

## **Hertfordshire County Council Highway Authority response to East Herts District Plan Matters and Issues part 1 questions**

### ***Matter 2 Q 14. What is the risk of associated infrastructure not coming forward in time? What action is the Council proposing in the event of delay?***

The key transport infrastructure required to support the Plan are identified in IDM/001 and in the County Council's response to Matter 4 Q2. These are:

M11 Junction 7, 7a and 8, Stort Crossings, Hertford Bypass, Rush Green Roundabout, North and East of Ware Internal Spine Road, Little Hadham Bypass, Buntingford A10/London Road Roundabout, Dualling of A10 south of Buntingford, widening of the existing Stort crossing from the Eastwick roundabout to the Burnt Mill roundabout, provision of a second Stort crossing Harlow North Bypass.

The County Council is of the view that the key risks of transport infrastructure not coming forward are probably most in relation to the M11 junctions, a Hertford Bypass, and a Harlow Bypass, due to the uncertainty around funding. Additionally, the delivery of the Stort Crossings Package is also considered to be a risk as the aspiration is for this to be delivered earlier than is identified in IDM/001. Apart from dualling of the A10 all the others are directly associated with developments and substantive developer contributions, (supplemented as necessary from other sources).

### ***M11 Junctions***

The situation with regard to M11 junctions 7, 7a, and 8 are set out in IDM/001. At present the only approved and funded scheme relates to J7a with the majority of funding identified for the interim solution for Junction 8. Improvements to Junction 7 are in the process of being developed by Essex County Council. However, there is still some uncertainty in relation to the long term improvements required for Junction 8, although options are currently being explored.

### ***Hertford Bypass & Sustainable Travel Town***

The County Council's advice to EHDC was that there was considered to be approximately seven years capacity remaining, meaning by 2024 a solution for Hertford would need to be in place. The actual point at which the remaining capacity on the network is used up is dependent on a number of factors, including the speed at which housing comes forward and the level of background traffic growth in the area. There will need to be annual review of the trigger point analysis to maintain an up-to-date position on the remaining capacity and when that is likely to be used up – i.e., whether 2024 continues to represent a realistic tipping point. It should be noted that this annual review may not necessarily result in a negative impact on the 2024 timeline as, based on past predicted growth not occurring at the rate previously expected, this could potentially also serve to extend the period.

It is clear from previous studies looking at ‘online’ mitigation options for the A414 through Hertford that whilst improvements can in theory be made to isolated junctions this is achieved at the detriment of adjacent junctions. Effective ‘online’ solutions do not exist (see TRA/008 and TRA009), which is why the bypass option is being progressed by the Local Transport Plan 4 process - a Hertford Bypass and Sustainable Travel Town being identified as one of the Major Schemes being considered [‘Transport Vision’ consultation (TRA/003)].

Confirmation of the inclusion of the Hertford Bypass and Sustainable Town Major Project within the approved Local Transport Plan 4 would be expected to be reached by summer 2018, so the ‘delivery clock’ would start from around that time. A typical programme to progress such a scheme through the County Council’s standard “Project Gateway” process of feasibility, preferred option development, design (including statutory processes), and procurement, would be as follows:

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Indicative time to complete</b>
2	Identification of preferred solution through option testing	12-18 months
3	Development of full Business case to support funding bids and securing approvals to pursue statutory processes (CPO, SRO )	18-24 months
4	Design development, securing statutory approvals (incl. PI processes)	24-30 months
5	Post PI design development, contract drafting and procurement	12-18months
6	Delivery – construction	30-42 months
Total		96-132 months (8 -11 years)

For schemes the size and nature of a Hertford Bypass this timetable should be viewed as an optimistic one. However, it is worth noting that, in the case of Hertford, we are in effect already in stage 2 and are presently conducting option testing under the umbrella of Transport Vision / LTP4 and A414 Strategy work.

There is currently no funding source identified for a Hertford Bypass. Should it progress to major scheme status, stages 2 and 3 would be progressed from 2018 with a view to preparing bids for funding, though clearly there would be significant preparatory discussions with all relevant parties throughout those stages. Given the scale of the scheme the funding source will almost certainly be Government and the funding programmes likely to be pursued include those identified in IDM/001 but similarly might also include others that are emerging with increased regularity like Housing Infrastructure Fund, for which the County Council is intending to submit an Expression of Interest in respect of the wider A414 corridor highlighting work which is currently underway to develop a strategy for prioritise investment along the whole corridor.

In accordance with the above indicative timeframe, a fundamental indication of whether funding for a scheme would be likely to be forthcoming would be end of

stage 3 (within 2.5-3.5 years from 2018). At that point there should be greater clarity on whether it would be realistic to anticipate a Hertford Bypass being in place by 2026-2029.

### **Stort Crossings and Sustainable Transport Corridor**

The East Herts IDP seeks to set out the transport infrastructure items that, on the basis of current intelligence, are related directly to or are associated with the Gilston proposal.

The schemes include widening of the existing Stort crossing from the Eastwick roundabout to the Burnt Mill roundabout, provision of a second Stort crossing, and upgrade works to Junctions 7 and 8 of the M11. Works on specific junctions in Harlow itself have also been identified as being necessary.

However, the transport infrastructure identified in the MoU and East Herts IDP are based on the Development Strategy in the Draft District Plan, which equates to 3050 homes in the Plan period.

Notwithstanding the Development Strategy it is the clear intention of the Plan that 10,000 homes are to be brought forward at Gilston, during the life of this Plan and beyond. However, what is currently lacking is the evidence of what additional transport infrastructure is required to support a development of this scale.

The presumption is that Gilston will be an exemplar of sustainability seeking to realise ambitious mode share targets. It will achieve this by promoting walking, cycling and public transport as the key modes for both short and longer journeys, especially for commuter (employment) related trips. Both in terms of physical measures and targeted and ongoing investment 'smarter choices' programmes. To achieve these aspirations non-car mode choice needs to be enshrined at the design stage through appropriate provision of transport infrastructure both at a site level but also to the wider sub-region.

Whilst there is a level of understanding around the level of infrastructure that is required to facilitate the growth proposed in the current East Herts District Plan there is an acceptance that to achieve the level of modal split being targeted this infrastructure may need to be enhanced further and the trigger point for its delivery brought forward.

On this basis we consider that early delivery of the Stort crossings package, including the provision of a second crossing to the east of the existing Eastwick crossing, widening of Fifth Avenue between the Eastwick Road and Edinburgh Way junctions is imperative.

Delivering the Eastern and Central crossing improvements as a single package offers the opportunity to deliver improved walking and cycling infrastructure, alongside the provision of a second crossing and thereby providing the opportunity to further develop the concept of a North-South sustainable corridor into Harlow. The additional lane on Fifth Avenue would be a dedicated sustainable link, possibly a bus lane.

## ***Harlow North Bypass***

Work continues to establish the potential requirement for, and timing of, a Harlow North Bypass, however this remains unresolved. IDM/001, based on available modelling, indicates that a scheme may not be required in capacity terms until beyond the 2033 Plan period when the Gilston development reaches 3,050 homes.

However, early indications from the emerging evidence supporting the need for a Northern Bypass are that it could lead to significant re-routing of traffic in the area, and further refining work will be required. There is, therefore, a clear need for its potential inclusion to be considered as part of a wider strategic package of measures. Notwithstanding the above, there is a possibility that the scheme will be identified as being required within the Plan period to 2033.

In any case whilst an evidence led decision is yet to be reached regarding the need for a Harlow Northern Bypass, in order to take a sensible approach to safeguarding we would suggest that the current working assumption should be that Harlow Northern Bypass will be required at some point in the future. It is therefore important that any potential bypass is considered as part of the design for Gilston. This position will enable safeguarding of the route in planning terms and also ensure that houses are remote enough from what in the future may form part of a wider strategic road network

Accordingly some uncertainty remains in relation to the need for and timing of a Harlow North bypass, the risks at this stage are not considered to be significant. This will, however, need to be reviewed over time.

### ***Matter 4 Q1. Would the distribution of development in the Plan have proper regard to the quality and capacity of the road network, the quality and capacity of public transport and wider aims to promote sustainable development?***

The approach to distribution and location of development in the Plan has been focused along major transport routes/corridors and at main settlements where opportunities for modal shift are maximised.

The East Herts District Plan Topic Paper on Transport (TPA/006) accurately summarises the various steps taken throughout the development of the District Plan to address the impact of growth on the transport network. As you can see from this document there was ongoing and sustained dialogue around what mitigation was required, in particular for Hertford, which ultimately influenced the final development strategy in the District Plan Pre-Submission Version.

Since the publication of the Pre-Submission District Plan further high level strategic modelling work has been undertaken as set out in TRA/001 and TRA/002. This work

has identified a number of key locations which have, in turn, all been identified in the IDP for resolution.

The work completed to date is considered appropriate in the context of the District Plan to provide confidence at this stage that suitable mitigation exists at a strategic level. However, it is acknowledged the mitigation options will need to be developed further as and when the plan moves into a delivery stage. At that time consideration will need to be given to ensuring the mitigations are aligned with a wider transport strategy, which should focus on maximising modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport.

***Matter 4 Q2. What are the principal transport improvements and projects that are required for the implementation of the Plan?***

The principal transport improvements and projects required to implement the Plan and issues relating to their delivery are set out in IDM/001. The most significant of these are:

M11 Junction 7, 7a and 8; Stort Crossings; Hertford Bypass; Rush Green Roundabout; North and East of Ware Link Road (referred to as Spine Road in IDP); Little Hadham Bypass; Buntingford A10/London Road Roundabout; Dualling of A10 south Buntingford; widening of the existing Stort crossing from the Eastwick roundabout to the Burnt Mill roundabout and, provision of a second Stort crossing Harlow North Bypass. The County Council's view on risks associated with these are set out in response to Matter 2 Q14.