if the full 10,000 houses in the North East Growth Triangle were to be delivered, with development continuing beyond 2026.

Postwick Hub is “Significantly Over-Engineered” Without a NDR

If the Growth Triangle as proposed in the JCS is not approved, and the NDR is not funded, the published Postwick Hub road layout would be excessive in size, and have a poor layout. The closure of direct links on and off A47(T) forcing drivers on a long detour would inconvenience current journeys and access to the proposed housing and employment development allocated in the 2006 Broadland Local Plan.

In a letter to Norfolk County Council dated 27 March 2009, the Department for Transport advised that the proposed Postwick Hub would be “significantly over-engineered” without the NDR being in place. Similarly, in its assessment of the Community Infrastructure Bid for Postwick Hub, the Homes & Communities Agency recommended rejection of the project on grounds of over-design.

NNTAG, December 2010