

## Independent Examination of the Lichfield Local Plan

### Staffordshire County Council Statement on issues arising from Main Modifications (12, 13, 14, 22, 23 and 24)

#### Proposed changes to Lichfield District Integrated Transport Strategy

##### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Transport Appraisal of the Spatial Strategy for Lichfield City Addendum (CD2-14) assesses the transport implications of the District Council's spatial strategy published in the Submission Local Plan and examined between June and July 2012. The Lichfield District Integrated Transport Strategy 2013-2026 forms part of that Addendum and details the specific interventions that need to be delivered with public and private monies to make the Local Plan proposals acceptable in transport terms. The Transport Strategy was updated in November 2013 and extended to 2028. It can be found at:

<http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/transport/transportplanning/localtransportplan/districtintegratedtransportstrategies.aspx>

- 1.2 The Local Plan was found unsound only in respect of inadequate provision of housing need, and to rectify this Lichfield District Council propose to extend the plan period to 2029, allocate 900 additional new homes at Deans Slade Farm and Cricket Lane (both currently within the Greenbelt), a further 200 homes at various sites within the City and 250 homes at the Fradley SDA. Some 12ha of employment land previously allocated at Fradley will be decanted to Cricket Lane to increase the supply of jobs within Lichfield.
- 1.3 The County Council has now considered the potential impact of these development proposals on the local highway network (reported in 'Transport Implications of the Proposed Main Modifications - August 2014')

<http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/transport/transportplanning/localtransportplan/districtintegratedtransportstrategies.aspx>

Based on the available evidence, we have concluded that should the Inspector find these Main Modifications acceptable in planning terms, our transport strategy will need to be modified and expanded. However, assuming all additional interventions are delivered within the Plan Period, there are no insurmountable constraints and we have sufficient confidence that the additional transport impacts can be mitigated and made acceptable.

- 1.4 It is also considered appropriate to briefly update the hearings with respect to progress on the funding and delivery of Lichfield Southern Bypass which is a key part of the transport strategy being pursued by SCC within the Plan Period.

## **2.0 Recommended Changes to the Lichfield District Integrated Transport Strategy as a Consequence of the Proposed Main Modifications**

- 2.1 A high level capacity assessment was undertaken, focussed on the performance of 11 key junctions within the city, effectively building on the 2012 assessment previously examined.
- 2.2 Underlying parameters for the exercise were changed. New traffic count data was collected including, 3 new traffic counts to assist with the estimation of base flows. Forecasting was undertaken using the latest TEMPRO growth rates for 2014 applied to background traffic, with all new development added explicitly for the 2029 Scenario. Residential trip rates for new development were informed by new surveys undertaken at Pasco Drive and Agincourt Road. The old SATURN Traffic Model was revalidated to help us estimate the effect of the bypass with a higher number of vehicle trips on the local network and the option of closing St John Street Northbound in association with the Friarsgate scheme was deleted. Five-year accident data was scrutinised for underlying safety issues. Junction capacity tests were undertaken using the latest industry standard software (Linsig and Junctions8).
- 2.3 Our assessments showed that there is a reasonable expectation that in 2029 with all currently proposed and committed developments eight key junctions will still operate at an acceptable level of performance. This outcome depends upon:
- Lichfield Southern Bypass being completed to link A5127 Birmingham Road to A5206 London Road.
  - Developers and local authorities working together to achieving a 5% shift away from private car use at peak times.
  - Delivery of local highway, public transport and travel management interventions currently identified within the Transport Strategy and agreed as mitigation for the Streethay, St John's SDAs and the Friarsgate development scheme.
- 2.4 Two (of the eleven) junctions were revealed where improvements are likely to be required to provide additional highway capacity to mitigate the additional impact on the highway network.
1. A5190 Lichfield Road / A461 Walsall Road at Pipehill. This is a new Impact.
  2. A5127 / Eastern Avenue / Cappers Lane / Valley Lane. A larger scheme will be required than that currently included in our strategy.

However, it is believed that appropriate remedial engineering solutions can be delivered in both these locations.

- 2.5 Also, the assessment of the junction at A5206 London Road /A51 Tamworth Road / Shortbutts Lane / Upper St John Street suggests that the linked junction arrangement (being provided by the St John's development scheme and already included in our strategy) will be coming to the end of its design life in 2029. Site constraints make further capacity improvements impractical. However, a double roundabout arrangement was tested and demonstrated that it could easily accommodate the 2029 demand flows.
- 2.6 Further detailed assessment of these 3 junctions will need to be undertaken at the Planning Application Stage for the Deans Slade and Cricket Lane proposals. This will identify the scale and nature of necessary capacity improvements to specifically mitigate traffic from these developments. Ideally the new traffic model being prepared in 2014/15 to support the business case for Lichfield Southern Bypass would be applied for these exercises. Journey to work data (JTW) at Output Area level from the 2011 Census should also be available. Hitherto we have relied on 2001 JTW data for our analysis, although 2011 JTW data at Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA) level was recently released on 25/07/14.
- 2.7 If these sites are allocated, the Lichfield District Transport Strategy (and the LDC IDP which it informs) will be expanded to include a new highway capacity improvement at Pipehill and highlight the potential for larger improvements at A5127 / Eastern Avenue / Cappers Lane / Valley Lane and A5206 London Road /A51 Tamworth Road/ Shortbutts Lane / Upper St John Street junctions. To maximise the potential for travellers to exercise modal choice (and for the 5% shift target to be achieved), Deans Slade and Cricket Lane SDAs will need to deliver good walking and cycling connectivity and actively encourage the use of transport modes other than private cars through the implementation of personal travel planning interventions and effectively managed travel plans. A frequent (10 minute) bus service(s) should be provided from all three SDAs in Southern Lichfield to the town and transport hubs. This was previously specified in our 2009 evidence and the analysis revisited in 2014 for the Main Modification proposals.
- <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/transport/transportplanning/localtransportplan/districtintegratedtransportstrategies.aspx>
- 2.8 No additional transport interventions are required to be included in our strategy specifically to accommodate 250 additional houses at Fradley. The updated strategy will include a statement that improvements to Fradley South and Hilliard's Cross junctions were included within the Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Strategic Economic Plan (SEP). Funding has not been confirmed and the County Council has entered into a dialogue with the Highways Agency to include these improvements within their South Midlands Route Strategy.
- 2.9 Increased development in the city will undoubtedly result in an increased demand to use rail services. Footfall has already increased from 838,714 2006/7 to 1,552,930 in 12/13 at Lichfield's Stations. The narrative within our transport strategy will therefore be revised to explain the County Council's

increased involvement with rail service planning to influence available capacity (e.g. active involvement in the long term planning, devolution and future refranchising processes). Better partnership working with the Rail Industry has already resulted in a successful joint bid for DfT Access for All Funding which will see Lichfield Trent Valley becoming fully accessible by 2019.

### **3.0 Update on Lichfield Southern Bypass**

- 3.1 Work to design the railway bridge (the 'public sector' element of the scheme) is continuing with the objective of securing Network Rail Approval in Principle by Christmas 2014. The intention is to secure the necessary finance from Local Growth Fund through the Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. Lichfield Southern Bypass has been included within the Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Strategic Economic Plan.
- 3.2 The 2014 estimate to provide the structure, together with a short section of the bypass is £8.0M; however DfT guidance also requires the application of 66% Optimism Bias for this type of project at the programme entry stage. A local contribution of £1.24M has already been secured.
- 3.3 A new SATURN traffic model will be commissioned in 2015 to support the preparation of a Major Scheme Business Case to demonstrate best value. Planning permission could be sought in 2016. The current intention is to seek rail possessions for Christmas 2017.