

Warrington Local Plan Examination

EXPLANATORY COVER NOTE

Meeting with National Highways and updated
IDP requirements in light of Main Modifications

6 March 2023



1 Introduction

- 1.1 Following the conclusion from the Inspectors that the South East Warrington Employment Area (SEWEA) allocation, as set out under draft Policy MD6, should be removed from the emerging Local Plan as a Main Modification, the Council has considered the wider implications of this change in relation to infrastructure provision.
- 1.2 This note provides clarity on this matter.

2. Implications

- 2.1 The SEWEA, along with the South East Warrington Urban Extension (SEWUE), was to contribute to improvements to the M6/M56 interchange in order to mitigate impacts associated with the proposed developments on the motorway network. This has been discussed in some detail with National Highways as the draft Local Plan has emerged.
- 2.2 Upon confirmation that the SEWEA allocation was to be removed from the Plan, Warrington Borough Council officers met with National Highways representatives to ensure that necessary mitigation measures remain feasible to the strategic road network in this location. Whilst details of works have not yet been confirmed, National Highways has agreed that there is scope for the level of development proposed in South Warrington, taking account of the proposed Main Modifications, to be mitigated.
- 2.3 Appended to this note are minutes of a meeting held with National Highways on 31 January 2023 (Appendix 1) and an extract from the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) (Appendix 2) whereby the relevant infrastructure details have been updated. National Highways have subsequently confirmed they are happy with this update to the IDP.
- 2.4 The Council is confident that there are no other significant implications for the IDP arising from the Main Modifications which require an update at this stage. The Council will however continue to update the IDP on a regular basis.

Appendix 1 – Note of Meeting with National Highways

Meeting with National Highways

31 01 2023

Attendees:

Rob Heywood (RH), National Highways
 Ben Laverick (BL), National Highways
 Lindsay Alder (LA), National Highways
 Alan Dickin (AD), Warrington Borough Council
 Steve Hunter (SH), Warrington Borough Council
 Michael Bell (MB), Warrington Borough Council
 Ella Gartland (EG), Warrington Borough Council

Purpose of meeting: Update following the Inspectors’ Letter and Main Modifications to the Local Plan

	Summary of Discussion	Actions
1.	Introductions and purpose of the meeting.	
2.	MB provided an update on the latest position regarding the Local Plan Examination – WBC has now received the Inspectors’ letter advising of Main Modifications to the plan. In summary, the Inspectors are supportive of the housing allocations, subject to a modification at Fiddlers Ferry to remove the southern housing element of the allocation and also some concerns raised regarding deliverability of the Waterfront allocation due to uncertainty regarding the Western Link, though it will remain allocated in the plan. With regard to employment land, the Inspectors have concluded that the draft plan allocates too much employment land and this is not in balance with housing in the Borough. They therefore request the removal of the South East Warrington Employment Area (SEWEA) close to the junction of the M6 and M56 in south Warrington.	
3.	MB set out next steps for the plan – the Council will provide a schedule of modifications which will be subject to SA/HA/HRA. These will be consulted on for a period of 6 weeks from mid-March 2023 and following the consultation the Inspectors will issue their final report.	
4.	MB explained that one area for discussion are the improvements required to the M6 J20 which were previously scoped with expected contributions from both the SEWEA and the South East Warrington Urban Extension (SEWUE). With the former now being removed from the plan, WBC officers and colleagues from National Highways need to be confident that sufficient improvements can still be delivered to mitigate impact on the strategic highway network in this location.	

5.	RH stated that the removal of the southern residential parcel from the Fiddlers Ferry allocation would likely not have significant implications from a National Highways perspective. The removal of the SEWEA will mean that there is less immediate pressure for an improvement at M6 J20. There will still need to be improvements due to the SEWUE but given the projected build out of the residential development on a more phased basis the improvements will likely not need to be delivered until later in the Plan Period and not in the first five years.	
6.	RH commented that National Highways continues to assess schemes requiring funding and that improvements to M6 J20 remain included for consideration for future funding programmes. As part of any scheme National Highways would expect contributions from developers and the local authority.	
7.	MB explained that in terms of the Local Plan process, and in particular for the Main Modifications consultation, both the Council and National Highways need to demonstrate that they are comfortable that removal of the SEWEA from the plan will not impact on the delivery of required improvements at M6 J20. It is suggested that this could be demonstrated through an update to the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).	
8.	RH agreed that this would be a sensible approach and can be agreed in advance of modifications consultation. BL added that the mitigation scheme may not change a great deal and RH agreed that the impact of the SEWUE will need to be assessed separately to confirm this. In terms of the development trajectory RH commented that National Highways is comfortable that a solution can be worked up in due course given the phased delivery of housing development over the plan period and there no longer being a need for the improvements to be delivered in the first five years of the Plan Period.	
9.	SH confirmed the Council is committed to working proactively with National Highways on improvements to the Strategic Road Network. AD added that the forthcoming Development Framework for the SEWUE, being prepared by Homes England and Miller Homes, will need to consider the scope of improvements at M6 J20 as well as improvements at M56 J10.	
	Agreed Actions	
10.	MB/EG to draft update to IDP in respect of M6 J20 and share with National Highways colleagues prior to Modifications Consultation.	MB/EG
	End of meeting.	

Appendix 2 – Extract from Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)

CATEGORY	TOPIC	PROJECT	WHERE [PLACE MAKING AREA]	POLICY	INDICATIVE COST	FUNDING CONFIRMED	FUNDING GAP	FUNDING SOURCE	WHO [LEAD]	PARTNERS	DELIVERY NOTES	Short Term (2021-2025)	Medium Term (2026-2030)	Long Term (2031 +)	COMMITTED UNCERTAIN LONG TERM / ASPIRATIONAL	ADDED / UPDATED	AMENDED BY	INFORMATION SOURCE
Transport	Strategic Road Network	Junction 20 M6 - improvements	South Warrington	INF1	£18,000,000	£0	£18,000,000	Developers / private sector / public sector	WBC/ National Highways	Developers / private sector	Business case development subject of a study led by WBC in partnership with National Highways	>	>	>	Identified in Council/Partner Strategy	Mar-23	EG	WBC Transport for Warrington

"public sector" added to Funding Source
Timescale amended from Short / Medium Term to Medium / Long Term