

Worthing Borough Council

Local Development Framework: Core Strategy Publication – April 2010

Revised Transport Matters Statement of Common Ground between Worthing Borough Council and West Sussex County Council

Background

Worthing Borough Council (WBC) prepared a Submission Draft Core Strategy in November 2007. The Highways Agency (HA) and West Sussex County Council (WSCC), as the local highway authorities for the town made representations on the Submission Draft and this would have provided part of the evidence base for any subsequent Examination. Due to a combination of several reasons, including revised national planning policy guidance (PPS 12 – Local Spatial Planning) the Examination did not take place and the Submission Draft was withdrawn.

A revised Core Strategy has been prepared for publication and will be submitted to the Secretary of State in late June/early July 2010, with a subsequent Examination later in the year. The Core Strategy will give weight to this Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) which sets out the areas of agreement between WSCC and WBC to inform the Core Strategy's Examination process. The statement is focused on the common transport objectives of WBC and WSCC, who both have a key role to play in maintaining and administrating the local road transport network. However, the primary route along the northern WBC boundary is the A27 and this is administered by the Highways Agency. In spatial planning and development control terms the HA has a duty to safeguard the operation of the trunk road network. In addition the HA has been asked to work with local planning authorities and others to promote more sustainable modes of transport. They, therefore, look to the Council's LDF to promote strategies, policies, and land allocations which will support alternatives to the private car.

West Sussex County Council's objectives

The Core strategy, when adopted in 2011 should support and help to deliver the long term objectives, strategies and targets set out within the current Local Transport Plan 2006 – 2016 (and also the strategies and targets set out in the emerging LTP which will be finalised in 2011).

The current priorities include the need to:

- Reducing congestion
- Reducing pollution
- Improving accessibility
- Improving safety

The above criteria are in line with national transport planning policy and reflect Government thinking that best use should be made of existing road infrastructure by managing our roads better. New road building should only be used where it can be justified by these policy objectives, where this represents good value for money and where this will not inhibit the achievement of other overarching policy objectives, such as those concerned with improving

the quality of the environment.

Statement of Common Ground

The SoCG will provide the framework to assess and define the content of transport policies in the Core Strategy.

WBC needs to provide a clear link between transport policy and the essential criteria and rationale that are required to ensure that the Core Strategy is sound. This will include ensuring compatibility with the Core Strategy's spatial vision and strategic objectives. The spatial vision sets out Worthing's commitment to supporting and developing the principles of sustainable development. This means promoting good accessibility to the town's services and economic centres. It focuses therefore on local distinctiveness and effective delivery to support the continuing vitality of the Worthing, both at the economic and social level.

The strategic objectives in the Core Strategy clearly set out Worthing's priorities that will be needed to implement the spatial vision. In terms of transport there are key strategic objectives that will help this process, they are:

- Delivering a sustainable economy
- Reducing the social and economic disparities that exist in Worthing
- Improving accessibility
- Protecting our natural environment and addressing climate change

The above objectives will help to make Worthing a cleaner and greener town. Developing more efficient and sustainable transport links and implementing targeted investment in new transport infrastructure will help to support the town's regeneration and social commitments.

Transport policies at both the Borough Council level and at County Council level should be able to be monitored against an agreed implementation timetable. Any policy formulation will be influenced and guided by a sound evidence base, including the results of an effective and inclusive consultation process. WSCC will be a pivotal part of this process as the highways authority for Worthing.

Transport areas of common interest

There are five main areas where WBC and WSCC share common transport interests, in terms of new infrastructure and transport policies needed in order to progress the Core Strategy.

1. Transport Assessments and accessibility at key strategic locations

Where major development is being planned, its site will reduce the need to travel especially by car and it should be well linked to existing public transport, pedestrian and cycle networks. The site should also be accessible to jobs, shops, schools and leisure facilities. Where major development needs access to the existing highway network WSCC will require a Transport Assessment to assess the impacts of the development on the local transport infrastructure. This should be supported by appropriate transport modelling that supports detailed development proposals. The Borough Council agrees with this aim as it will ensure that new development reduces, manages and mitigates the impact it has on the local transport infrastructure. The use of assessments also facilitates the planning and implementation of

transport infrastructure for all modes and enables agreement between the developers and the transport authorities to be consistent and workable.

2. Improving safety for pedestrians and motorists

Safety is a key concern for both Councils and as such all transport infrastructure should be designed to meet the appropriate design standards and must be considered through the Safety Audit process, addressing issues raised in the audit. The provision of transport infrastructure that reduces the incidence and severity of personal injury accidents is a policy requirement that satisfies legislators at both national and regional level. Reducing the number of accidents will be helped by improving visibility at junctions, reducing traffic speed levels and improving infrastructure for all motorised and non-motorised users where needed.

3. Car Parking

Car parking needs to play a key role in supporting economic vitality in Worthing and meets the needs of those who live and visit the town. as part of a holistic approach to transport which promotes sustainable modes of transport and does not allow unrestrained growth in trips by private car. A car parking strategy will be required that will assess current need and capacity for on and off-street parking, and presents a range of initiatives that will meet the future needs of the town in the context of the overarching policy objectives.

4. Alternative transport modes/demand management initiatives

The use of demand management tools to restrict car use will be limited in Worthing. The use of road pricing and similar measures are unlikely to gain favour with elected Members or the general public. The use of initiatives which promote the use of alternative modes of transport other than the car are far more acceptable and in providing access to development, the priority should be to provide access by public transport, walking and cycling. Constructing more walking and cycling routes and the increased use of public transport are common goals that are achievable and affordable in the short to medium term.

5. Progressing the Coastal Transport System

The Coastal Transport System (CTS) will provide an important public transport link from Brighton to Worthing and will then continue westwards to Portsmouth. It will provide a high quality of service with services operating at high frequency, using high quality buses, passenger information and waiting facilities. Passenger numbers should increase significantly and new infrastructure will be needed to support the service. Where they are feasible, bus priority measures will be used to reduce journey times for buses, by allowing them priority at traffic signals and to bypass congested locations. These measures will give passengers a genuine advantage compared to travelling by private car and reliability will also be improved for bus services, giving passengers the confidence to regularly rely on the service.

Core Strategy development scenarios in Worthing

The Core Strategy as well as setting out the strategic objectives set out above, also considers the areas of the town that have been identified as being those that are most likely to provide the greatest stimulus to the town's regeneration and hence, economic growth. They are also areas that will be used to meet a significant proportion of Worthing's new housing allocation,

as set out in the South East Plan – some 4,000 dwellings. The areas have been identified in the Core Strategy as Areas of Change. They are predominantly **identified** sites that are likely to come forward for development during the Core Strategy period and not specifically **allocated** sites, which have a greater degree of delivery certainty. The only allocated site in the Core Strategy is West Durrington.

These sites will see development across a wide range of activities, from residential to leisure and business use. Clearly new development will place a strain on the existing road network and it is important to assess any impacts on it.

Evidence base work to assess the impacts of new development has been commissioned in the past two years. The Worthing and Adur Strategic Transport Model (WASTM) has developed a validated traffic model and a package of infrastructure/policy development options that will be tested as part of the emerging Delivering a Sustainable Transport System (DaSTS) process.

Further modelling work has been completed by WBC and Parsons Brinckerhof – the HA’s approved modelling contractor – the Worthing LDF Core Strategy Testing Report (WCSTR). The WASTM model was used to assess the impacts of the development sites in the Core Strategy. The main aim of the work was to confirm to the Planning Inspector at any future Examination, that there were no ‘showstoppers’ in terms of any development site imposing excessive pressures on the road network.

The outcome from the modelling work is that increases in traffic volumes and congestion are inevitable in the next 10 -15 years, even without any Core Strategy development sites coming forward. However, the modelling work concluded that the impact of the Core Strategy development sites, in overall terms, will have limited impact, on both the A27 and the local road infrastructure. However, mitigation measures were tested as part of the modelling work in order to identify how congestion could be reduced at some of the sites where traffic volumes were forecast to increase as a result of development. The mitigation measures were forecast to be generally positive but further work may be required at some of the sites when development reaches the implementation stage.

Stakeholder position on the evidence base work

Highways Agency

The HA have assessed the results of the Core Strategy modelling work and have concluded that

“Most of the Worthing increases in traffic flow occur within and around the town centre due to the large number of development options located there. The transport effects of each individual development option are likely to be small and manageable within the network constraints. Compared to background growth, each development will generate small increases overall across the network and with the supposed exceptions of the West Durrington and ‘The Warren’ sites will generate little traffic along the A27.

Given the low level of extra demand created by the Core Strategy options compared to existing traffic and future background growth in the area, the Core Strategy as tested is not the greatest contributor to the future year projected increases in demand upon the A27.

Overall, it does not add significantly more traffic to the strategic highway network but could still have a material impact that requires closer scrutiny”

West Sussex County Council

Although the County Council are in agreement with the 5 transport areas of common interest set out above they are also aware that major new development is inevitable in Worthing during the Core Strategy period. However, they are understandably keen to ensure that any development does not place unnecessary pressure on the local road network.

WBC and WSCC agree that the WCSTR is not a document that sets out to resolve the future transport problems in Worthing. It is primarily an evidence base document to highlight areas of potential concern in relation to transport matters as a result of future development.

Any major development will still require a separate Transport Assessment to be produced as part of any planning application. At present no assessments have been done for any of the Core Strategy sites, (apart from West Durrington) It is understood that separate Transport Assessments for the development sites may highlight transport problems that cannot be resolved by suitable mitigation measures. If this is the case then WSCC could raise objections and WBC would work in partnership with the County to resolve any major issues. WSCC will continue to work in partnership with WBC on future transport matters.

The above position is awaiting WSCC endorsement. Any ratifications or amendments will be addressed in the future.