

Stroud District Local Plan Examination Pause

Short Report July 2024

Overview

The Inspectors wrote to Stroud District Council on 5th February 2024 confirming they would allow a pause in the Examination between 5th February and 5th December 2024. During this period the Inspectors require Stroud District Council to undertake and provide all the tasks set out in their letter (ID-015) sections I-VI. Stroud District Council have agreed to these actions and timescales, together with Gloucestershire County Council, South Gloucestershire Council, National Highways and the site promoters where relevant.

The Inspectors have now written to Stroud District Council (ID-018) with the following request:

A period of time has elapsed since the Inspectors agreed to the pause of the Examination of the Stroud Local Plan. The Inspectors would like the Council to provide a short report on the progress being made on the actions currently being undertaken. The first update should be provided by the end of this month (31 May 2024) and then submitted on a monthly basis thereafter. These should also be uploaded to the Examination webpage.

The length and content of the monthly reports will vary depending on the progress with the individual projects and tasks set out in ID-017 I-IV. The following short report is the first report (May) and has been written jointly with Stroud District Council, Gloucestershire County Council, National Highways, South Gloucestershire Council and relevant highway consultants.

M5 Junction 12 Project

The following update is provided by Gloucestershire County Council and Stroud District Council, who have jointly commissioned WSP:

Since the previous update, WSP have completed the highway designs and associated strategic and junction modelling work for the three junction solutions and have delivered to programme. The GG104 assessment, Design Risk Management Schedule



and Pre-Construction Information have also been completed to programme. The Stage 2 Optioneering Report has been drafted by WSP and reviewed by the client group. Work on the costs and economics for the three junction solutions is currently being undertaken and engagement is ongoing with the client group on the outcomes of this work. The client group suggested an extended project programme to allow a longer client feedback period on the costs and economics before final submission of the Stage 2 Optioneering Report. WSP is on track to deliver the Stage 2 Optioneering Report in the agreed timescales, allowing a preferred Junction design to be consulted on in September and submitted to the Inspectors in December 2024.

The following update is provided by National Highways:

National Highways continues to work collaboratively with Stroud District Council, Gloucestershire County Council and with the councils' consultants to progress the development of options for improvement of M5 J12 and J14, including attendance as a contributor at the M5 J12 and J14 Working Group meetings. National Highways is content that the work being undertaken on behalf of Stroud District Council and Gloucestershire County Council is progressing in accordance with agreed timetables and will continue to cooperate as reasonably practicable with the local authorities and their consultants having due regard to government policy and guidance.

M5 Junction 12 Project Status

Gloucestershire County Council, Stroud District Council and National Highways are working collaboratively to progress the works. WSP is on programme to deliver the required works for a September consultation with submission to the Inspectors 5th December 2024

M5 Junction 14 Project

The following update is Provided by Stroud District Council:

The first draft design for the Grade-Separated arrangement of M5 Junction 14 has been completed and shared with the TWG. Comments have been received from NH in relation to the design of the scheme which are currently being reviewed and actioned. Many of the comments are useful guidance in relation to the traffic management associated with the construction of the scheme, or otherwise matters which would be addressed as part of future stages of scheme delivery. SDC will continue to liaise with NH on these matters and remains confident that agreement will be reached.



Micro-simulation modelling using the Vissim software programme has been requested by NH to assess junction performance in more detail. This has been undertaken, and minor iterations to the design carried out based on the modelling.

The Order of Cost Estimate and impact apportionment workstreams are largely complete and have been circulated to members of the TWG for comment. The impact apportionment exercise has been refined to address previous comments raised by neighbouring authorities, including addressing uncertainty with growth in neighbouring authorities and points of detail around the methodology.

SDC at its consultants are fully engaged in the M5 J12 work, which is being led by GCC and its Consultants. There are regular progress and technical meetings taking place across both workstreams. A core team sits across both programmes to ensure consistency and drive progress.

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M5 Junction 14 Project Status

Stroud District Council, National Highways and South Gloucestershire Council are working collaboratively to progress the works. AECOM is on programme to deliver the required works for a September consultation with submission to the Inspectors 5th December 2024.

Housing Update

The following update is Provided by Stroud District Council:

The Council are working with National Highways and GCC to verify evidence set out in SLP-AP-002 Appendix 2. This will confirm the amount of development and sites that can be brought forward before improvements are required to M5 Junctions 12 and 14.



The Council is continuing to update the housing trajectory to take account of latest annual monitoring data (01 April 2023 – 31 March 2024) and changes to anticipated delivery identified during the examination hearing sessions.

Housing Supply Project Status

The work is on programme for a September consultation with submission to the Inspectors 5th December 2024.

Sharpness Vale New Settlement

The following update is Provided by Stantec, on behalf of the promoter:

1 Sharpness Passenger Rail Service

Following meetings with Network Rail regarding next steps to progress the Sharpness Passenger Rail Service proposals, it was agreed that a Strategic Outline Business Case (SoBC) would be prepared which follows the DfT Business Plan Guidance. Sharpness has instructed a consultant from Network Rail's 'STAR' consultant list to deliver the SoBC.

The final draft of the SoBC is being prepared for discussion. In the preparation of the report, the consultants have undertaken detailed discussions with Great Western Railways (GWR) as well as other key stakeholders such as Network Rail. On balance the report shows that the new service will be viable but more importantly has recognised that there would be greater community and sustainability benefits if it were planned more strategically to embrace a wider regional rail service that was inclusive of localised rail destinations such as Sharpness, Berkeley Road and Bristol Road, Stonehouse and included stops at Cam and Dursley as well as Charfield. A strategically inclusive service would ensure slower commuter trains left the network at Sharpness and allowed the faster services that travel between regional centres to run uninterrupted. The new service would also need the re-introduction of the southern chord to allow an easy link to Bristol. GWR has suggested that a regionally inclusive service would be more attractive to a greater number of passenger and consequently more viable in the long term. They have also agreed that such a service would be more attractive to their organisation.

Sharpness LLP has therefore instigated a stakeholder group that will include Western Gateway, Stroud District Council, South Gloucestershire Council, Gloucestershire County Council, Network Rail and GWR to now look at a wider strategic railway infrastructure that will include Sharpness and deliver a more comprehensive and viable rail service over the longer term. The first meeting of the Stakeholder Group will be set up for August.



2 Demand Responsive Transit

As has always been part of the sustainable transport approach for Sharpness Vale, demand responsive express coach services towards Gloucester (before rail is introduced) and towards key employment destinations near Bristol are an important aspect of the low carbon approach to the settlement. Stantec continue to engage with two demand responsive transit providers to obtain operational and cost information relating to the provision of these services. Updated trip generation and distribution assessments have been produced to inform this process. A report will be produced by Stantec incorporating information received directly from the DRT providers. This process is currently in progress.

3 Mobility as a Service (MaaS)

Stantec continue to update their evidence report on Mobility as a Service provision for Sharpness Vale drawing on additional examples of current applications. As set out in our June update, this is currently being refined further subsequent to the Land use and Transport Planning: DfT Science Advisory Council paper published on 29 April 2024 which recommends that:

Given the limited evidence available in the UK, data should be sought from international case studies. There is a need to build a wider evidence base of what ‘good’ looks like for a variety of contexts and scales, referenced to designs of new developments for car-independency that are shown to have been successful.

4 Strategic Road Network – M5 J14 Interim Scheme

Following our initial discussions with National Highways, the process to assess the impact of development at Sharpness and the identification of an interim highway mitigation scheme at the M5 Junction 14 has been concluded and a Final Technical Note with associated design drawings has been produced. This has been presented to and discussed the Stroud District Council Officers and is being issued to National Highways and South Gloucestershire County Council Highways Development Management by the Sharpness Development LLP for the purpose of reaching an in-principle agreement to the interim mitigation scheme which can accommodate the traffic associated with 1000 new homes at Sharpness Vale without a severe impact upon the local and strategic highway network.

Sharpness Vale New Settlement Project Status

The work is on programme for a September consultation with submission to the Inspectors 5th December 2024.



Wisloe New Settlement

The following update is Provided by Stantec on behalf of the promoter:

The Action Plan for Wisloe New Settlement derived from the EIP session on 23rd June 2023 and has been progressed accordingly. There are no further substantial updates from the previous June update.

Wisloe New Settlement Project Status

The work is on programme for a September consultation with submission to the Inspectors 5th December 2024.

