



Folkestone & Hythe District Council
Core Strategy Review Examination

**Update from the Local Planning Authority Regarding
Discussions with Highways England**

31 October 2020

UPDATE ON DISCUSSIONS WITH HIGHWAYS ENGLAND

Discussions have continued between the District Council and Highways England regarding their statements on Main Matter 5: Urban Area and Main Matter 7: North Downs Area.

Main Matter 5: Urban Area

There has been continued exchange of materials between Highways England and the district council regarding their statement on Main Matter 5: Urban Area. The district council is confident that this matter has now been resolved.

Highways England confirmed in October 2018 as part of negotiations on the district council's Places and Policies Local Plan that no mitigation was required for the 2031 scenario in accordance with the additional modelling scenarios. The AECOM model included the significant majority of strategic sites from the adopted Core Strategy (2013) as committed development, reflected as follows:

- Folkestone Seafront: outline planning consent granted on 31st July 2014. Construction is recently underway;
- Shornccliffe Garrison: hybrid planning consent granted on 17th December 2015. Construction is well underway and off-site highway improvements are being implemented;
- Sellindge Phase 1 (Taylor Wimpey): hybrid planning consent granted on 19th January 2016. Construction is well underway;
- New Romney Broad Location: outline consent for 110 dwellings granted on 10th February 2017 (note that New Romney is rather distant from the local/strategic network around Otterpool Park). This parcel is expected to be fully built out within the next 18 months or so. The second parcel was granted outline consent on 28th August 2019. Construction activity has not commenced; and
- Martello Lakes/Nickolls Quarry: this scheme for 1050 dwellings was originally a smaller allocation in the 2006 Local Plan. Outline consent was granted in 2010. Construction is well underway.

As drawn from the AECOM Model Update Note dated November 2017, by the 2031 DM scenario, with the application of background growth and committed developments, a

further five junctions are predicted to be over capacity and therefore potentially require mitigation measures. These include:

- The remaining junction forming the Alkham Valley interchange, which is the roundabout serving the A20 eastbound slip roads, the A260 and White Horse Hill;
- The Spitfire Way / Canterbury Road / A260 roundabout in Hawkinge, under Kent County Council (KCC) control;
- Castle Hill Interchange (M20 Junction 13), at Folkestone, under Highways England (HE) control;
- Two roundabout junctions in Folkestone, under KCC control; and
- The A20 / A261 Hythe Road / Stone Street junction complex, in the Sellindge area, also under KCC control.

By the 2031 DS Places and Policies Local Plan scenario, a further junction is predicted to experience capacity issues:

- The priority junction of Aldington Road and Lympne Hill, under KCC control.

With the introduction of the Otterpool Park traffic for the 2037 DS CSR scenarios, four further junctions are predicted to experience capacity issues, all in the Sellindge area in the vicinity of Otterpool Park, to include:

- The M20 / A20 / B2068 roundabout (M20 Junction 11), under HE control;
- The signalised junction of the A20 Ashford Road with the B2067 Otterpool Lane, under KCC control;
- The roundabout to the south of M20 Junction 11, under KCC control; and,
- The priority junction of Aldington Road and Stone Street, under KCC control.

The reported outcomes from the AECOM report (as accepted by Highways England) in respect of the possible requirement for mitigation is reflected in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Following confirmation from Highways England that no mitigation was required for the 2031 scenario for the Places and Policies Local Plan, it is now accepted by Highways England that the 2031 DS scenario for the Places and Policies Local Plan represents that 2031 DM scenario for the Core Strategy Review.

Other than the proposed allocation of the Garden Settlement (Otterpool Park) with modest growth at Sellindge (Phase 2 site A for 188 dwellings that does not carry the benefit of a planning consent), and Phase 2 site B (which does carry the benefit of planning consent granted on 7th January 2019 for 162 dwellings and small-scale employment use) the Core Strategy Review simply carries forward the allocations in the Core Strategy (2013) to ensure there are site-based policies to guide future Reserved Matters applications. Crucially, the implications of the planned growth in the Core Strategy Review case is limited to the Sellindge area junctions, as detailed in the AECOM Model Update note.

Highways England have requested that an updated Statement of Common Ground is prepared and issued by FHDC for their review and comment to effectively decouple those issues arising under Matter 5 (for which verbal agreement has been reached) from those associated with Matter 7. A draft version of a revised Statement of Common Ground to resolve issues relating to Matter 5 is to be shared with Highways England by Monday 2nd November. It is expected that written acceptance of the position in respect of Matter 5 is to be provided by Highways England early in the week commencing 2nd November.

Main Matter 7: North Downs Area

Under Matter 7 the district council is of clear opinion that the M20 / A20 / B2068 roundabout (i.e. M20 Junction 11) is the only junction on the Strategic Road Network (controlled and managed by Highways England) that will require mitigation as a result of the traffic impact from the proposed new garden town. Highways England have identified that further consideration is to be taken in respect of the impact of the Core Strategy Review on the Strategic Road Network to the east of M20 J11. Associated commentary is set out under suitably-titled headings.

Mitigation design being progressed for the M20 / A20 / B2068 roundabout (i.e. M20 Junction 11)

Arcadis, working on behalf of the Otterpool Park site promoter, circulated correspondence on 26 October 2020 and enclosed documents relating to a scheme of mitigation for the M20 Junction 11, including an initial sketch from the traffic team and the initial highway concept identification.

Arcadis have previously advised further as follows:

- The lane gain, lane drop arrangement has been assumed for now; and
- Further work is being done to investigate the feasibility of the junction.

During a teleconference meeting held on 31st October it was advised by Arcadis that comments issued by Highways England via email correspondence have been addressed, with notations incorporated onto the presented schematic drawing for the scheme of mitigation at M20 J11 to evidence where such changes have been made. An early stage road safety audit (not a full audit) is being progressed, and will be the subject of discussion.

Arcadis are to proceed to provide an indicative cost for the proposed scheme of mitigation on Monday 2nd November. Upon receipt of costing information the Council shall compare the latest figure with the value incorporated into the viability work.

In summary, having discussed this issue with the site promoters and Highways England, the district council understands that no technical constraints have been identified that would create problems with feasibility.

Additional work in respect of consideration of the Strategic Road Network to the east of M20 J11

During the meeting on the 31st October Highways England disclosed that they accept whilst number of junctions and links that form part of the Strategic Road Network to the east of M20 J11 shall be under severe capacity constraint (with associated implications on congestion, i.e. increased queue lengths and/or journey delay) in the future year modelled scenario without planned growth as set out in the emerging Core Strategy Review, as follows:

- White Horse Hill / A20 EB slips / A260 / A260 Spitfire Way;
- A20 WB slips / Alkham Valley Road;
- A260 / Alkham Valley Road;
- A2034 / A20 / A259 / M20 On Slip / M20 Off Slip (Castle Hill Interchange); and
- A20 / M20 / B2064 Cheriton Interchange.

If it is demonstrated that additional traffic added to the Strategic Road Network by planned growth (in this instance the Core Strategy Review) shall further exacerbate the severe capacity constraint, then it is a requirement of Highways England that mitigation is secured to ensure that the future year performance of each affected junction/link is no worse than it otherwise would have been without planned growth.

In light of this advice, further work is underway to establish what the corresponding impact is attributable to Otterpool Park. If it is shown that Otterpool Park will need to provide mitigation to one/more junctions, then schematic schemes will be circulated during the week commencing 2nd November. There has previously been progress made on this activity, i.e. Arcadis have investigated possible options to mitigate the impact of development on this part of the Strategic Road Network.

Subject to the outcome of discussions to taken place during week commencing 2nd November with regards to necessary mitigation to be a requirement of the Core Strategy Review, then it follows that the governance arrangements around securing any further schemes of mitigation would also need to be appropriately captured and addressed within the Core Strategy Review and Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

A conference call is scheduled for 16:30 on Tuesday 3rd November to discuss and take forward the outstanding items.