

## Statement of Common Ground between Wyre Forest District Council, Worcestershire County Council and Highways England

### 1) Introduction

Under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019), strategic policy making authorities, such as local planning authorities, should produce, maintain and keep up to date a Statement of Common Ground (SofCG) to highlight agreement on cross boundary strategic issues with neighbouring local authorities and other relevant bodies.

This SofCG has been produced to support the emerging Wyre Forest District Local Plan Review. It sets out how Wyre Forest District Council has engaged with Highways England in order to fulfil its Duty to Cooperate requirements.

### 2) Parties Involved

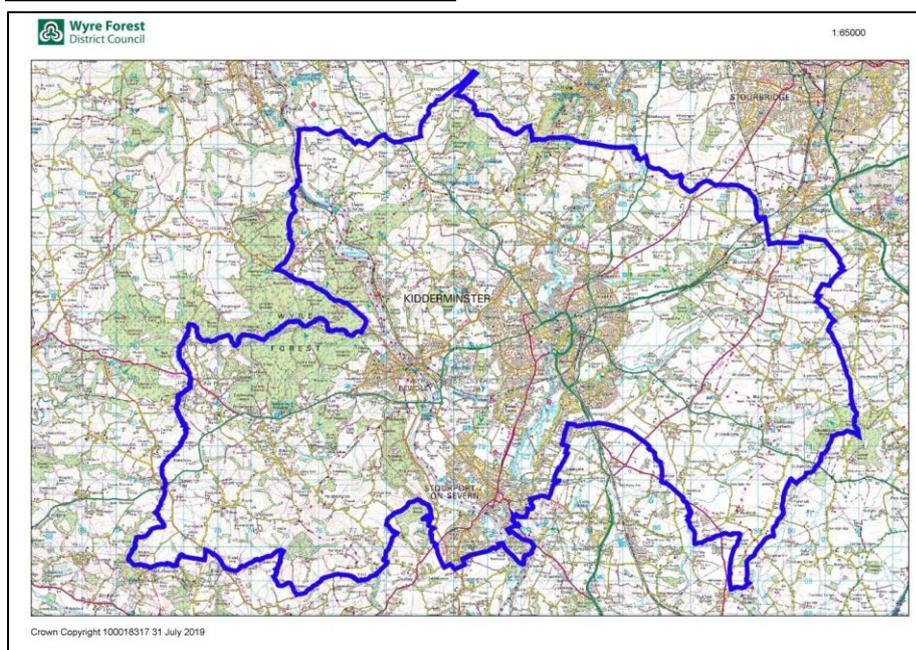
This Statement of Common Ground (SofCG) has been prepared jointly by Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC), Worcestershire County Council (WCC) and Highways England (HE). Highways England is a statutory consultee.

The SofCG covers those matters agreed and disagreed by the parties with regards to the proposed Wyre Forest District Local Plan (2016 – 2036), in order to fulfil the Duty to Cooperate requirements as outlined in paragraph 27 of the NPPF.

### 3) Strategic Geography

This SofCG covers all of the Wyre Forest District and has been produced for the purposes of the Wyre Forest District Local Plan 2016-2036, which is due to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in Spring 2020. Figure 1 below shows the district boundary of Wyre Forest District.

**Figure 1: Map of Wyre Forest District**



#### 4) Background / Duty to Cooperate

There has been ongoing engagement between WFDC and Highways England throughout the preparation of the WFDC Local Plan Review. WFDC has consulted with Highways England at every stage of plan making. The Local Plan Review consultation periods were as follows:-

- Issues and Options Consultation – September / October 2015
- Preferred Options Consultation – June / August 2017
- Pre-Submission Consultation – November / December 2018
- Pre-Submission Consultation (re-opened) – September / October 2019

Duty to Cooperate meetings have also taken place on the following dates:-

- 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018 – meeting at Wyre Forest House to discuss Local Plan during the Pre-Submission consultation (2018). Officers from Highways England, WCC and WFDC present at meeting.
- 9<sup>th</sup> December 2019 – meeting at Wyre Forest House to discuss Local Plan post Pre-Submission consultation (2019). Officers from Highways England, WCC and WFDC present at meeting.
- 6<sup>th</sup> March 2020 – meeting at Worcestershire County Council to discuss the draft Statement of Common Ground with Highways England and Worcestershire County Council. Officer from Highways England, WCC and WFDC present at meeting.

#### 5) Strategic Matters Identified

Highways England responded to the WFDC Local Plan Pre-Submission consultation that was undertaken in November / December 2018. Table 1 shows a summary of the responses received from Highways England (the full response can be viewed in Appendix 2).

Table 1: Highways England response to WFDC Local Plan Pre-Submission (October 2018)

	<b>Issues raised by Highways England - 2018</b>
<b>Highways England (2018 response)</b>	Highways England has previously commented on the Preferred Options consultation, undertaken in 2017, and further engaged with WFDC since to outline the potential implications of development traffic on the SRN; specifically at M5 Junction 4. Although this part of the SRN lies within the adjacent Worcestershire district of Bromsgrove the traffic implications of development can inherently be cross boundary in nature depending on the origin and destination of journeys. In this regard M5 Junction 4 is one of two principal accesses to the SRN, along with M5 Junction 3, for longer distance and regular commuting journeys that either begin or end within Wyre Forest.
<b>Highways England (2018 response)</b>	Technical work carried out for Highways England, including traffic modelling, has demonstrated that the effects of Local Plan growth in Wyre Forest will be expected to exacerbate existing traffic congestion issues on the A491 Sandy Lane arm of M5 Junction 4 with wider consequences for the operation of the junction. This arm has a direct relationship with traffic accessing Wyre Forest and consequences include the blocking of traffic seeking to exit the M5 northbound off-

	slip resulting in queuing on the slip road.
<b>Highways England (2018 response)</b>	Highways England’s assessment has demonstrated the link between these issues and local plan growth. It has demonstrated that a highway related intervention should be made in order to allow delivery of the overall growth envisioned within the plan. However the point at which such a scheme would need to be brought forward has yet to be determined.
<b>Highways England (2018 response)</b>	Highways England’s assessment has considered how these issues can be mitigated and has identified that further assessment will be required to outline the form of the necessary works. This scheme is anticipated to require joint works on the SRN and the adjacent local highway network as maintained by Worcestershire County Council. Highways England will work with that authority to identify the scale and likely costs of this scheme.
<b>Highways England (2018 response)</b>	Highways England confirms that they have considered the revised development assumptions contained within the current pre-submission version of the plan. Highways England note that some variance in the overall development quantum and balance of sites within the district has occurred since their assessment. However, while the assumption used at that time are not sufficiently different to suggest this would be likely to alter the results of the assessment at M5 Junction 4, the revised development assumptions will be used in later assessment work to be undertaken by Highways England.
<b>Highways England (2018 response)</b>	An update to Wyre Forest’s Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) will be necessary to ensure the transport implications of the plan for the SRN are mitigated and for the plan to be sound in the view of Highways England. This is likely to require policy support through the wording contained within the main Pre-Submission Plan document.
<b>Highways England (2018 response)</b>	<p>Policy 12 Strategic Infrastructure and Policy 13 Transport and Accessibility in Wyre Forest presently do not recognise these cross boundary issues and make little reference to the importance of SRN access to Wyre Forest. At present para 13.11 indicates only that:</p> <p>13.11 (Existing) – <i>“The District does not benefit from local access to the motorway network (M5); however, it has connections to the Black Country and wider West Midlands Conurbation to the north/west, Bromsgrove and Redditch to the east, and Worcester to the south, provided by the local principal road network.”</i></p> <p>While semantically accurate in so far that M5 J4 lies within the adjacent Worcestershire District of Bromsgrove this does not reflect the cross boundary implications of traffic arising from Wyre Forest. We recommend the following changes in wording be made:</p> <p>13.11 (Highways England proposed modification) – <i>“The District does not benefit from local access to the motorway network (M5); however, <b>M5 Junctions 3 and 4, which lie within Bromsgrove and Dudley respectively, provide key access from Wyre Forest to the Strategic Road Network.</b> They then provide connections to the <del>Black Country</del> and wider West Midlands Conurbation to the north-east</i></p>

	<i>west, Bromsgrove and Redditch to the east, and Worcester to the south via the local principal road network.”</i>								
<b>Highways England (2018 response)</b>	<p>The mitigation of cross boundary implications of growth on the SRN should receive policy support within the plan. Further this should be treated equally to requirements within Wyre Forest. In this regard Highways England recommend that Policy 13 should be amended to list M5 Junction 4 as a strategic cross boundary improvement requirement alongside any further strategic cross boundary improvements should they be identified.</p> <p>Highways England acknowledges that the view of Worcestershire County Council is also relevant to WFDC in the final drafting of these sections. Highways England would therefore be happy to consider the detail of any further wording via correspondence with WFDC.</p>								
<b>Highways England (2018 response)</b>	<p>While the current IDP dated October 2018 does not record the need for an improvement at M5 junction 4 Table 3A of that document lists the Strategic Transport Infrastructure requirements and should therefore list this scheme. Highways England have provided draft text for this as follows, which should also be used to update other such entries contained within the IDP:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Location</th> <th>Project</th> <th>Estimated Cost</th> <th>Potential Funding Sources</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>M5 Junction 4</td> <td>Improvement of A491 Sandy Lane arm</td> <td>TBC</td> <td>S106 Developer Contributions, Government Funding, Local Enterprise Partnerships Highways England, Worcestershire County Council</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Location	Project	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources	M5 Junction 4	Improvement of A491 Sandy Lane arm	TBC	S106 Developer Contributions, Government Funding, Local Enterprise Partnerships Highways England, Worcestershire County Council
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<b>Highways England (2018 response)</b>	<p>Highways England have listed potential funding sources above so that this entry will accord with the approach WFDC have taken in recording other identified schemes. In this regard, while Highways England consider it is reasonable to list Highways England as a potential funding source, as well as other parties, this should not be taken as any commitment from Highways England to provide funding in the future. Highways England do commit, however, to undertake further the scope of these works, including likely costs, so that this can in future be recorded in the IDP.</p>								
<b>Highways England (2018 response)</b>	<p>Additional supporting text is likely to be necessary within the IDP to explain the need for this scheme. The details provided within this letter, and the Technical Note summarising the evidence for this assessment Highways England have previously provided to WFDC, should contain adequate information to explain this priority.</p>								

Highways England also responded to the WFDC re-opening of the Local Plan Pre-Submission consultation that was undertaken in September / October 2019. Table 2 shows a summary of the responses received from Highways England (the full response can be viewed in Appendix 1).

Table 2: Highways England response to WFDC Local Plan Pre-Submission (September 2019)

	<b>Issues raised by Highways England - 2019</b>
<b>Highways England (2019 response)</b>	Highways England previously commented on both the Preferred Options consultation undertaken in 2017 and the Pre-Submission regulation 19 consultation undertaken in December 2018. In these Highways England outlined the potential implications of development traffic on the SRN, specifically at M5 Junction 4.
<b>Highways England (2019 response)</b>	Although M5 Junction 4 is not located in Wyre Forest, the traffic implications of future developments within the district are cross-boundary. M5 Junction 4, in Bromsgrove district, is one of two principal points of access to the SRN, along with M5 Junction 3, for longer distance and commuting journeys beginning or ending within Wyre Forest.
<b>Highways England (2019 response)</b>	<p>Following engagement with WFDC, Highways England commissioned technical work, including traffic modelling, that has demonstrated that the effects of Local Plan growth in Wyre Forest will exacerbate existing traffic congestion issues on the A491 Sandy Lane arm of M5 Junction 4. This is the junction arm used by traffic routeing to or from Wyre Forest.</p> <p>The conclusion of this work was that, due to the connection between these SRN issues and the Wyre Forest Local Plan growth, highway-related intervention will be necessary in order to deliver the overall growth envisioned within the plan.</p> <p>After comparing the updated development quantum and distribution contained within the current plan with the numbers used in Highways England's assessment, Highways England can confirm that this assessment remains the same.</p>
<b>Highways England (2019 response)</b>	In Highways England previous response, Highways England recommended that an update to the draft Wyre Forest Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) should be made to include a scheme at M5 Junction 4 capable of mitigating the transport implications of the plan at this location.
<b>Highways England (2019 response)</b>	Highways England has worked jointly with Worcestershire County Council to explore the scope of the necessary mitigation works and to develop the transport evidence that demonstrates this need. Highways England are happy to provide any further details of this work although it is their view that the evidence is already sufficient to demonstrate this requirement.
<b>Highways England (2019 response)</b>	In Highway England's last response to the plan of December 2018, they advised that additional text should be included in the plan to outline the need for the scheme. The omission of this scheme from the June 2019 update of the IDP is therefore of concern to Highways England. Without this improvement it is Highways England's view that the plan would not be sound.

	<p>Highways England set out that, in their view, the current wording of Policy 12 Strategic Infrastructure and Policy 13 Transport and Accessibility in Wyre Forest were insufficient as they did not recognise the cross-boundary issues and that no reference was made to the importance the SRN in accessing Wyre Forest District. Highways England note that para 13.11 has still not been modified as per their recommendation. Consequently, Highways England encourage that the wording is modified as below:</p> <p>13.11 (Highways England proposed modification) – <i>“The District does not benefit from local access to the motorway network (M5); however, <b>M5 Junctions 3 and 4, which lie within Bromsgrove, provide key access from Wyre Forest to the Strategic Road Network for journeys by road. They provide connections to the Black Country and wider West Midlands Conurbation, including Birmingham and parts of the Black Country to the north/east west, and Bromsgrove and Redditch to the south east, and as well as links to Worcester to the south. This in turn provides access to the local principal road network.”</b></i></p> <p>It is Highways England’s view that the mitigation of cross-boundary traffic impacts on the SRN from new growth should receive policy support within the plan and should be treated equally to requirements arising within Wyre Forest.</p>
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**6) Matters that parties agree on**

Table 3 below shows the matters that both parties agree on.

Table 3: Matters that both parties agree on

	<b>Matter/Issues</b>	<b>WFDC / WCC Response</b>
<b>Highways England (2018 response)</b>	Highways England has previously commented on the Preferred Options consultation, undertaken in 2017, and further engaged with WFDC since to outline the potential implications of development traffic on the SRN; specifically at M5 Junction 4. Although this part of the SRN lies within the adjacent Worcestershire district of Bromsgrove the traffic implications of development can inherently be cross boundary in nature depending on the origin and destination of journeys. In this regard M5 Junction 4 is one of two principal accesses to the SRN, along with M5 Junction 3, for longer distance and regular commuting journeys that either begin or end within Wyre Forest.	WFDC have consulted with Highways England at every stage of plan making and welcomes the responses received from Highways England.  The M5 Junctions 3 and 4 are not located within Wyre Forest District, but WFDC accepts that residents from Wyre Forest will use these

		<p>junctions to access the motorway along with residents from neighbouring local authorities and elsewhere across the region. It is important to note that these junctions already suffer from traffic congestion at peak times, so the congestion is an existing problem that needs to be resolved.</p>
<p><b>Highways England (2018 response)</b></p>	<p>Technical work carried out for Highways England, including traffic modelling, has demonstrated that the effects of Local Plan growth in Wyre Forest will be expected to exacerbate existing traffic congestion issues on the A491 Sandy Lane arm of M5 Junction 4 with wider consequences for the operation of the junction. This arm has a direct relationship with traffic accessing Wyre Forest and consequences include the blocking of traffic seeking to exit the M5 northbound off-slip resulting in queuing on the slip road.</p>	<p>At the meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018 Highways England confirmed that they had used an out of date site list for their traffic modelling work. Following this meeting, WFDC sent Highways England an updated list of sites for Highways England to use in their modelling work.</p>
<p><b>Highways England (2018 response)</b></p>	<p>Highways England's assessment has demonstrated the link between these issues and local plan growth. It has demonstrated that a highway related intervention should be made in order to allow delivery of the overall growth envisioned within the plan. However the point at which such a scheme would need to be brought forward has yet to be determined.</p>	<p>Worcestershire County Council is currently pursuing a Major Road Network (MRN) strategic corridor assessment, which includes the A491 up to its junction with the M5 at Lydiate Ash (M5, Junction 4). This scheme will identify capacity improvements needed to support forecast growth on this strategically important corridor. The results will be shared with</p>

		Highways England and funding will be sought to pursue improvements with a suitably robust business case to justify investment.
<b>Highways England (2018 response)</b>	Highways England's assessment has considered how these issues can be mitigated and has identified that further assessment will be required to outline the form of the necessary works. This scheme is anticipated to require joint works on the SRN and the adjacent local highway network as maintained by Worcestershire County Council. Highways England will work with that authority to identify the scale and likely costs of this scheme.	See comment above.
<b>Highways England (2018 response)</b>	Highways England confirms that they have considered the revised development assumptions contained within the current pre-submission version of the plan. Highways England note that some variance in the overall development quantum and balance of sites within the district has occurred since their assessment. However, while the assumption used at that time are not sufficiently different to suggest this would be likely to alter the results of the assessment at M5 Junction 4, the revised development assumptions will be used in later assessment work to be undertaken by Highways England.	At the meeting on 5 <sup>th</sup> December 2018 Highways England confirmed that they had used an out of date site list for their traffic modelling work. Following this meeting, WFDC sent Highways England an updated list of sites for Highways England to use in their modelling work.
<b>Highways England (2018 response)</b>	An update to Wyre Forest's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) will be necessary to ensure the transport implications of the plan for the SRN are mitigated and for the plan to be sound in the view of Highways England. This is likely to require policy support through the wording contained within the main Pre-Submission Plan document.	See proposed amendments to policy wording below.
<b>Highways England (2018 response)</b>	<p>Policy 12 Strategic Infrastructure and Policy 13 Transport and Accessibility in Wyre Forest presently do not recognise these cross boundary issues and make little reference to the importance of SRN access to Wyre Forest. At present para 13.11 indicates only that:</p> <p>13.11 (Existing) – <i>“The District does not benefit from local access to the motorway network (M5); however, it has connections to the Black Country and wider West Midlands Conurbation to the north/west, Bromsgrove and Redditch to the east, and Worcester to the south, provided by the local principal road network.”</i></p>	<p>WFDC agree that the wording of Policy 13 should be amended at Paragraph AM13.11. The proposed amendment is as follows:</p> <p><i>“The District does not benefit from local access to the</i></p>

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<p><b>Highways England (2018 response)</b></p>	<p>While the current IDP dated October 2018 does not record the need for an improvement at M5 junction 4 Table 3A of that document lists the Strategic Transport Infrastructure requirements and should therefore list this</p>	<p>Agreed between all parties that further technical work was required and, a</p>

	<p>scheme. Highways England have provided draft text for this as follows, which should also be used to update other such entries contained within the IDP:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="496 333 1182 837"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="496 333 628 445">Location</th> <th data-bbox="628 333 820 445">Project</th> <th data-bbox="820 333 970 445">Estimated Cost</th> <th data-bbox="970 333 1182 445">Potential Funding Sources</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="496 445 628 837">M5 Junction 4</td> <td data-bbox="628 445 820 837">Improvement of A491 Sandy Lane arm</td> <td data-bbox="820 445 970 837">TBC</td> <td data-bbox="970 445 1182 837">S106 Developer Contributions, Government Funding, Local Enterprise Partnerships Highways England, Worcestershire County Council</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Location	Project	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources	M5 Junction 4	Improvement of A491 Sandy Lane arm	TBC	S106 Developer Contributions, Government Funding, Local Enterprise Partnerships Highways England, Worcestershire County Council	<p>deliverable costed project was required prior to inclusion of a scheme within the WFDC IDP.</p> <p>As the IDP is a live document this information can be added to the IDP as necessary during the reviews of IDP's.</p>
Location	Project	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources							
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<p><b>Highways England (2018 response)</b></p>	<p>Additional supporting text is likely to be necessary within the IDP to explain the need for this scheme. The details provided within this letter, and the Technical Note summarising the evidence for this assessment Highways England have previously provided to WFDC, should contain adequate information to explain this priority.</p>	<p>The IDP is a live document and will be updated as necessary during its next review. See also comments above.</p>								
<p><b>Highways England (2019 response)</b></p>	<p>Highways England previously commented on both the Preferred Options consultation undertaken in 2017 and the Pre-Submission regulation 19 consultation undertaken in December 2018. In these Highways England outlined the potential implications of development traffic on the SRN, specifically at M5 Junction 4.</p>	<p>Comments are noted.</p>								
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<p><b>Highways England</b> <i>(2019 response)</i></p>	<p>In Highways England previous response, Highways England recommended that an update to the draft Wyre Forest Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) should be made to include a scheme at M5 Junction 4 capable of mitigating the transport implications of the plan at this location.</p>	<p>Agreed between all parties that further technical work was required and, a deliverable costed project was required prior to inclusion of a scheme within the WFDC IDP.</p> <p>WCC, WFDC and Highways England will continue to work together to develop a deliverable scheme. The IDP is a live document and subject to periodic reviews enabling the subsequent inclusion of a scheme.</p>
<p><b>Highways England</b> <i>(2019 response)</i></p>	<p>Highways England has worked jointly with Worcestershire County Council to explore the scope of the necessary mitigation works and to develop the transport evidence that demonstrates this need. Highways England are happy to provide any further details of this work although it is their view that the</p>	<p>Work is ongoing and will be added to the IDP once a deliverable project is developed and costed as set out in</p>

	evidence is already sufficient to demonstrate this requirement.	the text above.
<b>Highways England (2019 response)</b>	<p>In Highway England’s last response to the plan of December 2018, they advised that additional text should be included in the plan to outline the need for the scheme. The omission of this scheme from the June 2019 update of the IDP is therefore of concern to Highways England. Without this improvement it is Highways England’s view that the plan would not be sound.</p> <p>Highways England set out that, in their view, the current wording of Policy 12 Strategic Infrastructure and Policy 13 Transport and Accessibility in Wyre Forest were insufficient as they did not recognise the cross-boundary issues and that no reference was made to the importance the SRN in accessing Wyre Forest District. Highways England note that para 13.11 has still not been modified as per their recommendation. Consequently, Highways England encourage that the wording is modified as below:</p> <p>13.11 (Highways England proposed modification) – <i>“The District does not benefit from local access to the motorway network (M5); however, <b>M5 Junctions 3 and 4, which lie within Bromsgrove, provide key access from Wyre Forest to the Strategic Road Network for journeys by road. They provide connections to the Black Country and wider West Midlands Conurbation, including Birmingham and parts of the Black Country to the north/east west, and Bromsgrove and Redditch to the south east, and as well as links to Worcester to the south. This in turn provides access to the local principal road network.</b>”</i></p> <p>It is Highways England’s view that the mitigation of cross-boundary traffic impacts on the SRN from new growth should receive policy support within the plan and should be treated equally to requirements arising within Wyre Forest.</p>	<p>WFDC agree that the wording of Policy 13 should be amended at Paragraph AM13.11. The proposed amendment is as follows:</p> <p><i>“The District does not benefit from local access to the motorway network (M5); however, <b><u>M5 Junction 3 and 4 provide access from Wyre Forest District and the rural hinterland to the Strategic Road Network for journeys by road. It has They provide connections to the Black Country and wider West Midlands Conurbation and wider Worcestershire. to the north/west, Bromsgrove and Redditch to the east, and Worcester to the south, This in turn provides access to by the local principal road network.</u></b>”</i></p> <p>This proposed amendment will be progressed as a modification to the Local Plan.</p>

**7) Matters that parties disagree on**

There are no matters that parties disagree on.

## 8) Other Strategic Matters

Following a Duty to Cooperate meeting with Highways England on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2020, Highways England requested the following suggested amendment to the Wyre Forest Local Plan in Chapter 13 – Transport and Accessibility:

**The district does not benefit from direct access to the Strategic Road Network. However, it does have connections to the M5 Corridor through the following local principal road network which connects to the M5 through the identified corridors and junctions;**

- **A456 Corridor – which provides access to M5 Junction 3 (Quinton);**
- **A491 Corridor – which provides access to M5 Junction 4 (Lydiate Ash); and,**
- **A449 Corridor – which provides access to M5 Junction 6 (Worcester North).**

**These connections enable the movement of goods, services and freight into and out of the district. These junctions are also signed for routing to the West Midland Safari Park and Severn Valley Railway which are national tourist destinations and important to the regional economy.**

**Whilst it is noted that the Wyre Forest Local Plan will increase potential trips on the Strategic Road Network the impact is considered minor, however cumulatively with further housing and employment growth in Birmingham, Black Country, Bromsgrove and South Worcestershire it is likely that improvements will be required at these junctions.**

**Therefore, Highways England, who maintains and manages the M5 Corridor, continues to work with Worcestershire County Council, and other key stakeholders to identify and develop improvement schemes and funding opportunities at these locations, to enable the growth across this area to be accommodated within the operational capacity of the Strategic Road Network.**

It has been suggested by HE that this text should sit above the existing text at paragraph 13.11 on Highway Network.

WFDC and WCC are agreeable to this suggested modification.

There are no other strategic matters relevant to this Statement of Common Ground.

## 9) Governance Arrangements

The governance arrangements are key to the effectiveness and implementation of the Statement of Common Ground. The table below sets out the requirements for the authorities involved.

<b>Authority</b>	<b>Method of Approval</b>
Wyre Forest District Council	SofCG to be signed off by Corporate Director for Economic Prosperity and Place
Highways England	SofCG to be signed off by Spatial Planner for the Birmingham Motorway Box and Coventry & Warwickshire
Worcestershire County Council	SofCG to be signed off by Strategic Director for Economy and Infrastructure

## 10) Timetable for agreement

The table below sets out the timetable arrangement for the Statement of Common Ground to be agreed.

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Timetable for approval</b>
Wyre Forest District Council	- March/April 2020
Highways England	- March/April 2020
Worcestershire County Council	- March/April 2020

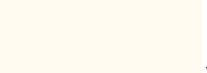
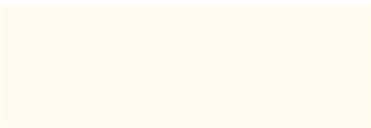
## 11) Conclusions

The parties agree that:

- i) WFDC has fulfilled its Duty to Cooperate with Highways England.
- ii) Highways England is satisfied that all matters raised in its representations to the WFDC Local Plan Review (2016-2036) have been addressed by WFDC and WCC responses.
- iii) The parties will continue to work positively together, including with other authorities where relevant on strategic cross boundary issues.

## 12) Signatories

This Statement of Common Ground has been agreed and signed by the following:-

<p><b><u>Worcestershire County Council</u></b></p> <p>Name: <u>    Nigel Hudson    </u></p> <p>Position: <u>    Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy    </u></p> <p>Date agreed: <u>    24 April 2020    </u></p> <p>Signature: <u>    </u></p>	<p><b><u>Wyre Forest District Council</u></b></p> <p>Name: <u>    Mike Parker    </u></p> <p>Position: <u>    Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity &amp; Place    </u></p> <p>Date agreed: <u>    27th April 2020    </u></p> <p>Signature: <u>    </u></p>
<p><b><u>Highways England</u></b></p> <p>Name: <u>    Ben Simm    </u></p> <p>Position: <u>    Spatial Planner for the Birmingham Motorway Box Coventry &amp; Warwickshire    </u></p> <p>Date agreed: <u>    14/04.2020    </u></p> <p>Signature: <u>    </u></p>	

### **13) Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Highways England response to the WFDC re-opening of Pre-Submission consultation (Sept / Oct 2019)
- Appendix 2 – Highways England response to the WFDC Pre-Submission Consultation (Nov/Dec 2018)
- Appendix 3 – Highways England response to the WFDC Preferred Options consultation (June – August 2017)
- Appendix 4 – Highways England response to the WFDC Issues & Options consultation (2015)



Our ref:  
Your ref: Wyre Forest Local Plan Review -  
Pre-Submission Publication Consultation (Regulation  
19)

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1 October 2019

Via Email: [LPR@wyreforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:LPR@wyreforestdc.gov.uk)

Dear Helen,

## **WYRE FOREST DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN PRE-SUBMISSION - REGULATION 19 CONSULTATION**

Thank you for forwarding me details of the above referenced consultation. Highways England ('we') is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) in England. The network includes all major motorways and trunk roads, and in the vicinity of Wyre Forest comprises the M5 motorway.

We previously commented on both the Preferred Options consultation undertaken in 2017 and the Pre-submission regulation 19 consultation undertaken in December 2018. In these we outlined the potential implications of development traffic on the SRN, specifically at M5 Junction 4.

Although M5 Junction 4 is not located in Wyre Forest, the traffic implications of future developments within the district are cross-boundary. M5 Junction 4, in Bromsgrove district, is one of two principal points of access to the SRN, along with M5 Junction 3, for longer distance and commuting journeys beginning or ending within Wyre Forest.

Following engagement with you we commissioned technical work, including traffic modelling, that has demonstrated that the effects of Local Plan growth in Wyre Forest will exacerbate existing traffic congestion issues on the A491 Sandy Lane arm of M5 Junction 4. This is the junction arm used by traffic routeing to or from Wyre Forest.

The conclusion of this work was that, due to the connection between these SRN issues and the Wyre Forest Local Plan growth, highway-related intervention will be necessary in order to deliver the overall growth envisioned within the plan.

After comparing the updated development quantum and distribution contained within the current plan with the numbers used in our assessment we can confirm that this assessment remains suitable.

In our previous response we recommended that an update to the draft Wyre Forest Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) should be made to include a scheme at M5 Junction 4 capable of mitigating the transport implications of the plan at this location.

As you are aware, we have worked jointly with Worcestershire County Council to explore the scope of the necessary mitigation works and to develop the transport evidence that demonstrates this need. We are happy to provide any further details of this work although it is our view that the evidence is already sufficient to demonstrate this requirement.

In our last response to the plan of December 2018 we advised that additional text should be included in the plan to outline the need for the scheme. The omission of this scheme from the June 2019 update of the IDP is therefore of concern to us. Without this improvement our view is that the plan would not be sound.

We set out that, in our view, the current wording of **Policy 12 Strategic Infrastructure** and **Policy 13 Transport and Accessibility in Wyre Forest** were insufficient as they did not recognise the cross-boundary issues and that no reference was made to the importance the SRN in accessing Wyre Forest District. We note that para 13.11 has still not been modified as per our recommendation. Consequently, we encourage that the wording is modified as below:

*13.11 (Highways England proposed modification)*

*The District does not benefit from local access to the motorway network (M5); however, **M5 Junctions 3 and 4, which lie within Bromsgrove, provide key access from Wyre Forest to the Strategic Road Network for journeys by road.** They provide connections to the ~~Black Country~~ and wider West Midlands Conurbation, **including Birmingham and parts of the Black Country to the north/east west**, and Bromsgrove and Redditch to the south east, ~~and~~ as well as **links to Worcester to the south.** This in turn provides access to the local principal road network.*

It is Highways England's view that the mitigation of cross-boundary traffic impacts on the SRN from new growth should receive policy support within the plan and should be treated equally to requirements arising within Wyre Forest.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any more information or clarification.

Yours sincerely



Patricia Dray





Our ref: SHARE/  
Your ref: Wyre Forest Local Plan

Planning Policy Team  
Wyre Forest District Council  
Wyre Forest House  
Finepoint Way  
Kidderminster  
Worcestershire DY11 7WF

Adrian Johnson  
Asset Manager  
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14 December 2018

Via Email: [LPR@wyreforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:LPR@wyreforestdc.gov.uk)

Dear Sir / Madam

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN PRE-SUBMISSION REGULATION 19 CONSULTATION**

Thank you for forwarding me details of the above referenced consultation. Highways England is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) in England. The network includes all major motorways and trunk roads, and in the vicinity of Wyre Forest comprises the M5 motorway.

Highways England has previously commented on the Preferred Options consultation, undertaken in 2017, and have further engaged with you since to outline the potential implications of development traffic on the SRN; specifically at M5 Junction 4. Although this part of the SRN lies within the adjacent Worcestershire district of Bromsgrove the traffic implications of development can inherently be cross boundary in nature depending on the origin and destination of journeys. In this regard M5 Junction 4 is one of two principal accesses to the SRN, along with M5 Junction 3, for longer distance and regular commuting journeys that either begin or end within Wyre Forest.

Technical work carried out for Highways England, including traffic modelling, has demonstrated that the effects of Local Plan growth in Wyre Forest will be expected to exacerbate existing traffic congestion issues on the A491 Sandy Lane arm of M5 Junction 4 with wider consequences for the operation of the junction. This arm has a direct relationship with traffic accessing Wyre Forest and consequences include the blocking of traffic seeking to exit the M5 northbound off-slip resulting in queuing on the slip road.

To date our assessment has demonstrated the link between these issues and local plan growth. It has demonstrated that a highway related intervention should be made in order to allow delivery of the overall growth envisioned within the plan. However the point at which such a scheme would need to be brought forward has yet to be determined.

Our assessment has considered how these issues can be mitigated and has identified that further assessment will be required to outline the form of the necessary works. This

scheme is anticipated to require joint works on the SRN and the adjacent local highway network as maintained by Worcestershire County Council. We will work with that authority to identify the scale and likely costs of this scheme.

To update you on the evidence we used in our assessment we can confirm that we have considered the revised development assumptions contained within the current pre-submission version of the plan. We note that some variance in the overall development quantum and balance of sites within the district has occurred since our assessment. However, while the assumptions we used at that time are not sufficiently different to suggest this would be likely to alter the results of the assessment at M5 Junction 4, the revised development assumptions will be used in later assessment work to be undertaken by us.

An update to Wyre Forest's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) will be necessary to ensure the transport implications of the plan for the SRN are mitigated and for the plan to be sound in the view of Highways England. This is likely to require policy support through the wording contained within the main Pre-Submission Plan document.

**Policy 12 Strategic Infrastructure** and **Policy 13 Transport and Accessibility in Wyre Forest** presently do not recognise these cross boundary issues and make little reference to the importance of SRN access to Wyre Forest. At present para 13.11 indicates only that:

*13.11 (Existing)*

*The District does not benefit from local access to the motorway network (M5); however, it has connections to the Black Country and wider West Midlands Conurbation to the north/west, Bromsgrove and Redditch to the east, and Worcester to the south, provided by the local principal road network.*

While semantically accurate in so far that M5 J4 lies within the adjacent Worcestershire District of Bromsgrove this does not reflect the cross boundary implications of traffic arising from Wyre Forest. We recommend the following changes in wording be made:

*13.11 (Highways England proposed modification)*

*The District does not benefit from local access to the motorway network (M5); however, **M5 Junctions 3 and 4, which lie within Bromsgrove and Dudley respectively, provide key access from Wyre Forest to the Strategic Road Network. They then provide connections to the Black Country and wider West Midlands Conurbation to the north-east west, Bromsgrove and Redditch to the east, and Worcester to the south via the local principal road network.***

The mitigation of cross boundary implications of growth on the SRN should receive policy support within the plan. Further this should be treated equally to requirements within Wyre Forest. In this regard we recommend that **Policy 13** should be amended to list M5 Junction 4 as a strategic cross boundary improvement requirement alongside any further strategic cross boundary improvements should they be identified.

We acknowledge that the view of Worcestershire County Council is also relevant to you in the final drafting of these sections and we would be happy to consider the detail of any further wording via correspondence with you.

While the current IDP dated October 2018 does not record the need for an improvement at M5 junction 4 Table 3A of that document lists the Strategic Transport Infrastructure requirements and should therefore list this scheme. We have provided draft text for this as follows, which should also be used to update other such entries contained within the IDP:

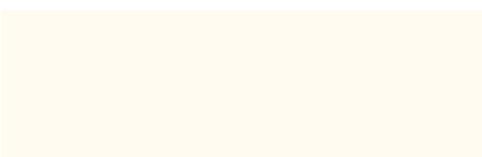
Location	Project	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources
M5 Junction 4	Improvement of A491 Sandy Lane arm	TBC	S106 Developer Contributions, Government Funding, Local Enterprise Partnerships Highways England, Worcestershire County Council

We have listed potential funding sources above so that this entry will accord with the approach you have taken in recording other identified schemes. In this regard, while we consider it is reasonable to list Highways England as a potential funding source, as well other parties, this should not been taken as any commitment from us to provide funding in the future. We do commit, however, to undertake further investigatory assessment jointly with Worcestershire County Council to explore further the scope of these works, including likely costs, so that this can in future be recorded in the IDP.

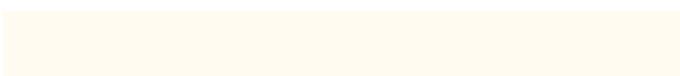
Additional supporting text is likely to be necessary within the IDP to explain the need for this scheme. The details provided within this letter, and the Technical Note summarising the evidence for this assessment we have previously provided to you, should contain adequate information to explain this priority. We would however be happy to assist in any further drafting and would welcome sight of such text prior to the update of the IDP. This update should be made at the first available opportunity.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any more information or clarification.

Yours sincerely



Adrian Johnson



Cc: Patricia Day



Our ref: SHARE/  
Your ref HS:EW/HET/FP-LPPO

Helen Smith  
Spatial Planning Manager  
Wyre Forest  
Via Email: [LPR@wyreforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:LPR@wyreforestdc.gov.uk)

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26 July 2017

Dear Helen

### **Wyre Forest District Local Plan Review - Preferred Options Consultation**

Thank you for forwarding me details of the above referenced consultation. Highways England ('we') are responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) in England. The network includes all major motorways and trunk roads. The Wyre Forest District lies in close proximity to the M5, which is located approximately 6 miles to the east of the district.

Highways England has undertaken a preliminary review in order to consider the potential traffic implications associated with the allocated housing, employment and retail development as set out in Options A and B of the consultation version of the Wyre Forest Local Plan. We have identified that the level of traffic generated from the allocated sites within both options is similar and we do not have specific preference as to which option is brought forward. We note however that there may be material implication for our network at M5 Junctions 3, 4 and 6 arising from increased levels of traffic associated with development in Wyre Forest.

In order to develop a clearer understanding of the implications of the proposed allocation of development for the SRN, we have identified that more detailed traffic assessment of M5 Junction 4 is a priority. This junction is already affected by development arising from the plans of Bromsgrove District and Birmingham City Councils. Furthermore, the implications of development traffic at M5 Junction 3 are likely to be affected by traffic growth associated with plans and strategies of Bromsgrove District Council, the Black Country Authorities and Transport for West Midlands.

Highways England will seek to work in partnership with you and Worcestershire County Council as the Local Highway Authority to consider these implications and identify if any mitigation measures are required to support the identified growth in Wyre Forest District.

Highways England will therefore seek to encourage on-going engagement with Wyre Forest District Council and Worcestershire County Council during and after the public Local Plan consultation in order to identify any necessary highway improvement



schemes to ensure the SRN continues to operate its primary role as a strategic route for through traffic.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any more information or clarification.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Townend

Cc: Patricia Dray (Highways England)  
Matthew Taylor (Highways England)  
Chris Cox (Systra)



Your ref: Local Plan Review

Maria Dunn  
Senior Forward Planning Officer  
Wyre Forest District Council

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Network Delivery and Development  
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2 October 2015

Dear Maria,

**RE: LOCAL PLAN REVIEW ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION,  
Wyre Forest District.**

Thank you for forwarding me details of the consultation dated 1 September on the above referenced Wyre Forest Local Plan.

HIGHWAYS ENGLAND (“we”) has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport as strategic highway company under the provision of the Infrastructure Act 2015 and is the highway authority, traffic authority and street authority for the Strategic Road Network (SRN). The SRN near to the Wyre Forest area comprises the M5 motorway.

The SRN is a critical national asset and as such works to ensure that it operates and is managed in the public interest, both in respect of current activities and needs as well as in providing effective stewardship of its long-term operation and integrity. The M5 Motorway may be affected by potential transport impacts arising from the plan are considered to occur between Junctions 3 and 6, inclusive.

Highways England welcomes the opportunity to provide the following comments on the Wyre Forest Local Plan.

Highways England supports the regeneration of local centres, as this is consistent with the principles of sustainable development, reducing the need to travel in order to access services and employment opportunities. In this regards we recognise and support Options 1 and 4 as set out within section 6 of the consultation document as these are likely to offer the greatest opportunity for a reduction in transport impacts of development.

While these would sequentially be first preference we recognise these may be insufficient to meet the required levels of growth within the district. As such secondly we consider the possible allocation of a SUE (Options 2, 3 and 5) to be appropriate if Options 1 and 4 cannot deliver all the required growth. Of these proposals we consider that Option 2 located to the North East of Kidderminster Town Centre and Option 5

adjacent to Bewdley would be most suitable on transport grounds rather than Option 3 to the South East however the careful consideration of impacts upon the SRN will be required with either option.

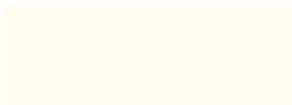
Highways England does not generally support the allocation of significant dispersed rural development sites under Options 6 and 7, as these forms of development are often associated with an increase in single occupancy vehicles trips, in order to permit access to services and employment opportunities. It is recommended that Options 1-5 or other further opportunities for a SUE should be considered and sequentially preferred prior to adoption of either of these Options

In assessing all of the Growth Options outlined within the Wyre Forest Local Plan, the potential impacts of future site allocations on the SRN must be considered and assessed. This assessment should be undertaken in consultation with Highways England and consider the cumulative impacts arising from development as well as that development proposed by neighbouring authorities. This includes, but is not confined to development proposed by the Birmingham Development Plan, Bromsgrove District Local Plan, Redditch Local Plan, South Worcestershire Development Plan and the forthcoming update to the Black Country Joint Core Strategy.

A consideration of the above cross-boundary issues is required to assess that collectively, these impacts are acceptable to Highways England. Further it should identify, if appropriate, any requirement for further mitigation and improvement measures to ensure there are no adverse impacts on the operation and functionality of the SRN.

If you have any questions regarding our response please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Scarlett Griffiths  
NDD Midlands

