



# Summary Note SN1

## Folkestone Hythe Local Plan

To:	[REDACTED]
From:	[REDACTED]
Cc:	
Date:	26 May 2021
Re:	Folkestone Hythe Local Plan – SRN Impacts & Mitigation

### 1.1 Duty to Co-operate

Highways England have been working with Folkestone & Hythe Council and the promoters of the Otterpool new settlement in order to agree how to assess and mitigate the Core Strategy Review plan and proposals in accordance with national transport and planning policy.

The work has fully acknowledged the importance of the plan and proposals, the support being provided by government to the new settlement and the need for the plan and proposals to be agreed and implemented as soon as possible.

### 1.2 Information provided to Examination

The evidence provided up to Examination in Public in February 2021 clearly demonstrated that the plan/proposals have an impact on the following parts of the Strategic Road Network:

- M20J11
- M20J12/13
- A20/A260

It is accepted that the evidence has been at the coarser end of the modelling spectrum and that more sophisticated modelling could show a reduced (but not eradicated) level of impact on the SRN. However, in the time scale available, set by the Examination, it appeared exceptionally unlikely that a completely new round and form of modelling could be produced, assessed and agreed.

Therefore, in a spirit of collaboration and co-operation, Highways England have carefully explored what can be achieved within the bounds set by the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and the WebTag etc requirements for modelling in the time available.

### 1.3 Agreed Way forward

Highways England agreed with Folkestone & Hythe Council that the following actions should be taken to resolve the concerns at the identified SRN junctions/locations:

- **M20J11** – with an additional sensitivity test to consider the impact of any J11 closure, it was considered that the current design, as submitted to the Examination, may be acceptable highways England from both a design and operational perspective in relation to the plan's impacts.
- **M20J12/13** – with additional modelling to more firmly deduce flow rates, it was considered that modelling may be able to support a relatively straight forward set of slip road of mitigation works to the junctions that would fully comply with DMRB and should not require any departures (other than reconfirming existing departures in accordance with normal practice).
- **A20/A260** – further assessment was required to consider all elements of the junction and nearby KCC junctions holistically.

With the above noted, Highways England have been actively involved in discussing ways forward with Folkestone & Hythe and their consultants via regular 'Teams' meetings as well as a workshop to look at M20 J12-13 and A20/A260 options held on the 1<sup>st</sup> April. These discussions outlined the requirements for Highways England.

The original proposals sought a down grade in the classification of the M20 Motorway between junctions 12 and 13 from rural to urban in order to effectively manage the impacts of the plan. It was stated that the M20 between Junctions 12 and 13 could not be reclassified as urban and that the weaving sections would need to remain as existing and therefore could not be shortened in any way. Further that the mitigation requirements for the merges and diverges would need to take this into account.

For the A20/A260 junction it was thought that a signalisation scheme may provide the best solution subject to safety on both the strategic and local road networks. In addition, the proposals would need to ensure that there would be no blocking back between the A20 Westbound slip roads/Alkham Valley Road and the A260 Canterbury Road/Alkham Valley Road junctions and the A20/A260 Spitfire Way junction.

#### 1.4 Recent Technical Information

The following information has been received after the submission to the Examination in Public in February 2021 and forms the basis of this Technical Note 1 in response to Folkestone & Hythe Council and the promoters of the Otterpool new settlement:

- 26<sup>h</sup> March 2021 - M20 Junction 12 to 13 traffic analysis and appendices,
- 26<sup>h</sup> April 2021 - M20 Junction 12 to 13 traffic analysis incorporating the changes discussed at workshop 1<sup>st</sup> April,
- 11<sup>h</sup> May 2021 - Draft report for the A20/A260 Alkham Valley Spitfire Way interchange.
- 13<sup>h</sup> May 2021 - A20 / A260 Alkham Valley/Spitfire Way Interchange - Traffic Analysis and appendices

#### 1.5 Review of M20 Junction 12 to 13 Proposals

The technical note of 26 April is based upon revised traffic flows and considers merge and diverge impacts with all development in place by 2037. For the merges and diverges the report concludes that mitigation is required to the M20 J12 and 13 Slip roads as follows:

- J12 e/b merge as a type B (parallel merge)
- J13 e/b diverge as a type A or B
- J13 w/b merge as a type C (ghost island merge)
- J12 w/b diverge as a type C (lane drop)

Although Highways England do not totally agree that the revised flows are correct, the assessments have provided HE with sufficient confidence about the mitigation requirements to achieve nil detriment based upon the impacts of additional Core Strategy Review traffic flow. On this basis Highways England's review has concluded that the following mitigation is required:

- J12 e/b merge as a type B (parallel merge)
- J13 e/b diverge as a type B
- J13 w/b merge as a type C (ghost island merge) or type D lane gain (if below is type C)
- J12 w/b diverge as a type B (parallel diverge) or type C (lane drop)

## 1.6 Review of A20/A260 and adjacent junction proposals

The second technical note was submitted on 11 May with accompanying appendices on 13 May. This considers impacts with and without Core Strategy Review traffic in 2037.

Previous modelling of the three junctions indicated the possibility of queueing back from junction to junction. Highways England had previously stated that the modelling would need to demonstrate that the results would not be invalidated by queueing back between junctions; a phenomenon that could not be assessed with individual junction models.

Our consideration of the technical note has led to the following comments and conclusions.

- **Alkham Valley Road/A20 westbound slip roads** – At this junction there are no impacts upon the westbound slip roads. In the evening peak hour there is the possibility of queueing back during part of the hour from the roundabout to Canterbury Road along Alkham Valley Road. This may impede southbound traffic on Canterbury Road for a brief period and this may impede flows southbound from the A20/A260 roundabout as a knock-on effect. Some further mitigation on this arm of Alkham Valley Road to reduce queueing will be required to eliminate this possibility.
- **A260 Canterbury Road/Alkham Valley Road** – The proposed mitigation and priority junction modelling does not show any severe impacts in operation. Note however the heavy flow along Canterbury Road southbound in both peak hours that the modelling assumes will flow without delay as the movement is not opposed and does not take into account the capacity of the one lane approach that may be insufficient to allow free flow of traffic as previously stated. This could lead to blocking back through the A20/A260 Spitfire Way roundabout.
- **A20/A260 Spitfire Way Roundabout** – Proposed improvements as previously demonstrated have been re-submitted and termed “nil-detriment” mitigation. This involves flaring the A20 off slip arm to three lanes at the roundabout and dualling the slip road to allow additional stacking capacity. In isolation this solution would provide nil-detriment mitigation based upon the modelling provided although the modelling shows a queue of over 200 vehicles during the peak of the peak hour. This would queue back into the tunnel albeit with a shorter queue than the 2037 base scenario without the additional traffic. Queuing in the tunnel would lead to unacceptable safety issues.

A further option has been modelled for a signalisation scheme designed to relieve queues on the A20 off slip. The modelling provided shows that with the additional traffic in 2037 this does relieve the off slip but that it would lead to safety concerns due to additional queueing on Spitfire Way that we are currently advised is not acceptable to Kent County Council.

In summary, to avoid queues back into the tunnel or onto the main carriageway close to the tunnel exit (either as Core Strategy Review mitigation or from another source) a different solution is required. This may involve, for example, slip road widening potentially to three lanes to accommodate queues.

## 1.7 Matters Previously Agreed

Folkestone & Hythe Council and Highways England have previously agreed mitigation for the Core Strategy Review at the following locations:

- M20 Junction 11 roundabout and slip road merges and diverges
- M20 Junction 13 southern roundabout

## 1.8 Issues Requiring further Consideration

The following matters need further review and submission to Highways England for approval:

- a) Modelling evidence is required to demonstrate that there would be no severe impacts due to the temporary closure of M20 Junction 11 on the surrounding road network and junctions. This will include consideration of Junction 10 and 10A.  
and
- b) Modelling evidence of appropriate mitigation to demonstrate satisfactorily that with the additional development the A20 will not be impacted by traffic queueing back on the A20 eastbound off slip road from the A20/A260 Spitfire Way Roundabout.