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# Charnwood Local Plan Mitigation: The role of the Strategic Road Network in the context of planned growth

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## Quality information

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## Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Authorized	Name	Position
Original	08/01/2021	v1	Yes	SG	Project Director

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Charnwood Borough Council (CBC) commissioned AECOM to identify transport mitigation needed to support growth options being considered in CBC's emerging Local Plan. The work will provide information to support CBC in identifying a preferred growth option.
- 1.2 Growth options have been through the Pan-Regional Transport Model (PRTM) to forecast the potential changes that could come about on the road network. The PRTM outputs have informed the identification of 'broad locations' where interventions would be needed to focus to mitigate impacts. This work is set out 'Charnwood Borough Local Plan Mitigation: Technical Note 1' (TN1) January 2021, for the Hybrid Option.
- 1.3 Analysis of the PRTM outputs and consultation with key stakeholders<sup>1</sup> suggest there are existing constraints on strategic routes in Charnwood or in the vicinity, which could impact on the routing of new traffic arising from the Local Plan growth, and which could impact on how the mitigation needed are identified and developed.
- 1.4 The objective of this note is to describe how the Strategic Road Network (SRN), in conjunction with the Local Road Network (LRN), operates currently; how it could be impacted by planned growth in Charnwood Borough as well as surrounding areas; and the implications this has for developing a local transport mitigation strategy for Charnwood.
- 1.5 The existing conditions of other key routes through Charnwood, such as the A6, which is not SRN, are also important to understand when formulating a mitigation response to growth; however, analysis of PRTM forecasting and stakeholder engagement has not suggested that the condition of other non-SRN routes is a significant issue or would be significantly affected by growth. As such the focus of this note is primarily on the SRN.
- 1.6 As will be explained in this note, existing issues occurring on the SRN are significant in scale and are likely to be complex to resolve. Direct impact on the SRN arising from Charnwood's growth is relatively small. This note therefore focuses on the SRN, and its relationship to the LRN, because it is viewed as being critical to help unlock growth not only in Charnwood but the wider area. Furthermore, Highways England ultimately determines what improvements are needed on the SRN, and so this note is a pointer to what are considered to be the bigger issues (affecting Charnwood but also beyond) and as such the note is providing a basis to begin developing a wider area strategy for mitigation.
- 1.7 The note explains:
  - The role that the SRN and Highways England plays, and how the SRN is considered when developing Local Plans (Section 2);
  - What the SRN comprises in the Charnwood area, including how it interacts with the LRN (Section 3);
  - Current and forecasted issues, which affect the SRN (Section 4);
  - Previously identified mitigation and potential (Section 5); and
  - Concludes by setting out the recommended approach for how network issues should be addressed (Section 6).

## 2. The role of the SRN and Highways England

- 2.1 The SRN comprises all motorways and major A-roads across England. It provides long distance connectivity between regions of the UK and, indirectly, the efficient movement of traffic on other roads, including the LRN. The SRN therefore plays an important role in enabling and sustaining economic prosperity and productivity, helps support environmental and social aims.

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<sup>1</sup> Workshop held on 3rd December 2020 by AECOM with CBC, Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council, and Highways England.

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- 2.2 The SRN is managed by Highways England. Highways England's remit is to operate, maintain, renew and enhance the SRN to the benefit of all road users, as well as people who live next to or depend upon the network, and the natural, built and historic environment.
- 2.3 When developing Local Plans, the engagement of Highways England is critical as it provides an opportunity to consult on how to minimise trip generation and encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport. The role of the SRN and Highways England's approach to engaging in Local Plans is set out in the Department for Transport's (DfT's) Circular 02/2013, 'The Strategic Road Network and the delivery of sustainable development' and 'Planning for the future – A guide to working with Highways England on planning matters' (2015). Highways England's guidance is that the planning of growth, and its impact mitigation, should be to make the most efficient use of available capacity on the SRN in recognition that often additional physical capacity is difficult, costly and takes time to provide.
- 2.4 Although not explicitly a mechanism for unlocking and delivering Local Plan growth, the DfT's Road Investment Strategy (RIS) process allows Highways England to plan future works. RIS sets a long-term strategic vision for the network and with that it lists planned enhancement schemes, which are expected to be built and the funding available. During the preparation of each RIS, stakeholders including local authorities have opportunity to submit evidence to the DfT indicating the need for local investment in infrastructure.
- 2.5 Other funding routes are also available to support the delivery of improvements on the SRN, with recent examples including Highways England's Growth and Housing Fund and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Housing Infrastructure Fund. Many of these mechanisms for supporting the delivery of new infrastructure requires close collaboration and cooperation between multiple agencies, including local authorities and Highways England, and sometimes private developers. Smaller-scale improvements to the SRN can also be secured through planning permissions.

## 3. What the SRN comprises in and around Charnwood

- 3.1 The SRN in Charnwood comprises the M1 and A46, with the former running across the western side of the borough in a broadly north-south orientation and the latter running across the southern edge and the eastern side of the borough in a broadly south-west to north-east orientation.
- 3.2 The sections and junctions of the SRN which are located within the Charnwood administrative boundary (Figure 1) comprise the following:
  - 5.2km section of the M1 motorway in the north-west of the borough with Junction 23, broadly equidistant along this section, linking to the A512 at Shepshed;
  - 1.5km of the A46 to the south of the village of Anstey which incorporates a grade separated junction with Leicester Road/ Anstey Lane/Gynsill Lane; and
  - 17km section of the A46 between Birstall and the north-east corner of the borough near to Willoughby-on-the-Wolds, incorporating numerous at-grade and grade-separated junctions including (from south to north) the A46/A46 Loughborough Road grade-separated junction at Birstall, A46/A607 Hobby Horse at-grade roundabout west of Syston, A46/A607 grade separated interchange junction north of Syston; A46/Ratcliffe Road/Broome Lane grade separated junction; and the A46 Six Hills grade separated junction.

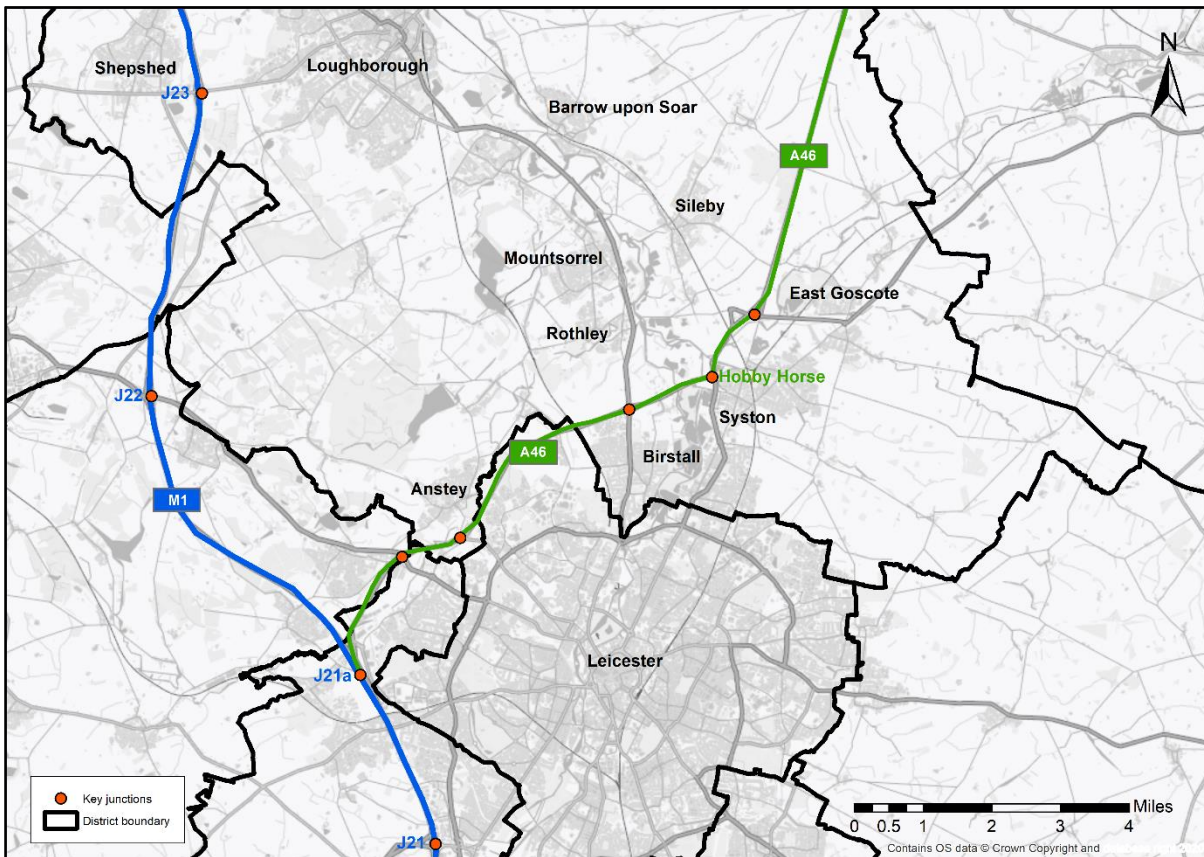


Figure 1: Charnwood Borough and the SRN

3.3 Beyond Charnwood’s border the M1 extends southwards through the neighbouring Leicestershire planning authorities of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough, Blaby District and Harborough District. The A46 and M1 join at Junction 21a with a connection into north-west Leicester via the Kirby Muxloe Interchange (although traffic from the M1 north cannot access Leicester at this location, and instead needs to exit at Junction 22 upstream and use the A50). Further south is M1 Junction 21, which is the only main access to Leicester from the M1 and also connects with the M69 which links across to the A5 and M6 corridors.

**The M1**

- 3.4 The M1 is a nationally important arterial route linking the South and North of England. To the south of Charnwood, it provides access to Leicester, Northampton, Milton Keynes, Luton, Greater London and the M25. To the north of Charnwood, the M1 provides access to Derby, Nottingham, Chesterfield, Sheffield, Barnsley, Wakefield and Leeds. The M1 route serves a number of key national and international gateways and freight terminals, including Luton Airport and East Midlands Airport.
- 3.5 The M1 corridor caters for a high proportion of long-distance commercial journeys, due to its strategic nature and the number of distribution centres along its length (London to Scotland East Route Strategy, Highways England, March 2017). There are however sections where short distance trips use sections of the SRN, which can lead to congestion. So-called ‘junction hopping’ can occur where relatively short trips take place between consecutive junctions on the SRN, particularly where there are closely-spaced junctions and where there is no viable alternative route on the LRN.
- 3.6 Within the local area, the M1 comprises three lanes and hard shoulder in either direction. A motorway service area is located between Junctions 21 and 21a at Leicester Forest East on the western edge of Leicester, outside of Charnwood. All junctions are grade-separated, with the M1 mainline carriageway running uninterrupted through the junction. Junction 23, the only junction within Charnwood, and Junction 22 located in neighbouring Hinckley and Bosworth district, consist of large, traffic signal-controlled roundabouts or gyratories.

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### ***The A46***

- 3.7 The A46 is not as nationally important as the M1 and would therefore be expected to carry a combination of shorter distance, local trips as well as longer distance, regional trips. It feeds into the M1 to the south-west of Charnwood and resumes after the M69 to the east of Coventry providing onward connections to Royal Leamington Spa, Stratford-upon-Avon and Tewkesbury. To the north-east of Charnwood, the A46 links to Newark-on-Trent, Lincoln and Grimsby.
- 3.8 Within the local area, the A46 comprises a dual carriageway, mostly two lanes in both directions although there are some sections with three lanes which incorporate an extra weaving lane between closely-spaced junctions. Most junctions are grade-separated with the A46 mainline carriageway running uninterrupted through each junction, although the notable exception is the A46-A607 Hobby Horse roundabout, which is discussed later in this note.
- 3.9 A section of the A46 between the Anstey and Birstall junctions falls within Leicester City, and the south-western section of the A46 which is outside Charnwood falls within the districts of Blaby and Hinckley and Bosworth. The section of the A46 running across the north-west/west of Leicester functions as a bypass to the city, in effect substituting inner-urban distributor routes such as the A563.
- 3.10 The A46 serves as a bypass around Leicester, linking suburbs and satellite settlements around the city including Groby (in Hinckley and Bosworth district), Glenfield (Leicester City), Anstey, Birstall, Syston and East Goscote. Several important employment and key service hubs are located close to the A46 corridor around the north/west of Leicester including Glenfield Hospital, Leicestershire County Council (County Hall), Beaumont Shopping Centre and Beaumont Leys industrial area (including Walkers Snacks factory).
- 3.11 The remainder of the network comprises the LRN which is managed by Leicestershire County Council and (within the city's boundary) Leicester City Council and local highway authorities. The LRN includes other vital A-road routes including the A6, A50, A512 and A607.<sup>2</sup>

### ***The relationship between the SRN and LRN in and around Charnwood***

- 3.12 As well as a strategic role, the SRN has an important local role to play. The key interactions between the SRN and LRN occur at several key junctions.
- The A512 runs east-west across the north of Charnwood and is the main route linking Shepshed and Loughborough to the M1 at Junction 23 as well as routing onwards towards Ashby-de-la-Zouch and the A42.
  - A section of the A50 links the M1 at Junction 22 with the A46 at Groby and facilitates not only access to Leicester City but for trips routing between the M1 north and the A46 east.
  - The A563 New Parks Way/Krefeld Way/Red Hill Way/Watermead Way runs broadly parallel across the northern and western suburbs of Leicester. Whilst the A46 formally acts as the western bypass to Leicester, the A563 provides an alternative distributor route to the A46 for local, urban trips.
  - The A607 links Grantham and Melton Mowbray to Leicester and forms a northern and western bypass to Syston. A section of the A46 needs to be used to route between both sections of the A607 around Syston. The A46-A607 Hobby Horse roundabout is a notable point on the network being the only at-grade roundabout on the A46 in Leicestershire where the A46 mainline carriageway is interrupted, i.e. traffic has to give-way to opposing traffic.
  - The A6 forms a key gateway into northern Leicester, connecting into Charnwood and interacts with the A46 at Birstall where there is a Park and Ride facility.

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<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that the Government has set out proposals for the creation of a new Major Road Network (MRN) which will form the middle tier of the country's busiest and most economically important local authority 'A' roads, sitting between the SRN and rest of the LRN. It is expected that the MRN will receive a dedicated funding stream. MRN priorities include supporting economic growth and housing delivery and complementing and supporting the existing SRN by creating a more resilient road network. In the local area, the MRN is expected to comprise the A6, A50 and A607.

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- There are several less obvious cross-borough routes which may be influenced by the SRN. These include the B591 which links Shepshed (Ingleberry Road) and the A511 near to M1 Junction 22 (Copt Oak Road) with Whitwick Road acting as a spur to the A50 east of the M1. There is also a network of cross-country routes in the west of the borough, which the B591 forms part of, bounded by the M1, A512, A6 and A46, some of which could provide a more convenient and less congested way into Leicester, and these include Charley Road, Roeclyffe Road and Snell's Nook Lane.

- 3.13 Whilst the SRN should generally facilitate quicker and uninterrupted journeys, it can be susceptible to incidents and delays. Unforeseen incidents or regular congestion and delays, especially during weekday peak periods, will compel some motorists to find alternative routes. Segregated, limited access routes such as the M1 and to some extent the A46, where junctions are spaced apart and there are fewer opportunities to make route changes to avoid congestion, motorists may feel discouraged from entering these routes especially where there is no certainty of when incidents may be cleared and delays reduced.
- 3.14 Conversely, the LRN can provide more flexibility with a greater variety of routing permutations although not all routings would be considered appropriate and desirable particularly where they may impact rural communities. Such routes, some of which may go through small settlements including Anstey, Thurmaston, Newton Linford and Cropston, are not designed to deal with high volumes of traffic.
- 3.15 In summary, there is a strong functional relationship between the SRN and LRN, and issues occurring on either network will influence the other. For this reason, it is important to understand how current and forecast issues on the SRN could affect Local Plan mitigation.

## 4. Identified problems (current and forecast)

- 4.1 The Leicestershire Pan-Regional Transport Model (PRTM) has been used to assess how the highway network will operate with and without the Local Plan growth in Charnwood in a forecast year of 2037. The PRTM incorporates all the SRN and a sizeable proportion of the LRN (excluding very minor routes for example quiet residential cul-de-sacs).
- 4.2 Analysis of model outputs has focused on volume over capacity ratios at junctions, changes in delay and changes in traffic volumes. The analysis has also sought to distinguish existing issues from those generated by planned growth.
- 4.3 Other evidence sources have been used to clarify the key issues occurring on the SRN and LRN.
- 4.4 Charnwood's Local Plan Growth is anticipated to intensify existing issues on the highway network with traffic routing decisions influenced by areas of congestion on the SRN and LRN.

### ***M1 Congestion, J20 and 21a***

- 4.5 The M1 already experiences congestion and delays which is understood to be a consequence of insufficient capacity to accommodate traffic volumes during peak periods along the mainline between junctions, and congestion at junctions which in turn causes tailbacks onto the M1 mainline carriageway.
- 4.6 The Midlands Connect A46 Corridor Study (Phase 2 Final Report, November 2020) identifies M1 Junctions 21 and 21a as significant source of delay. Junctions 21 and 21a serves both the north-south M1 and east-west A46/M69 corridors. Also, heavy reliance is placed on Junction 21 as it is the only main M1 gateway to Leicester.
- 4.7 The London to Scotland East Route Strategy (Highways England, March 2017) highlights congestion at M1 Junctions 21 and 21a, where growth is restricted, and safety is compromised which is reported to be of concern to emergency services. The M1 between junctions 21 and 21a is noted to be one of the worst on the network for journey delays and congestion at Junction 21 and on the adjoining M1 mainline creates safety problems.
- 4.8 Leicestershire County Council's Local Transport Plan 3 also cites peak congestion at Junction 21 which affects inter-urban travel and connectivity to Leicester and its southern suburbs.



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- 4.9 Congestion and delays occurring on the M1 between Junction 21 and 21a will inevitably have a knock-on impact on the A46 which feeds into the M1 south. Depending on the level of severity of M1 congestion, junctions along the A46 including the A46-A50 Brantings Roundabout could also be impacted.
- 4.10 It is also important to note that a section of the M1 between Junction 21 and 21a is a designated Air Quality Management Area.
- 4.11 Charnwood's Local Plan growth is forecast to marginally increase these existing issues which will also be impacted by background growth including that which is allocated in neighbouring Leicestershire planning authority areas including Hinckley and Bosworth, Blaby and Leicester City.
- 4.12 The increase in delay as a result of Local Plan growth in the AM Peak on the M69 approach to M1 J21 is around 60 seconds, however this is somewhat indicative of existing congestion amounting to over 6 minutes delay in the Baseline scenario (without Charnwood growth included).
- 4.13 A number of routes joining/leaving the M1 have volume/capacity (VoC) ratios greater than 100% in the Baseline scenario, and VoC on some sections of the M1 itself are as high as 85% - 90% in the Baseline.
- 4.14 The change in flow on the M1 as a result of Charnwood Local Plan growth is negligible at around 20-30 PCUs.

### ***LRN issues adjacent to the SRN***

- 4.15 The PRTM has forecast localised congestion on the A512 close to M1 Junction 23. The Local Plan modelling has incorporated the improvement works currently being as part of the M1 Junction 23 and A512 improvement scheme. The model outputs show increases in traffic on minor LRN rural routes which appear to occur as a consequence of these delays, therefore indicating that motorists may avoid using the M1 for certain journeys where the LRN could provide a viable alternative in terms of journey time.
- 4.16 One example is Charley Road which connects the A512 at Shepshed to the B591, B5330 and other minor rural routes which provide access to the M1 at Junction 22, and Leicester. This is demonstrated in the Google on-line journey planning tool plot (Figure 2) which shows an AM peak journey starting in Shepshed and ending in central Leicester, with various routing options using the LRN, SRN and a combination of both, all with similar estimated journey time ranges.

## Charnwood BC LP Mitigation: SRN Issues

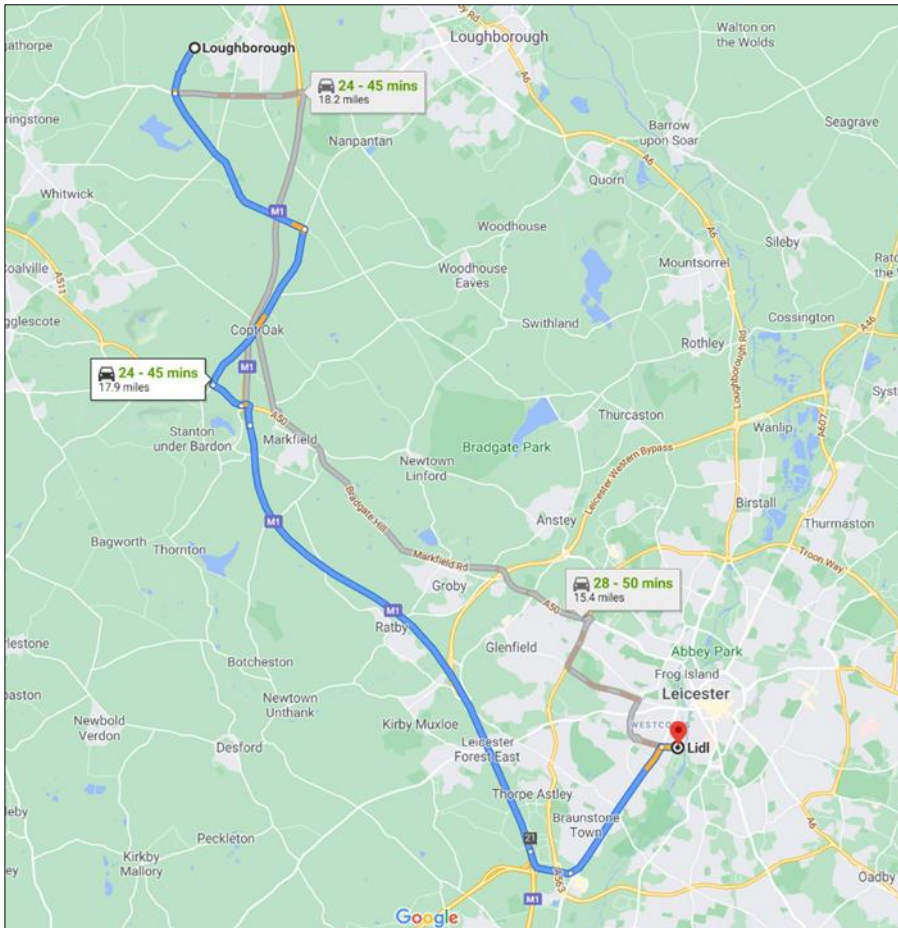


Figure 2: Google journey planner output for an AM peak trip from Shepshed to central Leicester

### ***A46 Hobby Horse roundabout***

- 4.17 The Hobby Horse roundabout is a major pressure point on the network. The Midlands Connect A46 Corridor Study Phase 2 report has identified this junction as the number one bottleneck on the entire A46 corridor with reported queues at this location lasting for 25 minutes on average.
- 4.18 Highway's England's North and East Midlands Route Strategy (March 2017) highlights that congestion at the A46 Hobby Horse roundabout may have a negative impact on the economic opportunity areas identified around Leicester. It also highlights that congestion on the A46 around Leicester has the potential to constrain economic growth in the region and further east on the A46 corridor in Lincolnshire
- 4.19 The Hobby Horse junction facilitates a mixture of local traffic entering/exiting Leicester from areas to the north, as well as longer distance traffic along the A46 and A607 (which forms a bypass around Syston). The junction has been improved in the past in response to congestion, with additional lanes and traffic signals introduced.
- 4.20 Congestion at the Hobby Horse roundabout may compel motorists to find alternative, less suitable routes, including Fosse Way and Melton Road through Syston town centre.
- 4.21 The maximum estimated increase in traffic flow occurring as a result of Charnwood Local Plan growth is around 70 PCUs (AM Peak) and 130 PCUs (PM Peak). The A46 Wanlip Road westbound onslip, to the west of the Hobby Horse roundabout, is estimated to experience an increase in flow of around 50 PCUs in AM Peak.
- 4.22 Whilst these flows are not insignificant, there is estimated to be virtually no change in delays. It is also important to highlight the magnitude of issues estimated to occur at the junction in the Baseline scenario (without Charnwood's Local Plan growth). The western arm (A46 and left turn filter from A46



## Charnwood BC LP Mitigation: SRN Issues

west to north) are estimated to experience VoC ratios of 90% - 100% in both peak periods, indicating high levels of congestion.

### ***A46-A6 junction, A46-A50 Brantings Roundabout, A46-Anstey Lane junction, A46 Kirby Muxloe Interchange – localised congestion at key junctions***

- 4.23 Highways England's North and East Midlands Route Strategy (March 2017) highlights that continued safety issues due to congestion and non-standard road layouts along the A46 could be exacerbated by future traffic growth
- 4.24 Localised congestion is evident at several junctions, including the Kirby Muxloe Interchange (adjacent to M1 Junction 21a), A46-A50 and A46-A6 junctions. Congestion at these locations is not considered to be severe and, in some cases, it may be as a knock-on effect of congestion occurring elsewhere, including on the M1 or the Hobby Horse roundabout. However, it is clear from the modelling that the A46 is forecast to be at capacity by 2037, demonstrated by there being little change in flow along this section when additional Local Plan development is introduced
- 4.25 Congestion along the A46 could lead to continuing rat-running issues through villages to the north of Leicester, and this is evident in the PRTM outputs particularly through Anstey and between Sileby and East Goscote.

## 5. Previously Identified Mitigation

### ***M1 Junctions 21-21a and Junction 21a-23***

- 5.1 The Road Investment Strategy 2 (RIS2) 2020-2025 identifies Smart Motorway schemes on the M1, identified as 'C13' M1 North Leicestershire extra capacity and 'C14' M1 Leicester Western Access and as RIS3 Pipeline schemes. This means that they are proposals which Highways England will develop during RIS period 2 so that they could enter construction in RIS period 3 (2025-2030).
- 5.2 Funding for construction of these schemes has not been committed. Acknowledgement of these vital schemes in the RIS signifies their importance to facilitating local and regional growth on a major national transport corridor.

### ***A46 Hobby Horse roundabout***

- 5.3 Highways England has undertaken a PCF Stage 0 high level assessment of options to improve the junction through grade separation. Such improvements will require significant land acquisition and will therefore be an expensive and complex scheme to deliver. It is understood that Highways England has not undertaken further investigations into possible junction improvements and therefore there is no certainty of when such a scheme could come forward. It is highly likely that substantial improvements at this junction will unlock significant growth opportunities both locally and regionally.
- 5.4 The junction improvements are not however included in RIS2 and more detailed feasibility work would be required to determine the scale and form of any improvements.

## 6. How to address problems on the SRN

- 6.1 DfT Circular 02/2013 sets out Highways England's approach to mitigating impacts from development on the SRN. A key aim is to promote sustainable transport solutions through Local Plans with development promoted at locations that are or can be made sustainable, that allow for uptake of sustainable transport modes and support wider social and health objectives, and which support existing business sectors as well as enabling new growth.

### ***Travel Plans***

- 6.2 The Circular states that capacity enhancements and infrastructure required to deliver strategic growth should be identified at the Local Plan stage, only after travel plan and demand management measures have been fully explored and applied should capacity enhancement be considered. Highways England therefore should endorse opportunities to introduce travel plan and demand management measures through the Local Plan process.

## Charnwood BC LP Mitigation: SRN Issues

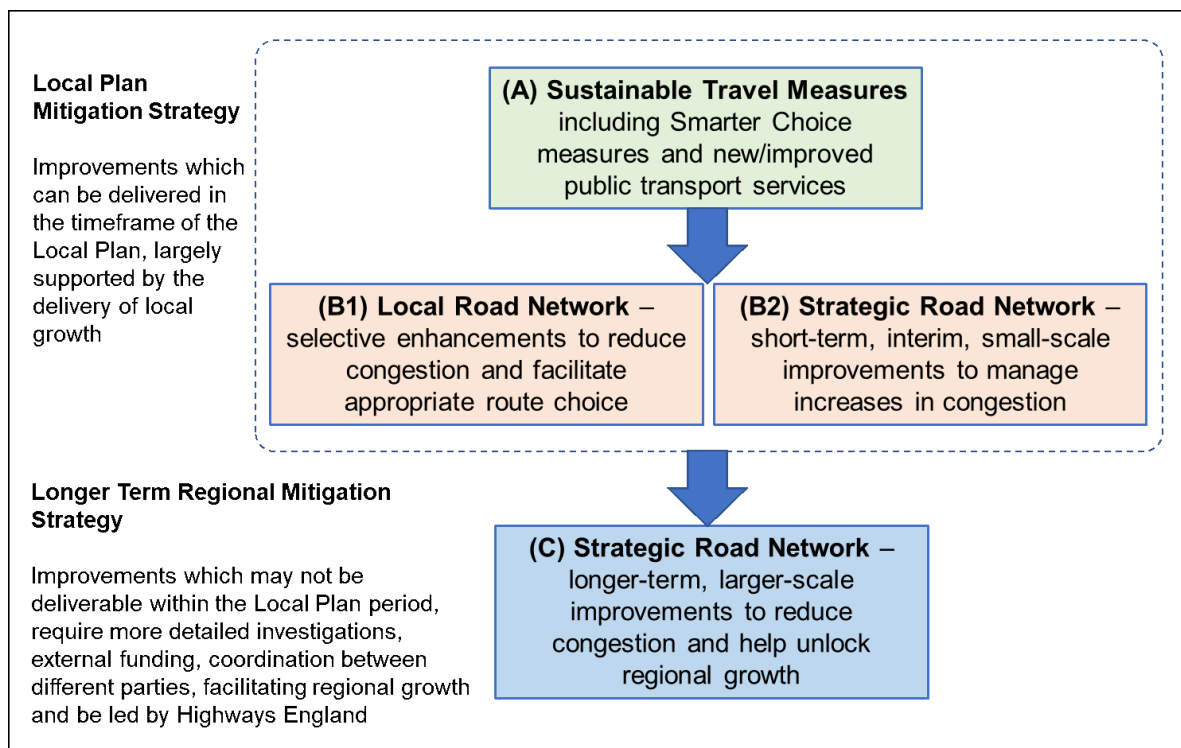
- 6.3 A sustainable travel led mitigation strategy approach is therefore required for Charnwood, but additional highway infrastructure improvements will also be needed.

### **SRN Intervention**

- 6.4 In contrast to much of the LRN, the SRN mainly comprises larger, more complex infrastructure including grade-separated junctions and segregated carriageways. There are potentially therefore fewer opportunities to deliver smaller improvements to the SRN which are proportionate to the level of impact arising from Charnwood's Local Plan growth due to the complex nature of the infrastructure without substantial works and expense.
- 6.5 As is evident on the M1 and A46 in and around Charnwood, many of the junctions have been subject to incremental improvements over the years including for example providing additional lanes on slip road approaches to roundabouts, introducing traffic signals and changing designated lane movements.
- 6.6 These incremental improvements will have enhanced capacity, increased traffic throughput and reduced delays to an extent. Whilst there may remain in some cases further opportunities for additional incremental enhancements to the SRN, in many locations these opportunities will now have been largely exhausted. Furthermore, relatively small-scale improvements can still be complex and expensive to deliver, particularly where these impact utilities or require new structures.
- 6.7 The level of severity of the key issues of many of the SRN's issues in/around Charnwood is such that larger, more complex and expensive options would most likely be the next key step to be taken in order to deliver the level of improvement needed. Improvement schemes identified on the M1 Junctions 21-21a and at the A46 Hobby Horse roundabout are larger scale and more complex to deliver. They also address local and regional growth needs, as well as tackling existing severe congestion issues

### **A Mitigation Strategy for the SRN**

- 6.8 Taking a proportionate approach in the context of local growth in Charnwood, it is proposed that a multi-faceted mitigation strategy is needed which recognises the intrinsic relationship between the SRN and LRN and the need to unlock growth in the short term whilst not placing undue reliance upon the delivery of complex infrastructure which is unlikely to come forward until the medium to long term.
- 6.9 Figure 3 describes the proposed mitigation strategy for dealing with issues on the SRN.



**Figure 3: SRN mitigation strategy**

## Charnwood BC LP Mitigation: SRN Issues

- 6.10 First and foremost, the mitigation strategy should be led by sustainable travel measures where these are deliverable and could help relieve some pressure on the LRN and SRN (item A in the Figure above). In the context of Charnwood's growth and the SRN, this approach could yield benefits along the A512 corridor between Shepshed and Loughborough via M1 Junction 23; between Loughborough and Leicester along the A6 corridor via the A46 junction at Birstall; across the north-west of Leicester on the various routes leading into the city from surrounding villages including Anstey; and in Syston.
- 6.11 Sustainable travel measures should be complemented by selective, proportionate improvements to the LRN and SRN where these could help to manage increases in delays and congestion especially in the short term, leading to more appropriate route choice (for example, reducing rat-running on minor rural routes for inter-urban journeys) thus enabling Local Plan growth to get underway (items B1 and B2 in the figure above). It will be vital however that these improvements do not undermine opportunities to deliver sustainable travel measures, extinguishing congestion and therefore making private car travel too attractive again.
- 6.12 These interim improvements would need to be deliverable and affordable in a shorter timeframe; should not inhibit opportunities for bringing forward larger, more complex improvements in the longer term; and assist in achieving a tangible improvement in the short term.
- 6.13 In locations where evidence indicates that issues on the LRN are impacting route choices including the use of minor roads in preference to the SRN, consideration should be given to introducing 'stick' measures which could make them less attractive (for example, reducing speed limits, banning turning movements) however it must be recognised that access to rural communities along these minor routes should be maintained and the rural nature may prohibit certain types of highway improvements. The junction between Charley Road and the A512 is one such example where this approach could be appropriate.
- 6.14 Items A and B1/B2 comprise the main Local Plan-led mitigation strategy. In the longer term, strategic-led improvements to the M1 and A46 will help to unlock both local and regional growth as well as tackle already severe congestion issues. Subject to further investigations led by Highways England in discussion with local and regional bodies, these larger-scale improvements could be delivered within the timescales of the Charnwood Local Plan, certainly in the latter stages.
- 6.15 Should these larger interventions come forward sooner than expected, they may supersede the need for smaller scale, interim improvements which could become abortive works.
- 6.16 Pivotal to the mitigation strategy is cooperation and collaboration between the local authorities and Highways England. This is particularly important in light of many of the SRN issues (current and future) being impacted not only by growth in Charnwood but also in neighbouring local authorities and regionally.
- 6.17 Looking ahead to a future examination in public, to provide confidence to an Inspector, the following could be undertaken:
  - Develop a Statement of Common Ground with strategic partners, especially those charged with the SRN/major road remit, i.e. other districts, Leicester County Council (LCC) and Highways England, which illustrates that there is a coordinated response to addressing the SRN.
  - Provide a clear way forward (a road map) setting out how thinking and commitments will be progressed.
  - This could point to the development of a Strategic Growth Plan, which could provide a strategic long-term vision for the SRN and LRN.