1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This Briefing Note has been prepared by DHA on behalf of Tandridge District Council (TDC) to update elected Members and other stakeholders on progress to date with the M25 Junction 6 feasibility study, which is being progressed in support of the new Local Plan.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 TDC intends to submit its draft Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate by 24th January 2019. The Local Plan outlines TDC’s development vision for the district to 2033. It proposes to direct growth to urban and semi-rural settlements and to deliver a garden community at South Godstone comprising approximately 4,000 dwellings.

1.2.2 Based on discussions to date between TDC and Highways England (HE), it is understood that M25 Junction 6 will be operating at capacity by 2020 in the absence of any Local Plan development. A scheme of mitigation is therefore required to accommodate the level of development proposed by the Plan.

1.2.3 DHA was appointed by TDC in September 2018 to identify appropriate mitigation options, which will be subject to highway capacity assessment, outline design and cost-benefit analysis. Consideration will also be given to potential phasing and funding options. A preferred option will then be agreed by TDC, Surrey County Council (SCC) and HE early in 2019 prior to the Local Plan Examination.

1.3 Progress to Date

1.3.1 Baseline traffic surveys of the junction were undertaken in October 2018 during school term time to capture its existing peak operation and to inform the capacity assessment of its current and potential future layouts.

1.3.2 A full topographical survey of the junction and its approaches has also been commissioned, on which the design options will be based. The necessary consents for the survey methodology and accompanying traffic management measures have been granted by HE and the survey will be undertaken during December.

1.3.3 HE has recently undertaken a review of the traffic signal timings at the junction to improve their efficiency. The results of this exercise will be fed into the study.
1.3.4 A Project Board comprising representatives of TDC, SCC, HE and DHA has met on a regular basis to discuss, agree and refine the study methodology and programme. Key discussion points to date have included the model scenarios to be tested, ensuring that the site allocations in the new Local Plan – including the garden community at South Godstone – are accurately accounted for, so that full mitigation is achieved.

1.4 Emerging Options

1.4.1 Observations of the existing operation of the junction during the AM and PM peak periods have been undertaken to identify the principal causes of congestion and delay at these times. These observations, together with a review of the principal engineering, environmental and land constraints, have informed a high-level optioneering exercise.

1.4.2 It has been noted that the main traffic demand during peak periods is on the A22 approaches and the M25 anti-clockwise on-slip. Traffic requiring the M25 anti-clockwise regularly obstructs traffic from flowing freely to the A22 northbound.

1.4.3 Additional capacity can be created by widening the roundabout gyratory and providing an additional lane for traffic seeking to access the M25 anti-clockwise. To fully realise this additional capacity, the M25 anti-clockwise on-slip would needed to be widened to provide two lanes. This layout would be similar to the current arrangement on the M25 clockwise on-slip.

1.4.4 Additionally, HE colleagues engaged in the aforementioned traffic signal timing review have recommended that consideration be given to the provision of free-flow left-turn filter lanes from the A22 southbound approach to the M25 anti-clockwise on-slip and from the M25 clockwise off-slip to the A22 southbound exit. This would further increase capacity on the roundabout gyratory.

1.4.5 A full increase to the capacity of the gyratory is restricted by the width of the M25 overbridges. Although one of the footways adjacent to the carriageway could be removed, there is nevertheless insufficient width to create an additional traffic lane whilst also maintaining a safe clearance and protection to the bridge structure.

1.5 Forward Programme

1.5.1 The existing and proposed junction layouts will be subject to outline design and highway capacity assessment using industry-standard LinSig software, to determine the extent to which they would mitigate the traffic growth arising from the Local Plan.

1.5.2 Following receipt of the topographical survey in January 2019, the engineering feasibility of each option will be determined on a more accurate basis and the outline designs will be issued for costing and subsequently economic appraisal, in order that a preferred option may be selected.

1.5.3 At this early stage, and without the benefit of the topographical survey, utilities plans etc. it is not possible to provide a firm indication of the likely capital cost of the final scheme. However, based on the emerging options considered and DHA’s
professional experience, it is anticipated that it may be in the range of £5-£10 million.

1.5.4 Subject to the extent of work required, including the potential diversion of utilities infrastructure, as well as the need for the relevant consents from SCC and HE and the necessary forward-funding, it is anticipated that the preferred mitigation scheme could be delivered within a period of 3-4 years.

1.6 Summary and Conclusion

1.6.1 This Briefing Note has been prepared on behalf of Tandridge District Council (TDC) to update elected Members and other stakeholders on progress to date with the M25 Junction 6 feasibility study, which is being progressed by DHA in support of the new Local Plan.

1.6.2 The study is being overseen by a Project Board comprising TDC, Surrey County Council, Highways England and DHA. Initial third party data and information collection has been completed and on-site observations have been undertaken which have informed the emerging mitigation options, which will shortly be subject to outline design and highway capacity assessment.

1.6.3 Following the receipt of a full topographical survey of the junction in January 2019, it will be possible to identify and agree a shortlist of options, which will be subject to costing and economic appraisal in order that a preferred option may be selected. This will form a key component of the enabling infrastructure package for the Local Plan.