

## Suffolk County Council Lorry Route Review - Submission 2 (of 2)

### West Stow - All Roads Within and Leading into the Village

#### Submission 1 (of 2)

##### B1106 Through Wordwell and Culford

*NB At the roundabout south of Culford (52.277191 - 0.70842505) all four turnings are designated the B1106 (which is itself problematic for those unfamiliar with the area); this submission refers directly to the north-south stretch between 52.316887 - 0.68107724 and 52.292601 - .69563627 and by implication to the stretch from the A11 to 52.287474 - 0.69957778.*

#### Context

1. Culford is a small rural village that is also home to a public school, prep and pre-prep schools, a nursery (with a total of c.800 pupils in all) and an EFL school, meaning that children, from babies to 18 years olds, and their parents are frequent road users. There is also a sports centre and a hockey club, all generating considerable amounts of local traffic. Most of Culford is a conservation area and home to significant listed and un-listed historic assets. There are roadside paths and verges for pedestrians. Street lighting is fairly sparse.
2. Wordwell is a hamlet with no pavements and no street lighting.
3. Both villages are accessible only via the B1106 (North-South) and HGVs use this road both during the day and through the night.
4. At present the B1106 is designated as a 'Local Access Route serving as access to a specific location'. This means that only HGV traffic needing to access a location on or immediately off the B1106 should be using it.
5. In fact, virtually all the considerable volume of HGV traffic that passes through Culford and Wordwell using the B1106 (North-South); uses the road as either a (very marginal) short cut or to avoid the traffic calming and speed control measures on the A134, which runs roughly parallel to the B1106 (North/-South) and a short distance to the east.
6. The Parish Council and residents believe not only that enforcement of the existing designation is inadequate but that the B1106 (North-South) is completely unsuitable for HGVs. There is a significant number of reasons for this and, while inter-linked, these have been grouped together for the purposes of this submission under seven main headings (which, where possible, match the categories used in the summary survey which we have also completed).

#### A. Road Safety for Pedestrians, Cyclists and Car Users

7. Large lorries are too big for the road in terms of the safety of other road users. As a result, HGVs pass too close alongside the roadside paths and this often results in pedestrians having to step back to the inside edge of the pavement to avoid the destabilising draught effect of lorries passing within inches of them.
8. There is also sometimes a danger of being physically hit because a lorry which has its wheels close to the edge of the road will, of course, be overhanging the verge or kerb.
9. Cars are often forced to pull suddenly to the left of the road when faced with lorries coming in the other direction and two lorries passing in opposite directions often result in vehicular intrusion onto pedestrian space.
10. Cyclists are placed in extreme danger.

## **B. Damage to property**

11. Amongst the listed and un-listed historic assets in the conservation area, the brick and flint boundary walls of Culford Park and many brick and flint former estate houses feature prominently.
12. The boundary walls and many houses are on or very close to the verge of the road and are particularly susceptible to vibration damage from large lorries rumbling passed at very close distances. A significant proportion of the more modern houses are also situated close to the road with only shallow front gardens to protect them.

## **C. Damage to Verges**

13. As will be clear from the above, damage to verges is a frequent occurrence. This exacerbates the dangers to other road users because in wet weather the margins of the road can become unclear and this is further exacerbated by pools of water forming which spread across parts of the highway, effectively narrowing the road even further.
14. The collection of rainwater, which often remains in the damaged verges for days after a heavy downpour, also makes walking on the roadside paths hazardous as it is impossible to avoid getting soaked by passing traffic. Even small cars travelling at moderate speed cause the water from these HGV-caused troughs to splash and the backwash to flood whatever part of the path or verge is not already covered.
15. The verge ruts are difficult for motorists to see in the dark so it is easy for cars to drive into them and very difficult to escape from them.
16. In Wordwell the verges are so eroded that the foundations of the walls are being directly affected by HGVs and in other places there will be a risk to utilities that are carried along the road edges.
17. A resident who wrote to this council about verge erosion has calculated that the damage to verges on the B1106 between Brandon and Fornham represents a diminution of Green Space of 13,500m<sup>2</sup> (based on 22.5km x 2 x .3m). This undermines the County's efforts to be the greenest county in the country.

## **D. Road Surface Damage**

18. The road surface is poor and made worse by lorries, for which this type of road was not designed. There are many potholes, dropped manhole covers and ruts which increase noise and create a danger to road users.

## **E. Noise**

19. Large lorries make a considerable amount of noise and the impact on residents is significant, whether they live in houses set close to the road or set back from it.
20. The road is too narrow for these types of vehicle and so the thud, thud, thud of tyres over cats' eyes, coupled with the bounce and boom as lorries pass over manholes, potholes and road repair patches, is substantial. The impact is especially great at night when residents are frequently woken by HGVs.

## **F. Other Amenity Issues**

21. With the gradual increase in HGV use over the past 10 plus years, the amenity of the area has been reduced. Many cyclists (including a cycling club) and horse-riders feel unable to use the road safely and the many visitors to the paths and forest walks in and around the parish are put off by the need to fight HGVs for road space and the dangers that HGVs create when seeking egress from forest car parks.

## **G. Speeding**

22. Speeding does not cause any of the problems mentioned above but it does amplify all of them and represents a significant problem in its own right.

## **Alternative Routes for HGVs**

23. While recognising that any reduction in volumes of HGV traffic on one road will cause associated increases elsewhere, this Parish Council believes that A roads are self-evidently more suitable for HGVs and through traffic. It follows, therefore, that where suitable A roads exist HGV traffic should be directed to use those routes.
24. Suffolk County Council recognise this, for example their map of the Lorry Route Network states that Strategic Lorry Routes (marked red on that map) should be used in preference to local lorry routes.
25. This being so there is no need for the B1106 (North-South), south of the A11 to be included in the Lorry Network at all as there is an existing A road/ Strategic Lorry Route alternative that HGVs should be using already.
26. The clear and sensible alternative to the use by HGVs of the B1106 south of the A11 is the A134, which runs approximately parallel with the B1106 and connects the same routes.
27. Traffic travelling south west along the A11 reaches this first and it is the logical route for those HGVs needing to reach Bury St Edmunds and district.
28. Traffic travelling south on the northern section of the B1106 (from Brandon for example) would turn east onto the A11 for a short distance and then pick up the A134 (the existing excellent and very modern junctions facilitate this). Alternatively the B1107 directly from Brandon passes through no settlements on its way to the A11, which it meets at the A134 roundabout.
29. HGV traffic coming from the south, traveling either north or north east, would simply follow the reverse of these routes

## **Summary and Conclusion**

30. The Parish Council recognises that any reduction in volumes of HGV traffic on the B1106 (North-South) would cause associated increases elsewhere and that this means that shifts in HGV traffic must be carefully considered.
31. B Roads are, by Government definition, designed to connect different areas and to link A roads and smaller roads. Implicitly, they are not primary routes intended for use by most traffic, and especially not HGV through-traffic).
32. There is a demonstrably more suitable alternative route to the B1106 (North-South) which is as convenient or only very marginally less convenient (depending upon direction of travel) and which would therefore have a zero or close to zero effect on hauliers' costs.
33. Given the existing stipulation that HGV traffic should use Strategic Lorry Routes where possible and given that the A134 is unlikely to change designation connects exactly the same localities as the B1106, there is no reason for the B1106 (North-South) to be part of the Lorry Route Network.
34. For all these reasons, which encompass safety, practical, heritage and amenity considerations, HGVs should not be using the B1106 between the co-ordinates stated above and a weight limit reflecting this should be imposed.

For further information or in the event of query please contact

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