Dear Sir/Madam

CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT PUBLICATION VERSION OF RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL’S LOCAL PLAN PART 2: LAND AND PLANNING POLICIES DOCUMENT

Highways England welcomes the opportunity to comment on the draft publication version of the Local Plan Part 2: Land and Planning Policies (LPP2) document which has been produced for public consultation. The LPP2 sets out the non-strategic development allocations to ensure there is enough suitable land to meet the Borough’s housing target of a minimum of 13,150 new homes over the Plan period 2011 to 2028.

Highways England has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport as 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). It is our role to maintain the safe and efficient operation of the SRN whilst acting as a delivery partner to national economic growth. In relation to the Rushcliffe LPP2, our principal interest is safeguarding the operation of the A52, A453 and A46 which all route through the Plan area.

We have had extensive previous engagement with Rushcliffe Borough Council in the progression of the LLP1. In this regard, we have worked collaboratively with Rushcliffe Borough Council and Nottinghamshire County Council to agree a package of junction improvements on the A52 and A606 to support growth in Rushcliffe. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been agreed with the Councils to secure proportionate developer contributions towards this package of improvements.

We have engaged with the Council in the progression of its LPP2 document, most recently in our response to the LPP2 Preferred Housing Sites consultation document in November 2017. We commented that despite site allocations being relatively small in the LPP2, their cumulative impacts could have some implications for the operation of the SRN which would need to be further assessed. This was particularly the case for growth at ‘key settlements’ including Cotgrave, Keyworth, Ruddington and Radcliffe-on-Trent due to their proximity to the SRN.
We note that the publication version of the LPP2 states that Rushcliffe needs to provide enough land for at least 2,000 new homes to meet the housing target of 13,150 by the end of the Plan period in 2028. However, an additional housing supply in the order of 700 dwellings has been identified as being required in order to provide a ‘buffer’ should housing delivery on the existing strategic allocations set out in LPP1 encounter delays. This, therefore, brings the total housing allocation to 2,700 dwellings which will be split across 21 sites. To accommodate this increase in growth, we note that some of the housing allocations at sites which could impact on the operation of the SRN have changed since our last response.

Housing allocations at Cotgrave have increased from 350 dwellings to 370 dwellings; at Keyworth from 580 dwellings to 600 dwellings and at Radcliffe on Trent from 820 dwellings to 920 dwellings (including Land off Shelford Road for 400 dwellings). However, we note that housing allocations at Ruddington have decreased from 410 dwellings to 350 dwellings.

We consider that these changes are unlikely to alter our position which is that whilst the individual site allocations may not be a significant issue for the safety and operation of the SRN, there could be some cumulative impacts, especially given their proximity to the SRN. We maintain the view, as previously set out in our November 2017 response, that Phase 1 of the A52 junction improvements scheme at junctions between Gamston and Bingham will provide short-term mitigation for the smaller sites coming forward as identified in the current consultation document. However, we expect that Transport Statements / Transport Assessments will be required to support individual planning applications as and when any of the non-strategic sites come forward and that they will be subject to the MoU process, as necessary, until such a time that funding for the improvement works has been completed.

Regarding the site at Land North of Grantham Road, we previously commented that direct access may be required from the site onto the A52, which would conflict with policy set out in the DfT Circular 02/2013 relating to the creation of new accesses on to the SRN. We note that the current consultation document states that the existing junction off the A52 to the business park would provide the primary access to the site, subject to required improvements. The volume of additional traffic exiting and entering the A52 from this existing access would need to be appropriately assessed to ensure that additional movements at this junction do not compromise the traffic movement and flow of the A52.

Highways England has no further comments to provide at this stage but wish to continue to engage with the Council as the LPP2 progresses.

Yours sincerely,

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Email: 

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