

Herefordshire Council

**Local Plan – Core Strategy
Examination in Public**

Statement of Common Ground

Between

Herefordshire Council

and

Highways Agency

13 January 2015

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL - EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC

STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND WITH THE HIGHWAYS AGENCY AGREED 13TH JANUARY 2015.

Introduction

This Statement of Common Ground regarding the Core Strategy, and Funding for the Relief Road, has been developed in partnership with the Highways Agency for the proposed submission to the Herefordshire Core Strategy.

Matters of Agreement

The Highways Agency has worked with Herefordshire Council over the past six years to assist with the development of the transport evidence base for its Core Strategy. The role of the A49, which forms part of the strategic road network, is significant in terms of the Council's aspirations for growth with a focus on Hereford City – the main settlement in the County.

As planning authority, Herefordshire Council has been developing long term development proposals which are seeking to support national priorities for economic regeneration and support for new homes and jobs. The Council's assessment of future housing and employment land requirements has been based on a housing needs assessment and studies into employment land requirements. Whilst the Core Strategy covers a wider range of land use proposals, assessments of needs in these sectors has driven strategic assessment of the likely demands on the transport network and identification of new highway infrastructure and associated sustainable transport measures.

The capacity of the A49 trunk road through Hereford is a limiting factor on both growth and strategic movement in the City. There is no further prospect for the provision of significant additional capacity on the existing alignment of the trunk road. Consequently, alternative solutions such as the provision of the range of transport measures –identified in the draft Core Strategy will be necessary to accommodate the level of growth proposed for Hereford.

The Council developed a draft Core Strategy in 2013 which included provision for 16,500 new homes, 148ha of employment land, a Western Relief Road and sustainable transport package for Hereford City. The Agency concluded that in publishing its draft Core Strategy the Council had made a policy choice on transport matters that is supported by the evidence base. Further work has been undertaken by the Council in development of the evidence base for the transport requirements outlined in the Core Strategy and following advice from the Agency. This comprised a Phasing Study which has provided a strategic outline of the timescale by which the relief road would need to be developed in support of the Core Strategy's development proposals and a refinement of the measures required to manage transport movements within the urban area.

The Agency notes that a key element of the assessment of the Core Strategy relates to viability and the ability of the Council to bring forward the supporting infrastructure required for the delivery of new development. Viability needs to consider the likely financial implications as well as other matters which would determine the deliverability of infrastructure. The Council has set out its proposals for infrastructure in the Infrastructure

Delivery Plan September 2014 (IDP). This identifies the three key packages for Hereford urban area, scheme costs and likely funding sources. The packages include:

- South Wye Transport Package
- Hereford City Centre Transport Package
- Hereford Transport Package

The Agency notes that the Council's proposed programme for the delivery of transport infrastructure, which would include a Hereford Relief Road, comprises the following key stages:

- Construction of City Link Road as part of the City Centre Transport Package completed by end 2016.
- Construction of Southern Link Road as part of South Wye Transport Package completed by Spring 2018
- Route option appraisal and development of Hereford Transport Package during 2015/2016
- Selection of preferred route for Hereford Relief Road completed end 2016
- Phased construction of Hereford Relief Road to commence late 2019 / 2020 and completed 2025.



Based on the growth assumption made by the Council in the Plan, this programme appears realistic and the Agency would look to work with the Council where its involvement is required in relation to the interactions between the Relief Road and the strategic road network.

The Agency notes that both the South Wye and City Centre transport packages have already secured funds through the Local Growth Programme. The Hereford Transport Package comprises a programme of schemes to be implemented over the period 2015 to 2031 with key elements of infrastructure, including a Hereford Relief Road, required in the period 2022 to 2027.

The Agency agrees on the basis of the evidence produced by the Council that the Hereford Relief Road alongside a series of sustainable modes interventions is necessary to support the scale of growth and development proposed in the Plan. Delivery is a matter for the Council to programme within the context of the delivery of the wider Core Strategy.

The Agency plans investment through a process of five year Route Investment Strategies submitted and approved by Government. A Hereford Relief Road was not identified as a priority for funding in the first Roads Investment Strategy (RIS 1) which will cover the period 2015 to 2020.

Whilst the Secretary of State has no intention of becoming the highway authority for the Relief Road, it would seem likely it would become the route of choice for through traffic and, therefore, it would be appropriate and prudent for any scheme to be designed to meet the highways design standards set out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.

| Declaration | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| The contents of this document are agreed for the purposes of the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy Examination in Public | | | |
| Signed on behalf of the Highways Agency | | Signed on behalf of Herefordshire Council | |
|  | Date: 13 January 2015 |  | Date 13 January 2015 |
| Position: Asset Manager | | Position: <i>Assistant Director</i> <i>Place Road Community</i> | |