

Mr K Ward and Mr P Mileham  
Inspectors  
C/o Caroline Williams  
Programme Officer

3 March 2021

Dear Mr Ward and Mr Mileham

### **Update on Work for the Core Strategy Review Examination**

I am writing to update you on the outstanding work that the council is undertaking on the Core Strategy Review matters relating to the new garden settlement.

#### **Statement of Common Ground with Highways England**

I want to reassure you that work continues between Folkestone & Hythe District Council and Highways England officers to reach an agreed position on the potential effect of the new garden settlement on the strategic highway network.

The district council has engaged closely with Highways England and the promoter of the new garden settlement on modelling and mitigation in order to seek agreement on a revised Statement of Common Ground.

Meetings were held with Highways England to understand the agency's outstanding concerns following their comments in July 2020. As reported during the hearings, these discussions have become more intensive with regular meetings since 25 September 2020. As time has passed, the discussions have become progressively more detailed than originally envisaged; however, this level of detail will allow a considerable degree of certainty to be given to the results.

At the start of the process early discussions indicated that there was no requirement for significant infrastructure delivery for at least 10 years and agreement was reached on the concept mitigation and costs. However, as the discussions progressed and

other issues came to light, Highways England considered it necessary that a full technical review process for highway solutions should be undertaken.

While this is not usually sought at this stage in the development process - for a local plan examination - the district council and site promoter have undertaken the work to ensure that there will be no unacceptable impacts on the strategic road network, including possible impacts from other wider factors, beyond the remit of the Core Strategy Review allocation.

This level of detail has meant that the district council is still in discussions with Highways England and the site promoter on a few remaining technical issues. As it has been presented to us, the issues which are still outstanding are:

- i. A Highways England technical report responding to the technical information provided by the site promoter and local planning authority;
- ii. Highways England's response to proposed technical solutions to mitigate impacts at M20 junctions 11, 12 and 13 and also at junctions between the A20 and the A260 at Hawkinge; and
- iii. Feedback from Highways England on specific operational issues such as whether the stretch of the M20 motorway between junctions 12 and 13 can be re-classified as urban rather than rural (it is understood that an informed view on this needs to be taken by Highways England's Safety, Engineering and Standards team).

The district council is continuing to press Highways England for a prompt resolution of these outstanding matters so that the final examination hearing sessions can be held as soon as possible.

A conference call involving Highways England, the district council and the site promoter and their consultants is to be held on Thursday 11 March 2021 where outstanding matters will be discussed, and it is hoped further progress will be made towards reaching a resolution. We will update you again following this meeting.

**'Blue light' services**

I believe that the only other outstanding matter is for the district council to clarify the need for infrastructure for the 'blue light' services.

Kent Police and Kent Fire & Rescue Service have recently responded to us and we are continuing to press the Ambulance Service for an update on their requirements. As soon as we hear from the Ambulance Service we will send you a note setting out up-to-date responses from all three services.

I hope that this letter gives you some reassurance that district council officers are continuing to press our partners for a speedy response to these outstanding issues so that the examination hearings can be concluded as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely



Adrian Tofts

Strategy, Policy & Performance Lead Specialist