



National Highways

Charnwood Local Plan

Examination in Public

HEARING STATEMENT:

Matter 8 – Infrastructure and Transport

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Introduction

National Highways, formerly Highways England, has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport as strategic highway company under the provisions of the Infrastructure Act 2015, and is the highway authority, traffic authority and street authority for the Strategic Road Network (SRN). It is our role to maintain the safe and efficient operation of the SRN whilst acting as a delivery partner to national economic growth.

The SRN is a critical national asset and as such National Highways works to ensure that it operates and is managed in the public interest, both in respect of current activities and needs as well as in providing effective stewardship of its long-term operation and integrity. The SRN within and near to the area of Charnwood includes the M1 Motorways and the A46 Trunk Road.

This hearing statement has been prepared by National Highways in response to the Matters, Issues and Questions which have been identified by the Inspectors in relation to Matter 8 – Infrastructure and Transport. We will be represented by Mrs Eri Wong, Spatial Planner Manager for the Midlands to aid discussion and provide clarification where required on the 20 July 2022.

The questions identified focus on the issue ‘whether the Council has complied with relevant procedural and legal requirements’ and our responses are provided under the relevant questions to ourselves.

Response to Questions 8.1 – 8.10

Issue 1 – The Infrastructure Delivery Plan

- 8.1 *Does the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (SD/10) contain the full range of infrastructure to support the development proposed in the plan? How will it be reviewed and kept up to date?*

National Highways have not raised any concerns with the Infrastructure Development Plan; however we have highlighted the need to align with our ongoing Route Strategy work, which is one of the key steps of initial research in the development of the Road Investment Strategy (RIS). This will ensure any existing or future schemes are reviewed and updated accordingly.

Furthermore, we note the cost and timescales indicated for each of the highway mitigation schemes identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Further ongoing discussions will be required across all the relevant Highway authorities with Charnwood Borough Council as the Plan is delivered to ensure the robustness of the delivery costs and timescales. Further work will need to be supported by appropriate evidence and details.

- 8.2 *Does the Infrastructure Delivery Schedule (Appendix 3 of the Plan) enable a coordinated and strategy led approach to the delivery of new and improved infrastructure to support planned growth? Can the priorities, costs and funding sources for the different types of infrastructure be easily identified from the Schedule?*

National Highways are currently reviewing the Jacobs Charnwood Local Plan – Transport Evidence – Options Assessment Report (OAR), dated 18 May 2022 evidence base which we understand will be submitted by Charnwood Borough Council. We are also reviewing the Charnwood Preliminary Design Estimate Assurance dated 25 May 2022 which provides a review of the Charnwood Scenario 2b and 3 junction improvements schemes cost estimates prepared by Jacobs on behalf of Leicestershire County Council. Further ongoing discussions with all relevant Highway authorities with Charnwood Borough Council will be needed to ensure robustness of the delivery costs and timescales.

- 8.2 Will Policy INF1 be effective in securing new and improvements in capacity to existing infrastructure to support proposed development and are any main modifications necessary for precision and effectiveness including in relation to:
- a. Including a cross reference in Policy INF1 to the Infrastructure Delivery Schedule in Appendix 3 of the Plan
 - b. Library and waste provision
 - c. The use of s106 legal agreements to fund highway improvements
 - d. Joint working to address cross boundary infrastructure needs and capacity.
- Through National Highways engagement with Charnwood Borough Council, we are aware they are intending to submit a main modification to INF1 as highlighted in the Supplemental Transport Statement of Common Ground (SoCG). We consider that the proposed modification to Policy INF1 will provide greater clarity and robustness to the approach in securing infrastructure.

Issue 2 – Transport

- 8.3 *What is the role of sustainable transport modes in supporting planned growth and has the effect of modal shift supported by Policy CC5 been taken into account in the transport modelling and studies (EB/TR/11, 12 & 13)? If so, how?*
- In order to follow on and update from the previously reviewed AECOM report, we understand Charnwood Borough Council will be submitting the Jacobs Charnwood Local Plan – Transport Evidence – Options Assessment Report (OAR), dated 18 May 2022. According to this new report, sustainable transport improvements provide a local road network benefit, but do not have any reported impact on the SRN. National Highways have requested clarifications in regard to this modelling, as we understand that the sustainable modes improvements will require further definition and modelling to a point to fully understand impacts and deliverability, beyond those presented in principle in the OAR.

National Highways are currently undertaking further reviews of information provided by Jacobs / Charnwood Borough Council to address the issues raised in our initial review.

- 8.4 *Does Policy INF2 (Local and Strategic Road Network) set out a co-ordinated and strategy led approach to all types of transport in the Borough?*
- Through National Highways engagement with Charnwood, we are aware they are intending to submit a main modification to INF2 as highlighted in the Supplemental Transport Statement of Common Ground (SoCG). We consider that the proposed modification to Policy INF2 will provide greater clarity and robustness to the approach in securing infrastructure.

- 8.5 *What is the likely effect of the proposed scale and distribution of development on the strategic and local highway network and key junctions? Have the necessary improvements and/or mitigation measures to the strategic and local highway network been identified in the Plan and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, including costs and timing/phasing where necessary?*

The AECOM Forecasting Report (2021) sets out the impact of the Charnwood Local Plan developments on an unimproved network on the assumption that developments and associated network improvements in surrounding boroughs are complete. This has identified that the proposed developments in the Charnwood Local Plan would have an adverse impact on the operation of the M1J23 and along the A46 Corridor through and adjacent the borough.

Since then, further work has been undertaken and will be reported in the Jacobs Charnwood Local Plan – Transport Evidence – Options Assessment Report (OAR), dated 18 May 2022, which we understand will be submitted by Charnwood Borough Council. Whilst we are undertaking our review of this report, we have requested further information from the modelling in order to agree to any impacts and effectiveness of mitigation experienced specifically on the SRN. Notwithstanding, having reviewed the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, we consider that the locations identified for mitigation are appropriate at this stage, and the proposed amendments to Policies INF1 and INF2 provide an appropriate mechanism for developing

It is also important to note, that the costs and timings of some improvements are likely to be subject to variation, particularly those where the delivery would be the responsibility of other parties.

- 8.6 *Does the transport modelling undertaken so far (EB/TR/11, 12 & 13) enable specific impacts on the highway network to be identified, for mitigation measures to be developed in response to that modelling and then required as part of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and site allocation policies? Is any further work required to establish this?*

The AECOM Forecasting Report shows the impacts of the Charnwood Local Plan development pattern in total. National Highways review of this report highlighted that at some locations, impacts will be caused by a single development. At other locations the impact will be the combined effect of traffic from several developments.

The mitigation packages have been developed to address the overall impact of all of the developments, but further work was required and will be presented in the Jacobs Charnwood Local Plan – Transport Evidence – Options Assessment Report (OAR), dated 18 May 2022, which we understand will be submitted by Charnwood Borough Council. More interrogation of the modelling would be required to link individual sites to individual mitigation measures. Areas for further work are presented in the Supplemental Transport SoCG.

Issue 3 – Community Facilities

8.10 Overall, does the plan make appropriate provision for new and improved infrastructure including transport and are any main modifications necessary for soundness?

Further ongoing discussions will be required across all the relevant Highway authorities with Charnwood Borough Council as the Plan is delivered to ensure the robustness of the proposed mitigation, delivery costs and timescales. This will need to be supported by appropriate evidence and details.