

**Basildon Borough Local Plan 2014-2034**

**Statement of Common Ground**

**Organisations: Basildon Borough Council and Highways England**

**Date: March 2019**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1. This Statement of Common Ground identifies areas of agreement between Basildon Borough Council (BBC) and Highways England (HE) in relation to the Basildon Borough Revised Publication Local Plan and supporting evidence base. There are no outstanding areas of disagreement.
- 1.2. This statement has been prepared to assist the examination of the Basildon Borough Local Plan. Highways England made representations to the Regulation 19 Revised Publication Local Plan published for consultation on the 1 November 2018. The following table sets out the relevant representation numbers:

<b>Chapter and Policy</b>	<b>RPLP No.</b>
Chapter 9 T1	RPLP/2072

- 1.3. A Plan has been provided at Appendix 1 which shows the locations and administrative areas covered by the statement. Highways England has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport as strategic highway company under the provisions of the Infrastructure Act 2015 and is the highway authority, traffic authority and street authority for the strategic road network (SRN). In spatial planning and development control terms, HE have a duty to safeguard the operation of the SRN as set out in the DfT Circular 02/2013 (The Strategic Road Network and the Delivery of Sustainable Development). The circular encourages Highways England to work co-operatively with Local Planning Authorities within the framework of the Government's policies for planning, growth areas, regeneration, integrated transport and sustainability.

**2. Matters Agreed**

- 2.1. BBC has fully engaged with Highways England on the development of each Council's respective Local Plans from the outset. In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, HE (and before their existence the Highways Agency) has been formally consulted at every stage of consultation on the Local Plan together with its accompanying Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA).

- 2.2. Neither Highways England nor the Highways Agency previously, have provided representations on the previous consultations regarding the Basildon Borough Local Plan despite being invited to do so. The representation received in respect of Revised Publication Local Plan is the first occasion Highways England have commented on the proposals it contains.

### **Areas of Agreement**

- **That BBC has made appropriate efforts to engage with HE to ensure that all cross-boundary strategic issues have been properly considered and where appropriate reflected in the Basildon Borough Local Plan 2014-2034.**

### Lower Thames Crossing

- 2.3. The Lower Thames Crossing is also identified as a priority for investment in the National Infrastructure Plan and will form part of the strategic highway network providing congestion relief and additional capacity to the existing Dartford river crossings. It is necessary to work closely with Highways England, Essex County Council and neighbouring authorities to ensure that in addition to maximising the opportunities the crossing presents, any challenges arising from it to the local transport network are fully addressed.
- 2.4. So far, Basildon Borough Council has been a member of the Stakeholder Advisory Panel for the Lower Thames Crossing project. The purpose of the Lower Thames Crossing Stakeholder Advisory Panel is to help Highways England draw upon local knowledge and understand stakeholders' needs, priorities and opinions with respect to the Lower Thames Crossing. Panel members have provided local knowledge and evidence as well as advice on engaging their own organisations and others with an interest in proposals for an additional crossing of the Lower Thames.
- 2.5. Basildon Borough Council has previously provided representations to consultations on the Lower Thames Crossing. In 2013, Basildon Council strongly agreed with the principle of Highways England's proposal to locate a crossing at Route Option C, rather than just increasing capacity at the existing crossing as part of Route Option A. In 2016, the Council's view was that on balance Route 4, which took a route to the east of the A128 closer to the Basildon Borough, connecting with a widened A127 from junction 29 on the M25 should be the preferential route for the Lower Thames Crossing. This route was considered by Basildon Council to offer the most economic benefits to the Borough's local communities and businesses, including prompting upgrades on interconnecting routes.
- 2.6. In the most recent representation to the LTC in 2018, Basildon Borough Council strongly supports Highways England's notion that a new Lower Thames Crossing is needed. However, Basildon Council also expressed concerns that the traffic modelling underestimated the potential impact of Local Plan growth in the south Essex sub-region due to a generic assumption of a 2.5% increase in trips. The Government agenda to increase the supply of housing through the completion of local development plans is likely to encourage the impacts shown in the 2041 and 2051 forecasts for the LTC to be felt much sooner. If this is the case, Basildon Borough Council recognised that there may be a need to incorporate more localised improvements to the road network including the A127, A13, and A130.

## Areas of Agreement

- **BBC and HE agree that they will continue to work together to secure the best possible planning, investment and coordination of upgrades to existing and new transport infrastructure that could positively affect the standard and reliability of key movement corridors and river crossings. This includes the continuation of the good working practices already established as part of the LTC project, where BBC has been actively involved in the Stakeholder Advisory Panel.**

## Site Allocations

- 2.7. HE has not raised specific objections with regard to site allocations in the Basildon Borough Local Plan.

## Areas of Agreement

- **There are no areas of uncommon ground or unresolved strategic matters in respect of site allocations.**

## 3. Matters Currently Under Discussion

### South Essex Joint Strategic Plan 2018-2038

- 3.1. Basildon Borough sits within the South Essex sub-region. There is a long history of the authorities in South Essex working together on Strategic Planning and in 2017 the Leaders and Chief Executives of the six Local Planning Authorities (LPA) and Essex County Council came together to create a shared vision for South Essex: South Essex 2050. The vision identified key policy themes to be supported and six growth areas within South Essex where it is expected development will be focussed.
- 3.2. In June 2017, through a Memorandum of Understanding these authorities formed the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA).
- 3.3. Through a Statement of Common Ground signed in June 2017, ASELA has agreed to prepare a Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) for South Essex. The ambition is to use this joint, statutory planning mechanism to coordinate the delivery of the South Essex 2050 vision, through partnership working at local and national levels, including sub-national transport bodies to bring forward the strategic infrastructure improvements needed to support growth.
- 3.4. The JSP has, in turn, been incorporated into the six LPA Local Development Schemes and is now being prepared. Highways England will need to be an integral part of the JSP as it progresses as the results of this plan will identify any major mitigation elements required to the highway network in order to sustain additional growth across South Essex.

## Areas of Agreement

- **BBC, HE and the ASELAs authorities will work together to ensure that strategic highway matters are addressed across South Essex as the Joint Strategic Plan emerges.**

### Transport and Highways

- 3.5. In the case of the Basildon Borough, although there is no SRN directly within the Borough, however, the A13, A127, A1089 and M25 in particular junctions 28, 29 and 30, are located to the north and west of the area respectively.
- 3.6. A Statement of Common Ground exists between the London Borough of Havering, the Essex LPAs and Highway Authorities along the entire route of the A127 to work together more collaboratively to plan and secure improvements to the key strategic route. Highways England did not sign up to this Statement of Common Ground as they considered that it did not adequately represent the Strategic Road Network, however, they have subsequently signed a Statement of Common Ground separately with the London Borough of Havering.
- 3.7. A Route Management Strategy for the A13 is also currently being developed by the Highway Authorities across South Essex in order to plan and secure improvements to the key strategic route, although this strategy is somewhere behind the A127 in terms of its development. Given Highways England's role as the highway authority for part of its route, Basildon Borough Council and Essex County Council will ensure that Highways England are involved in the progression of this strategy.
- 3.8. As part of the Lower Thames Crossing process mentioned in section 2, Basildon Borough Council has shared details of all development proposals contained in the Revised Publication Local Plan, and also all urban development that has planning permission, is currently under construction, or has been promoted for development through the Council's Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment, so that the associated traffic impact can be modelled on the highway network covering the area of interest for HE in relation to the SRN.
- 3.9. Basildon Borough Council and Highways England believe that in order to fully understand the potential impact of the Basildon Borough Revised Publication Local Plan on the Strategic Road Network, there is a need to consolidate the transport modelling work that has already been done. This includes detailed modelling of the highway network for the following projects:
- A127 / A130 Fairglens Interchange Model;
  - Essex County Council South Essex Model;
  - Highways England Lower Thames Crossing Model.
- 3.10. Both Basildon Borough Council and Highways England are confident that consolidating the modelling work already done it will be possible to accurately understand the full impact of the Revised Publication Local Plan on the Strategic Highway Network. It is also understood that the Lower Thames Crossing Model is likely to be the most accurate and detailed model in terms of forecasting the impact of growth across the whole of the south Essex authorities, and if following the most recent consultation, Highways England decide to model all of the individual site allocations as requested by Basildon Borough Council in its consultation response in 2018, this model should be able to provide the level of modelling required.

## Areas of Agreement

- BBC and HE agree that there is a need to action a piece of work which reviews the existing modelling work already done to fully understand the impact of growth in the Revised Publication Local Plan on the Strategic Road Network.

### 4. Matters Not Yet Agreed

- 4.1. There are no areas of uncommon ground where an agreement has not been reached.

### 5. Monitoring

- 5.1. This statement will be maintained by BBC and updated as necessary.
- 5.2. BBC will continue to work with HE beyond the Local Plan adoption for the monitoring and implementation of the Local Plan.

### 6. Signatories:

Signature: 	Signature: 
Matthew Winslow Service Manager – Strategic Planning, Housing and Regeneration Strategy Basildon Borough Council	Janice Burgess Spatial Planning Manager Highways England
Date	Date 27 March 2019

Appendix 1:

