

STAFFORD BOROUGH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

MEETING WITH THE HIGHWAYS AGENCY, STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL - HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY AND STAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

DATE OF MEETING - 21 SEPTEMBER 2007

Officers in attendance

Sean Davies - Highways Agency

Liz Davis - Highways Agency

Mark Herbert - GVA Grimley Consultants on behalf of the Highways Agency

Annabel Chell - Staffordshire County Council Highways Authority

Alex Yendole - Principal Planning Officer - Stafford Borough Council

Introduction

- Liz Davis is the Highway Agency's Planning Manager for Staffordshire and has been in post since 2006 dealing with Development Control and Local Development Frameworks matters. Sean Davies is the Highway Agency's Strategy Manager for Staffordshire and has been in place since the beginning of September 2007, having previously worked in the South West region. Mark Herbert is a consultant with GVA Grimley working on behalf of the Highways Agency, covering Staffordshire County and the District Council areas in terms of Development Control and Local Development Framework issues. Annabel Chell is Staffordshire County Council's Transport Strategy Manager dealing with developing transport strategies to help deliver the Local Transport Plan, and Local Development Framework liaison.

Details

- The Highways Agency deals with strategic routes defined as trunk roads and motorways. The Agency is set Performance Service Agreement targets in terms of reducing the number of deaths on roads and journey time reliability.
- Circular 2/07 from the Department of Transport sets out the role of the Highways Agency in terms of the planning system. When the Highways Agency de-trunk roads responsibility moves to the local Highway Authority, in this case Staffordshire County Council. Highways Agency funding is used on the motorway network and trunk roads for maintenance, the Traffic Officers Service and new infrastructure. The M6 has not yet entered the Agency's Major Schemes Programme. When agreed the Department for Transport will move to the next stage of the process.
- Staffordshire County Council, as the Highways Authority, produces the Local Transport Plan in order to secure funding for new schemes. The Highways Authority deals with local roads and producing the Local Transport Plan as the five

year policy visioning document. The Local Transport Plan reflects national objectives at the local level in terms of access, safety, quality of life and sustainability. The County Council has received an uplift of **3%** because of a good final second Local Transport Plan and an uplift of **12.5%** because of excellent delivery of the County's first local transport plan.

- Stafford Borough's area has schemes included in the second LTP to be delivered through capital programmes in order to achieve LTP targets.
- The only trunk road within Stafford Borough is the M6 motorway. Staffordshire County Council, as the Highways Authority, has responsibility for all other roads including the A34. The Highways Agency's Midlands region extends up to Junction 15 of the M6. Therefore there may be requirements to liaise with colleagues to the North West region to cover issues with Stafford Borough.
- Consultation takes place between Stafford Borough Council, the Highways Agency and Staffordshire County Council in terms of network capacity and implications of new development pressures.

Key Issues

- Local planning authorities have statutory responsibilities to consult the Highways Agency about planning applications as defined in Article 10 and 15 of the General Development Procedure Order 1995. The Highways Agency is interested in the implications of development proposals in terms of their effect on safety, potential delays, air quality and other environmental issues.
- It is possible that the Highways Agency's objectives might differ slightly from those of Local Highway Authorities in some cases. However both the Highways Agency and Staffordshire County Council are committed to joint working and a partnership approach in recognition that the local and strategic networks are part of one single road network.
- The Highways Agency monitors day to day traffic management issues and further information can be made available regarding the operation of the M6. Key operational issues regarding the motorway network will be provided in due course.
- Staffordshire County Council, as the Highways Authority, has key issues in terms of the transport strategy dealing with development growth within Stafford Borough on the road network and more details are required regarding new sites. A key issue is accommodating potential development traffic on roads in the Castlefields area and the town centre. The proposal is to build the western access route in order to access new development using an inner ring road linked through to the A34. Major housing development at Castlefields is expected to help fund the road using developer contributions. However the last link through to the A34 is very expensive, costing around £8 million because of subsidence and ground conditions. Currently a planning application is being discussed in terms of the area with a Transport Assessment and survey for the Castlefields area being carried out. Staffordshire County Council wish to gain funding for the road to avoid further

congested networks in Stafford town centre. Staffordshire County Council consider that Castlefields is close to the town centre as well as the station so it is a good location for new development. However it is vital to include public transport infrastructure in the scheme.

- Sean Davies to provide Highways Agency documents including the Business Plan, the West Midlands Regional Network Report, Circular 2/07 and Guidance on Transport Assessments.
- Staffordshire County Council and Stafford Borough Council are currently producing a transport model for Stafford, which may lead to a bid for transport infrastructure. AY to provide the Highways Agency and Staffordshire County Council with a flood plain map of Stafford Borough Council's area. The Highways Agency consider that new development south of Stafford could have an impact on the M6 motorway. Staffordshire County Council's Structure Plan policy on protected routes was not saved by the Secretary of State, although Stafford Borough Council policy in Local Plan was saved. It is important to continue partnership discussions and work with Stafford Borough Council, using the transport study to consider the implications for the M6. Proposals for an Eastern by-pass will be dealt with through the Local Development Framework. The Highways Agency and the Highways Authority were asked for initial comments on development options within Stafford Borough using maps circulated at the meeting. Sean Davies made it clear that it was not possible to give the Highway Agency's view about development options at the meeting. It is important to share information on broad locations.
- Date of Next Meeting – November / December 2007.

Note prepared by Alex Yendole

Date last revised: 08/01/2009

Forward Planning Section, Stafford Borough Council