

Statement to Planning Inspector for Erewash Strategy Review -MATTER 9

Introduction

This statement has been produced by a resident who lives along Quarry Hill Road from its junction with the A6096 who has grown increasingly frustrated and dissatisfied with both Erewash BC and Derbyshire CC over their failure to plan a road network to support the developments along its route and to maintain and upgrade the road as ever more traffic, both cars and more importantly HGVs, use it.

The road

Quarry Hill Road and its extension, Ilkeston Road, are the roads that lead from the junction with the A6096 at the Bulls Head Island to the junction with Lows Lane and Sowbrook Lane. It forms part of the main route from Ilkeston to Sandiacre and Long Eaton and as well as carrying local traffic, it is the main link from the town and surrounding area to Junction 25, A52 and M1.

According to Ordnance Survey, it is classified as C Category, “generally more than 4m wide” and “*classified unnumbered – smaller roads intended to connect together unclassified roads with A and B roads, and often linking a housing estate or a village to the rest of the network. Similar to ‘minor roads’ on an Ordnance Survey map and sometimes known unofficially as C roads*”.

Clearly, Ilkeston, Sandiacre and the associated industrial estates are more than housing estates or villages and, therefore, it would suggest that the road is incorrectly classified. This leads to the question as to whether the construction and maintenance standards are linked to its classification and whether this classification explains the lack of investment made in this road over the last twenty years or so.

Developments along Quarry Hill Road

Within the last twenty years or so, there has been an exponential growth in traffic along QHR and the linked Ilkeston Road with no associated investment, apart from road surfacing. The developments include:-

- Significant recycling facilities on the QHR Industrial Estate including Wards, Johnsons, AA tyres etc, recycling full range of domestic and industrial waste.
- 350 homes on Elka Rise.
- 150 acre New Stanton Park (potentially providing up to 4,000 new jobs)

Neither Erewash BC nor Derbyshire CC seems to have considered the impact of these developments on the local road network and its users in their past planning decisions.

Problems with the road

There are 4 major problems with the road between The Bulls Head junction and Low's lane:-

- The Bulls Head junction – this 3 way junction carries very heavy traffic, and is badly congested at peak and school hours. Frequently, there are queues back up into

Ilkeston town centre, Elka Rise and to Ladywood Primary School. Derbyshire CC had planned to upgrade the mini-roundabout to traffic-light controlled with pedestrian facilities from current mini-island but on examination found that the cost was prohibitive (due to need to relocate underground services) and there was insufficient space for new lanes and street furniture. This junction remains dangerous for pedestrians, especially pupils from nearby primary and secondary schools.

- Pedestrian crossings – despite Erewash and Derbyshire emphasising sustainability and “green” travel, this is merely lip service as the facilities for pedestrians remain woeful. As well as the problem with the Bulls Head junction, see above, there is no pedestrian crossing along the A6096 between The Spinney and Cavendish Rd and the whole length of QHR and Ilkeston Rd, (Bulls Head junction to Lows Lane), despite proximity of both primary and secondary schools.
- Footpath and cycling – again, despite the Councils’ claim to emphasise sustainability etc, the “active” route from Long Eaton to Ilkeston goes over the bridge across the Nutbrook trail – this is very dangerous for both pedestrians and cyclists. It is very narrow, with no footpaths and has a bend on the summit – only the most foolhardy would risk crossing it by foot or bike. The footpath from this bridge to Lows lane is also narrow. As this is the main link between Erewash’s two main conurbations of Ilkeston and Long Eaton, this is a major gap in the provision of sustainable, active travel.
- Maintenance standards – as a result of the heavier than planned for traffic, especially HGV, the road surface has collapsed in a number of places, causing significant blight to adjacent housing and danger of injury or damage to the road users.

Matter 9, the question whether the approach to transport is justified, effective and consistent with national policy. I can’t answer the final question but I do doubt its justification and effectiveness.

I am assuming that the Transport Infrastructure has been guided by the following document
- EREWASH LOCAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT VS2 – SYSTRA

I have some major concerns about this document:-

1. The baseline is given as 2016 (2.3.1) – this seems early and does therefore miss out on the significant and known, factual growth in traffic from the new housing on Elka Rise (350 homes), QHR Industrial Estate (especially recycling plant) and the New Stanton Park.
2. The analysis does not distinguish between car/light commercial and HGV – the latter is a major cause of traffic congestion in the QHR area from the surrounding industrial and commercial sites.
3. In 3.1.4, the Kirk Hallam Relief Road is described as having “simple give way junctions” at either end despite the “Infrastructure Delivery Schedule for the Erewash Core Strategy Review” showing a contribution of £3m by Erewash to the construction of a new roundabout at the Lows Lane/Sowbrook Lane junction.

Comments on findings:-

a. Erewash Local Plan No Mitigation

- a) 3.2.4 – flow change - It seems strange that background traffic moves away from “QHR, south of Longfield Lane” – along with the 20% increase in traffic from 2016, there is also additional traffic known to have been generated by the QHR-vicinity developments up to 2023. If there is not an increase in traffic along “QHR, south of Longfield Lane”, does that mean that traffic diverts down Longfield Lane – a suburban road with humps outside the Primary School?
- b) 3.2.6 – the Kirk Hallam Relief Rd (KHRR) will surely become the route of choice for HGVs from QHR/Stanton Industrial Estates heading west to Derby and for HGVs from the West Hallam Storage Depot heading towards the M1 south.
- c) 3.2.14 & 15 – junction congestion – it is strange that no mention is made in either section of the QHR/Little Hallam Hill roundabout – this is already obvious to anyone who lives within the vicinity of this junction or uses the roads during peak times. It is already congested (in 2023) at both AM and PM peak and the 20% traffic growth will push it even more into congestion, especially as the Assessment shows that the KHRR will take little background traffic away!

4 Mitigation Overview

4.1.2 – yet again, there is no reference to the QHR/LHH junction as being “most affected” although two nearby junctions , bullet 2 (Stanton Rd/Little Hallam Lane) and bullet 9 (QHR/Longfield Lane) are shown. These are both minor junctions between minor suburban roads and the main, traffic bearing roads and their inclusion at the expense of the neighbouring QHR/LHH junction seems unusual.

Mitigation Schemes

Phase 1 - it’s important that the KHRR is designed and constructed to a standard that recognises its use by HGVs, thus taking this traffic away from the congested and dangerous QHR/LHH junction.

Phase 2 – add - construct pedestrian footpath and cycle track from Lows Lane along Ilkeston Rd, bypassing the Nutbrook trail bridge and joining footpath on QHR at junction with Merlin Way. Essential to link Stanton employment and residential developments, classified as Ilkeston Urban Area, with Ilkeston itself.

Phase 3 – again, it’s surprising and disappointing that there’s no reference to the QHR/LHH junction – this must be a prime candidate for signalling for the benefits and safety of both vehicle users and pedestrians, despite known issues with underground services.

Other Transport Infrastructure issues

In the EBC Core Strategy Review, Nov 2022, Strategic Policy 2.1 Stanton North (page 16), there is a statement –

“The reconnection of a direct rail spur linking Stanton North to the national rail network will be required . The utilisation of the rail spur by freight services would help to minimise the number of HGV movements to and from the site, reducing pressure on the local road network.”

Where is the evidence for this? What does the business case for the rail spur show? What does transport modelling predict?

Previously, when the Stanton ironworks was operating, the movement in of iron ore and coal and the movement out of finished iron and steel products occurred, this statement would have been true.

However, as the rail spur will be serving recycling plants and warehouses, then goods coming in on rail will need to be distributed onwards by HGV as will goods leaving on rail have to be brought to the spur by HGV.

It would seem, therefore, that this statement is untrue unless evidence can be provided to the contrary.

Summary

1. There is a disquieting absence from the Strategy Review of reference to the transport issues around Quarry Hill Road and its junction with Little Hallam Lane, despite its already being under severe strain and being the one of the main transport links serving the borough.
2. There is no recognition in the modelling of the impact of heavy use of HGVs from local industrial and warehousing sites on QHR and the surrounding roads and junctions.
3. There is no recognition of the needs of pedestrians and cyclists along QHR and its vicinity.
4. There is a dubious statement about the “benefits” of the rail spur form local HGV use

Therefore, I would urge you as Inspector to stringently examine the proposals submitted by Erewash BC and seek evidence for the claims made.

David Arrowsmith