Tandridge District Council Local Plan

Response by West Sussex County Council to Inspector’s Matters Issues and Questions;

Reference, Matter 6 South Godstone Garden Community and housing allocations

1.1 This Hearing Statement related to the Inspectors Question "Is there sufficient evidence in regard to possible infrastructure requirements to suggest that there is a reasonable prospect that homes could be built at the proposed Garden Community in the Plan period as set out in the Plan’s trajectory?"

1.2 Following Submitted representations to the Regulation 19 representation stage, further transport work has been undertaken. As a result of the work undertaken on the A264/A2220 Copthorne Roundabout and A22/A264 Felbridge Traffic Signals Junction junctions to date, West Sussex County Council considers that an amendment should be made to the text of Policy SGC01: South Godstone Garden Community.

A264/A2220 Copthorne Roundabout

2.1 West Sussex County Council has worked together with Tandridge District Council and Mid Sussex District Council to develop an acceptable and deliverable mitigation solution to the severe transport impact to the A264/A2220 Copthorne Hotel roundabout in Mid Sussex identified through the strategic transport assessment for the draft local plan including supplementary strategic transport modelling outputs provided by Surrey County Council. Traffic generated by the South Godstone Garden Community is forecast to pass through this junction en-route to and from Crawley, Gatwick Airport the M23/A23 corridor towards Brighton and Hove and further destinations across West Sussex.

2.2 Tandridge District Council appointed Systra consultants to undertake this work, which has included the publication of two linked technical reports, ‘Copthorne Roundabout Local Model Validation Report’, referenced below as “Copthorne LMVR” and ‘Copthorne Hotel Junction, Mid Sussex Feasibility Engineering Design Report’, referenced below as “Copthorne Design Report”. Systra have developed, tested for capacity and delay and estimated the cost of two principal design options for the junction.

- Option 1 is a multi-junction including a signalised cross-roads on the A264 with restricted turning movements, plus a signalised T junction on the A264 (all movements) with two priority T junctions and a short road link to connect together and to maintain the access to the adjacent hotel. This option would limit access inbound to Copthorne Village at Brookfield Road to buses only from the A2220. Brookfield Road would continue to provide egress from Copthorne for all vehicle types.
• Option 2 is a signalised T junction with arms for the A264 and A2220 only, plus a priority T junction on the A2220 to maintain access to the hotel. In this option Brookhill Road would be closed to traffic, including for buses, meaning that Copthorne Village would lose this access, meaning that Borers Arms Road would become the principal southern access to/from the village.

• Systra also undertook a sensitivity test of Option 1 which would permit the left turn from A264 eastbound into Brookhill Road to access Copthorne Village. The A2220 approach to the signalised crossroads remains as bus-only in this test. Other traffic towards Brookhill Road from A264 westbound, A2220 and the Hotel would be able to turn at the new Heathy Farm roundabout on the A264 to the west of Copthorne, to approach the junction with Brookhill Road on A264 eastbound. This junction capacity sensitivity test is reported in the Copthorne LMVR, although there is not a corresponding amended design plan in the Copthorne Design Report.

2.3 The reporting process concluded that Option 2 would not be acceptable due to the extent of traffic diversion which would be required for most Copthorne Village traffic to use Borers Arms Road, disruption to through bus services - which could be displaced further from homes or with longer journey times – excessive queues and delays for traffic exiting Copthorne Village and safety concerns over intensification of the right turn movement from Borers Arms Road onto the A264, along with the likely necessity to close Newtown at or near the A264 to prevent this residential street being used by shortcutting traffic.

2.4 West Sussex County Council agrees that the Option 2 junction design should not be developed or considered further to mitigate the impacts of the Tandridge Local Plan as the impacts listed in paragraph 2.3 are unlikely to be overcome.

2.5 Option 1, as designed and forecasted is expected to resolve the identified capacity issues at the junction, but still presents some barriers to acceptability and deliverability, although West Sussex County Council considers these possible to resolve with continued development and modification to the design. The issues raised are:

• Diversion of traffic towards Copthorne Village away from Brookhill Road (except buses) to Borers Arms Road, along with the need for additional physical traffic restrictions to protect Newtown from through traffic. This would involve some loss of amenity for residents and visitors driving to/from Brookhill Road and Newtown and adjoining streets, albeit countered by benefits to bus users from additional priority and benefits to frontagers and pedestrians on these roads from reduced traffic flow. There would be commensurate disbenefits to frontagers and pedestrians at Borers Arms Road from increased traffic flows.
• Land acquisition, stated to total approximately 338 square metres, is required outside of the existing highway. This is divided into three parcels:
  o On the north side of the A264 to the west of the junction to enable widening the A264 eastbound approach to the junction.
  o On the southwestern side of the junction, by the point where the former stub of Copthorne Road approaches the A264, to enable provision of a dedicated left turn lane from A2220 to A264.
  o On the south side of the A264 to the east of the junction, to enable widening the A264 westbound approach to the junction.

2.6 As the design of the improvements is currently at an early stage, the land needed for the improvements may change as the designs are developed. However, in order to demonstrate that the plan is deliverable, West Sussex County Council considers that further evidence should be provided or amendments should be made to the plan to demonstrate that the land can be acquired to deliver the improvements, if necessary, within the timescales required at acceptable cost.

2.7 The Sensitivity Test Version of Option 1 would have a physical design that is similar to Option 1 but also includes a left-turning slip from A264 to Brookhill Road. This means that the land requirements would be unaltered. This version of the junction design would avoid the potential traffic intensification issues at Borers Arms Road and Newtown. The capacity test at section 9 of the Copthorne LMVR shows that, whilst it would not perform as well as Option 1 in the AM peak, when the tabulated travel times are combined with the flows through the junctions, the average increase in travel time is just under nine seconds per arriving vehicle, whilst there is a decrease of nine seconds in average travel time compared to future base.\(^1\) In the PM peak the sensitivity test version of Option 1 is forecast to perform as well as Option 1 for capacity and delay.

2.8 West Sussex County Council considers that the Sensitivity Test Version of Option 1 would successfully mitigate severe impacts at the Copthorne Hotel junction, whilst avoiding potential barriers to deliverability associated with the Option 1, provided that the required land can be secured. To implement the Sensitivity Test Versions of Option 1 would not, of itself, prejudice possible later adoption of Option 1, for example if it were to form part of a future project to enhance public transport throughout the Crawley to East Grinstead corridor. Although no such scheme currently exists, there is potential for this to come forward through the County Council’s Strategic Transport Investment Programme to address pre-existing issues and future background traffic growth.

---

\(^1\) These figures for average travel time per arriving vehicle are not obtainable directly from the tables presented in the Copthorne LMVR. The County Council has undertaken its own spreadsheet analysis using the traffic flows from table 18 of the LMVR, combined with the forecasted future base turning proportions per arm from table 6 adjusted to the forecasted with-scheme entry and exit flows with a “Furness” procedure, applied to the travel times from table 22 of the LMVR.
Such a scheme would also need to address the issues relating to traffic diversion.

2.9 The County Council considers that Option 1 and the Sensitivity Test Version of Option 1 should be further developed at planning application stage, including consultation with stakeholders and public. At that time, the A264 Heathy Farm roundabout should also be tested for the additional U-turning movements resulting from the proposed bus-only link at Copthorne to determine if any amendment to the highway layout would also be required there.

**A22/A264 Felbridge Traffic Signals Junction**

3.1 West Sussex County Council has been working together with Surrey County Council, Tandridge District Council and Mid Sussex District Council to examine and develop solutions for the combined impacts of developments in the submission Tandridge Local Plan and the Mid Sussex Local Plan on the junction of the A22 with the A264 at Felbridge. The junction is located on the County boundary with the majority situated in Surrey, Tandridge District and a small area in West Sussex, Mid Sussex District.

3.2 WSP were appointed to produce a technical report including junction option designs to balance the requirement for increased traffic flows from development with provision of safe and convenient facilities for non-motorised highway users including cyclists and pedestrians. To date, none of the designs produced have achieved the full agreement of both Local Highway Authorities, however all of the parties are continuing to work to achieve a common solution. The authorities are also working together to secure funding to deliver the improvements and an application for funding from the Housing Infrastructure Fund was submitted in March 2019.

3.3 The analysis to date has shown that any solution which is effective in traffic capacity terms and also provides adequate pedestrian facilities is likely to require third party land outside the existing highway boundary. The extent of this requirement will depend on the junction design to be developed and chosen. Therefore, the County Council consider that further evidence should be provided or amendments should be made to the plan to demonstrate that the land can be acquired to deliver the improvements, if necessary, within the timescales required at acceptable cost.

**Proposed Policy Amendment**

4.1 As a result of the work which has been undertaken on these junctions to date, West Sussex County Council considers that an amendment should be made to the text of Policy SGC01: South Godstone Garden Community under the Roads and Infrastructure subheading, to amend the first sentence of the second paragraph and insert a second sentence:
“Early on in the development, necessary improvements and mitigation to junctions along the A22, from J6 of the M25 down to East Grinstead, will be implemented where needed, as well as at the A264/A2220 junction at Copthorne. The District Council will ensure that, if any third party land is required to implement these junction improvements, that it is acquired, including potentially through use of compulsory purchase powers.”

4.2 The remainder of the paragraph would continue as is.