

Response to further question from the Inspector regarding the Strategic Road Network

1. This note is prepared in response to the Inspector's further questions relating to the impact of development in Bexhill on the Strategic Road Network, which each question answered in turn below

Q. How would the cost identified by Highways England (for A259 Little Common Roundabout) and the unknown costs of mitigation (at London Road and Glyne Gap junctions) impact on viability and therefore deliverability of the sites proposed to be allocated? Would CIL be used to contribute to such works or would the developments be expected to fully meet the costs?

2. As already indicated through Rother District Council's response to the Matters, Issues and Questions and the verbal evidence given at the hearing sessions, further modelling work has been commissioned to support the Development and Site Allocations (DaSA) Local Plan using the Highways England agreed methodology as set out within the respective Statement of Common Ground¹. The output from this work is still draft.
3. Highways England have subsequently confirmed that they consider that the DaSA is sound on the basis that highway mitigations will be provided at the following three junctions:
 1. A259 Little Common Roundabout,
 2. A259/A269 London Road signals, and
 3. A259 Glyne Gap Roundabout
4. They indicate that they are satisfied that there is a mitigation solution at Little Common Roundabout which involves widening of the entries and sections of the circulatory carriageway. A provisional estimate of this work is in the region of £250,000 – £300,000.
5. Whilst Highways England consider that mitigation solutions are feasible at the other two junctions they indicated in their email of 16 May 2019, that further work will need to be undertaken to determine whether or not they are deliverable within the existing highway boundary and what effect they may have on reducing the development impact to an acceptable level as well as their costing.
6. Work being undertaken in support of the current planning application at the 'Former High School Site and Drill Hall, Down Road' (site subject to Policy BEX4 in the DaSA) has identified specific mitigation at the A259/A269 London Road signalised junction. Highways England are working through this solution with the applicant, but have indicated that they are confident that an appropriate solution can be achieved at this junction. The modelling undertaken to support this solution takes into account all the development

¹ Reference PS31.

planned through the DaSA for Bexhill up to 2028. Highways England have estimated that the cost of these works would equate to £300,000-£400,000.

7. In addition, the additional modelling referred to in paragraph 1.1 has identified that the A2036 (southbound) of the roundabout as the critical arm. This arm of the roundabout is a local road under the remit of the Highway Authority rather than Highways England. Work is underway to look at the necessary mitigation on this arm of the roundabout to reduce queue lengths on the local road but estimates from East Sussex County Council indicate that this could be in the order to £100,000 -£200,000.

Therefore it is estimated that the total cost of the works needed to these improvements are £650,000 –£900,000.

8. The Council, along with its viability consultants, have considered the impact of the mitigation solutions on the viability of schemes coming forward in Bexhill, taking into account the worst case scenario of £900,000 and applying a proportionate cost per dwelling². These additional costs to development were then applied to the typologies for Bexhill set out in the Council's Local Plan Viability Assessment³. This includes the adopted CIL rates plus a S106 contribution of £1,700 per unit within sites, along with access standards M4(Cat 2), and M4 (3) where applicable, and 5% of all units for all sites with 20 or more units incorporating serviced plots for self-build, plus applicable affordable housing requirements as proposed in the DaSA (known as full cumulative policy layer 4⁴), as well as the additional financial contribution to the highway mitigation solutions.
9. The outcome of that viability work indicates that, even in this worst case scenario, the site typologies can absorb the cost of additional financial contributions⁵ towards these highway works without materially impact on their viability. Appendix 1 presents an updated version of Table 6.2 set out in the Council's Local Plan Viability Assessment, to demonstrate this impact in line with how the results are presented in the Council's Local Plan Viability Assessment. As such, this additional viability work indicates that the additional costs would not impact on the deliverability of sites in Bexhill.
10. The Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)⁶ is part of the evidence base informing the spatial policy of the Rother Local Plan. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan Schedule (Appendix A of the IDP) sets out a summary of the infrastructure required to support development proposed within the Local Plan. This Schedule was developed in consultation with service providers including both Highways England and East Sussex County Council.

² At the worst case scenario, £900,000/860 dwellings = £1,046

³ Reference SH2, pg 25, Table 5.1

⁴ Reference SH2, pg 25, Table 6.2

⁵ These are in addition to the base assumption of S106 contributions in the viability model so there may an element of double counting.

⁶ RDC-DaSA-007, March 2019

11. The IDP Schedule identifies infrastructure which is fundamental to the delivery of the objectives and spatial strategy of the Core Strategy. It identifies both the infrastructure required to support the level and distribution of development proposed in the Local Plan and also those infrastructure improvements that are required to resolve existing deficiencies and promote sustainable communities. The Schedule highlights, amongst other things, the importance of the infrastructure to the delivery of the Strategy.
12. The IDP Schedule identifies the three junctions highlighted by Highways England which require mitigation, including:
 - Improvements to the A2036 Corridor⁷
 - A259 Little Common Roundabout Junction Improvements⁸, and
 - A259/A269 London Road Junctions⁹
13. These three infrastructure outputs are designated as critical within the IDP for the delivery of the Strategy. Their funding elements are identified through a number of sources including developer contributions and external funding sources.
14. Therefore it is anticipated that the junction improvements are funded by the developments directly (as considered above), alongside other potential funding sources such as the Local Growth Fund, for example. It is not the case that these can be secured using Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for two reasons, firstly that SRN improvements through the provision of CIL does not provide sufficient certainty that they will come forward. This approach is consistent with advice from Highways England themselves. Whilst secondly, in any event, the Council's Regulation 123 list specifically scopes out *'mitigation works remote from the development where the need for such works is identified in a Transport Assessment'*.
15. Therefore, in conclusion, it is not considered that the cost of the mitigation solutions identified above would *impact on viability and therefore deliverability of the sites proposed to be allocated in the DaSA Local Plan.*

Q. Does the Council consider that there needs to be any modification to any of the policies in the DASA as a result of the position of Highways England? Should any of the allocation policies in the DASA which don't make reference to off-site highway contributions do so? If so, which ones?

16. Highways England set out in their initial representation to the DaSA that development of the following sites would likely have an impact on SRN are:
 - BEX3 – North Bexhill (including component policies at BEX3a, BEX3b and BEX3c),

⁷ RDC-DaSA-007, page 20

⁸ RDC-DaSA-007, page 25

⁹ RDC-DaSA-007, page 28

- BEX6 – Land adjacent to 276 Turkey Road,
- BEX9 – Land off Spindlewood Drive,
- BEX10 – Land at Northeye,
- BEX11 – Land at Sidley Sports Ground, and
- BEX14 – Land south-east of Beeching Road.

17. Policy TR3 (Access and New Development) provides the basis for permitting development where mitigation against transport impacts which may arise from development, either individually or cumulatively with other proposals. The policies listed in paragraph 2.1 above all include specific criterion which require that consideration be specifically made highway impacts of proposals and that the sites should mitigate their own impacts to make the development acceptable in highway terms. This is a reasonable approach to ensuring that each development appropriately responds to the impact of their development on the highway network. The provision for such highway improvements would be secured through a relevant legal agreement (Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act and/or Section 278 of the Highways Act).
18. It is therefore considered that the appropriate allocation policies in Bexhill already contain relevant policy wording to secure off-site highways work associated with development in line with the respective highway authorities' expectations. As such, no additional allocation policies in Bexhill would require modification to include such references.
19. However, should the Inspector be minded to consider whether it is appropriate to refer to cumulative impact to the highway network, then the Council suggest the following policy wording amendment to the respective policies:

“....offsite highway works to make the development acceptable in highway terms considering both the sites individual and, where necessary, the cumulative impact of development in Bexhill into account....”

24 May 2019

Appendix 1 – Viability of typology sites in Bexhill (Policy Layer 4, plus additional financial contributions to the mitigations on the SRN).

Site typology ref	Site typology	Value area	Policy Layer 1:	Policy Layer 2:	Policy Layer 3:	Policy layer 4:	Policy Layer 5:
			With CIL	Policy Layer 1 + s106	Policy later 2 + access standards	Policy layer 3 +affordable housing	Additional contribution toward SRN mitigation
1	500 unit Bexhill Strategic Site - Urban extn	Bexhill Strategic Site					
2	150 unit Bexhill Fringe - Brownfield	Bexhill Fringe					
3	150 unit Bexhill Fringe - Greenfield	Bexhill Fringe					
4	40 unit Bexhill Urban - Greenfield	Bexhill Urban					
5	30 unit Bexhill Urban - Greenfield	Bexhill Urban					
6	15 unit Bexhill Urban - Brownfield	Bexhill Urban					