

Our ref: SHARE 24636036
Your ref:

By email to:
Planning.policy@shropshire.gov.uk

Network Delivery and Development
Directorate
The Cube
199 Wharfside Street
Birmingham
West Midlands
B1 1RN

Direct Line: 0121 687 4137

Fax: 0121 678 8510

28 April 2014

Dear sirs,

**SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL
SITE ALLOCATION AND MANAGEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT (SAMDev)
CONSULTATION**

The Highways Agency welcomes the opportunity to comment on the current submission version of the SAMdev document, produced by Shropshire Council. The Highways Agency is responsible for maintaining, operating and improving the Strategic Road Network (SRN) in England, on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport which in this area, includes the M54/A5 corridor.

We have previously engaged with the Council in relation to this document and recognise that it has evolved, taking account of the representations received as well as the underlying transport evidence base, which was prepared to support the adopted Core Strategy. The evolution of this document has also considered subsequent transport modelling, which specifically examined the traffic implications associated with proposed development at Shifnal and Whitchurch.

This work has assured the Highways Agency that the document is based on the principles of securing sustainable economic development, with the majority of new development directed to the most accessible and sustainable locations and that the transport impacts on the SRN are likely to be acceptable.

It is evident that a high number of the settlements where new development is intended are relatively remote from the SRN and/or that the character of trips associated with them is unlikely to be of concern to the Highways Agency. For those sites/settlements where the impacts may be more significant, we set out below our current observations:

Craven Arms

Our response to the preferred options noted the ongoing highways issues associated with the development of proposed employment site ELR053. We note that the current document confirms (in table S7.1b) that a new strategic highways junction is intended onto the A49, in conjunction with site ELR055.

At this stage, a definitive view in relation to this new access cannot be provided, based on the limited information available. We understand that there may be a number of options under consideration. The Highways Agency anticipates working closely with stakeholders in order to assess and define the most suitable access solution to enable the delivery of these important employment sites. In particular, the Highways Agency will wish to see close working with Network Rail and the County Council as plans for revised access arrangements to the site of Long Lane is developed further as this may require amendment to the current SRN junction.

Ludlow

The comments provided by the Highways Agency to the preferred options consultation (dated 18 July 2012) remain valid.

The need to enhance accessibility between site LUD017 and the main build up area west of the A49 for cyclists and pedestrians will be a key consideration. The Highways Agency will be pleased to assist with identifying appropriate provisions and associated delivery mechanisms for this, as part of any future planning application strategy.

Similarly the delivery of key employment sites ELR059 and ELR058 will necessitate new access arrangements and associated highways improvements which will require detailed assessment as part of any future application.

An integrated approach to the transport assessment of these sites in Ludlow would be beneficial.

Oswestry

We note the intention to increase the scale of the proposed SUE in Oswestry, with an associated reduction in housing numbers at Church Stretton and other sites in Oswestry. The Highways Agency is of the view that the implications for the SRN would be acceptable. This reflects the fact that works are expected to be undertaken under the 'pinchpoint' programme to deliver a scheme of improvement works to the A5/A483 junction. These works are intended to enable the delivery of key housing and employment sites in Oswestry.

We understand the delivery of the Oswestry SUE is intended to be guided by a Masterplan and also a specific Memorandum of Understanding between key stakeholders on highways matters. We understand that this will serve to guide future development, including ensuring that any adverse impacts are properly identified, and where necessary mitigated. The Highways Agency welcomes further engagement in these matters to help facilitate the delivery of this sustainable development opportunity.

Shrewsbury

As with the Oswestry SUE, whilst the Highways Agency has no objection in principle it will nonetheless be critical to ensure that any future development proposals for the Shrewsbury SUEs, is fully supported by a comprehensive transport assessment process, including travel planning.

The Highways Agency expects to play an ongoing role in relation to this, in order to ensure that the proposals are delivered alongside any requisite infrastructure requirements and that effective funding mechanisms for this are in place.

Telford

Whilst SAMdev does not extend across Telford and Wrekin, there are a number of potential cross boundary issues associated with future development in this area (e.g. the LEP proposed T54 site adjacent to M54 junction 4) and the Highways Agency welcomes further engagement with and between key stakeholders to ensure that these are fully understood, under the duty to cooperate.

We trust these comments are helpful and look forward to ongoing engagement during the future submission and examination stages.

Yours sincerely

Letty Askew
Asset Manager
Network Delivery and Development Directorate
Midlands Team