



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE

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Our Ref: JB/lg
Date: 27 July 2016

Rob Smith, Deputy Director - Environment (Highways)
Hertfordshire County Council

By email to Rob.Smith@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Dear Rob

Thank you for your letter of 27 May, setting out your concerns about the evidence base required to support our Strategic Local Plan. I apologise for the delay in replying. I think you will understand we first needed face to face meetings to explain our approach and explore your concerns.

Adopting a Local Plan in St Albans is in both our authorities' interests. It will set a clear framework which will contribute to the wider economic development and success of the county over the next 15 years. It will also give HCC and other partners a much clearer basis for planning the future infrastructure requirements for this part of the County.

It is clear to me that both our authorities have been progressing work in good faith. However, a number of misunderstandings have arisen both about our plan process, and your expectations in relation to the transport evidence base. Since you wrote there have been officer meetings to discuss and clarify the issues you raise, including one attended by myself and John Wood. These have been helpful in ironing out the issues.

In particular, I hope you and your team are now clearer about the political and practical issues that led to the development of our plan process. Our process involves two stages. The first is the Strategic Local Plan (SLP). We expect to submit the SLP to the Planning Inspectorate in early August. The SLP will be followed by the Detailed Local Plan (DLP). The DLP is still in development, and we expect to go out for consultation on it in November 2016.

Through the meetings, we have now jointly agreed a work plan to develop the transport evidence base in the short and medium term. This work plan is aligned to our Local Plan process. I attach the resultant Further Transport Evidence Base Work Plan. I am pleased to note that the AECOM Technical Note has been finalised in accordance with that agreed work programme.

I think it will be helpful if our respective teams met regularly – perhaps monthly – to discuss and monitor this plan. From my side, the lead officer will be Chris Briggs. Please let me know who the lead officer is from HCC. Tracy Harvey, Head of Planning and Building Control, will take a close interest in progress. I encourage you to speak directly to Tracy if you need to discuss matters at a senior level.

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I also understand that our officers reached agreement on an HCC position statement in relation to the Local Plan. This was reported to our last Planning Policy Committee meeting. The statement is below:

Based on initial transport modelling, congestion is identified at various junctions requiring further investigation. Subject to further work/modelling being carried out to establish whether feasible mitigation(s) exist, HCC as Highway Authority will not object to the St Albans Strategic Local Plan. The further work/modelling required to support the Detailed Local Plan is broadly set out in the SADC Further Transport Evidence Base Work Plan. In the event that mitigation is not achievable this would require a review of the Spatial Options which form the Local Plan.

In relation to some of the wider points in your letter, I note the following:

- You mention that all authorities have signed up to the "Local Plan Protocol". As I said when we met, officers have been involved in discussions on a draft protocol and provided comments. However I do not believe that a final draft protocol has been produced or formally 'signed up to' at either senior officer or member level. I think the draft document is helpful, but can be improved by making clearer HCC's requirements at different stages for those authorities going through a two stage process. I hope our recent discussions will help with that.
- There was no intention to submit our Strategic Local Plan to the Inspectorate in June 2016. In fact we set July 2016 as the potential submission date, subject to the political process. As the attached plan shows, we will continue to develop the evidence base between submission and examination and as part of preparation for the DLP. The SLP examination is likely to be scheduled for the end of this year.

More generally, when we met we also discussed wider infrastructure issues of concern to the County Council, including schools' provision. I am pleased that agreement has been reached on a process for taking this forward. For example arrangements have been made for HCC education officers to present to our Planning Policy Committee in September, to inform our draft Detailed Local Plan.

I am copying this letter to recipients of yours, including all county divisional members for St Albans, as well as the Portfolio Holder for Planning and members of the St Albans Planning Policy Committee.

Yours sincerely



James Blake
Chief Executive

6	SADC brief with drafting support from HCC SADC commission Landowner/ Developer Input AECOM work SADC Review Outputs with support from HCC	Code mitigations from (5) into COMET and re-run. (this will be dependent on which version of COMET is utilised, see (4))	To follow completion of tasks 4 & 5. Draft Output – week 4 Final Output – week 6	CIL / DLP / Masterplanning
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SLP / DLP / CIL Timelines

	Consultation	Pre-submission Publication	Submission	Examination	Adoption
SLP	Oct/Nov 2014	Jan/Feb 2016	July 2016	November 2016	May 2017
DLP	Nov/Dec 2016	April/May 2017	Oct 2017	December 2017	June 2018
CIL	N/A	April/May 2017	Oct 2017	December 2017	June 2018

SADC Education related timeline - As of discussion at PPC on 14.6.16, HCC invited to present to 13 September PPC and HCC agreed (15.6.16) - Q and A from PPC below

Contact Name	Question	Answer
David Cairns Local resident	<p>Previously this Council has clearly stated that it considers the designation of specific sites for schools to be a DLP matter. This intent is repeated on pages 7/312-3/377 of this agenda, notably in response to HCC's Section 19 submission (p312). Item 11 introduces the IDP, with intent to submit in the evidence base for the PDSL. The IDP identifies (9.61, p375) a specific site in Lower Luton Road, and goes further with an unqualified comment that the school "will be built".</p> <p>1 How does the Council reconcile this apparent approval by stealth with (a) its statements about this being a DLP matter and (b) the lack of opportunity for consultation implicit in a publication that was not available during the section 19 consultation?</p> <p>Further the Council states intent that PPC would be provided opportunity to assess the demographic evidence of need before approving educational sites (p7). PPC work programme contains no reference to attendance at this Committee by HCC Schools Planners.</p> <p>2 Does the pre-determination of the Harpenden site and the</p>	<p>1. The relevant sentence from 9.61 says:</p> <p><i>Officers were asked to work with the County Council to establish if specific education sites should be identified for inclusion. This would need to include giving the Committee an opportunity to assess the demographic evidence base behind such sites.</i></p> <p>The draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) is not giving any approval by stealth. It merely records the responsible authority's current plans in this regard. As set out at 4.3 of the report:</p> <p><i>It provides an overview of the types of infrastructure required based on current understanding, giving an indication of where and when provision will occur, how it will be funded, and the parties responsible for delivery.</i></p> <p>In the case of the Harpenden secondary school proposal, Hertfordshire County Council's plans have been publically stated. They have set out that funding provision has been made and an interest in the land has been acquired. In the terms used in the report, this constitutes "an indication" for the IDP.</p> <p>The Council continues to make clear that it considers the designation of specific sites for schools to be a DLP matter.</p>

	<p>absence of HCC presence remove the ability to undertake the assessments that the Committee stated it wished to do?</p> <p>3 Given this wholly anomalous position in respect of this Council's stated intent for processing such matters, will the Council now remove all reference to any specific education site, particular that at 9.61 above, from all material submitted as evidence for the SLP?</p>	<p>The opportunity to assess and challenge the Education Authority assessment of demographic evidence for new school provision will be taken forward into the Work Programme in due course. It is currently anticipated that HCC will present on the issue approximately in September 2016.</p> <p>2. As already addressed, no pre-determination has been made.</p> <p>3. As already addressed, the position is not anomalous. No change to the IDP is required.</p>
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Draft HCC position statement on transport/highways:

Based on initial transport modelling congestion is identified at various junctions requiring further investigation. Subject to further work/modelling being carried out to establish whether feasible mitigation(s) exist, HCC as Highway Authority will not object to the St Albans Strategic Local Plan. The further work/modelling required to support the Detailed Local Plan is broadly set out in the SADC Further Transport Evidence Base Work Plan. In the event that mitigation is not achievable this would require a review of the Spatial Options which form the Local Plan.

John Wood
Chief Executive & Director - Environment



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Date: 2 August 2016

Dear James

St Albans Local Plan Development

Thank you for your letter dated 27 July 2016, together with the overall programme of work needed to move forward your two stage local plan.

I think the programme sets out clearly the further transport work that you, as the Local Planning Authority, will be carrying out and we, as the Highways Authority, would be happy to assist you in commissioning this work if that would be helpful.

I am conscious of your timescales and that this work needs to be progressed pretty swiftly now. I am not aware that anything has happened since we last met, so I think your idea of monthly meetings is sensible.

Roger Flowerday is the HCC's key contact for this work and he is awaiting contact from your colleagues to set these up. I will be asking Roger to keep me posted on progress.

Yours sincerely

Rob Smith
Deputy Director – Environment (Highways)

c.c. Roger Flowerday , Development Manager