Position Statement from Highways England In Respect Of The Runnymede Local Plan

In December 2018 Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) appointed Arcadis to undertake an assessment of the transport impacts of the Local Plan upon the strategic road network, namely M25 Junctions 11 and 13. An initial meeting took place on 11 December between Arcadis and Highways England to discuss the requirements for the assessment. Following agreement at the meeting Highways England provided a written outline of requirements and possible methods of assessment to enable Arcadis to develop a study methodology and timescales for assessment including any mitigation requirements.

Following email exchanges to allow comments on the methodology, a further telephone conference was held on 8 January to finalise the study methodology. Since that date Arcadis have been progressing the transport assessment. Two further teleconferences have been undertaken (21 and 29 January) to discuss progress and to agree assumptions made during the assessment. Initial findings of the assessment were sent to Highways England at 1pm today (4 February 2019) in a report titled M25 Traffic Impact Assessment Note.

Highways England will shortly provide comments, to RBC and Arcadis, on the M25 Traffic Impact Assessment Note. Highways England has committed resources to expedite the required transport assessment for the Local Plan and is continuing to work with RBC, and their consultants, so that the results and any potential mitigation measures can be agreed to timescales that will fit within a reasonable timeframe agreed between RBC and Highways England and that progress will be reported to the Inspector at the conclusion of substantial progress meetings.

Referring to section 5 (Matters of Disagreement) of the November 2018 Statement of Common Ground, matters of disagreement were reported at Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3. Through discussions to date, it appears that the methodology agreed for this revised transport assessment, being undertaken by Arcadis, (in Highways England’s experience and understanding) conforms with national planning guidance covering transport evidence base requirements for Local Plans including the assessment of “with” and “without” development scenarios. Similarly, Highways England is provisionally content that the methodology has satisfactorily included appropriate trip rates for development related traffic.

Highways England are aware of the need to progress the RBC Local Plan EIP and will collaborate with the Council to agree an appropriate timeline for future EIP sessions as required.

Janice Burgess
Highways England
4 February 2019