

Stroud District Local Plan (2020-2040)
STRATEGIC MATTERS STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND ADDENDUM

between

Gloucestershire County Council
Stroud District Council

December 2024

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 A Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground (GSoCG) covering agreements on various strategic planning matters has been prepared by the seven local authorities in Gloucestershire. The GSoCG provides for additional or supplementary Statements of Common Ground to be prepared by participating local authorities, particularly within the context of emerging local plans.
- 1.2 This additional Addendum Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) covering strategic transport matters has been prepared as Stroud District Council has been working with partners and site promoters to address soundness concerns raised by the Inspectors in their letter dated [4 August 2023](#) based on:
1. The capacity of the Strategic Road Network (SRN), specifically the capacity of M5 Junctions 12 and 14 to accommodate proposed housing growth;
 2. The proposed passenger train service and bespoke Mobility as a Service transport scheme (MaaS) at Strategic Site Allocation PS36 Sharpness New settlement on the grounds of viability and deliverability.
 3. The provision of the pedestrian and cycle bridge over the M5 motorway at Strategic Site Allocation PS37 Wisloe New settlement on the grounds of viability and deliverability.

Additional information and a commitment to address the Inspectors' specific viability and deliverability concerns relating to Strategic Site Allocations PS36 Sharpness new settlement and PS37 Wisloe new settlement were submitted to the Inspectors in September 2023.

- 1.3 A Joint Action Plan with National Highways (NH), Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) and South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) to address issues relating to the capacity of the SRN was submitted to the Inspectors on 30 November 2023
- 1.4 A further letter from the Inspectors dated [5 February 2024](#), ID-015 in the Examination Library, confirmed a pause in the Examination until December 2024 to allow the work set out in the Joint Action Plan and additional work relating to PS36 and PS37 to be completed and a six week period of public consultation on the outcomes of the workstreams to be carried out.

Consultation documents

- 1.5 The outcomes of the workstreams are set out below:

[EB133a - Design and Costing M5 Junction 14 Report](#)

[EB133b - Design and Costing M5 Junctions 12 and 14 Funding Overview](#)

[EB133c - Design and Costing M5 Junction 12 Stage 2 Optioneering Report](#)

[EB134 - Housing Delivery](#)

[EB134 - Appendix 1 Housing Delivery](#)

[EB135 - M5 Junctions 12 and 14 Scenarios](#)

[EB135 - Appendix 1 M5 Junctions 12 and 14 Scenarios](#)

[EB136 - PS36 Sharpness New Settlement](#)

[EB136 Appendix 1 - TN001-M5 J14 VISSIM](#)

[EB136 Appendix 2 - TN002 Trip Gen](#)

[EB136 Appendix 3 - Sharpness Branch Line SOC](#)

[EB136 Appendix 4 - TN03 - Updated Research on Mobility-as-a-Service](#)

[EB136 Appendix 5 - TN001 - Update to Sharpness Vale DRT- Coach Services](#)

[EB136 Appendix 6 - Update to M5J14 Technical Notepost NH consultation](#)

[EB137 - PS37 Wisloe New Settlement](#)

- 1.5 The Inspectors stated that only parties who submitted duly made representations at the Regulation 19 consultation stage of the Plan are invited and eligible to respond. Closing date was the **23 October 2024**. This addendum SOCG is a consequence of just the technical evidence consultation and has been signed by Stroud District Council and Gloucestershire County Council at officer level referred to hereafter as ‘the parties’.

2. Strategic matters that are agreed

Transport

- 2 GCC officers welcome the Plan’s approach to both recognising the changing needs of housing over a life course and also ensuring that mix and tenure of housing provision will provide high standards of affordable, accessible dwellings, and that accessibility to the local facilities is a primary consideration.
- 2.1 Preliminary designs and associated costs for the improvements to the M5 junction have been prepared on behalf of Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) and SDC for J12.. For J12 two options are recommended for further development – Option 2a as an improvement to the existing Dumbbell Roundabout arrangement, or Option 3a as a grade-separated roundabout.

- 2.2 GCC officers welcome the additional evidence provided in terms of the M5 Junction 12 Feasibility Study. However, it is agreed that GCC officers would be keen to see the outputs of the next phases of work (business cases) before a decision is made on which scheme option is taken forward.
- 2.3 The options being proposed as possible solutions, do conclude that an effective solution can overcome the junction capacity constraints, but the potential solutions ('options') vary in design and cost
- 2.4 Regarding the funding strategy, GCC officers acknowledge that some of the concerns raised previously are now addressed, however, GCC remains concerned about the scale of the total funding that needs to be raised to deliver two motorway junctions in the absence of confirmed Government funding for the proposed funding strategy
- 2.5 For M5, J14 a grade separated roundabout is proposed.
- 2.6 Stroud currently has good air quality, with no declared AQMAs. The Wisloe Design Code has been referenced throughout plans, with this Design Code detailing active travel and building measures which will help maintain good air quality. This is welcomed by the parties. With a large proportion of the development being proposed along main roads and in the light of human health implications from exposure to poor air quality, this Design Code reference is supported.
- 2.7 The parties agree that the Stroud Local Plan seeks to support economic vibrancy of the district with support for some key employment sectors including Retail and Hospitality, Tourism and the Visitor Economy, Arts and Culture, Agriculture, Agri-tech (including rural diversification), Manufacturing and Advanced Engineering. It also identifies the need to regenerate existing and new employment sites to meet the needs of the local economy.
- 2.8 In respect of public health GCC officers welcome the recommendation within EB133a for an Air Quality Assessment to be conducted to identify air quality impacts of both the construction and operational phases of the proposed development on human health and ecological receptors. This is supported by SDC Officers.
- 2.9 The recommendation within EB133a for plan makers to conduct a baseline noise survey and assessment in order to confirm any noise impacts of the proposed development are welcomed and Stroud are content to deliver this, working with the parties.
- 2.10 The parties agree that they have continued to co-operate on developing a transport evidence base during the Examination in Public pause for the Stroud District Local Plan.

Commitments for future work and collaboration

- 2.2 The parties agree to engaged proactively and positively on ongoing strategic transport matters relating to the Stroud District Local Plan.
- 2.3 The parties agree to work together where possible to develop any further transport analysis required to provide evidence for the Stroud District Local Plan at examination.

The options being proposed as possible solutions at J12, do conclude that an effective solution can overcome the junction capacity constraints, but the potential solutions ('options') vary in design and cost.

- 2.4 The Parties recognise that relying on funding a significant proportion via Government may be challenging, especially with the spending review currently underway by Government.
- 2.5 GCC officers would like to note that funding is not only required to mitigate the impact on the motorway, but also on the local road network. These local road network impacts were identified in the original modelling; however, they have not been confirmed through the work on the M5 J12 Feasibility Study and this work will need to be updated and costed as part of any future stages of work through the development management stage for example.
- 2.6 All officers are glad to see additional evidence provided for Junction 14 on the M5 and are happy to continue to cooperate on finding a solution for this junction working with neighbouring authorities and National Highways.
- 2.7 In respect of EB133a - Design and Costing M5 Junction 14 Report - an Air Quality Assessment is encouraged which SDC can support.
- 2.8 The parties agree to work together to implement the transport policies contained within the Stroud District Local Plan (2020 to 2040) when adopted.

3. Matters that are not agreed

- 3.1 Gloucestershire County Council has significant concerns regarding the allocation of strategic site PS36 Sharpness on transport grounds. Network Rail and GWR wrote to Gloucestershire County Council on the 30th of September 2024 setting out their assessment of the Sharpness promoter's Strategic Outline Case (SOC) for reopening Sharpness Branch Line to passenger service. NR and GWR make the following statement:

“Having reviewed the SOC, it is very clear that there is no strong financial case for any of the heavy rail options considered, with operational costs outweighing revenue in all scenarios. This is without factoring in capital expenditure costs, which would be significant if the preferred South Chord option were to be taken forward. There are also some important omissions when considering the economic case. The document notes that further work is required to look at operational issues at Gloucester to understand how services could be fitted into the timetable. Addressing this may well require further infrastructure, which has not been factored into this SOC. Signalling changes have also not been included in the appraisal.

With no identified funding strategy, other than seeking to add the scheme to the national Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline, and bearing in mind the current economic situation, it is difficult to see a scenario in which any of the heavy rail proposals would be a viable proposition. It should be worth noting that the current national pipeline is oversubscribed with projects that do deliver viable solutions to challenges.”

- 3.2 GCC officers remain concerned about the scale of the total funding that needs to be raised to deliver two motorway junctions, and that there is currently no funding strategy that secures the funding required. GCC officers will continue to work with SDC to build on previous experience of seeking contributions from development for large scale infrastructure improvements to strengthen the Stroud Local Plan policy position on this issue. SDC continue to update modelling and funding aspects to resolve this matter.
- 3.3 The additional rail evidence submitted concludes that revenues will not offset scheme and operating costs for options A and B and all 3 options presented will offer poor value for money, although the Benefit Cost Ratios (BCRs) are not shown. SDC will continue to seek that this matter is addressed by the promoter and them working with Network Rail
- 3.3 The Strategic Outline Case does not address the feasibility of incorporating new or diverted services and extended journey times into the strategic timetable structure of the Bristol-Gloucester-Birmingham Main Line, or their performance implications. GWR and Network Rail state the Sharpness proposals are poor value for money and are unlikely to be compatible with future service development on the Bristol-Birmingham Main Line which has complex inter-relationships with other routes and is highly utilised by GB-wide passenger and freight services. It is unlikely that Sharpness alone can justify wholly new rail services or extended journey times on existing services, or the infrastructure required to meet these. The case is not compelling for support from Network Rail, the Department for Transport or the wider rail industry. SDC continues to liaise with the site promoters and encourages to address these issues.
- 3.4 The Strategic Case reports, but does not develop, other mode options higher in Stantec's feasibility ranking than the rail options. GCC officers are also concerned about the financial case for the coach services proposed. The proposed hourly service relies on residents wanting to travel at the same time which is unrealistic in practice. To connect the proposed development with the key locations (Bristol, Stroud and Gloucester) would require significant ongoing revenue support for new or extended bus services. The site promoter has been asked to address these points for the EiP.
- 3.5 GCC expect a 'tipping point' be identified for housing delivery prior to any mitigation at M5 junction 14 and would also expect a cumulative impact assessment for all of the allocation sites in the emerging Stroud Local Plan to be undertaken. SDC continue to update modelling and funding aspects to resolve these issues.
- 3.6 There is a conflict between the proposed delivery of 1,000 houses by 2032 by the site promoter and the anticipated number of 595 houses to be built by 2031/32, 815 houses by 2032/33 and 1,035 houses by 2033/34 showing in EB135 Appendix 1. TN001 assumes that more public transport options, including express bus/coach services to key employments, would be available to Sharpness residents travelling further to Bristol and/or Gloucester, resulting in an increase in trips to work by public transport and a subsequent reduction in car trips. GCC officers are not convinced that viable public transport services that offer a real alternative to the car can be realistically achieved at this location and are therefore concerned that such an assumption, as well as the low trip rate estimates and high internalisation factor, would likely underestimate traffic impact by car on the highway network. SDC continues to liaise with and encourages the site promoters to address these specific issues.

4. Summary

4.1 Significant progress has been made to understand the Strategic Road Network infrastructure funding requirements and the likelihood of their delivery to support the Plan. GCC still have significant concerns with regards to the affordability of SRN infrastructure and the allocation at Sharpness including the evidence provided to justify its sustainable transport interventions and inclusion within the Plan. The parties agree that the EIP should recommence for the Inspectors to consider the updated evidence.

5. Signatories

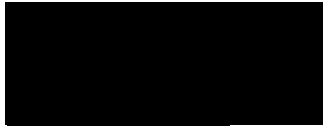
Signed on behalf of Gloucestershire County Council



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Simon Excell, Assistant Director, Planning & Economic Development

Dated: Monday 2nd December 2024

Signed on behalf of Stroud District Council



James Brain, Head of Planning Strategy and Economic Development

Dated: Monday, 2nd December 2024

This SoCG is agreed as of [ADD DATE]. However, this doesn't prejudice any changes as a result of future hearing sessions and GCC welcomes continued discussions.

Attached: Schedule of recommended changes contained within Memorandum dated 1 February 2023