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## ELVEDEN FARMS LIMITED

Our Ref: G004/F

1 February 2010

FAO P Waters Esq  
The Editor  
Eastern Daily Press  
Prospect House  
Rouen Road  
NORWICH  
Norfolk NR1 1RE

Dear Mr Waters

### A11 Dualling

Now the Public Inquiry has closed I would like to take the opportunity to place on record the efforts the Estate has made to help secure the upgrade of the A11.

The Estate has been involved with the promotion of the road upgrade going back to the early 1960's but the current proposal began in the late 1990's. The Estate's position has been consistent throughout in that we are anxious to see the road improved at the earliest opportunity. We have supported the Highways Agency consistently through the planning process and have contributed to nearly every aspect of the design process. Indeed the landscape design which has now been adopted is based largely on a scheme we worked up with our consultants in response to an effort promoted by the Agency's consultants which was completely out of character with the Breckland landscape.

We have been directly involved with Natural England and the RSPB and our in-house conservation team have attended many workshops and meetings in order to accommodate the road within the SPA. The Estate has made land available elsewhere on the Estate on a voluntary basis to mitigate the effects of the road on the Stone Curlew habitat.

The one aspect with which we have had concern is when in 2004 for no justifiable reason the grade separated junction between the A11 and the B1112 was removed from the proposed scheme. In spite of repeated requests the Highways Agency failed to produce any evidence to justify its removal.

We were disappointed when the original highway consultants Parsons Brinkerhoff were sacked from the scheme at the point Draft Orders were about to be published because it was inevitable this was going to lead to further delays. Mr Cheesmur is the fourth Highways Project Manager to be assigned to the scheme and the District Valuer has been changed twice. On each occasion this change has led to delay and put us to additional cost in having to introduce the new personnel to the complexities of the Estate.

The single issue that we were not able to resolve with the Agency revolved around the grade separated junction at the B1112. The principal reason was that their proposals defied logic and when we looked at their traffic model it was evident that it was not sufficiently reliable to be able to draw the conclusion that a grade separated junction should not be provided. Had we not engaged WSP to look at the first traffic model the Agency would have arrived at the Public Inquiry with flaws so serious the Inspector would not have been able

to rely on it to make an affirmative recommendation. The Highways Agency acknowledged this by ditching the first model and asking the new consultants to re-do the work. Unfortunately they continued to adapt the original information generated for the first model which meant the inherent faults flowed through to the second and third models.

At the Inquiry the Highways Agency's consultant confirmed that the third model might well be wrong but in the absence of any trip origin or destination data it would be impossible to confirm this point. In addition the Highways Agency's consultant's statement concerning his observations of the lack of congestion at Fiveways seemed completely at odds with the observations of those of us that use the junction regularly.

The Estate's position has been stated clearly on many occasions that if the traffic modelling had truly demonstrated that a grade separated junction was not justified then we would not have run an argument in front of the Inspector. We knew the model to be flawed and asked for the raw data to be made available so that our consultants could build our own model. For whatever reason and we know not why the Highways Agency declined to make this available. We were anxious that our concern over the junction should not delay the construction of the road as a whole and the Inspector confirmed and Mr Cheesmur for the Highways Agency accepted that if a junction is justified there is a mechanism by which the main programme can continue without delay whilst the changes at the junction layout can go through the procedural stages and catch up.

It has always seemed odd to us that at a relatively late stage the non-motorised user crossing at the War Memorial was fast tracked into the scheme after the publication of Draft Orders. This has a projected cost similar to the grade separated junction and directly affects two SSSI's and the SPA. Again we were happy to support the proposal although we questioned whether there had been a proper cost benefit analysis to justify spending yet more public funds.

I hope that you will agree that in the light of this information you will accept that the Estate has not delayed the scheme in any way but quite the reverse has been working hard over the years to expedite the delivery of this much needed transport link. I would be grateful if you could publish this letter in the light of the inaccurate way in which your publication has reported the Estate's position to date.

Yours sincerely

MJ Douglas

cc:-

Andrea Hill, Chief Exec SCC

Charles Clarke MP

Richard Spring MP

D Cox, Chairman of Country Strategic Partnership Board, Leader Norfolk County Council

D White, Chairman and Chief Exec NCC