Holcot Parish Council

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West Northamptonshire Council
One Angel Square
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13 November 2026

By email to: localtransportplan@westnorthants.gov.uk

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Draft Northampton Area Transport Strategy – Consultation Response

Holcot Parish Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on West Northamptonshire Council's Draft Northampton Area Transport Strategy.

The Parish Council supports the principle of an integrated transport strategy which improves connectivity, reduces congestion and provides alternatives to private car travel. However, we are concerned that the Strategy needs to give greater recognition to the needs of rural communities surrounding Northampton, particularly those affected by major housing development, strategic highway improvements and significant through-traffic.

Holcot is a small rural parish with 421 residents recorded in the 2021 Census. Despite its size, its geographical position means that it experiences traffic movements disproportionate to its population and the capacity of its rural road network.

The Parish Council has submitted a separate representation to the Regulation 19 Local Plan consultation and will also be submitting separate responses to the Draft West Northamptonshire Road Safety Strategy and Draft Freight Action Plan consultations. These representations address specific concerns relating to road safety, HGV movements, freight traffic and the impacts of development and construction activity on Holcot and its surrounding rural roads.

This representation focuses specifically on the wider transport implications for Holcot, including the proposed A43 improvements, rural connectivity, public transport and the need to ensure that surrounding rural communities benefit from strategic transport planning. The Parish Council considers that these consultations are closely related and that their combined implications must be properly recognised by WNC.

A43 Dualling and Strategic Highway Improvements

The Parish Council considers the proposed A43 Phase 3 dualling towards the Holcot Lane/Sywell Road roundabout to be one of the most significant transport infrastructure proposals affecting Holcot. We welcome progress towards improving this important strategic route and recognise its potential benefits in reducing congestion and supporting the wider transport network. However, the scheme must be considered alongside the substantial housing and employment growth planned along the A43 corridor.
In particular, we request that WNC:

- Provides clarity on the scope, funding, design and delivery programme for the proposed A43 improvements.
- Explains how the scheme will be coordinated with planned housing and employment development along the corridor.
- Assesses the potential effects of increased highway capacity on surrounding rural roads, particularly Sywell Road, Brixworth Road, Moulton Road and Holcot Road.
- Considers whether changes in traffic distribution could result in additional movements through neighbouring villages.
- Ensures that safe walking and cycling provision is incorporated where practicable.

The Parish Council also requests clarification of how A43 Phase 3 relates to the Northampton Area Transport Strategy and how the two programmes will be coordinated.

Cumulative Development and Rural Traffic Displacement

Holcot is potentially affected by substantial housing and employment growth around Northampton, Moulton, Brixworth and Overstone, together with the wider A43 corridor.
The Parish Council is concerned that improvements to the strategic road network must not simply transfer traffic problems onto smaller rural roads. The closure of the A43 in 2024 demonstrated how quickly traffic can be displaced onto rural roads which are not designed to accommodate substantial additional traffic volumes or heavy vehicles. We request that WNC:

- Assesses the cumulative traffic effects of planned housing and employment development.
- Considers the potential displacement of traffic onto unsuitable rural roads during congestion, accidents and highway works.
- Ensures that traffic modelling considers the wider rural highway network rather than individual development sites in isolation.
- Coordinates transport improvements with the timing and delivery of development.

The effects on neighbouring rural communities should form part of the assessment of strategic highway proposals, rather than being treated as a separate local issue after schemes have been approved.

Rural Bus Services and Mobility Hubs

The Parish Council welcomes the Strategy's emphasis on improving bus services, public transport and mobility hubs. However, these improvements must provide practical benefits for rural communities as well as Northampton itself. Holcot has limited public transport provision, and residents without access to a private vehicle can experience difficulties reaching employment, education, healthcare and other essential services. We ask WNC to consider:

- Better bus connections between Holcot, neighbouring villages, Moulton and Northampton.
- Opportunities to improve the frequency, reliability and operating hours of rural bus services.
- Demand-responsive transport where conventional bus services are not viable.
- Whether proposed mobility hubs along the A43 corridor could provide genuine benefits for residents of Holcot and surrounding villages.

Mobility hubs should not simply serve new developments or urban areas. Their location, accessibility and associated bus services should be considered in terms of their benefits to existing rural communities.

Walking and Cycling

The Parish Council supports improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure but considers that rural communities must not be overlooked. Holcot has narrow rural roads and limited footway provision. The narrow, single-lane section of Sywell Road through the village, where there are no pavements, presents particular difficulties for pedestrians. We request that the Strategy considers safe walking and cycling connections between rural villages and local facilities, including opportunities associated with the proposed A43 improvements. Any new infrastructure should be developed in consultation with affected parish councils and should provide genuinely safe and practical alternatives to private car travel.

Parish Council Involvement

The Parish Council considers that smaller rural communities possess valuable local knowledge about traffic movements, highway conditions and the effects of strategic transport improvements. We request that WNC ensures:

- Early consultation with parish councils affected by proposed transport and highway improvements.
- Clear information about proposed schemes, funding and delivery timescales.
- Appropriate consideration of local traffic concerns and potential impacts on rural roads.
- Feedback explaining how parish council representations have been considered.

We would welcome a continuing opportunity for Holcot Parish Council to be involved as the Strategy develops into detailed proposals and implementation programmes.

Summary of Holcot Parish Council's Requests

Holcot Parish Council asks West Northamptonshire Council to ensure that the final Northampton Area Transport Strategy:

1. Recognises the transport needs of smaller rural communities surrounding Northampton, including Holcot.
2. Gives appropriate consideration to the proposed A43 Phase 3 dualling towards the Holcot/Sywell roundabout, including its wider effects on surrounding villages.
3. Assesses the cumulative traffic implications of development along the A43 corridor and around Northampton, Moulton, Brixworth and Overstone.
4. Prevents strategic highway improvements from resulting in unacceptable additional traffic being displaced onto unsuitable rural roads.
5. Provides better bus connections and accessible mobility hubs which benefit rural residents.
6. Includes safe and practical walking and cycling connections for surrounding rural communities.
7. Ensures effective consultation with parish councils affected by strategic transport and highway improvements.

Holcot Parish Council supports the objectives of the Draft Northampton Area Transport Strategy but considers that it must give greater recognition to the needs of rural communities affected by Northampton's growth and associated strategic transport improvements.

The proposed A43 dualling towards the Holcot/Sywell roundabout is of particular importance. While the Parish Council welcomes improvements to the strategic highway network, their wider implications for Holcot and neighbouring villages must be properly assessed.

Transport improvements must not simply benefit Northampton and its expanding development areas while transferring additional traffic and associated problems onto surrounding rural roads. The Parish Council wishes to see a balanced strategy which improves rural connectivity, provides practical alternatives to private car travel and protects the safety and quality of life of existing rural communities.

We would welcome a written response addressing the matters raised in this representation.

Yours faithfully,

Ruby Cole

Clerk & RFO - Holcot Parish Council

Also sent to:

- *The Rt. Hon. Stuart Andrew MP - Member of Parliament for the Daventry Constituency. stuart.andrew.mp@parliament.uk*
- *Cllr Cécile Irving-Swift - Rural North East ward. Cecile.Irving-Swift@westnorthants.gov.uk*
- *Holcot Parish Councillors (4)*