

**Guildford borough Local Plan Examination**

**Statement of Common Ground**

**Parties:**

- Guildford Borough Council (the Council)
- Highways England

**Date: 5 June 2018**

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground has been prepared by Guildford Borough Council (the Council) and Highways England to assist the Inspector during the examination of the submitted Guildford borough Submission Local Plan: strategy and sites (referred to hereafter as the Submission Local Plan). This statement focuses on the matters which are relevant to the two parties.
- 1.2 This statement is provided without prejudice to other matters of detail that parties may wish to raise during the examination.
- 1.3 The duty to cooperate was created in the Localism Act 2011, and amends the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It places a legal duty on local planning authorities, county councils in England and public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters. Other public bodies, including Highways England, are subject to the duty to cooperate by being prescribed in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 1.4 HE and the council have a history of working effectively together. In addition to the Submission Local Plan, Guildford Borough Council has prepared (amongst others) the following documents as part of the evidence base of the Submission Local Plan relevant to forecasting impacts on the Strategic Road Network (SRN):
- Guildford Borough Proposed Submission Local Plan “June 2016”: Strategic Highway Assessment Report (Surrey County Council, June 2016) (hereafter the SHAR 2016)
  - Study of Performance of A3 Trunk Road Interchanges in Guildford Urban Area to 2024 Under Development Scenarios (Mott MacDonald, April 2018) and Corrections note (Mott MacDonald, 30 April 2018): Corrections to “Study of performance of A3 trunk road interchanges in Guildford urban area to 2024 under development scenarios” (Mott MacDonald, April 2018)

## **2 Matters on which parties agree**

### Road Investment Strategy schemes

- 2.1 An improvement of the A3 through Guildford was included in the first Road Investment Strategy (RIS1) announced in 2015 as a scheme to be developed during Road Period 1 (2015/16 to 2019/20) and for delivery from Road Period 2 (2020/21 to 2024/25), subject to value for money and availability of funding. Potential options for a scheme on the A3 between the A31 and A320 are being considered by Highways England as part of a wider study to identify an appropriate scheme to facilitate economic growth. Highways England is presently undertaking feasibility studies and initial analysis and appraisal in order to assess the viability of scheme solutions. This work has not yet been completed and is continuing with a view to ensuring the right approach goes forward into later recommendations to Government.
- 2.2 This part of the network suffers from congestion during both peak periods and experiences a higher than average number of incidents. Any potential A3 Guildford scheme will seek to reduce congestion, facilitate economic growth and improve journey time reliability and safety.
- 2.3 There are significant challenges in improving the A3 in the Guildford area so the work to complete the initial analysis and appraisal for the scheme is a complex task. Highways England are also mindful of the breadth of opinion amongst stakeholders to the scheme and are keen to ensure that their views help inform the development of the scheme. Highways England is currently preparing the information needed to inform a decision on scheme feasibility and are committed to informing stakeholders as soon as this work is completed.
- 2.4 The delivery of planned development in the later stages of the plan period is dependent on delivery of an improvement to the A3 through Guildford. It is understood that if it is not possible for Highways England to demonstrate a positive business case for an improvement to the A3 through Guildford, it may be necessary for Guildford Borough Council to consider a review of the Local Plan including its site allocations and infrastructure schedule.

- 2.5 The Council has positively prepared the Submission Local Plan assuming delivery of the A3 Guildford RIS scheme. To manage the impacts of planned growth in advance of a decision whether or not to improve the A3 and to manage uncertainty going forward, the Council has included policies within the Submission Local Plan to ensure that the plan provides the planning policy framework to ensure development does not come forward in advance of critical infrastructure.
- 2.6 There are two other Road Investment Strategy schemes planned by Department of Transport that will provide transport benefits within Guildford borough. These are:
- (a) M25 Junctions 10-16 scheme
  - (b) M25 Junction 10/A3 Wisley interchange scheme
- 2.7 RIS1 identified that these were schemes with construction anticipated to commence in Road Period 1 (2015/16 to 2019/20).
- 2.8 In October 2017, Highways England published the Highways England Delivery Plan Update - Supplementary Annex 2017-2018. This has modified the start of works date for the two Road Period 1 schemes to 2020/21.

Highways England small improvements

- 2.9 Highways England has developed several targeted improvement schemes for the Guildford section of the A3, to address some existing road safety issues on the A3 in the period prior to the decision for a potential A3 Guildford RIS scheme.
- 2.10 In March 2017, the Government committed funding to progress two of these schemes, which are included in the Submission Local Plan's Infrastructure Schedule as:
- (a) SRN7 'A3 northbound off-slip lane widening at University Interchange (approaching Tesco roundabout) improvement scheme'
  - (b) SRN8 'A3 southbound off-slip lane widening to A320 Stoke Interchange improvement scheme'.
- 2.11 The two schemes are currently planned to be delivered by spring 2020.

Guildford Borough Council/Surrey County Council Local Road Network Improvements

- 2.12 In April 2018, the councils secured funding from the Enterprise M3 Local Economic Partnership to implement Phase 1 of the West section of the Sustainable Movement Corridor, which forms part of a wider 'Unlocking Guildford' package which has been endorsed by the Local Enterprise Partnership's Board. This scheme involves improving the A3 off-slip/Tesco roundabout to improve facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport but importantly provide more capacity for general vehicle use.

Potential for wider benefits from collaborative working

- 2.13 This Phase 1 of the West section of the Sustainable Movement Corridor scheme in combination with the SRN7 scheme (described in paragraph 2.10) which provides widening to the lanes exiting the A3 and joining the roundabout have the potential to mitigate some impacts from Local Plan growth to 2024 on this section of the A3. The benefits of these combined improvements are set out and considered in the Mott MacDonald report "Study of Performance of A3 Trunk Road Interchanges in Guildford Urban Area to 2024 Under Development Scenarios" (April 2018).

Local Plan-promoted highways schemes on the SRN

- 2.14 To facilitate the realisation of the strategic site at the former Wisley Airfield (Policy A35) and Gosden Hill Farm (Policy A25), improvements/modifications to existing A3 junctions have been identified by Guildford Borough Council as infrastructure requirements in order to mitigate potential impacts from development on the Local Road Network.
- 2.15 Highways England has no objection in principle to these proposed improvements subject to the demonstration of deliverability and potential impacts to the safe and efficient operation of the A3. Highways England will work with Guildford Borough Council, Surrey County Council and other partners to determine if the potential improvements are viable and develop alternative infrastructure options if necessary.
- 2.16 It is recognised that the assessment and determination of deliverability of the additional north-facing slip roads on the A3 at the A247 Clandon Road (Burnt Common) (schemes SRN9 and SRN10 in the Submission Local Plan) will be considered by the

Planning Inspector for the Wisley Airfield Planning Inquiry. As set out below in paragraphs 3.4 and 3.5, work is continuing between Highways England and the applicant Wisley Property Investments Limited to establish if the additional slip roads are deliverable and can be provided safely and with demonstrable benefit to the economy. The inquiry's Planning Inspector is currently scheduled to make a decision on or before 13 June 2018.

#### Programme of sustainable transport schemes

- 2.17 Both parties agree the importance of sustainable transport and traffic management measures that are proposed in the Submission Local Plan. The sustainable transport options set out will offer alternatives to car-based transport. Highways England is developing a programme of improvements seeking to address some existing safety and congestion issues on the A3. Dialogue and work is continuing between Highways England, Guildford Borough Council, Surrey County Council and other partners to maximise the complimentary benefits of our respective proposals by seeking opportunities for joint working and delivery of schemes.

#### Transport evidence base

- 2.18 The Sintram 6 model with its average peak hour approach, as reported in the SHAR 2016 was the best available strategic highway assessment within the time frame for the preparation of evidence for the Submission Local Plan.
- 2.19 The SHAR 2016 demonstrates that the implementation of the three RIS schemes is required to be able to accommodate future planned growth both within and outside the borough.
- 2.20 The parties note that the SHAR 2016, at paragraph 4.9.7, states that: 'It should also be recognised that the strategic model may have difficulty in modelling effectively the details of the proposed mitigation measures, and may have to be used in conjunction with junction modelling tools to understand better the potential effects.'
- 2.21 New developments that will generate significant amounts of movement will, at the planning application stage, be supported by a Transport Statement or Transport

Assessment, and subject to the policy tests in NPPF paragraph 32 and Policy ID3. Promoters preparing a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment for their planning applications for new developments may be asked to use junction modelling tools in conjunction with the best available strategic modelling information. Other transport modelling approaches may also be agreeable to, or required by, the highway authorities and the Council. Individual new developments may be required to provide mitigation measures additional to those in the Infrastructure Schedule.

- 2.22 When the new Sintram 7 model becomes available, which is currently being prepared by Surrey County Council on behalf of the Council, as a more robust modelling tool it could be used to inform revisions in the future to the Infrastructure Schedule in the latest Guildford borough Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

### **3 Highways England Representations**

#### *Mott MacDonald A3 study*

- 3.1 This study responds to issues raised by Highways England with respect to the impact of proposed planned development in the Submission Local Plan on the Guildford section of the A3 trunk road in the period to 2024, the earliest date for the start of construction of the A3 Guildford scheme. The study considers how the operation of the A3 junctions is predicted to change by 2024 with the addition of traffic demand associated with the Submission Local Plan development and if this is likely to have any impact on the A3.
- 3.2 Highways England have reviewed the A3 study, based on the information provided it was not possible to accurately establish the baseline conditions and it was difficult to fully conclude what the precise impacts to the A3 could be from the predicted Local Plan growth up until 2024 based on the Mott MacDonald Study. Notwithstanding this, it is agreed that based on the assessed trajectory of Local Plan growth up until 2024 the impact to the A3 will unlikely be of a scale to recommend preventing progress of the Local Plan at this stage. However due to the existing congested nature of the A3 and its junctions, even small fluctuations of impacts could have disproportionate impacts in particular to safety of the A3 and its users without consideration of additional

interventions. It is agreed that at a later stage the use of appropriate modelling tools such as Paramics shall be used to inform if there is a need for additional highway interventions on the A3 or local road network before 2024. To identify further interventions now would likely be potentially abortive work until the current programme of works (both local and strategic) has been constructed and open to traffic. This position will be monitored by all parties.

- 3.3 It is agreed that if the growth trajectory was to change, the Submission Local Plan supporting evidence would need to be updated to consider both the individual and cumulative impact from growth to establish if any further mitigation/infrastructure is required to enable delivery.

Former Wisley Airfield Planning Inquiry

- 3.4 Since the closure of the Inquiry hearings, Highways England and Wisley Property Investments Limited have continued to meet and good progress has been made. The main focus to date has been on the tests in the Highways England Licence and assessments in terms of demonstrating that the proposed additional north-facing slip roads on the A3 at the A247 Clandon Road (Burnt Common) are deliverable and can be provided safely with demonstrable benefit to the economy.
- 3.5 As set out in the Agreed Statement on Progress Between Wisley Property Investments Ltd and Highways England, it is understood that it is likely to take Highways England 2-3 months to finalise their assessment of information provided and to reach a final position on the impacts on the Strategic Road Network and acceptability of the proposed A3 Burnt Common slip roads. This timing allows for possible discussion with the Department for Transport in respect of interpretation of the Highways England Licence.

#### 4 Actions Going Forward

##### Continued working between Highways England and Guildford Borough Council

- 4.1 Highways England and Guildford Borough Council both commit to continued dialogue during and after the Examination in Public, including ongoing working with Surrey County Council. This will include consideration of emerging evidence from Sintram 7 and Highways England's A3 Paramics Model (which will be used to inform decisions for a potential scheme on the A3 through Guildford for delivery from Road Period 2) and how it can be used to inform future updates to the Infrastructure Schedule in the latest Guildford borough Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- 4.2 Highways England is currently preparing all the information needed to inform a decision on a potential A3 scheme during Road Period 2 and is committed to informing stakeholders which includes Guildford Borough Council and Surrey County Council as soon as this work is completed.

<p><b>Signed:</b></p>  <p><b>Name:</b> Patrick Blake</p> <p><b>Position:</b> Area 3 Spatial Planning Manager</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 5/6/18</p> <p>Highways England</p>	<p><b>Signed:</b></p>  <p><b>Name:</b> Tracey Coleman</p> <p><b>Position:</b> Director of Planning and Regeneration</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 5/6/18</p> <p>Guildford Borough Council</p>
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