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Havant Borough Local Plan Examination Statement

Matter 6: Mainland Transport Assessment



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This statement has been produced as part of the examination of the Havant Borough Local Plan. It answers the Inspectors' questions relating to matter 2.

Any queries about the report should be sent to the programme officer:

Address: Ms Charlotte Glancy
Banks Solutions
80 Lavinia Way
East Preston
West Sussex
BN16 1DD

Email bankssolutions@gmail.com

Telephone 01903 776601

Website: <https://www.havant.gov.uk/local-plan-examination>

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Mainland Transport Assessment

6.1 Is the methodology and its modelling assumptions used for the assessment robust?

1. Yes. The Mainland Transport Assessment (TA) (EB05) utilises the well established strategic Sub-Regional Transport Model for South Hampshire. The model is a multi-modal transport model and is compliant with Department for Transport Web Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG). Further background to this model is found in chapter 2 of the TA (Mainland) SRTM Modelling Report, which forms part of the submitted TA (EB05).
2. That same report also sets out the land use modelling assumptions used in the TA (chapter 3). These reflect the Local Plan assumptions at the time of the production of the TA. While it is acknowledged that there have been a number of changes to the plan since that time, the Council is content that at a strategic level the assumptions made, and therefore the findings, remain robust.
3. It should also be noted that the TA considers a worst case scenario of modelling unconstrained traffic growth. In reality, and in particular when other demand measures are added, it is considered that some of this demand will not materialise (see 1.2.5 and 1.2.6 of EB05).
4. Hampshire County Council (HCC) as the Local Highway Authority, through the Statement of Common Ground (SCG10), also confirm that:
 - The methodology and process for undertaking the transport assessments is sound and has been agreed by the Highway Authority.
 - The use of the Sub Regional Transport Model for assessing the cumulative impact of local plan development and the methodology used is appropriate and sufficient and agreed by HCC.
 - The criteria for assessing the significant and severe impacts of local plan development on highway junctions are set up and approved by HCC and used in other local plan Transport Assessments across Hampshire.
 - The criteria for assessing the junctions in the Mainland Transport Assessment were agreed by HCC.
5. West Sussex County Council, raised a number of queries about the TA in 2019, but subsequently confirmed in their 2020 response (R297 20C01) that they are satisfied with the methodology in the strategic transport work following the receipt of further information from Systra (the model developer).

6.2 The Council has acknowledged (Ref: CD08) in response to our initial questions that the increase in employment floorspace allocation has not been considered in the assessment. Therefore, is it possible to conclude that there would be no severe impacts on the surrounding highway network?

6. Yes. The Council remains confident that the Mainland TA remains a robust strategic assessment of the highways impacts that might be expected from the Local Plan and background growth by the end of the plan period.
7. The Council considers that it would have been disproportionate, and would have delayed the plan unacceptably, to update the TA as a result of changes made during its evolution. Making such an update would not have produced a more robust evidence base.
8. Considering some of the individual changes made to the plan over the period of its drafting serves to illustrate why this is the case. Most notable perhaps, are the allocations for KP6 Langstone Technology Park and for C12 Former BAE Systems Park, where allocation figures have varied between no identified quantum of employment floorspace to 29,820sqm and 12,575sqm respectively, over 42,000 sqm in total. This is because of changes to the site promoters' plans at these sites, which the Council has aimed to reflect at the stages of plan preparation. The floorspace figures attached to these sites serve to demonstrate that revised plans at just one or two sites can serve to quite significantly reduce or increase the floorspace figure that should be assumed in assessments such as the TA. The overall strategy towards employment development has stayed broadly the same throughout the plan's development and is reflected in the Mainland TA and its model runs.
9. It should also be noted that the Council has indicated in other areas of the evidence base that its target employment floorspace (149,940 sqm; 113,770 sqm of which is specifically identified through allocations) is higher than the level identified through the key piece of evidence: the PUSH Spatial Position Statement (Table E1, p.38 of EB40). This is in order to provide choice and availability of employment sites to allow nimble adaptation to changing circumstances (see p.7-8 Duty to Cooperate Statement CD26).
10. While the Council acknowledges that the figures included in the TA for employment floorspace may be less than the employment floorspace put forward in the submission plan, the TA does demonstrate that 188,000 sqm (rounded) of commercial floorspace, including 94,500 sqm (rounded) of office, industrial and warehouse floorspace can be accommodated on the network, once mitigations measures are included. Overall, the Council considers that the figures in the TA remain robust at the strategic level against the employment floorspace planned for through the Local Plan. The TA forms a suitable and proportionate basis on which to conclude that there would be no severe impacts on the surrounding highway network.

6.3 Will the Plan avoid severe impacts on the strategic road network, particularly (but not limited to) the Teardrop and A3(M) junction?

11. Yes. The TA (EB05) finds that the quantum and distribution of development proposed in the draft Local Plan is capable of mitigation at the strategic level, and that the plan is therefore sound from a transport perspective (para 8.1.24, EB05).
12. In terms of the merge from the teardrop junction to the A3(M) (junction ID 3), the TA highlights the junction, together with two others, as experiencing a 'knock-on' severe effect as a result of mitigation proposed elsewhere (paras 6.2.11 and 8.1.15 EB05). The TA explains that this is a function of the model being based on unconstrained demand. This effect causes junctions where additional capacity is introduced as a result of mitigation elsewhere to become more attractive. Therefore, the severe impact is not attributed to development in the Local Plan and mitigation is therefore not included in the TA mitigation package. However, the TA does go on to suggest measures that could be considered at these junctions in the future if found to be necessary once other measures have been implemented (paras 6.2.12-13 and 8.1.15-16 EB05).

6.4 Were there sufficient discussions with neighbouring authorities during the preparation of the assessment and does the assessment sufficiently take into account their development aspirations?

13. Yes. The SRTM used for the TA (EB05) is a well-established sub-regional tool, which is used for the transport assessments of Local Plans in the Solent Sub-region. Model developers Systra are therefore well versed in development assumptions in neighbouring districts.
14. The SRTM model area is shown in figure 2-2 on p.10 of the TA (Mainland) Model Development Report (part of the Mainland TA EB05) and can be seen to extend well beyond the boundaries of Havant Borough.
15. Hampshire County Council as the Local Highway Authority naturally have an overview of development aspirations and transport needs of other districts in the County, and confirm through the Statement of Common Ground with the Council (SCG10) that there was sufficient engagement and consultation with HCC throughout the preparation of the Mainland Transport Assessment.
16. West Sussex County Council confirmed in their response R297 20C01 that they consider that the forecast changes in flows on the modelled highway network in West Sussex, together with the transport mitigation strategy in Havant, are not likely to result in a severe residual impact as defined in national policy. Chichester District Council, the only district to raise concerns about transport matters specifically at earlier stages, also confirm there is unlikely to be a severe residual impact in the Statement of Common Ground with the Council (SCG13).

6.5 Is sufficient regard had to sustainable modes of transport and the contribution this might have in meeting climate change objectives?

17. Yes, the Council considers that it has had sufficient regard to sustainable modes of transport and their contribution towards climate change objectives. Whilst the Mainland Transport Assessment (EB05) has not fully explored the impact of sustainable modes of transport on overall demand, this has resulted in an assessment of the impact on highways which is realistic. It therefore does not rely on assumptions about unproven changes in transport behaviour and choices, or funding for proposals which is uncommitted. However, this does not mean that sustainable modes will not be prioritised as proposals for development come forward.
18. The Mainland TA (EB05) makes it clear that (at the time of preparing the report) there were no public transport schemes committed within the Local Plan plan period and therefore no changes to the Public Transport sub-model and modal choice demand matrix have been included in Transport Assessment (para 8.1.4). The Council is preparing the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) (with Hampshire County Council and Sustrans), but this was not available at the time the transport modelling was being undertaken.
19. The Mainland TA concludes, 'Whilst the mitigation detailed in this TA has been shown to satisfactorily accommodate the additional travel demand from the Local Plan allocation, there may be additional opportunities for reducing the impact of the Local Plan across the road network within the Borough' (para 8.1.21). The TA then specifically references: South East Hampshire Rapid Transit, the Propensity to Cycle Tool (used in the production of LCWIPs) and Smarter Choices to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips.
20. The conclusions of the TA make it clear that, the overall Local Plan development, if accompanied by the potential mitigation measures modelled, can be accommodated on the network without causing severe traffic impacts within the Borough.' It goes on to state, 'However, it is not designed to test or propose specific detailed mitigation to deal with the effects of individual development sites' (para 8.1.5). It is expected that the local transport impacts of the Local Plan allocation sites will still have to be addressed in site specific Transport Assessments that will be required to accompany planning application and include mitigation to enhance infrastructure and enable sustainable transport modes.
21. Policy IN2 criterion b. requires the improvement of the network of infrastructure which encourages sustainable, low carbon transport modes, with a particular emphasis on healthy non-motorised modes and public transport. Policy E2 encourages the enhancement of existing, and facilitation of new, opportunities for active travel (cycling and walking). Policy KP5 (Southleigh) criterion a.vi. requires that development, 'Is designed to make walking, cycling and public transport the most attractive forms of local transport, so that residents have convenient and sustainable access to jobs, education and services.'. Criteria b.vi & vii. require provision for additional bus routes and safe cycling and walking routes. The other key projects and site allocations include requirements for site specific sustainable transport infrastructure and the submission of a Travel Plan to accompany a planning application, where appropriate.

22. Since the Transport Assessment was prepared, the Government has awarded the Portsmouth City region some £56 million from the Transforming Cities Fund to improve connectivity and increase productivity through better walking cycling and public transport links, including the next phase the South East Hampshire Rapid Transit proposals. This includes investment in bus-based rapid transit routes from Waterlooville to Portsmouth and Havant to Portsmouth.
23. The Statement of Common Ground with Hampshire County Council (SCG10) recognises that there are other solutions for mitigating the transport impacts from Local Plan development. These mitigation solutions are more closely aligned with the emerging policy agenda from central Government on decarbonising transport and HCC on the reduction of carbon emissions from transport. There will be a focus on sustainable transport as planning applications come forward on specific schemes. The Statement of Common Ground with Highways England (SCG16) also acknowledges the need for the Council, Highways England, HCC, and developers to work together to manage down demand before strategic highways solutions focussed on motor vehicles are progressed.

