1.0 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

1.1 This Transport Technical Note (TTN) has been produced by Ardent Consulting Engineers (ACE) on behalf of Bellway Homes (Strategic) Ltd. The purpose of this report is to review the details of planned improvements being constructed for Junction 6 of the M25 and provide an overview of the implications on the emerging Tandridge District Council (TDC) Local Plan, which is currently undergoing examination in public.

1.2 DHA produced a TTN to identify a scheme of capacity mitigation at Junction 6 to accommodate traffic growth associated with TDC's new Local Plan including the planned garden community of 4,000 dwellings at South Godstone. The report outlines the predicted capacity benefits and cost implications that the improvements would have. The improvement scheme can be summarised as follows:

- An additional roundabout circulatory lane being provided, taking the existing two lanes to three. With the exception of when exiting the M25 (westbound) off slip and the A22 (south) arm, where four-lane circulation is provided.
- A third lane would also be provided on the M25 (eastbound) off slip, the M25 (westbound) off slip, and the A22 (south) approach.
• The pedestrian crossings would be retained in their existing location, with two lanes retained on the B2235 approach.
• A four-lane entry on the A22 (north) approach.

1.3 Subsequently WSP prepared a Technical Note that reviewed the DHA report and the proposed improvement scheme. The WSP report highlights issues/concerns with the improvement scheme, which can be subcategorised as follows:

• Design Feasibility;
• Capacity Analysis;
• Process;
• Cost; and
• Programme.

1.4 Following a review of both reports, it is acknowledged that the improvement scheme has a departure from a number of standards within the ’Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), and WSP have noted that further improvements and additional work should be provided compared to those proposed in order to accommodate the existing constraints. Furthermore, there does not appear to be any Road Safety Audit undertaken, nor a Non-Motorised User Audit, which Highways England would normally require when reviewing any highway scheme.

1.5 The review from WSP detailed that the capacity assessments undertaken by DHA are considered to be “flawed and is based on inappropriate data manipulation”, and highlighted what additional information and survey data was required.

1.6 It would appear that the Project Control Framework (PCF) process has not been followed, which is a formal process that Highways England (HE) follows to approve junction proposals. There is a lack of detail from DHA regarding the delivery of the improvements and its co-ordination with other road improvement schemes in the area. Furthermore, the DHA cost plan for the improvements is significantly underestimating the delivery cost by circa £150million, which will significantly impact the emerging Local Plan (detailed further below).
1.7 In light of the above, it is our consideration that the points raised by WSP are considered valid and justified, we would expect that TDC should commission further transport evidence to allay these concerns and ensure that any proposed improvements are supported by robust evidence to ensure they would fully mitigate planned Local Plan growth in practice.

1.8 Based on the outstanding concerns regarding the technical matters of the scheme, it is important to recognise the potential implications that flawed or substandard improvements could have on the successful delivery of new development identified in the draft Local Plan. If the improvements are flawed (from both a geometric and capacity perspective), then any future development’s traffic that impacts that junction will potentially be required to mitigate their impacts through further improvements. Each development will mitigate small parts of the junction and at different timescales, resulting in improvements coming forward in a piecemeal fashion. The proposed improvements should be provided at one time to cover all predicted impacts with contributions provided by future developments towards the improvements. This highlights the importance of a suitably robust evidence base on which coordinated future transport improvements can be based.

1.9 If there is the predicted gap in costs with insufficient funding obtained from Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF), then ultimately the entire improvements scheme may not be delivered. Instead, similar to the above, future developments will seek to mitigate their impacts individually rather than a holistic scheme that covers all Local Plan traffic impact.

2.0 CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY

2.1 This report has reviewed the DHA TTN that outlines the proposed improvement scheme for Junction 6 of the M25, as well as the Technical Note that WSP prepared subsequently. The WSP report concluded that the improvement schemes proposed were “…unfeasible, unviable and unsafe and the associated costs are significantly underestimated”. The evidence that the DHA Note put forward is light in detail and could result in continued congestion issues.
2.2 Further to the above, there are concerns that the cumulative impacts of traffic associated with all the draft Local Plan allocation sites onto Junction 6 of the M25 will not be satisfactorily mitigated, and also the costing of the junction is substantially underestimated. This would therefore result in future developments having to overcome this by proposing additional smaller scale improvement schemes which would not provide suitable mitigation for all of the Local Plan traffic and network growth. Therefore, it is considered that WSP’s comments are well founded, and thus it is agreed that the improvement scheme should be re-assessed and supported by more robust evidence.