

South Warwickshire Local Plan (SWLP): Transport Evidence Base

Potential Matters for Examination in Public

Draft Technical Review prepared for Trinity Mead Residents Group (SHAPE)– version 2

29/07/2026

1. Context & Statutory Framework

The emerging South Warwickshire Local Plan (SWLP)¹ proposes significant residential growth in and around South Stratford-upon-Avon:

- Strategic Growth Location 19 (SG19: East of Stratford-upon-Avon): 2,585 to 2,727 residential dwellings, supported by an internal spine road linking the A3400 Shipston Road, A422 Banbury Road, and Loxley Road.
- New Settlement E1 (Long Marston Airfield / LMA): 4,000 to 4,500 residential dwellings and 15.0 to 69.8 hectares of employment land.
- Strategic Growth Location 18 (SG18-N & SG18-S: West of Stratford-upon-Avon): 1,455 to 1,574 residential dwellings split across northern and southern parcels adjacent to the A3400 Birmingham Road and A422 Alcester Road.
- Strategic Growth Locations 15 & 16 (Wellesbourne North & South): 1,550 to 3,250 residential dwellings and 62.8 to 89.8 hectares of strategic employment land.
- Strategic Growth Location 20 (Bidford-on-Avon): 3,000 to 3,120 residential dwellings and 11 hectares of employment land.

Delivery of this growth is supported by an extensive programme of strategic highway improvements centred on the proposed South West Relief Road (SWRR) and a series of junction mitigation schemes identified through the South Warwickshire Strategic Transport Assessment (STA). This document reviews the published transport evidence prepared by SLR Consulting and Atkins Réalis to consider whether it provides a sufficiently robust basis for the proposed spatial strategy. In doing so, it considers whether the evidence satisfies the tests of soundness set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)²—the Government's planning policy for England—and the transport-related requirements in paragraphs 114 and 116.

The review recognises that the transport evidence represents a substantial body of technical work and that the proposed mitigation package improves network

performance when compared with an unmitigated growth scenario. However, the published evidence also identifies a number of acknowledged limitations, strategic dependencies and residual impacts which, taken together, raise legitimate questions regarding the robustness and deliverability of the transport strategy.

In particular, this review identifies five recurring themes:

- **Residual Network Performance** – While the proposed mitigation package substantially improves network operation, the published evidence indicates that residual congestion remains on a number of key corridors and does not fully restore network performance to the 2050 Reference Case.
- **Infrastructure Delivery and Phasing** – The proposed spatial strategy depends heavily upon delivery of the South West Relief Road, yet the published evidence identifies significant funding, programme and delivery dependencies while providing limited explanation of how housing delivery would be coordinated with infrastructure provision.
- **Transport Modelling Assumptions** – The modelling relies upon assumptions regarding background growth, mode shift, public transport improvements and neutral weekday travel conditions. The published evidence does not always explain how these assumptions have been tested through sensitivity analysis, particularly in relation to visitor demand and cross-boundary growth.
- **Deliverability of Strategic Mitigation** – Many of the proposed highway interventions represent strategic modelling solutions that have not yet progressed through detailed engineering design, road safety assessment or environmental assessment. Consequently, the published evidence does not yet demonstrate the detailed feasibility or deliverability of every proposed scheme.
- **Cumulative Operation of the Stratford Highway Network** – The detailed review of localised corridors identifies several locations where residual queueing, interdependent junction operation and changing traffic patterns continue to raise questions regarding the resilience of the wider highway network, particularly during periods of elevated visitor and retail demand.

The purpose of this document is therefore not to challenge the principle of growth in South Warwickshire, nor to dispute the technical modelling undertaken by the Council's consultants. Rather, it seeks to identify areas where the published transport evidence could be examined further during the Local Plan Examination in Public to determine whether the Plan has demonstrated that it is justified, effective and supported by robust and proportionate evidence, as required by the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. Core Lines of Inquiry

2.1 Cumulative Network Failure and Severe Residual Impacts

Potential policy breach: NPPF Paragraph 116 (Severe Residual Cumulative Impact) and Paragraph 36(c) (Effective Plan).

Evidence Base References: SLR SuAWA STA Testing Results Summary (30 April 2026)³, Section 6.31–6.33, Figures 24 & 25, pp. 26–28; SLR SuAWA STA Golf Scenario Assessment (12 May 2026)⁴, Section 4.10–4.29, Figures 8–10, pp. 11–16

Technical Critique: The Council's transport evidence base demonstrates that the spatial allocation strategy generates traffic volumes that exceed the operational capacity of the South Stratford highway network. Modelling conducted via the Stratford-upon-Avon Wide Area (SuAWA) Paramics microsimulation model confirms that in the "Local Plan Do Nothing" and "Do Minimum" scenarios (which include consented growth, SWLP allocations, and baseline mode-shift assumptions), the network suffers catastrophic gridlock and simulation lock-ups, preventing traffic from clearing during peak hours.

To mitigate this gridlock, consultants modelled the "Do Something" (DS) and "Do Something 2" (DS2) scenarios, incorporating the South Western Relief Road (SWRR) alongside ten major highway intervention schemes (Schemes 1–10 and G1–G5). These interventions include signalisation of Clopton Bridge/Tiddington Road, conversion of Alveston Manor roundabout to signals, and extensive multi-arm widening along the A46 corridor.

The modelling assumes delivery of the SWRR together with the full package of strategic highway mitigation. Despite this, the official outputs confirm that the plan does not restore network performance to the Reference Case:

- **Persistent Mean Network Delay:** Even following the full mitigation package, overall network delay remains approximately 2–3% above the 2050 Reference Case, demonstrating that residual impacts remain.
- **Shipston Road / Clifford Lane Roundabout (Scheme G2):** Scheme G2 reduces the PM peak northbound queue from approximately 200 vehicles to around 85 vehicles. However, the report concludes that the remaining queue continues to interact with the proposed SG19 access roundabout on Shipston Road, indicating that further review of the junction layout will be required.

Because the Council's own modelling demonstrates that, even after the full mitigation package is assumed, residual congestion remains above the Reference Case and further junction refinement is required, there is a question as to whether the Plan

adequately demonstrates that severe residual cumulative transport impacts have been addressed for the purposes of NPPF paragraph 116.

2.2 Unfunded Strategic Infrastructure

Potential policy breach: NPPF Paragraph 36(c) (Effective / Deliverability of Infrastructure)

Evidence Base References: Atkins Réalis Delivery Strategy and Cost Refinement Report (09 February 2026), Executive Summary⁵, pp. 7–10; SLR SuAWA STA Testing Results Summary (30 April 2026)³, Section 6.44–6.49, pp. 35–37

Technical Critique: The transport strategy underpinning allocations SG19 (~2,700 dwellings), E1 Long Marston Airfield (~4,500 dwellings), and SG18-S (687 dwellings) relies fundamentally on the construction of the South Western Relief Road (SWRR / Option W3). The SLR testing concludes that without the SWRR, the local road network experiences severe congestion, causing network-wide journey times to increase by 14% in the AM peak and 27% in the PM peak over the Do Something scenario, with simulation lock-ups occurring in 50% of peak runs.

However, the financial evidence confirms that no committed funding package has been identified.

- **Refined Cost Estimates:** Applying Department for Transport (DfT) Reference Class Forecasting and risk uplifts (P70 to P80 confidence intervals), Atkins Réalis estimates the outturn cost of the SWRR (Option W3) to be between £170 million and £630 million.
- **Funding Deficit and Lags:** DfT funding for new local road schemes is currently very limited, with no competitive funding rounds scheduled. Major strategic funding via a future unitary authority or strategic authority will not be accessible until at least 2028/29. While Homes England partnership funding is identified as a short-term route, support is contingent on proving that housing can be unlocked long before 2040—a prospect contradicted by the delivery timeline.

The cost breakdown across design specifications and opening years is detailed below:

Design Specification	Opening Year	P70 to P80 Uplift Outturn Cost (£ Million)
Minimum (Single Carriageway)	2035 / 2040	£170m–£240m (2035) / £210m–£300m (2040)
Mid (Single Carriageway + Rail Futureproofing)	2035 / 2040	£190m–£280m (2035) / £240m–£340m (2040)
Maximum (Dual Carriageway)	2035 / 2040	£360m–£520m (2035) / £440m–£630m (2040)

The Council's own evidence establishes that delivery of the scale of growth proposed in the SWLP remains dependent upon the South Western Relief Road. However, while AtkinsRéalis identifies a range of potential future funding mechanisms, it does not identify a committed funding package. Instead, delivery depends upon future funding opportunities, engagement with Homes England, further technical work, additional transport modelling and subsequent business case development. Given that the SWRR is identified by both SLR and AtkinsRéalis as a critical enabling infrastructure project, there is a legitimate question as to whether the Plan has demonstrated that the infrastructure necessary to support the proposed level of growth is deliverable over the plan period, as required by NPPF paragraph 36(c).

2.3 Phasing Issues and Infrastructure Delivery Lags

Potential policy breach: NPPF Paragraph 36(c) (Effective / Phasing Alignment) and Paragraph 116 (Severe Cumulative Impact).

Evidence Base References: Atkins Réalis Delivery Strategy Report (09 February 2026)⁵, Indicative Delivery Programme, p. 10; SLR SuAWA STA Testing Results Summary (30 April 2026)³, Section 6.44–6.49, pp. 35–37

Technical Critique: The evidence base identifies a potential temporal disconnect between the proposed housing trajectories and the delivery timeline of the supporting highway infrastructure.

The Atkins Réalis Delivery Strategy identifies an indicative programme under which the SWRR could open by 2035/36. However, this programme is expressly contingent upon early decisions, continuous progress through option development, environmental assessment, preliminary and detailed design, statutory planning consent, land acquisition (including, where necessary, Compulsory Purchase Orders), procurement, timely funding and successful management of identified programme risks. Those risks include delays associated with Homes England funding, the SWLP Examination, local government reorganisation in 2028, public objections, landowner negotiations, CPO

processes and construction cost inflation. The report also presents opening-year cost estimates for both 2035 and 2040, recognising the potential for later delivery should these risks materialise.

Conversely, residential delivery at Long Marston Airfield (E1: 4,000+ homes) and East of Stratford (SG19: 2,585+ homes) is heavily front-loaded, with early phases scheduled for occupation during the early-to-mid 2030s. This creates a period during which substantial housing occupation could occur before the SWRR becomes operational.

The SLR sensitivity testing ("Do Something No SWRR") models network performance in the absence of the relief road. The results demonstrate that without the SWRR, the local road network collapses into gridlock, with simulation lock-ups occurring in 50% of PM peak runs, network-wide delays increasing by 27% over mitigated levels, and severe congestion spreading into rural surrounding villages.

The evidence reviewed does not identify any phasing mechanism or policy trigger requiring the SWRR to be operational before substantial housing occupation proceeds. Allowing front-loaded residential growth to outpace critical infrastructure potentially violates NPPF Paragraph 36(c) and Paragraph 116.

2.4 Unsubstantiated Mode-Shift Targets and Active Travel Severance

Potential policy breach: NPPF Paragraph 36(b) (Justified), Paragraph 114 (Prioritising Sustainable Transport).

Evidence Base References: SLR Mode Shift Methodology (12 May 2026)⁶, Sections 3.20–3.28, 4.10–4.18, Tables 3-4 & 3-5, pp. 17–19, 23–25; SLR SuAWA Golf Scenario Assessment (12 May 2026)⁴, Section 4.31–4.35, pp. 17–18

Technical Critique: The transport modelling applies pre-modelled reductions in private car demand arising from assumed improvements in bus, walking and cycling. The robustness of these assumptions gives rise to two principal concerns.

First, the mode-shift methodology assumes that bus patronage can recover by approximately 107%, returning to pre-decline levels identified within the Warwickshire BSIP. To translate this into traffic demand reductions, the model applies a tiered WebTAG diversion framework, including Tier 1 assumptions that up to 30% of trips using "car-beating" bus services would transfer from private car use. These assumptions depend upon the delivery of extensive new and enhanced bus services, including higher frequencies, route extensions and "turn-up-and-go" operations. However, the published evidence base does not identify committed operator agreements, long-term revenue funding, or implementation mechanisms demonstrating how these service standards will be achieved and maintained

throughout the plan period. The evidence base includes an optimistic mode-shift sensitivity scenario, but it does not appear to test the consequences of lower-than-assumed bus patronage or active travel uptake, nor scenarios in which proposed public transport enhancements are only partially delivered. If these assumed levels of mode shift are not achieved, the transport model will underestimate future private vehicle trips and associated traffic flows, resulting in greater congestion than predicted and potentially requiring additional highway mitigation beyond that identified in the evidence base.

This raises a question as to whether the transport evidence is sufficiently justified for the purposes of NPPF paragraph 36(b).

Second, the mode-shift methodology relies heavily on walking and cycling infrastructure to intercept short trips, citing the Propensity to Cycle Tool (PCT) and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) routes, including the Stratford Greenway (LCWIP Route P_1) and rural Public Rights of Way (PRoW) networks. Simultaneously, the Council's proposed highway mitigation strategy introduces high-speed, high-volume road infrastructure which intersects these active travel corridors:

- Upgrading Pimlico Lane into a 50mph regional arterial bypass connecting Loxley Road to the A429 Wellesbourne Road to handle >600 vehicles/hour in the PM peak.
- Constructing the 50mph SWRR across rural footpaths and the Stratford Greenway alignment.

While the Plan relies upon walking and cycling infrastructure to achieve mode shift, the published evidence does not clearly explain how continuity and safety for non-motorised users will be maintained where strategic highway schemes intersect LCWIP routes, the Stratford Greenway and existing Public Rights of Way. This raises a further question as to whether the mode-shift assumptions remain sufficiently justified for the purposes of NPPF paragraph 36(b), and whether opportunities to promote safe, attractive and convenient walking, cycling and public transport have been fully realised in accordance with NPPF paragraph 114(a).

2.5 Representativeness of the Baseline Travel Data: Neutral Weekday Assumptions and Peak Tourist Traffic

Potential policy breach: NPPF Paragraph 36(b) (Justified / Proportionate & Robust Evidence).

Evidence Base References: WCC Modelling Protocol Advice Note 005 - Mobile Network Data (October 2023)⁷, Sections 21–30, pp. 4–5; SLR SuAWA STA Testing Results Summary (30 April 2026)³, Section 1.4, p. 1.

Technical Critique: The baseline origin-destination (OD) matrices and travel demand patterns underpinning the SuAWA Paramics microsimulation model rely upon Mobile Network Data (MND) collected during 2022–23 and traffic counts established in 2023. The evidence base gives rise to two principal concerns.

First, Warwickshire County Council's Mobile Network Data protocol derives weekday travel patterns from neutral Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday datasets, with separate weekend datasets available where appropriate for retail and leisure assessments. The published transport evidence does not explain whether equivalent sensitivity testing has been undertaken to assess network performance during weekends, bank holidays or other periods of elevated visitor demand.

This is particularly relevant because Stratford-upon-Avon is internationally recognised as one of England's principal heritage tourism destinations, attracting millions of visitors annually, including a substantial proportion of overseas visitors. Stratford-upon-Avon experiences traffic conditions during weekends, bank holidays and major events which differ materially from neutral weekday operation. Visitor traffic is commonly concentrated around the town centre, the River Avon Embankment and the Stratford Cricket Club parking areas, with significant volumes approaching via the A3400 Shipston Road, Clifford Lane and Clopton Bridge. At the same time, substantially higher pedestrian activity occurs around Bridge Foot and the riverside, increasing demand at pedestrian crossings and affecting traffic progression through the town centre. These are well-recognised characteristics of Stratford-upon-Avon's visitor economy and are likely to create operating conditions materially different from neutral weekday traffic patterns, yet they are not specifically discussed within the published transport evidence.

Second, according to the Tourism Impact Assessment published by Shakespeare's England, visitor volume to South Warwickshire (anchored by Stratford-upon-Avon) grew substantially between 2023 and 2026. Day trips rose by 12% (reaching over 9.9 million annually), outperforming the Great Britain national trend which saw a 12% drop over the same baseline period⁸. Despite this growth, the published transport evidence does not explain whether any sensitivity testing has been undertaken to assess the operation of the network during periods of elevated visitor demand or whether those conditions could materially affect the performance of key junctions serving the south of the town.

Accordingly, there is a question as to whether the evidence base provides a sufficiently robust and proportionate assessment of the full range of operating conditions likely to be experienced on Stratford-upon-Avon's highway network, as required for a justified plan under NPPF paragraph 36(b).

2.6 Cross-Boundary Growth Assumptions and Emerging Development in Cotswold District

Potential policy breach: NPPF Paragraph 36(b) (Justified) and Paragraph 36(c) (Effective).

Evidence Base References: Cotswold District Local Plan 2011–2031 (Adopted August 2018)⁹, Policies DS1, EC7, EC8, pp. 23–24, 46–47, 89–90; SLR STA Analysis of Impacts Outside of Core Models (14 May 2026)¹⁰, Section 6.1–6.23, pp. 20–23; Cotswold District Council Local Plan Update – Preferred Options Consultation (2025)¹¹, Table 2.

Technical Critique: The SLR analysis acknowledges that its methodology is necessarily high-level and identifies several important limitations. In particular, it states that future traffic growth arising from consented development has not been considered within this stage of assessment and that future traffic reassignment cannot be represented using the adopted methodology.

This is particularly relevant along the southern edge of the South Warwickshire transport model. Stratford-upon-Avon functions as a significant commercial, employment, retail and educational centre for communities in the northern part of Cotswold District. Established travel corridors connect settlements including Mickleton, Chipping Campden and Moreton-in-Marsh with Stratford-upon-Avon via the B4632, A3400 and A429, creating regular cross-boundary travel for employment, education, retail and other services. The adopted Cotswold Local Plan identifies Moreton-in-Marsh as the principal service centre for the North Cotswolds and Chipping Campden as an important service centre and employment location.

The scale of planned growth within these settlements has also increased substantially through the emerging Cotswold Local Plan. The Council's Preferred Options proposes approximately:

- Mickleton: 589 additional dwellings by 2043 (including a strategic allocation of 439 dwellings), representing approximately 62% growth over the existing village;
- Moreton-in-Marsh: 2,135 additional dwellings by 2043;
- Chipping Campden: 228 additional dwellings by 2043.

Against this background, the published South Warwickshire transport evidence does not explain whether committed and emerging cross-boundary growth within neighbouring Cotswold District has been incorporated into the background traffic assumptions used to assess the A429, A3400 and B4632 corridors, nor whether any sensitivity testing has been undertaken to understand the potential implications of this significant additional development.

Accordingly, there is a question as to whether the published transport evidence provides a sufficiently transparent and robust assessment of cumulative cross-boundary traffic growth, and whether the assumptions underpinning the 2050 Reference Case remain appropriate in light of substantial emerging development immediately beyond the South Warwickshire boundary, as required by NPPF paragraphs 36(b), 36(c) and 116.

3. Detailed Investigation of Specific Localized Network Hotspots

Analysis of the official evidence base—specifically the SLR SuAWA Testing Results (April 2026)³, the Golf Scenario Assessment (May 2026)³, and the Impacts Outside Core Models Report (May 2026)¹⁰—reveals localized network failures across South Stratford and adjacent corridors:

3.1 Bidford-on-Avon Allocation (SG20) and Evesham Road Traffic into Stratford

Context: The revised "Golf Scenario" introduces Strategic Growth Location SG20 at Bidford-on-Avon, comprising 3,120 dwellings and 11 hectares of employment land. As SG20 lies outside the SuAWA model area, its access strategy has not been assessed within the SuAWA microsimulation model. Instead, for the purposes of modelling, the assessment assumes that the South West Relief Road (SWRR) has been delivered and that SG20-generated traffic enters the SuAWA network via the B439 Evesham Road, routing towards Stratford-upon-Avon, the A46 and M40 Junction 15.

Issue: Testing of the revised development strategy identified that this additional demand places significant pressure on the proposed Evesham Road/SWRR access roundabout. Compared with the previous "Foxtrot" scenario, westbound PM peak delays increased by approximately 70–100 seconds, with delays up to four minutes greater than the 2050 Reference Case. The modelling also predicted substantial traffic reassignment through Luddington, where westbound PM peak flows increased from approximately 12 vehicles per hour in the Reference Case to between 146 and 260 vehicles per hour.

To address these impacts, the assessment introduces **Scheme G5**, comprising a revised layout for the Evesham Road/SWRR junction. However, the published transport evidence indicates that the proposed mitigation represents a strategic modelling solution and has not yet been developed through detailed engineering design or road safety assessment. Consequently, while the modelling suggests that junction improvements could reduce the identified delays, the published evidence does not yet

demonstrate the detailed feasibility, operational performance or deliverability of the proposed mitigation.

Conclusion: Accordingly, there is a question as to whether the published transport evidence provides sufficient certainty that the significant additional traffic generated by SG20 can be accommodated on the Evesham Road corridor without unacceptable impacts on the local highway network, and whether the proposed mitigation has been demonstrated to be deliverable and effective, as required by NPPF paragraphs 36(b), 36(c) and 116.

3.2. Wellesbourne Allocations (SG15 & SG16) and Tiddington Road Impact

Context: Strategic Growth Locations SG15 (North of Wellesbourne) and SG16 (South of Wellesbourne) comprise a mixed-use development of approximately 1,550 dwellings, 27 hectares of employment land and 62.81 hectares of employment land respectively. The SuAWA Strategic Transport Assessment includes both allocations using their proposed access strategies and identifies that a substantial proportion of traffic generated by these developments is assigned westbound towards Stratford-upon-Avon via the B4086 Stratford Road / Tiddington Road corridor.

Issue: The modelling identifies significant cumulative pressure along this corridor as traffic from the Wellesbourne allocations combines with existing demand travelling towards Stratford-upon-Avon.

The B4086 / Loxley Lane junction experiences substantial queueing on the B4086 approaches as a consequence of increased through movements between Wellesbourne and Stratford-upon-Avon. Further west, the modelling identifies the Tiddington Road / Clopton Bridge junction as requiring significant intervention to accommodate forecast traffic demand. To manage these flows, the proposed mitigation package includes Scheme 1, introducing full signal control at the junction to regulate traffic entering Stratford town centre from Tiddington Road.

While the proposed signalisation is intended to improve junction operation, the modelling indicates that this approach regulates demand by introducing controlled queueing on the Tiddington Road approach, with queues extending onto Clopton Bridge, one of Stratford-upon-Avon's principal river crossings. The published evidence therefore demonstrates that accommodating the forecast traffic associated with the Wellesbourne allocations relies upon significant intervention at an already constrained and strategically important part of the highway network.

Furthermore, as with the wider mitigation package, the proposed junction arrangements represent strategic modelling solutions and have not yet been developed through detailed engineering design or road safety assessment. Consequently, the

published evidence does not yet demonstrate the detailed feasibility, operational performance or deliverability of the proposed mitigation.

3.3. Arden Street Queueing, Hospital Access, and Maybird Shopping Park

Context: The SuAWA Strategic Transport Assessment assesses the operation of the A422 Alcester Road / Arden Street / Greenhill Street corridor, one of the principal northern approaches into Stratford-upon-Avon. This corridor provides access not only to Stratford Hospital but also to the Birmingham Road retail corridor, including Maybird Shopping Park, together with several major retail, leisure and commercial destinations located to the north of the town centre. The modelling includes Local Growth Location 683 (Maybird Shopping Park) alongside strategic growth proposed elsewhere within the SuAWA network.

Issue: The published modelling identifies significant congestion and queueing along the A422 and Arden Street corridor during peak periods, with queues associated with the A422 Alcester Road / Greenhill Street junction interacting with traffic on Arden Street.

The Birmingham Road corridor already experiences substantial traffic demand associated with its role as Stratford-upon-Avon's principal out-of-town retail destination, particularly during weekends and seasonal shopping periods. However, the published transport evidence does not explain whether equivalent weekend sensitivity testing has been undertaken or whether the neutral weekday modelling assumptions adequately represent operation of this corridor during peak retail demand.

Nor does the published evidence identify any mitigation specifically targeted at improving operation along the Arden Street corridor itself.

Conclusion: Accordingly, there is a question as to whether the published transport evidence adequately demonstrates that cumulative growth can be accommodated on this important approach to Stratford-upon-Avon while maintaining reliable access to the Birmingham Road retail corridor, including Maybird Shopping Park, during periods of higher demand, as required by NPPF paragraphs 36(b), 36(c) and 116.

3.4. Evesham Place, Grove Road and Access to West Stratford

Context: The SuAWA Strategic Transport Assessment identifies the Evesham Place (A4390) / Grove Road / Seven Meadows Road / Evesham Road corridor as one of the principal approaches into west Stratford-upon-Avon. The corridor provides access to a concentration of important destinations including King Edward VI School, Stratford Girls' Grammar School, Stratford-upon-Avon College, Stratford Railway Station,

Morrisons Superstore, and the surrounding commercial and retail areas. Stratford Railway Station also functions as the principal rail interchange for Stratford-upon-Avon and serves both the town and surrounding rural communities.

Issue: The published modelling identifies significant queueing on the Evesham Place / Grove Road approach to the Seven Meadows Road roundabout under the revised "Golf Scenario". Forecast queues extend northwards along Grove Road and Rother Street, affecting the operation of adjoining junctions and access points. To mitigate these impacts, the assessment introduces Scheme G3, extending the two-lane approach along Evesham Place towards Rother Street.

However, the published modelling indicates that, despite this intervention, southbound queueing remains on the corridor and delays continue to affect adjacent side roads. As with the wider mitigation package, the proposed junction alterations represent strategic modelling solutions and have not yet been developed through detailed engineering design or road safety assessment. Consequently, the published evidence does not yet demonstrate the detailed feasibility, operational performance or deliverability of the proposed mitigation.

The corridor also performs an important role in providing access to Stratford Railway Station, educational establishments and major retail destinations. The published transport evidence does not explain whether the operational effects of forecast queueing on access to these key destinations have been separately assessed, nor whether any sensitivity testing has been undertaken to understand network performance during periods of higher demand.

Furthermore, the modelling adopts a neutral weekday baseline, whereas Stratford Railway Station and the surrounding retail and leisure destinations experience materially different travel demand during weekends and seasonal visitor periods. The published transport evidence does not explain whether the neutral weekday modelling assumptions adequately represent operation of this corridor during these periods, or whether additional sensitivity testing has been undertaken to assess the cumulative effects of development alongside elevated visitor and retail traffic.

Conclusion: Accordingly, there is a question as to whether the published transport evidence adequately demonstrates that cumulative growth can be accommodated on the Evesham Place and Grove Road corridor while maintaining reliable access to Stratford Railway Station, educational establishments and major retail destinations, and whether the proposed mitigation has been demonstrated to be deliverable and effective, as required by NPPF paragraphs 36(b), 36(c) and 116.

3.5 Bridge Foot One-Way System, Pedestrian Demand and Network Resilience

Context: The Bridge Foot one-way system forms one of Stratford-upon-Avon's principal highway junctions, connecting the A439 Warwick Road, A422 Banbury Road, A3400 Shipston Road and Clopton Bridge. In addition to carrying strategic vehicular movements, the junction accommodates significant pedestrian activity between Bridge Foot multi-storey car park, Stratford Leisure Centre, the Recreation Ground and the town centre via a series of signal-controlled pedestrian crossings. As both a key highway junction and an important pedestrian gateway into the town centre, the operation of Bridge Foot depends upon balancing vehicle capacity with pedestrian crossing demand.

Issue: The published transport modelling identifies Bridge Foot and the approaches to Clopton Bridge as sensitive parts of the highway network where queueing develops under future growth scenarios, with mitigation proposed at adjoining junctions to regulate traffic entering the town centre.

However, the published evidence does not explain how the operational effects of pedestrian crossing demand at Bridge Foot have been represented within the modelling, nor whether sensitivity testing has been undertaken to assess periods when pedestrian activity is substantially higher than a typical neutral weekday.

This is particularly relevant because Bridge Foot serves the principal walking route between Stratford's town centre, riverside attractions, public car parks and leisure facilities. Pedestrian demand at this location is likely to vary significantly during weekends, summer tourism periods and major events, resulting in more frequent operation of the signal-controlled crossings and reducing the effective capacity available for vehicular traffic.

Earlier sections of the transport evidence explain that the strategic modelling is based upon neutral weekday travel conditions and applies mode shift assumptions before assignment. However, the published evidence does not explain whether the interaction between elevated pedestrian demand and vehicular traffic at Bridge Foot has been separately assessed, or whether the neutral weekday assumptions adequately represent operation during Stratford-upon-Avon's busiest visitor periods.

Conclusion: Accordingly, there is a question as to whether the published transport evidence provides a sufficiently robust assessment of the cumulative interaction between vehicular and pedestrian movements at Bridge Foot, and whether the proposed mitigation has been demonstrated to maintain reliable operation of this strategically important junction during periods of elevated visitor demand, as required by NPPF paragraphs 36(b), 36(c) and 116.

3.6 Trinity Mead, SG19 Access and the A3400 Shipston Road Corridor

Context: The revised "Golf Scenario" introduces Strategic Growth Location SG19 (East of Stratford-upon-Avon) comprising at least 2,585 dwellings, accessed principally via a new link road between Shipston Road (A3400) and Loxley Road. A key element of the associated highway mitigation is Scheme G2, comprising widening works at the A3400 Shipston Road / Clifford Lane / Waitrose roundabout, including removal of the free-flow left-turn slip lane from Clifford Lane, widening of the northbound exit to two lanes towards Trinity Way, and widening of the Waitrose egress.

Issue: The published modelling indicates that Scheme G2 substantially reduces northbound queueing on the A3400 approach to the Clifford Lane roundabout. However, the assessment also identifies a residual PM peak queue of approximately 85 vehicles, which extends back through the proposed SG19 access roundabout on Shipston Road. The report further acknowledges uncertainty regarding the final location and form of the SG19 access arrangements.

This raises a question as to whether the proposed access strategy for SG19 has been demonstrated to operate satisfactorily under forecast 2050 traffic conditions. If residual queueing extends through the proposed access junction, the published evidence does not explain how reliable access to and from the development would be maintained during peak periods, nor how the interaction between the strategic highway network and the principal site access would operate in practice.

The A3400 Shipston Road corridor also serves the Waitrose supermarket and adjoining retail uses, which generate materially different traffic conditions during weekends and seasonal shopping periods. However, the published transport evidence does not explain whether the neutral weekday modelling assumptions adequately represent operation of this corridor during periods of elevated retail demand, or whether any sensitivity testing has been undertaken to assess the combined effects of peak retail traffic and forecast development traffic associated with SG19.

Furthermore, as with the wider mitigation package, Scheme G2 represents a strategic modelling solution and has not yet been developed through detailed engineering design or road safety assessment. Consequently, the published evidence does not yet demonstrate the detailed feasibility, operational performance or deliverability of the proposed junction arrangement.

Conclusion: Accordingly, there is a question as to whether the published transport evidence demonstrates that SG19 can be provided with a safe and suitable means of access, and whether the proposed mitigation is sufficient to prevent unacceptable operational interaction between the A3400 Shipston Road corridor and the principal access to the allocation, consistent with NPPF paragraphs 36(b), 36(c), 114(b) and 116.

3.7 Pimlico Lane, Knights Lane and the Extended SG19 Link Road

Context: The revised "Golf Scenario" includes Strategic Growth Location SG19 (East of Stratford-upon-Avon), served by a new internal link road connecting Shipston Road (A3400) and Loxley Road. Initial modelling of this arrangement identified significant traffic reassignment onto the surrounding rural highway network, particularly Knights Lane, as drivers sought to avoid congestion within Stratford-upon-Avon. In response, the assessment introduces an Extended Link Road, extending the SG19 spine road eastwards along Pimlico Lane to connect directly with the A429 Wellesbourne Road.

Issue: The published modelling indicates that, without the Extended Link Road, PM peak traffic using Knights Lane would increase by more than 100%, exceeding 600 vehicles per hour, with the report concluding that the existing rural road network is not suited to accommodating these additional movements. The Extended Link Road is therefore introduced as a strategic mitigation measure to intercept this traffic before it reaches Knights Lane. The proposed mitigation would, however, substantially alter the strategic function of Pimlico Lane, changing its role from a local rural lane into part of a strategic traffic corridor connecting the A3400 and A429. While the transport modelling demonstrates why this intervention is proposed, the published evidence does not explain the wider planning implications of this change, including its effects on landscape character, environmental quality, residential amenity, severance, or the surrounding rural highway network. Furthermore, as with the wider mitigation package, the Extended Link Road represents a strategic modelling solution and has not yet been developed through detailed engineering design, environmental assessment or road safety assessment. Consequently, the published evidence does not yet demonstrate the detailed feasibility, operational performance or deliverability of the proposed scheme.

Conclusion: Accordingly, there is a question as to whether the published transport evidence adequately demonstrates that the proposed Extended Link Road represents an appropriate and deliverable solution to the traffic impacts arising from SG19, and whether the wider planning implications of changing Pimlico Lane into a strategic transport corridor have been sufficiently assessed, consistent with NPPF paragraphs 36(b), 36(c) and 116.

3.8 Cumulative Operation of the South Stratford Corridor

Context: The principal approaches to Stratford-upon-Avon from the south and east operate as an interconnected highway corridor centred on Clopton Bridge, Bridge Foot, the A3400 Shipston Road, Seven Meadows Road, Evesham Road and the A422 Banbury Road. Rather than functioning independently, congestion at one junction influences the operation of adjacent junctions through queue interaction and traffic reassignment.

Issue: The published Strategic Transport Assessment assesses a series of individual mitigation schemes across this corridor, including Schemes G1, G2, G3 and G5

together with the signalisation of key junctions around Clopton Bridge. While these interventions generally improve operation at individual locations, the published evidence also identifies residual queueing at several of the principal junctions.

Taken collectively, the published evidence demonstrates that the strategy relies upon a sequence of interdependent mitigation schemes operating together to maintain acceptable network performance. However, the evidence does not explain how residual queueing at one location may affect the operation of adjoining junctions, nor whether the resilience of the corridor as a whole has been assessed under periods of elevated visitor, retail or seasonal traffic demand.

Conclusion: Accordingly, there is a question as to whether the published transport evidence demonstrates that the principal southern approaches to Stratford-upon-Avon operate satisfactorily as an integrated transport corridor, rather than simply through the operation of individual junctions in isolation, consistent with NPPF paragraphs 36(b), 36(c) and 116.

4. Conclusions and Recommended Matters for Examination

Conclusions

The transport evidence published in support of the South Warwickshire Local Plan demonstrates that substantial work has been undertaken to understand the transport implications of the proposed spatial strategy and to identify a comprehensive package of mitigation measures. However, the published evidence also identifies a number of important residual impacts, strategic dependencies and acknowledged limitations.

Taken collectively, these matters raise legitimate questions as to whether the transport evidence currently demonstrates that the Plan is justified, effective and capable of being delivered over the Plan period, consistent with the tests of soundness in NPPF paragraph 36.

In particular, the published evidence does not clearly demonstrate:

- that the proposed mitigation package restores operation of the network to Reference Case conditions across all key corridors;
- that infrastructure critical to delivery of the strategy, particularly the South West Relief Road, will be delivered within the timescales assumed by the transport modelling;
- that the assumptions underpinning mode shift, background traffic growth and cross-boundary development remain robust for a plan extending to 2050;

- that strategic mitigation schemes have progressed beyond concept-level modelling to demonstrate detailed feasibility, operational performance and deliverability; or
- that the cumulative operation and resilience of Stratford-upon-Avon's principal transport corridors has been assessed under the range of traffic conditions likely to occur throughout the Plan period, including periods of elevated visitor and retail demand.

Accordingly, the evidence raises a question as to whether the cumulative impacts of the proposed development strategy have been fully understood and whether the published transport evidence presently provides a sufficiently robust basis upon which to conclude that the Plan satisfies NPPF paragraphs 36, 114 and 116.

Recommended Matters for Examination

It is respectfully requested that the Inspector considers whether the Joint Local Planning Authorities should provide further evidence in the following areas before the Plan is found sound.

1. Infrastructure Delivery

Provide further evidence demonstrating the funding strategy, delivery programme, governance arrangements and implementation mechanisms for the South West Relief Road and other critical transport infrastructure upon which the proposed development strategy depends.

2. Development Phasing

Demonstrate how the proposed phasing of strategic allocations will be coordinated with the delivery of critical transport infrastructure, including whether policy mechanisms are required to ensure that development does not substantially outpace infrastructure provision.

3. Transport Modelling Assumptions

Explain and, where appropriate, validate the assumptions underpinning:

- background traffic growth;
- mode shift;
- public transport improvements;
- cross-boundary development;
- visitor demand; and
- neutral weekday modelling assumptions.

This should include clarification of whether additional sensitivity testing is required.

4. Strategic Mitigation

Provide further evidence demonstrating the engineering feasibility, operational performance, road safety implications and deliverability of the principal highway mitigation schemes identified through the Strategic Transport Assessment.

5. Cumulative Network Performance

Demonstrate that the proposed mitigation package provides satisfactory operation of the strategic highway network as an integrated system, rather than solely through the performance of individual junctions, including consideration of periods of elevated visitor and retail demand where appropriate.

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