

Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk

Note Submitted by NNTAG**7172****Re: Landstock Estates' proposed 'link' road – Thorpe Woodlands**

Landstock Estates & Landowners Group has submitted a proposal for a developer-funded link road between Plumstead Road and Salhouse Road, which would complete the 'inner link road' between the Postwick junction and Wroxham Road.

We have a number of serious concerns relating to this proposed link road, ie:-

1. The road would run through Racecourse Plantation, approximately (according to Create Consulting Engineer's drawing, submitted by Landstock) 50 to 100 metres west of the eastern boundary of the woodland.
2. Racecourse Plantation is one of three adjoining woodlands, effectively forming a continuous block of woodland amounting to some 205 acres, in the north-western corner of the parish of Thorpe St Andrew (the other two being Brown's Plantation & Belmore Plantation)
3. Thorpe & Felthorpe Trust, the owner of these woods, intend to seek planning permission to build up to 800 houses with associated roads, retail units etc, on these woods
4. All three woods are designated as County Wildlife Sites
5. Racecourse Plantation contains the most important habitat of the three woods, supporting significant populations of both locally and nationally scarce species of flora and fauna, including plants that are not recorded at any other site in Norfolk, and national Biodiversity Action Plan priority species
6. All three woods are designated as an area of high landscape value in BDC's Local Plan
7. All three woods are designated as areas of core biodiversity in the GNDP's documents
8. All three woods are designated as core Green Infrastructure in GNDP's documents
9. All three woodlands are extremely highly valued by the overwhelming majority of the local population, many of whom have become members of Friends of Thorpe Woodlands, which was established in August 2010 in response to the Thorpe & Felthorpe Trust's charette, which revealed the latter body's intention to develop the woods

10. The Friends of Thorpe Woodlands' campaign to conserve the woods in their entirety is actively supported by all BDC members for the Thorpe St Andrew area, as well as all members of Thorpe St Andrew Town Council
11. A link road passing through Racecourse Plantation would cause serious damage to the woodland and its wildlife habitat, both along the actual route by directly destroying it and, indirectly, adjacent to it, particularly to its east, by way of fragmenting this section from the bulk of the remaining woodland
12. In view of the fact that Racecourse Plantation is owned by the T&FT, which has an interest in developing the woodland, T&FT would only be likely to agree to such a link road if they believed it would increase the prospects of their gaining planning permission for their development scheme, which would destroy Racecourse Plantation entirely and cause very serious damage to the other two woods. Developer contributions toward the costs of such a link road might only be expected from T&FT if such contributions were conditional on granting of planning permission for their development scheme (or vice versa)
13. In view of the points above, we would object very strongly to any link road that encroached upon Racecourse Plantation to any extent whatsoever.
14. We understand that NNTAG and CPRE have proposed a link road between Plumstead Road and Salhouse Road that would run to the east of the boundary of Racecourse Plantation.
15. While Friends of Thorpe Woodlands does not necessarily agree with the construction of any new roads that would enable intensive development in this area, we would nonetheless greatly prefer the route proposed by NNTAG & CPRE over that proposed by Landstock Estates. Such a route would not entail any direct impact upon Racecourse Plantation, and would not necessarily entail any intrinsic planning gain to BDC/GNDP through any connection to the T&FT's development scheme.
16. We therefore respectfully ask that all the above points are taken into consideration when considering any 'Plan B' that GNDP may put forward that is based upon the provision of an 'inner link road' that would enable development on a reduced scale to take place while the prospects of the NNDR ever being built remain in doubt.
17. Our view is that an inner link road may be feasible, but that any such road must completely avoid damage to any of the three Thorpe woodlands.
18. We conclude that, if any 'inner link road' is to be seriously considered, it should follow a route to the east of Racecourse Plantation, along the lines put forward by NNTAG & CPRE.