

Further Statement for the South Wiltshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy Examination

March 2010

Matter 2 - The Distribution of Development - Settlement Hierarchy

Representative Reference 2773

Statement
submitted on behalf of
The Highways Agency

1. Context

- 1.1 This statement seeks to build upon the previous representations submitted by the Highways Agency in relation to the Core Strategy and outlines the Highways Agency's concerns surrounding the likely impact of the spatial strategy on the A36 and A303.
- 1.2 The Agency has been involved in the progression of the South Wiltshire Core Strategy since 2007 and has made a series of representations to both the Issues and Options document (September 2007), Preferred Options document (March 2008) and more recently the Submission Stage document (September 2009).
- 1.3 The Agency has also given further consideration to the details of the evidence base, relating to transport and subsequent new evidence in the form of the 'Salisbury Transport Strategy: Options Assessment Report' published in January 2010.
- 1.4 The Agency needs to be satisfied that the emerging spatial strategy takes account of the impact of development on the A36 and the A303. We therefore re-emphasise our commitment to greater integration between transport and land use planning with a focus on strategically located mixed use developments designed to facilitate self containment of communities and consequently trip internalisation, in addition to the prioritisation of investment in sustainable transport options.
- 1.5 This statement should be considered as evidence at the sessions relating to Matter 2 focusing on the distribution of development.

2. Performance and Issues facing the A303/A36

- 2.1 As outlined at the beginning of this statement the Agency is responsible for maintaining and managing the Strategic Road Network (SRN), which in this instance relates to the A36 and A303. The A303 runs across the breadth of South Wiltshire providing a link to the South West and London. The A36 links South Wiltshire to Southampton and the West of England.

- 2.2 Current traffic volumes on the A36 average per day at approximately 16,500 vehicles two way, with flow variations of between 10,000 and 34,000 at various locations along the route. The route is mainly comprised of single two-way carriageway, although there are a number of dual sections situated in areas of particularly heavy flow. Typically these are close to the intersections with other major routes, for instance the A361 and the A303.
- 2.3 Sections along the A36 experience high levels of congestion in the morning and evening peak hours as well as during the weekend peak periods. This congestion results in significant queuing and delays for vehicles using this route.
- 2.4 The A303 is a mixture of single and dual carriageway road which runs through South Wiltshire. It is subject to peak hour congestion at various points during the weekday peak periods in addition to some limited weekend congestion. This results in queuing and delays at some points, particularly at junctions along the route.

3. Transport Strategy & Sustainable Transport

- 3.1 The Agency has been working closely with Wiltshire Council in compiling the evidence base and modelling evidence required as part of the EiP and welcomes the publication of the Salisbury Transport Study which was published in December 2009. The Agency will provide further commentary on the findings of the study within our statement relating to Matter 5 relating to transport and participation at the EiP.
- 3.2 With regards to sustainable transport specifically, the Agency previously expressed our support for the inclusion of Strategic Objective 8 within the Core Strategy which sought to provide a range of transport choices. However, the Agency would wish to see a more succinct wording for this objective which clearly sets out the desired outcomes and how these will be met.

4. Matter Specific Comments

4.1 The Agency has no further comments to add to the submissions made to date in relation to:

Question 2.1: Why a six tier settlement hierarchy?

Question 2.2: The choice of settlements.

Question 2.3: Why choose this distribution strategy?

Question 2.5: Removal of housing policy boundaries.

4.2 The Agency would like to make the following matter specific comments:

Question 2.4: Proposed Levels of Growth in Settlements

4.3 The Agency, in its previous comments to the Issues and Options and Preferred Options stages expressed the view that a large proportion of the development in South Wiltshire should take place in Salisbury or around its settlement boundary in order to complement its existing services and facilities. The Agency also identified that previously developed and centrally located sites should come forward prior to more peripheral locations.

4.4 However, in reviewing the evidence base provided to date, the Agency is concerned that evidence has not been presented that demonstrates the Policy requirements of Circular 02/2007 have been met, specifically that the cumulative impact of the strategic sites on the SRN at key points (A36 – Salisbury, A303 – Amesbury) can be appropriately mitigated in order to ensure the continued safe and efficient operation of the SRN. Therefore the Agency does not have the level of information necessary to provide final comments on the proposed distribution of development.

4.5 The evidence presented in the Options Assessment Report for the Salisbury Transport Strategy demonstrates that travel by all motorised modes in and around Salisbury can be expected to grow by approximately 20% by 2026 (paragraph 7.1). The results also identified that certain junctions would

experience at least a doubling of total delay (including A36 junctions), though delay per vehicle is not reported.

- 4.6 Wiltshire Council provided the following table of information (2nd Feb 2010, by email, Martin Aldam to Jacqui Ashman) demonstrating that journey times on the SRN for the three future year scenarios reported show increases in journey time between 20% and 37% in the AM peak hour and between 7% and 78% in the PM peak hour compared to present conditions.

Time Period & Direction	Time (s) from Petersfinger to The Kingsway via A36				Change from Base Year		
	Base	Do Nothing	Established	Radical	Do Nothing	Established	Radical
AM westbound	791	1006	991	950	27%	25%	20%
AM eastbound	840	1145	1149	1068	36%	37%	27%
IP westbound	764	886	856	823	16%	12%	8%
IP eastbound	772	867	861	819	12%	12%	6%
WB westbound	767	1362	1373	1343	78%	79%	75%
WB eastbound	796	975	951	851	22%	19%	7%

- 4.7 The Agency in its submission to the Regional Spatial Strategy EiP supports the balanced growth proposed for Salisbury as outlined within Policy SR30. However, the Agency remains concerned that evidence within the Core Strategy, as currently being considered, fails to provide sufficient comfort that the levels of growth identified in South Wiltshire can be adequately accommodated without a detrimental impact on the SRN and physical mitigation measures in place.
- 4.8 These mitigation measures are not identified in the 'Salisbury Transport Strategy: Options Assessment Report' and therefore the Agency in the absence of the information required to assess the individual impacts of each allocation on the SRN (which will form the basis of the Site Allocation document), will need to reserve its position and may need to make further submissions at the Site Allocation stage.

5. Monitoring and Implementing

- 5.1 The Agency would stress that the major development proposals outlined in the Core Strategy Submission Document will all need to be subject to a full Transport Assessment produced in accordance with Circular 02/2007 '*Planning and the Strategic Road Network*' and the DfT '*Guidance on Transport Assessment*' or relevant future policy that is adopted during the plan period. The assessment should also include a detailed Travel Plan (in line with current DfT Good Practice Guidelines: *Delivering Travel Plans through the Planning Process*, April 2009) which assesses the potential impact on the SRN and outlines a package of mitigation measures, to minimise these impacts. The Agency reserves the opportunity to comment on more detailed locations and site specific proposals when they come forward for determination and are accompanied by the appropriate supporting information.