



STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL
PUBLICATION DRAFT LOCAL PLAN - SEPTEMBER 2017
JOINT POSITION STATEMENT

Introduction

The purpose of this Joint Position Statement [JPS] is to set out the position of Highways England and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council [the Council] regarding the evidence base supporting the Local Plan. The JPS demonstrates our continued co-operation and identifies that we are in agreement and share a common goal of ensuring the evidence base supporting the Local Plan and the infrastructure improvements proposed relating to the Strategic Road Network [SRN] are robust.

Background

Highways England and the Council have been working closely together throughout the preparation of the new Local Plan since the initial Draft Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation published in November 2016. Highways England and the Council have also been working in partnership with the Tees Valley Combined Authority [TVCA], who take the lead on strategic transport planning for the Tees Valley and Hartlepool Borough Council, particularly with regards to future development at Wynyard.

In November 2017, Highways England provided representations in response to the Publication Draft Local Plan stating that it considered the Plan to be unsound. In that response, Highways England's primary concern was with the evidence base supporting the Local Plan, which was in the process of being updated and incomplete at the time of the consultation. Whilst no specific concerns were raised regarding the impact of proposed development on the SRN or the principle of the proposed SRN improvements detailed in the Local Plan (Policy TI1: Transport Infrastructure) and the accompanying Infrastructure Strategy and Infrastructure Schedule, Highways England considered that further work would be required to ensure that the evidence base supporting these schemes was robust and would confirm that the SRN would be capable of supporting the Plan's development and growth aspirations.

Tees Valley Area Action Plan

Highways England stated its intention at Publication stage to continue to work with the Council and the TVCA on the update of the Tees Valley Area Action Plan [AAP], which would provide the key piece of evidence underpinning the transport infrastructure requirements within the Borough, to ensure that this essential piece of evidence was completed and agreed prior to the commencement of the examination hearing sessions.

On behalf of the Tees Valley Authorities and Highways England (then known as the Highways Agency), the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit developed the first AAP for the Tees Valley in 2006. The AAP was to be a pro-active response to the challenges of supporting economic regeneration in the Tees Valley and fit with the aims of the, at the time, City Region Business Case, to deliver projects more efficiently and cost effectively by aligning resources across the Tees Valley. The AAP was prepared to assess the development pressure on the trunk road network, primarily the A66(T), A19(T) and A174(T) but also the strategic local road network and identify and prioritise infrastructure improvement schemes required to alleviate traffic growth as a result of new development.

The last update of the AAP was completed in November 2012 by Tees Valley Unlimited, working in partnership with the Highways Agency and the five Tees Valley local authorities. That latest update of the AAP identified those development proposals likely to come forward in a series of five-year time slices up to 2014, 2019 and 2024. The Highways Agency Traffic Impact Assessment Tool was then used to assess the additional trips on the SRN arising from the developments and predicted traffic generations were then fed into a model called the TRIPS model. Potential traffic reduction schemes were then tested to assess their effectiveness against mitigating the impacts of development traffic.

The 2012 AAP update has already provided evidence to support Highways England's bid to their Pinch Point Programme to fund a number of infrastructure improvement projects to improve traffic flows throughout the Tees Valley from Redcar and Cleveland through to Darlington.

During 2015 it was decided that the AAP required updating again. The main reason for the update is that the TVCA is currently developing a Strategic Transport Plan for the Tees Valley to identify and set out infrastructure improvements to support development across the Tees Valley up to 2026. A draft Strategic Transport Plan is due to be published imminently. As part of the Strategic Transport Plan, the TVCA is currently working with local authorities to produce a number of documents including:

- An updated Tees Valley AAP – a prioritised programme of local highway improvements to support Tees Valley strategic priorities, which include facilitating housing and employment growth;
- Individual local transport delivery plans – setting out local measures to be delivered by each of the five Tees Valley Local Authorities;
- A Tees Valley Freight Strategy – identifying investment priorities to facilitate planned freight growth across the Tees Valley and beyond;
- A Tees Valley Rail Statement – outlining the further enhancement of local rail services through active involvement in the new North East Rail Management Unit, to build on franchise improvements and recent Tees Valley Combined Authority investment in station facilities;
- A Tees Valley Bus Strategy – further network enhancement to build on the recent Tees Valley Bus Network Improvements investment. The Buses Bill will provide the opportunity to work with operators to develop the future network that is needed; and

- A Tees Valley Walking & Cycling Strategy – continued development of a complementary programme of cycling, walking and other sustainable transport measures to support economic growth as well as health and well-being.

The original plan was to commence the AAP update during 2016 and this would then have formed the evidence base for assessing the impact of the Local Plan on the SRN. However, there has been a delay in commencing the update due to changes to the way the TVCA is governed, including the introduction of the Tees Valley Mayor and also changes to Department for Transport guidelines on the way traffic forecasting should be undertaken.

Following Highways England's response to the Local Plan at Publication stage, ongoing dialogue and collaboration has continued between Highways England, TVCA and the Council to ensure that the impacts on the SRN are assessed even with the delay to updating the AAP and associated evidence base.

As there has been a delay in finalising the AAP, the Council has commissioned Arup to undertake traffic modelling to provide the transport evidence base to support the Local Plan, effectively replacing the AAP. Further details of the modelling undertaken by Arup, and Highways England's view of the modelling can be found in the 'Current Position' section of this JPS.

Stockton-On-Tees Local Plan

Highways England determined that the Local Plan evidence base in respect of highways matters was incomplete at the time of consultation on the Publication version of the Plan. Highways England has sought to clarify and agree its position through a Statement of Common Ground [SoCG] between Stockton on Tees Borough Council and Hartlepool Borough Council (submitted as part of the Hartlepool Local Plan Examination, along with a position statement between Highways England, Hartlepool Borough Council and Wynyard Park. The SoCG in particular was also specifically intended to assist with the Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan examination process.

These agreements are as follows:

- Statement of Common Ground between Hartlepool Borough Council, Stockton Borough Council and Highways England (20 September 2017) (EX/HBC/76)¹
- Response to Inspector's Matters 6 and 9 - Position Statement between Hartlepool Borough Council, Highways England and Wynyard Park relating to infrastructure delivery (3 October 2017) (EX/HBC/93)

Consequently, these agreements provide the context to the previous and continued working relationship established between all parties at the Hartlepool Local Plan Examination, which this JPS seeks to build upon on specifically in relation to the Stockton Local Plan Examination.

¹ https://www.hartlepool.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/3064/examination_library_25_april_2017.pdf

Current Position

As stated earlier within this JPS, the Council has commissioned Arup to undertake traffic modelling to provide the transport evidence base to support the Local Plan, in the absence of the AAP. Arup also undertook the transport modelling prepared in support of Wynyard Park as part of the Hartlepool Local Plan Examination, thus providing consistency with regard to modelling the impact of Local Plan sites and allocations at the SRN.

Arup's development of the transport evidence base builds upon an agreed position between the Council and Highways England, and have rebased an agreed model to update to a base year of 2018. In addition, Arup's work focuses on two key growth locations within Stockton; Wynyard and West Stockton.

Highways England, and spatial planning consultants Jacobs, have met with the Council and Arup throughout 2018 to agree the approach of developing a transport evidence base, culminating in an agreed position between all parties within this JPS. At the time of submission to the Inspector, due to the volume of modelling undertaken, it has not been possible for the transport evidence base to be reviewed and accepted by Highways England and Jacobs, but the agreed approach will be for a Jacobs *Stockton Local Plan Transport Evidence Base Review* [Evidence Base Review] to be prepared and submitted to the Inspector in advance of the Examination.

The Evidence Base Review will assess the modelling undertaken by Arup, the impact of the Local Plan at the SRN, as well as the suitability of the proposed infrastructure schemes as a consequence of the level of impact identified. Given the joint and collaborative working between Highways England, Jacobs, the Council and Arup, it is expected that the Evidence Base Review will provide a positive outcome, enabling agreement to be reached before the Examination.

The proposed schemes are promoted through the Local Plan in *Policy T11: Transport Infrastructure*, and the supporting Infrastructure Strategy and Infrastructure Schedule. Policy T11 identifies targeted improvements to be delivered at the following locations on the SRN:

- i. A66 (including A66 Elton Interchange);
- ii. A19 Widening Norton to A689 (route safeguarded);
- iii. A19/ A689 Interchange;
- iv. A689 at Wynyard;
- v. New Tees Crossing; and
- vi. A19/A67 Interchange (Crathorne).

The Infrastructure Strategy and Infrastructure Schedule contains specific provisions at the SRN as presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Strategic Road Network improvements as identified in the Infrastructure Strategy and Infrastructure Schedule

Scheme	Status / Delivery
<p>A19 Tees Valley Expressway Improvements Central to economic growth of sub-region and improve connectivity with risk of UK.</p>	<p>Timetable: 2021+ Proposed: through Local Plan Cost (estimate): £unknown Finance and delivery Department for Transport and Highways England</p>
<p>A689 Wynyard Improvements Capacity improvements at access points along the A689 between Billingham and Wynyard, including A19/A689 third lane works to facilitate housing and business development.</p>	<p>Timetable: 2017/18 for Wolviston roundabout. Further works to follow in 2018/19. Proposed: through Local Plan Cost (estimate): £unknown Finance and delivery: National Productivity Investment Fund for Wolviston roundabout, Developer Contributions, TVCA Single Pot Funding</p>
<p>A19 Widening Wynyard to Norton Additional lane between Wynyard (A689) and Norton (A1027/A139). Required to facilitate future development at Wynyard – Stockton and Hartlepool, and to address delays and congestion particularly on southbound carriageway in the morning peak.</p>	<p>Timetable: 2020-2022 Proposed: through Local Plan Cost (estimate): £140m Finance and delivery: Department for Transport and Highways England*</p>
<p>A19/A67 Crathorne Interchange improvements To improve access to key sites, improving journey times and connections onto the A19.</p>	<p>Timetable: TBC Proposed: through Local Plan Cost (estimate): £2.2m Finance and delivery: Developer Contributions</p>
<p>Elton Interchange Junction Improvements Required to facilitate the delivery of the West Stockton Strategic Urban Extension.</p>	<p>Timetable: 2018-2020 Proposed: through Local Plan Cost (estimate): £12m Finance and delivery: Developer Contributions, Highways England*, Housing Infrastructure Fund</p>
<p>New Tees Crossing & Links To directly address congestion on the A19.</p>	<p>Timetable: 2025-2030 Proposed: through Local Plan Cost (estimate): £218m - £449m Finance and delivery: TBC</p>

** Highways England will seek to obtain funding through available sources, including future Road Investment Strategy bids, throughout the duration of the Plan period.*

Whilst both parties agree that these works may be required to support the growth aspirations of the Local Plan and while initial timescales are identified in the Infrastructure Strategy and Infrastructure Schedule (where possible on the basis of currently available evidence), further work is required to identify the timings, finance and delivery of these works, however, given the proactive relationship between all parties to agree the JPS, it is considered this relationship will be extended to the delivery of transport infrastructure.

Future Work

The purpose of this JPS is to identify the agreed position, the agreed way forward and to reiterate the ongoing co-operation and joint working between Highways England, TVCA and the Council regarding the Stockton Local Plan and its impact at the SRN.

Highways England are confident in the agreed position, as well as the agreed way forward, that the quantum of development contained within the Stockton Local Plan can be delivered alongside the infrastructure improvements identified in Table 1, and that it would not result in any severe impact on the operation of the SRN. The confidence in this position will be confirmed within the Evidence Base Review.

Applications for development will be managed on an individual basis through the development management process taking into account the development's scale, location and influence on the SRN.

All parties will continue to work together to determine the priority and timescales for delivery of infrastructure improvements to ensure they fully support the development aspirations of the Local Plan. Where appropriate, Highways England (including through the Road Investment Strategy) and TVCA will submit bids, as well as investigating other available sources, to secure the necessary funding to support their delivery. The Council will continue to support and work with Highways England and TVCA through that process to ensure the timely delivery of the works.

Therefore, whilst the phasing of improvements is still to be finalised, with further work continuing to be undertaken, either through the AAP or via separately commissioned work, we consider that this JPS will provide the necessary comfort to the Inspector that: based on the evidence currently available; along with the continuing monitoring of the traffic impact levels on the SRN as part of future updates to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan; and the delivery of the measures outlined above, the development proposed within the Local Plan can be accommodated on the SRN without resulting in any severe residual impact.

Signature: 

Date: 22nd May 2018

Signature: 

Date: 22 May 2018

Chris Bell
Asset Manager
Highways England

Richard McGuckin
Director of Economic Growth
& Development
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council