

North Warwickshire Local Plan Examination in Public
Matter 7: Infrastructure Provision

Written Statement from Warwickshire County Council
NWBC Local Plan A5 Dualling Proposals

March 2019



1. Purpose of the Statement

The purpose of this statement is to provide the Local Plan Inspector with further clarity with regards to the A5 2015 (*WCC correction 2018*) study, the A5 Housing Infrastructure Fund bid and likely timing, relationship to costings in IDP and the implications for capacity of A5 over the coming years in the absence of that project being implemented.

2. Context

Warwickshire County Council (WCC) supported North Warwickshire Borough Council (NWBC) in the preparation of the transport evidence base for NWBC Local Plan (LP) including the production of a series of documents which focussed on the implications on the transport network arising from the delivery of the proposed housing and employment allocations identified within the NWBC (LP).

The key infrastructure requirements to support the NWBC LP were identified through the Strategic Transport Assessment (STA) October 2017 completed by Vectos Microsim (VM) on behalf of NWBC and WCC.

The STA identified the key highway infrastructure measures considered necessary to support the delivery of the local plan proposals. Additionally the development impacts were tested across a series of years to provide an indicative phasing plan for the infrastructure delivery.

The phasing of schemes is primarily driven by the manner in which development comes forward throughout the LP. Therefore the order of schemes identified within the STA serves as a guide only at this stage. The STA does, however, provide an indication of the strategy required to facilitate the level of growth identified by 2021, 2026 and finally by 2031 (now 2033). These assumptions will be subject to continuous testing and scrutiny throughout the planning process as developments and schemes will be subject to further testing.

3. A5 Growth Study

The A5 Growth Corridor Study 2018 was completed prior to the examination and supplemented the STA. This study assessed the operation of the A5 inclusive of the developments identified within both NWBC Local Plan proposals as well as the, now adopted, NBBC Local Plan. Testing considered all housing and employment along the corridor and concluded that the full strategy for the A5 will accommodate the proposed level of housing and employment growth which has been identified thus far.

The A5 Growth Corridor Study findings corroborated the findings of the STA in that the mitigation identified within the original STA remained consistent with mitigation identified within the STA. The outcome of this study cemented the conclusions that the additional schemes identified towards the end of the STA work will be essential in facilitating all of the growth identified in the Local Plan proposals whilst maintaining an acceptable level of network operation.

A5 Additional Essential Schemes

The following schemes are those which are considered to be essential for delivery by the end of the Plan period on the basis of the current trajectory and development proposals identified.

Dualling north of Grendon

These scheme proposals align with the emerging Midlands Connect strategy for the corridor and involve delivery of a dualled section of the A5 which effectively bypasses Grendon. WCC are working closely with both Midlands Connect and Highways England and would hope to see these improvements included within a future RIS period. The majority of the dualling required would fall within land identified as RH1 in the LP. The current HIF bid provides the junction with the A5 at Grendon to which the dualling north of Grendon scheme would connect.

Based upon more recent assessments to inform the A5 HIF business case, this infrastructure was not identified as being required until at least 2028/29 whilst on the original STA work/A5 Growth Corridor study it is considered that these schemes will likely be essential by the end of the plan period. This provides assurance that there will be time available following the adoption of the Local Plan for more certainty around these proposals to be established.

Dualling from Atherstone to Higham Lane/MIRA

This proposal was not identified in the original STA because of the extent of the assessment. The proposal for this section of the A5 completes the partially dualled section between Atherstone and MIRA. Effectively this creates a dual carriageway from MIRA to M42 J10.

MIRA development sites would be expected to fund the improvements required to facilitate growth at the site as there is a direct link between the developments and infrastructure needs. MIRA has previously been successful in securing government funding for improvements to facilitate expansion as an Enterprise Zone and secured £19m through the RGF. Given the important nature of the work undertaken at MIRA and the current focus on the A5 nationally, one could reasonably expect further funding being made available in the future.

M42 J10

WCC have commissioned a detailed study of the junction and potential mitigation solutions, in preparation for discussions with HS2, which identified a scheme which would mitigate the impacts of the Local Plan. WCC have shared this information with Highways England (HE), in parallel HE have also been considering short term and long term interventions at this location some of which align very closely with the scheme proposals identified by WCC and would serve as a first phase. WCC understand that HE are currently investigating approaches to funding these improvements. It was also noted within the 2017 STA report that the strategic nature of this junction meant that the need to improve the junction was related to the much greater volume of traffic growth projected by the strategic trips in the area rather than as a direct impact of the local housing developments allocated through the NWBC Local Plan proposals.

4. A5 Housing Infrastructure Fund

WCC are developing a Housing Infrastructure Fund submission (due 22/03/19) seeking funding for the A5 from the £4.3bn available through Homes England. This funding source is designed specifically to facilitate infrastructure delivery which is necessary to support housing growth where there are existing market barriers (such as viability concerns). The WCC A5 HIF submission will secure the initial phases of infrastructure requirements on the A5 needed to facilitate the LP in a manner which will see them delivered earlier than it was considered necessary to do so, which it is hoped will serve as further housing market stimulation. A significant amount of work has been undertaken to provide evidence for the HIF submission (similar to Outline Business Case) which has

considered how the infrastructure would be delivered, the timescales, cost and the magnitude of housing directly linked to the infrastructure delivery.

Schemes identified within the STA were further developed to support the HIF submission and have been designed to maximise housing release within the funding timescale constraints. Modelling highlighted that the existing A5 network could accommodate growth in accordance with the trajectory until 2021, beyond this point a significant change in infrastructure provision would be required to release further housing. The A5 HIF submission supports 100% funding (excluding development access points) for the following improvements as highlighted orange in Fig.1

- Offline dualling south of Dordon - including a new offline roundabout to provide access to Dordon and new roundabout at eastern end to reconnect with existing A5 and link into the dualling north of Grendon (identified in purple (Fig. 1)
- Spon Lane roundabout improvements – approach and circulatory widening for additional lanes
- Holly Lane roundabout improvements – approach and circulatory widening for additional lanes
- The existing A5 south of Dordon would become a local access road with improved pedestrian and cycle facilities

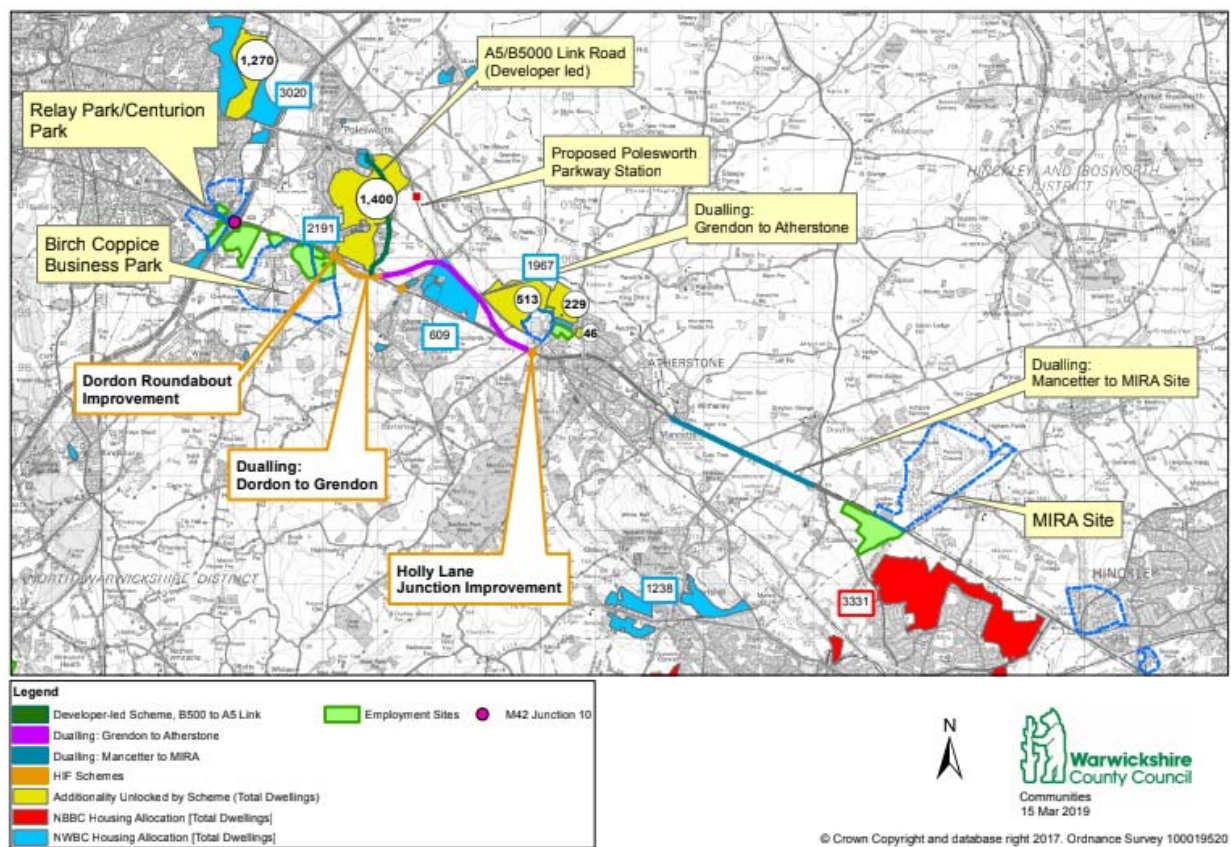


Fig 1 A5 improvements, allocations and relationship to HIF submission

The submission identified that the infrastructure supported by the HIF funding would facilitate all of housing identified in the NWBC LP trajectory up to 2028/29 levels, which equates to approximately 3,500 dwellings, Fig 1 identifies the quantum of housing released at each LP allocation (marked yellow)

5. Relationship to IDP costings

Development of the HIF proposals has been supported by a more detailed assessment of infrastructure costs for these specific sections of the A5 corridor.

Fig.2 highlights those schemes linked to the SRN, their status within the STA and the latest position in terms of costs and funding

SRN Scheme in STA	Current Status	STA mitigation requirement	Expected delivery by	STA cost	Revised cost
1 – Holly Lane	Subject to HIF submission	2021	March 2024(HIF)	£750,000	Included in total £58m HIF bid
4 – A5/B5000 Link Road	Will be condition of planning	2026	Developer led	£7.5m	
5 – A5 Bypass Phase 1	Subject to HIF submission	2026	March 2024(HIF)	£29m	Included in total £58m HIF bid
6 –Dordon Signals	Subject to HIF submission	2026	March 2024(HIF)	(see 5)	Included in total £58m HIF bid
7 - Holly Lane Widening Approaches	Subject to HIF submission	2026	March 2024(HIF)	£9.2m	Included in total £58m HIF bid
8 – Removal of signals at M42	Subject to HE WCC and HE studies	2026	Replaced by 18	-	
9 – Grendon Roundabout	Subject to HIF submission	2026	March 2024(HIF)	(see 5)	Included in total £58m HIF bid
11 – Mancetter Gyratory	Removed from HIF submission as no longer required	2031	2031	£2.3m	n/a
12 – A5 Holly Lane	Subject to HIF submission	2031	March 2024(HIF)	(see 7)	Included in total £58m HIF bid
14 - A5 - Dualling	No longer required, replaced by dualling north of Grendon	2031	-	n/a	
15 – Bypass Roundabout	Subject to HIF submission	2031	March 2024(HIF)	See 5	Included in total £58m HIF bid
Additional schemes identified in the 2018 A5 Corridor Study					
16 - Dualling north of Grendon	Considered as part of HIF but could not meet funding timescales	2031 (aspirational)	By 2031, dependent on development trajectory	£57.5m	No revised cost available
17 - Dualling from Atherstone to Higham Lane	To be funded through employment sites at MIRA	-	By 2031, dependent on development trajectory	Not costed	Not costed
18 - M42 J10		2031 (aspirational)			

Fig 2 Original STA Mitigation Costs and Delivery Dates, Current Status and Revised Costs and Delivery Dates

The £58m HIF bid comprises schemes 1,5,6,7,9,12 and 15. When high level cost estimating to support the STA was undertaken, these schemes were identified to cost in the region of £39m. The HIF scheme will also include associated improvements to the original A5 at Dordon and improved ped/cycle facilities, whilst also being compatible with the longer term HE and Midlands Connect vision for the corridor.

6. Support for the HIF proposals and wider focus on the A5 corridor

There is widespread support for the A5 HIF proposals which will facilitate the sub regional housing needs. As such WCC have been inundated with letters of support from WMCA, Midlands Connect, Andy Street (Mayor of Birmingham), 3 Members of Parliament, Highways England, CWLEPs, all neighbouring Local Authorities, housing developers and a number of major employers located on the A5.

There is a regional focus on the need for improvements on the A5. Midlands Connect is the transport element of the Midlands Engine and consists of a partnership of Local Authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), Department for Transport (DfT), Network Rail and Highways England. In its Transport Strategy (March 2017), the A5 Corridor was highlighted as having strong potential to provide a more resiliently connected regional network. Therefore Midlands Connect is pursuing an A5 Corridor Study to identify the transport infrastructure required to maximise the economic potential of the 52-mile section of the A5 from M6 Junction 12 (Gailey), in the west, to M1 Junction 18 (Crick) in the east. The outcomes of this study will then make the case to Government that investment in the A5 is essential to local growth and instrumental to regional and national economic growth and prosperity.

Midlands Connect has also produced a summary document specifically to support this application which sets out the initial findings from the MC A5 Corridor Study highlighting the importance of the A5 to the economic prosperity of the Midlands as a key connector to the UK's 'Logistics Golden Triangle'.

Highways England has recognised the work undertaken, which is cognisant to the HE scheme development process, and is supportive of the proposals, having been directly involved in the HIF submission and STA work

Alan Law
County Transport Modeller – Modelling and Traffic Surveys Team Leader
Warwickshire County Council