Examination of the Doncaster Local Plan
Council Hearing Statement

Matter 12. Transport and Access

September 2020
Proposed road improvements

Q12.1. Is the support for each of the eleven road improvements listed in policy 13 part A and Table 7 ("major road network enhancement priorities") and indicated on the Key Diagram ("transport proposals") and Figure 6 ("proposed infrastructure") justified and consistent with national policy? In particular:

a) Do these elements of the Plan serve a clear purpose, and is it evident how a decision maker should react to a proposal to deliver one of the schemes or, alternatively, react to a development proposal that could compromise the delivery of one of the schemes?

1. Doncaster’s location on the Strategic Road Network has been central to the recent growth in jobs and houses particularly along the M18 corridor. Many of the schemes listed in Table 7 relate to the interaction with the Strategic and Local Road Network and the development opportunities the schemes can provide whilst reducing existing and future congestion issues. Each of the schemes are at various stages of development with differing levels of certainty.

2. The Pan-Northern Route identifies potential corridors linking the M18 across to the M1, no specific route for this link has been identified therefore there is no need for the protection of the route. This overarching scheme includes three other identified schemes within the list namely North Doncaster A1-A19 Link, Dearne Valley to A1(M) Improvements (Hickleton/Marr Bypasses) and A19 - M18 connectivity. Feasibility work is currently being undertaken on the overarching scheme and individual elements of the scheme by delivering in a phased approach.

3. The purpose of the Pan Northern serves a number of purposes, including:
   - Key Strategic Connections between the East and the West to ease the pressure on the M18 and M62 corridors;
   - Unlocking potential development sites which currently wouldn’t be feasible due to the lack of infrastructure to support the sites, as per NPPF 81 (c). This includes the unlocking of land at Carcroft which cannot be developed until there is an appropriate connection with the Strategic Road Network without impacting on residential areas;
   - Easing congestion and safety issues around residential areas; and,
   - Re-balancing development opportunities across the Borough with better connectivity and also providing access to existing employment opportunities.

4. Hatfield Link Road is a scheme currently under construction and is expected to be completed in December 2020. This scheme is fully funded including developer contributions.

5. West Moor Link (A630) Improvement Scheme is being delivered in two phases and has taken into account the sites identified in the Local Plan along this corridor. Traffic Modelling work has taken account of the potential developments and end uses to identify potential measures to cater for the increased traffic movements without impacting on journey times. The first phase has started which addresses a key pinch point by widening an existing railway bridge to allow better capacity flow. Developer contributions form part of the funding.
package to deliver phase 1. Detailed design is yet to be completed on Phase 2 but as new developments take place along this corridor then further contributions will be sought through the planning process to help fund the subsequent phases.

6. Improved access to the South East of Doncaster from M18 Junction 4 would look to support connections to key housing and employment sites. A connection at this point would reduce journey length for journeys using the M18 corridor from the North and would also offer significant accessibility to housing and employment without the need to use the Strategic Road Network. Currently this is conceptual and is looking at potential delivery towards the end of the plan period as a precursor to the next Local Plan to help facilitate future potential development.

7. Highways England have identified network improvements will be required on their Strategic Road Network through the Borough\(^1\). The A1 improvements between the M62 and the M18 form part of development works for the Road Improvement Scheme funding post 2025. The A1 is dual carriageway along this stretch and has sub-standard junctions which leads to congestion and safety issues. Feasibility work has been undertaken to either widen the existing carriageway or re-alignment along the route.

8. The North Nottinghamshire to A631 capacity improvements are a result of the impact of developments in a neighbouring planning authority. Improvements have been agreed through developer contributions to address the impact of the development in the Borough. Trigger points for the development are in place to ensure that the infrastructure agreed is in place before the impact of the generated traffic is detrimental to traffic flow and safety.

b) Are the schemes based on robust transport evidence in accordance with national policy and guidance?

9. The eleven schemes that have been included in the Local Plan have been arrived at through evidence on the impacts of congestion, road accident data and air quality data. The impact of development on both the Strategic Road Network\(^2\) and Local Road Network\(^3\) has been robustly assessed as part of the Local Plan’s evidence base which have been prepared in line with the relevant national policy and guidance, including PPG (Transport evidence bases in plan making\(^4\)). The schemes take account of already permitted development to reduce their impact by minimising congestion and accessibility with public transport. They are derived from a number of issues including: growth areas; congestion and road safety; areas of Air Quality concerns (as outlined in NPPF paragraph 181); committed development; and, problem areas within an identified Air Quality Management Area.

c) Were reasonable alternatives to the schemes considered during the preparation of the Plan including through the sustainability appraisal?

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\(^{1}\) SDEBS1 Transport Modelling (SRN Highways England Motorway Junctions Assessment) 2019
\(^{2}\) SDEBS1 Transport Modelling (SRN Highways England Motorway Junctions Assessment) 2019
\(^{3}\) SDEBS0.1-50.5 Doncaster Local Plan Junction Assessment 2020 & Appendices
\(^{4}\) ID: 54-001-20141010 to ID: 54-012-20150313
10. The schemes listed are all derived from long standing issues and problems that have been considered for option appraisal. Where possible, mitigation measures have been put in place to address some of the issues with varying options for addressing the issues. All the major schemes identified have either gone through, or will go through, an assessment to look at all reasonable alternatives. The basis of the options will look at the impact on any given scheme on cost and benefits but will take into account any impacts that the scheme will have including environmental and sustainable factors.

11. The business case approach either through the Sheffield City Region Appraisal Process, or the Transport for the North Major Route Network Funding, both require Department for Transport Webtag compliance for Transport Schemes. This ensures that the schemes are not only robust but they provide a level of evidence that, in order to obtain funding, will need to address all benefits and dis-benefits for the preferred and alternative options for scheme delivery.

12. The Pan Northern Route is currently at feasibility stage and has mainly focussed on the corridor approach. As the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) has been developed, a number of options for the routes have been considered. The SOBC includes looking at a range of options including the impact of a ‘do nothing option’ ranging to dual carriageway provision. Each of the phases will look at a range of options to deliver that individual phase but taking into account the wider Pan Northern Route. The next stage of the work is to produce an Outline Business Case which will demonstrate the options considered in the development and the justification for the preferred scheme.

13. The SA\(^5\) considered the effects of the policy, rather than the component road schemes (which for the SRN, are being led by Highways England). The policy is an enabler of existing commitments for some schemes (such as Hatfield Link Road) where the environmental impacts will have been considered as part of the Development Management and planning application stage. For other schemes, assessments have been undertaken to support the development of other plans (and the accompanying reasonable alternatives). For example, the SEA and HRA of the South Yorkshire Local Transport Plan, the assessment of the Transport for the North Strategic Transport Plan for the North of England\(^6\), and the supporting work undertaken by Highways England.

\[d) \text{ Have the environmental impacts of the schemes been identified, assessed and taken into account?}\]

14. The environmental impacts of all the schemes will be taken into account as part of the Full Business Case. This will be included in the planning application and accompanied by an EIA. The environmental impacts will form part of the process in determining not only whether the scheme is submitted for funding, but also used to inform the options for route alignment.

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\(^5\) CSD7.1 Sustainability Appraisal Report 2019

e) Is there a reasonable prospect that each of the schemes will be delivered during the Plan period?

15. It is reasonable to assume that some of the schemes will be delivered during the Plan Period. Some schemes, such as the Hatfield Link Road and West Moor Link Improvements, are already underway. Other schemes are at various stages of the process such as the Hickleton-Marr by-pass which is at Strategic Outline Business Case and A631 which is subject to a development trigger point in a neighbouring planning authority.

16. The Pan Northern Route may not be physically complete within the plan period as it covers a significant distance, but the alignment of the full route will be determined and phases of the full scheme will be delivered subject to Full Business Case approval for the required funding.

17. The Highways England controlled schemes on the A1 and M18 will be subject to the Road Investment Strategy phase 3 pipeline work which will commence construction in the period 2026-2030. The submission, if supported, will be delivered within the plan period.

18. The issues on Junction 3 have a short-term solution to cater for existing traffic volumes. The current performance of the junction has resulted in significant risk with queueing traffic on the fast flowing M18. The initial improvements will resolve this issue, but as the traffic will continue to grow as a result of existing permissions the longer term solution is to ease the capacity with a connection at junction 4. The scheme is likely to be delivered towards the end of the plan period as interventions at Junction 3 currently programmed to be delivered by 2023 will need to be assessed as to whether they resolve the current issues at Junction 3.

19. As set out above, there is greater certainty for some of the schemes being delivered in the plan period than others at the time of drafting the Plan. However, the Council is firmly of the view that inclusion of schemes in the Plan, particularly where there is less certainty at this stage, is an important prerequisite to obtaining any necessary funding in due course. Their inclusion therefore will, in itself, make delivery in the plan period far more likely than were they not to be included (or omitted altogether and left to a review of the plan). The statutory requirement to review Local Plans at least every five years also provides an opportunity to monitor progress and respond accordingly.

A1(M) and M18 junctions

Q12.2. Is it necessary to modify the Plan for it to set out requirements for any allocated sites to secure or contribute towards improvements to A1(M) or M18 junctions?

20. It is not considered necessary to modify the Plan to include for developer contributions to the A1 and M18 junctions. Highways England will be seeking the funding through the Road Investment Strategy for the A1 upgrade and funding for Junction 3 has been identified through the Transforming Cities Fund.

Proposed rail and bus transport improvements
Q12.3. Is the support for each of the rail and bus improvements listed in policy 13 parts B and C justified and consistent with national policy? In particular:

a) Do these elements of the Plan serve a clear purpose, and is it evident how a decision maker should react to a proposal to deliver one of the improvements or, alternatively, react to a development proposal that could compromise the delivery of one?

21. The majority of the rail improvements are focussed around improving existing services which improve capacity, reliability or quality of the rail provision.

22. The potential re-opening of a station at Askern is considered to be achievable on the basis that the rail network exists and that the land is available to cater for a station. The provision of a service along this route will be subject to the rail operator on the route being prepared to run a service. There are no development proposals which would impact on the station provision. The rail connection would provide improved connection to Doncaster from Askern for employment and leisure reducing significant journey time but would also provide connectivity with potential employment in West Yorkshire.

23. The proposal of the Doncaster Sheffield Airport East Coast Main Line (ECML) station involves providing a new rail connection form the North and South of the Airport and would support the housing growth that has been seen in the area already, alongside further housing provision during the plan period. The impact that the new rail alignment would have on development proposals is minimal as the areas for development in the Local Plan are within the ownership of the developer that is working with the Local Authority to provide the rail connection. The delivery of this will be subject to securing significant funding. Work has been undertaken to demonstrate the benefits not only to the airport but to the wider community through the provision of a park and ride facility that would reduce the need for commuters to access the rail network through Doncaster Station. The ECML connectivity would provide journeys to London, Leeds and York as well as providing a local rail connection with Doncaster. The current status of this project cannot be certain that the link will be provided therefore land continues to be safeguarded to provide a station on the Lincoln line which will serve the Airport and Local Community albeit not linked directly to the airport terminal and would require a shuttle service.

24. The station will serve as a park and ride facility with no other stations located in the South of the Borough. The station would serve as access to employment via sustainable mode both to employees at and in and around the Airport but also to residents in the local area accessing employment and services both in Doncaster and cities such as Sheffield and Leeds where currently the journey is likely to be by car. Journeys to London and the South would reduce the journeys into Doncaster.

b) Are the improvements based on robust transport evidence in accordance with national policy and guidance?
25. Doncaster Railway Station is a key station on the East Coast Main Line (ECML). The flow of trains conflicts with the East West movements of trains and therefore reduces the capacity through Doncaster. Network Rail are considering options to improve the efficiency of Doncaster Station in order to achieve the outputs required by Northern Powerhouse Rail for train timetables. The proposed loop into Doncaster Sheffield Airport will help to resolve some of the conflicts of train movements as ECML trains serving DSA would not stop at both Doncaster and DSA stations. A Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) has been prepared for a new rail connection and station for the GatewayEast growth hub, centred around Doncaster Sheffield Airport. With the submission of the SOBC a formal request for the project (known as “GatewayEast Rail”) to be included within the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline (RNEP), with a corresponding ‘Decision to Develop’, along with agreement to the funding required for the next stage of scheme development.

26. A feasibility study has been undertaken for Askern Station that demonstrates some challenges to delivering the scheme but these are not insurmountable with further work to be carried out prior to the development of a business case to seek funding.

27. Improving the access to rail services will help to reduce the reliance on the car and encourage more sustainable journeys. The proposed Tram Train schemes will utilise existing heavy rail rather than necessarily new infrastructure, though the flexibility of Tram Train could allow for new stops on the route. As with the major road schemes the funding will require that there is robust evidence to justify the investment needed to deliver the new stops.

28. As outlined in NPPF paragraphs 102 and 103, the rail schemes will support greater use of public transport and reduce the need for car journeys. Rail park and ride schemes have proven successful in transferring significant portions of journeys to public transport. The impacts of the environmental factors in delivering the ECML diversion would be more than offset by the reduction in car journeys to access the rail network and ultimately would provide net environmental gains. It reduces the need to travel into Doncaster Town Centre to access the rail network as well as offering the opportunity for access to employment for those that do not have access to a car.

29. Askern Station has little or no environmental impacts as the railway line already exists and it is only a station that is required. The station not only would provide access to public transport but could provide links to employment and leisure.

30. Both of the schemes identified would give a genuine choice of transport modes that are currently not available in these areas and will help to reduce congestion and emissions.

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<tr>
<th>c) Are the improvements needed to facilitate development proposed in the Plan?</th>
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<tr>
<td>31. None of the rail improvements are required to facilitate development. The delivery of these schemes will bring benefits to existing local residents and</td>
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future developments in providing accessibility to the rail network and reducing the reliance of the private car.

d) Have the environmental impacts of the improvements been identified, assessed and taken into account?

32. The rail schemes identified will be required to submit a Full Business Case (FBC) in order to obtain funding. The FBC will include the environmental impacts of delivering these schemes as well as forming part of the planning application process. Work has been undertaken on the East Coast Main Line with an overarching assessment on the overall environmental benefits from delivering the scheme but an environmental impact assessment will be formally undertaken as part of the Outline Business Case stage.

e) Is there a reasonable prospect that each of the improvements will be delivered during the Plan period?

33. It is reasonable to assume that these projects will be delivered during the Plan Period subject to available funding. Work has already begun in the feasibility of the stations identified; this work demonstrates the benefits of each scheme. The key issue will be the availability of funding, when the funding is available and comparison with other schemes as often this is a competitive process such as the New Stations Fund released by Network Rail is often oversubscribed.

Freight transport and lorry parking

Q12.4. Is the approach to freight transport and lorry parking set out in policies 13 part D and 16 justified and consistent with national policy, and will it be effective in improving the efficiency of transport and encouraging alternatives to the use of roads?

34. The policies are consistent with NPPF paragraph 107 and identify that those developments that have an impact on increased lorry parking should cater for this within the development in line with NPPF.

35. The availability of privately run lorry parking provision is assessed as part of the needs of the Borough through an assessment of current provision. It is often difficult to provide these facilities which meet the needs of every business associated with deliveries. It is complicated further by the “just in time” delivery schedules employed by companies to minimise catering for large numbers of lorries on site. There are a number of sites both in and just outside the Borough which cater for overnight lorry parking and are operating within capacity. Often overnight parking is required as part of an overall journey and may not be in any way related to developments within the Borough but rather they may be the appropriate stopping place as part of the overall journey.

36. New sites will be supported for additional lorry parking where they are appropriate i.e. located close to or on the Strategic Road Network that do not impact on local residents. As part of the A1 improvement scheme there will be discussions with Highways England on the provision of Lorry Parking within
service areas along the route particularly as many spaces have been lost on the A1 due to the closure of lay-bys.

37. The I-port has generated significant freight since the development came into use, they now have a rail freight terminal which is fully operational. Where possible the transfer of freight via alternative means than by road is encouraged.

Promoting sustainable transport in new development

| Q12.5. Are the requirements of policy 14 justified and consistent with national policy and guidance? In particular: |
| a) The parking standards for cars, disabled motorists, electric vehicles and motorcycles for different types of development in appendix 6. |

38. Appendix 6 is consistent with NPPF paragraph 105 as the Council has adopted different standards for the town centre where accessibility is greater than the rest of the Borough. Consideration will be given to developments outside the Town Centre that may be located on key transport routes but this will need to be justified in the transport assessment to support sustainable travel.

39. The current levels of electric car ownership do not justify development other than residential to provide a set level of spaces. As the ownership levels increase there will be a need for increased provision of spaces, appendix 6 allows for some flexibility in this by agreeing levels of electric charging points within developments.

40. The parking standards set out in Appendix 6 seeks to ensure that both residential and commercial parking provision is designed in a way that the development encourages sustainable travel where possible but also caters for existing and future car requirements. The provision of disabled spaces follows national guidelines for levels of disabled spaces to be included.

41. The parking standards set out in Appendix 6 is in line with NPPF paragraph 106 and seeks to ensure that both residential and commercial parking provision is designed in a way that the development encourages sustainable travel where possible but also caters for existing and future car requirements. The provision of disabled spaces follows national guidelines for levels of disabled spaces to be included.

42. An annual health check of parking provision is carried out by the Council to ensure that the quality and quantity of parking is appropriate. This includes looking at occupancy levels to give an understanding of need.

43. Improved cycle and pedestrian facilities in the Town Centre are on-going to ensure the Town Centre is not only accessible to all but also encourages sustainable journeys to and from the Town Centre.

| b) The thresholds for transport statements, transport assessments, and travel plans in appendix 7. |
44. The thresholds included in Appendix 7 are taken from the Guidance on Transport Assessment document\(^7\), and provides thresholds which provide a good starting point to open discussions. Although withdrawn in October 2014, it is still widely used.

**Cycling and walking**

Q12.6. Are policies 17 to 21, and the cycle parking standards in appendix 6, justified and will they be effective in providing high quality walking and cycling networks and supporting facilities? In particular:

a) Is the Council’s suggested change to policy 17 part C.3 necessary to make the Plan sound, and is it justified?

45. The Council has an adopted Cycle Strategy, it identifies the key corridors for improving cycle routes. The combination of improved cycle routes and existing infrastructure including quiet streets will help to provide a network that has connectivity from residential areas to areas or employment, education and leisure. Key to the success of the network is the provision of facilities within developments that will encourage cycling as the mode of transport. The lack of facilities such as parking provision could discourage cycling. Cycling infrastructure is continually improving as new routes are implemented as key connectors such as the routes now serving the I-port with further connections planned. This is more than just connecting an employment site with communities but provides greater accessibility for all but requires the developer to ensure that the sites with I-port provide the facilities to support cycling.

b) Is the requirement in policy 19 part D for unrecorded public paths that cross development sites to be treated in the same way as definitive rights of way justified?

46. Yes. Just because a route is not legally recorded does not necessarily mean that it does not carry public rights. Failure to take notice of unrecorded public rights of way may result in delays and design issues for the developer should public rights be shown to exist on the paths at a later date. The Council has seen a recent example of this on a residential development scheme where the developer failed to take into account 2 clearly used paths on the site. Both proved to carry public footpath rights and the developer had to redesign the site to accommodate them, causing delay to the start of the project which the Council wishes to avoid.

47. The granting of planning permission does not authorise the extinguishment or alteration of a public right of way, a separate order is required. The processing of such orders can be time consuming, particularly if objections are received that are not withdrawn and the order has to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for determination. Therefore, it is in the developer’s interest to apply for any such orders as soon as possible, including any orders

that may be required for unrecorded public rights of way. Where there is a well used path across a proposed development site, or one where the Council has an application to recognise public rights based on historical evidence, the Council brings this to the developers attention. The developer (or land owner if different) may choose to recognise that these rights exist and apply to divert accordingly. Although the paths do not formally possess any public status the developer (or landowner if different) accepts that these rights exist and applies to divert. This practice has been used in the past to reduce the risk of further delays. The developer may choose to ignore, but this may have detrimental effects later on. For example a well-used path at Hatfield that the developer chose to ignore, was later, following the definitive map modification order process, added to the definitive map resulting in a new residential garden being split into two.

c) Are the specific requirements in policy 20 parts B and C relating to the access, design and layout of public rights of way on development sites justified?

48. Yes. In respect to Policy 20 and Part B, if public rights of way are diverted onto estate roads, they lose their traffic free character. Enclosed paths with sharp bends are uninviting and give the perception of anti-social behaviour. By avoiding narrow paths with sharp bends it contributes to the reduction of the possibility of, and perception of, crime.

49. Public rights of way are highways, therefore the surface is owned by the Highway Authority. Any change in surface needs to be authorised to ensure that it is suitable for all legitimate users and that the cost of future maintenance is not prohibitive. An example of when authority has not been granted prior to a developer surfacing a public right of way is one where the developer has tarmacked a public bridleway to make it easier to cycle on, but as a result is not suitable for equestrians. In addition a developer may be committing an offence under Section 131 of the Highways Act 1980.

50. The Highways Act is very specific about the criteria under which structures on a public right of way may be authorised by the Highway Authority. Any unauthorised structures are an obstruction to that highway. The Council has a policy of least restrictive access to ensure that the network meets the needs of as many people as possible and complies with its statutory requirements under the Equality Act.

51. All the above requirements are included in the Council’s formally adopted Rights of Way Improvement Plan. By establishing these principles in the Local Plan it may save time and costs in the future for both for the developer and the Council and make it clear what is required.

52. In terms of Policy 20 Part C, the width requirements for public rights of way within development sites is taken from the Council’s formally adopted Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan. The plan was produced following an extensive consultation exercise with members of the public, statutory organisations and local land owners.