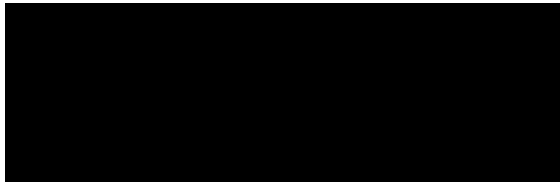


## STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

### 1. List of Parties involved:

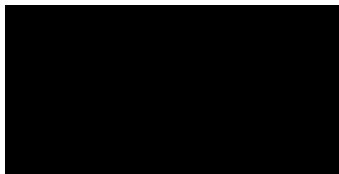
- Elmbridge Borough Council (EBC)
- National Highways (NH)

### 2. Signatories:



**27.07.2023**

***Elmbridge Borough Council  
Kim Tagliarini, Head of Planning & Environmental Services***



**27.07.2023**

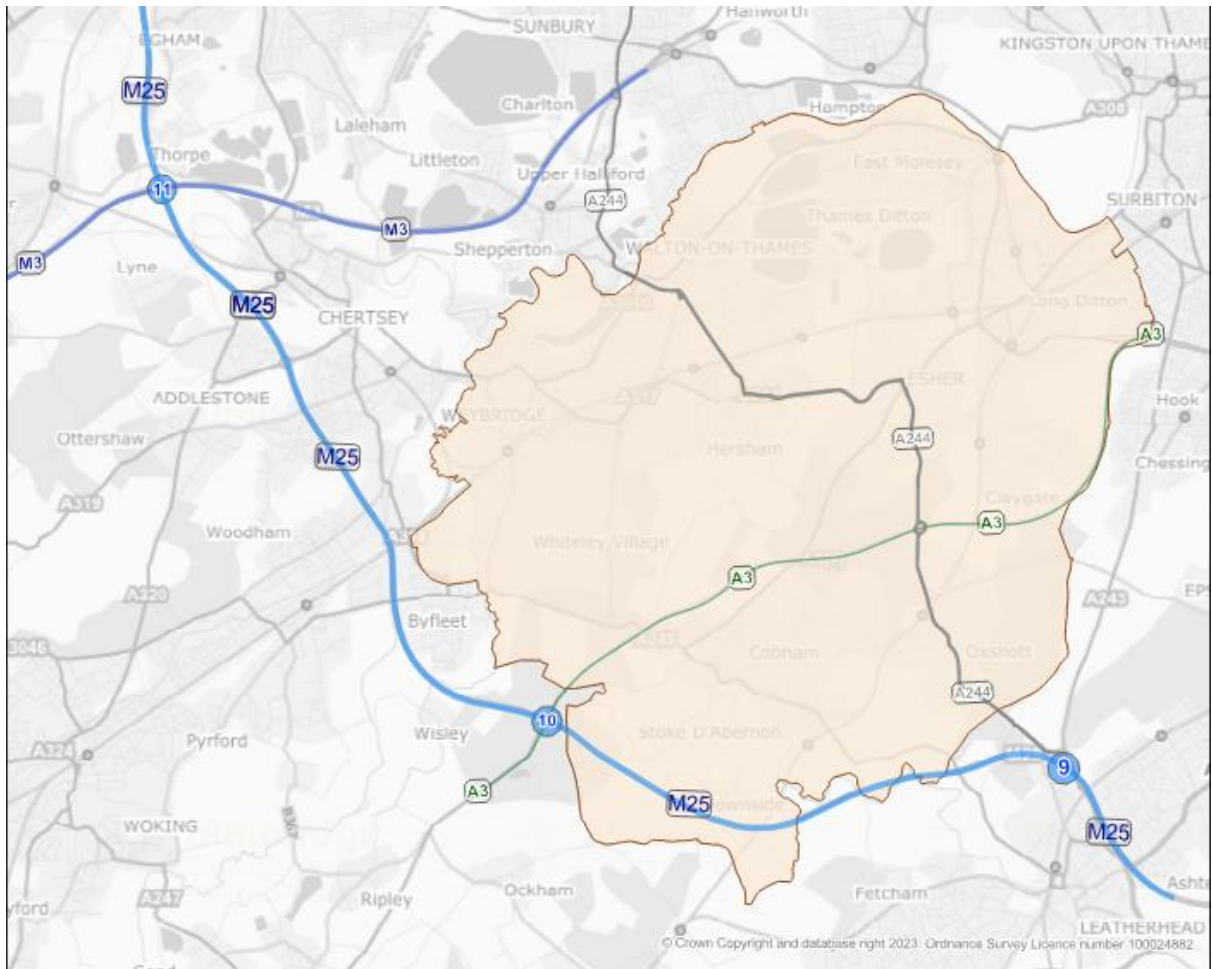
***National Highways  
Patrick Blake, Area 3 Spatial Planner***

### 3. Strategic Geography

The Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) sets out the areas of agreement between Elmbridge Borough Council (EBC) and National Highways (NH) in relation to the draft Elmbridge Local Plan 2037. It applies to Elmbridge Borough.

NH has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport as a strategic highway company under the provisions of the Infrastructure Act 2015 and is the highway authority, traffic authority and street authority for the Strategic Road Network (SRN). The SRN is a critical national asset and as such NH 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. NH will be concerned with proposals that have the potential to impact on the safe and efficient operation of the SRN.

In the case of the draft Elmbridge Local Plan, NH is primarily interested in the impacts of the development plan on the M25 (in particular, M25 Junctions 9 to 11) and the A3 (in particular between M25 Junction 10 (Wisley) and its junction with the A309 (Hook)) (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1: The primarily road network within Elmbridge Borough and immediate areas**

#### **4. Strategic Matters**

##### **Duty to Cooperate**

EBC has engaged NH on an active and on-going basis throughout the preparation of its draft Local Plan 2037. This has included engagement on the evidence base documents; through meetings; and at the Regulation 18 & 19 Stages, up until the submission of the draft Local Plan for Examination in Public (EiP).

Duty to cooperate activities up until the Regulation 19 Stages are recorded in EBC's Duty to Cooperate: Statement of Compliance (June 2022). Specifically, activities relating to Strategic Matter 4: Transport and the preparation of the Transport

Assessment in support of the draft Local Plan, are set out in pages 128 – 148 of the Statement.

NH agrees that the above document sets out an accurate record of their engagement up until the Regulation 19 Stage and has not raised an objection to the draft Local Plan in relation to the duty.

A summary of the activities undertaken prior to the Regulation 19 stage is set out below:

- **Elmbridge Local Plan: Strategic Options Consultation (2016/17)** – response received from NH setting out their responsibilities and areas of interest in terms of the SRN and the development of the Local Plan. NH set out that EBC will need to provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate the proposals have no residual severe impacts on the operation of the SRN or provide proposals to mitigate such impacts to an acceptable level.
- **Agreeing the scope of the Study Area for the Transport Assessment and use of SINTRAM** – towards the end of 2018 discussions started with NH and SCC to define the extent of the study area to be covered by the transport modelling. The study area was agreed April 2019.
- **Agreeing the approach to the base year local model refinement for the Transport Assessment** – a technical note which described the approach to the base year sub-area model validation was circulated from the Council's appointed Transport Consultants, WSP in June 2019. Following an initial meeting to discuss the details of the technical note, a series of emails were exchanged between June and August 2019 to agree the approach to 1) the inclusion of committed Local Plan growth arising from relevant neighbouring authorities; 2) the inclusion of windfalls in the appropriate development scenarios for the borough which were to be tested; 3) how internalised trip rates would be calculated and how these would apply to different geographies in the borough; and 4) the trip rate assumptions proposed related to the housing mix assumptions being made in the emerging Local Plan.
- **Elmbridge Local Plan: Options Consultation (2019)** – no particular comments were made by NH in regard to the spatial strategy options within this consultation. The on-going dialogue between the two parties concerning the assessment methodology of the potential impacts upon the SRN was acknowledged.
- **Agreeing the forecasting approach for the Transport Assessment** – discussions between the two parties took place over the Summer of 2019 up until October regarding forecasting. WSP shared a Forecast Methodology document with NH for comment in June 2019. This set out the approach agreed at previous meetings. This included the agreement of the approach to 1) forecasting

considering previous work completed by the County Council for Runnymede (2017) and Tandridge (2018); 2) how the trip rates for Wisely Airfield were to be incorporated into the model; and 3) how to approach the updated trip rates using the 2018 surveys and uploaded into the TRICS database.

- **Local Plan: Creating our vision, objectives, and the direction for the Development Management Policies (2020)** – no response received from NH in regard to the Strategic Matter of Transport.
- **Engagement on the modelling for the Transport Assessment** – between November 2020 and January 2021 a series of meetings were held to discuss the outcomes of the Part 1 Transport Assessment (modelling the high growth scenario) and potential mitigation options. Two key issues raised by NH were 1) consideration of the M25 J11 improvements within the Elmbridge Local Plan forecast scenarios and, 2) assessment of merges and diverges using DMRB approach and possibly LinSig modelling for the SRN junctions. NH also requested to see the Base Year Model Report which was subsequently provided. A proposed methodology to undertake an assessment of merges and diverges on the SRN using DMRB calculations (TD22/06) was shared with NH in March 2021. NH responded in April 2021 stating that the methodology was generally acceptable. On the issues of M25 J11, EBC sought the latest detailed scheme up until October 2021. These were not provided by SCC.
- **Engagement of the draft Transport Assessment** – following meetings and the circulation of a Briefing Note setting out a summary of the proposed mitigation alongside detailed modelling results, the parties met on 4 February 2022 to discuss. NH followed up with formal comments on 21 February 2022. NH agreed that no detailed modelling is required to rule out a severe impact at the M25 J9 as a result of the forecast growth. NH confirmed that they were content with the proposed mitigation measures and Area of Interest identified through the study work. NH raised a query on EBC's intended approach to M25 J11. In responding to NH's query, it was confirmed that the design of the junction should accommodate all anticipated growth, including growth that would arise from the Elmbridge Local Plan.
- **Additional modelling of mitigation at Copsem Lane** – on 23 May 2022, NH were provided with the scope for the surveys of the additional modelling work proposed at Copsem Lane, Esher following discussions on the draft Transport Assessment. A response from NH was provided on 23 May 2022. This sought clarification on 'stop lines' (arrivals and departures) and the type of analysis or modelling envisaged.

#### **Elmbridge Local Plan – Regulation 19 Representation Period (June 2022)**

EBC invited representations on their draft Local Plan (Regulation 19) between 17 June and 29 July 2022. Key points raised by NH in their representation (dated 28 July 2022) were:

- NH noted the outcomes of the Transport Assessment (May 2022) and the comparisons on the network conditions both with and without the draft spatial strategy applied.
- Having appraised the proposed impacts and effects of the draft spatial strategy on the SRN, NH were content the residual cumulative impacts had been adequately identified.
- NH noted that the assessment of mitigation measures had concentrated on identifying the highways improvements required to accommodate the draft Local Plan spatial strategy and had been undertaken at a high level using the SINTRAM traffic model.
- NH noted that the mitigation proposed for the junction of the A3 with A244 Copsem Lane (Esher Common Roundabout) involved the partial signalisation of the circulatory and the A3 westbound off-slip.
- NH acknowledged the congestion and capacity problems at the above junction may arise from traffic queuing back from nearby junctions located to the north and south of the junction. Therefore, a scheme for the junction of the A3 and A244 Copsem Lane may require highway interventions to the north and south of the junction. NH noted that this was currently being reviewed by EBC and looked forward to further discussions on this point.
- NH confirmed that in regard to the junction of the A3 and A244 Copsem Lane, EBC would need to provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the proposed mitigation and/or modifications mitigates any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, to an acceptable degree.
- NH noted that no allowance had been made in the traffic modelling for future residents or employees who might travel by public transport or active forms of travel. Furthermore, that no detailed assessment of bus and rail accessibility had been included in the assessment and no strategic bus and rail services improvements are proposed as part of the draft Local Plan spatial strategy.
- NH stated that local improvements could be provided at a later stage as part of the mitigation requirements for individual planning applications.
- NH sought to understand further what sustainable transport measures can be identified to limit impacts on the SRN and that they would advocate an approach to manage demand through enhancing connectivity to existing urban and employment centres, and access to high-quality and frequent public transport services thereby reducing the need to travel on the SRN.
- NH noted that scheme costing is still to be determined and that funding for any scheme will need to be secured. NH stated that they expect a clearly defined

scheme and delivery mechanism with secured funding to be identified through the plan process, clearly indicating scheme delivery phasing and timing.

### **Additional modelling of the Junction of the A3 with A244 Copsem Lane (Esher Common Roundabout)**

In respect of this junction, additional modelling was requested by both NH and SCC. This work was completed between June 2022 and April 2023, with traffic counts undertaken in June and October 2022 to inform traffic demand for the 2022 base-year.

Between December 2022 and January 2023, proposed modelling options were discussed between the two parties with a meeting held on 7 March 2023, to agree the methodology for the production of the 2037 forecast Local Plan VISSIM model. This would include the A3/ Copsem Lane grade-separate junction, the Milbourne Lane/ Copsem Lane traffic signal-controlled junction (situated to the north of the A3) and the Fair oak Lane/ Copsem Lane traffic signal-controlled junction (situated to the south of the A3). At the meeting WSP was also asked to compare as part of the modelling process, the level in growth in TEMPro 8.0 against the TEMPro 7.2 growth used for the model and to send to NH the demand matrices used in the VISSIM model. These were shared on 26 March 2023.

On 26 April 2023, WSP circulated a Technical Note of the VISSIM Modelling of Copsem Lane (see Appendix 1), including a response to the comparison of the level in growth in TEMPro 8.0 against the TEMPro 7.2 growth used for the model.

This was discussed in detail between the parties on 25 May 2023, where it was agreed that:

1. The VISSIM 2037 Do Minimum scenario already shows issues on the existing network with the level of background growth predicted even before adding the Local Plan trips to represent the Do Something scenario. The major constraint in the network are the signalised junctions on the A244 rather than the A3 roundabout.
2. The 2037 DM situation will be realised, irrespective of the emerging Elmbridge Local Plan, largely caused by traffic coming from neighbouring boroughs (such as Mole Valley) into Elmbridge and travelling through to areas such as Kingston.
3. Intervention on the A244 is limited due to the highway being narrow and the surrounding land being designated Commons.

4. However, as the modelling does not take account of any change in travel behaviour e.g., a shift to active forms of travel such as cycling and walking and also increased working from home, it is considered to be a worst-case scenario and that the level of growth in the VISSIM model (Do Something scenario) is unlikely to be seen.
5. There are also opportunities to minimise the impact of growth proposed on the SRN through proactive policies surrounding the location of future development and active travel as set out in the draft Local Plan.
6. In the case of the draft Elmbridge Local Plan, a 'plan-monitor-manage' approach is considered acceptable.

Regarding Point 3 above, NH would be concerned about any interventions on the A244 that increase the capacity of the A244 north and south of the A3 and, which, accordingly, encourage more traffic to use the junction of the A3 with the A244 Copsem Lane (Esher Common Roundabout) than the current or a partially-signalised upgrade of the junction can accommodate. No interventions on the A244 are required to accommodate the Elmbridge Local Plan.

The VISSIM modelling suggests partial signalisation of the junction of the A3 and the A244 (Esher Common Roundabout) will not be needed within the plan period as previously assumed. Nevertheless, queuing on the two off-slips from the A3 to the junction of the A3 and the A244 (Esher Common Roundabout) will be monitored by NH and SCC and if necessary, the potential for signalisation of the off-slips will be discussed further between SCC and NH should a need be identified to prevent queuing back onto the A3. The need for signalisation will not be entirely attributable to Elmbridge's Local Plan and therefore this is not a matter of soundness for the Local Plan.

Regarding Point 5 above, the parties agree that the draft Local Plan sets out a sound policy approach to seek to minimise the impact of growth proposed on the SRN. The principal draft policies are:

- **SS1 – Responding to the climate emergency**, sets out that all development must respond to the climate emergency by providing more walkable and cyclable neighbourhoods that reduce demand for use of private vehicles.
- **SS2 – Sustainable place-making**, states that all development proposals will be assessed taking into account the provision of infrastructure and connectivity. This includes making it easy and attractive to walk, cycle and use public transport; offering excellent connections through sustainable transport links to reduce reliance on private motor vehicles; and providing excellent integrated digital connectivity.

- **SS3 – Scale and location of good growth**, sets out the Council's approach to directing development to the existing urban areas as they offer the most sustainable locations for development.
- **CC4 – Sustainable transport**, sets out that sustainable transport in the borough will be achieved by new developments contributing to the delivery of an integrated, accessible and safe sustainable transport network, and maximising the use of sustainable transport modes including walking, cycling and public transport. The policy also requires new developments to provide opportunities for established car clubs or similar schemes and for significant development to prepare and keep up to date Travel Plans. Car free developments in appropriate locations and where supported by evidence demonstrating that proposals will not lead to parking stress are also encouraged.
- **ENV3 – Air quality**, states that the design and location of new development must take account of the need to improve air quality in accordance with the borough's latest Air Quality Action Plan, local Air Quality Strategies and Local Transport Plans, as well as national air quality policy and guidance. The policy also requires that all development proposals should promote a shift to the use of sustainable low emission modes of transport, to minimise the impact of vehicle emissions on air quality.
- **ENV9 – Urban design quality**, states that development must encourage and enable sustainable and health lifestyles by incorporating public realm, including streets and open spaces, which facilitate the use of active modes of travel such as walking and cycling.
- **INF1 – Infrastructure delivery**, sets out the Council's approach of working with infrastructure providers to ensure that new development and its impacts is appropriately mitigated.

### **Matters of disagreement**

There are no remaining matters of disagreement between NH and EBC in respect of the draft Elmbridge Local Plan.

## **5. Governance Arrangements**

The parties are committed to working positively together, sharing information and best practice, and continuing to engage with one another through the EiP process and beyond.

This co-operation and collaboration will take place at senior officer as well as at technical officer level with the support of the EBC's appointed Transport Consultants, WSP.



The SoCG will be reviewed where necessary to reflect progress made through effective cooperation on any issues that may arise through the EiP process.

