

Harborough District Council Local Plan Regulation 19 Consultation

Proposed Submission Draft Harborough Local Plan 2020-2041

Warwickshire County Council Transport Planning Team Comments

ISSUE 30th April 2025

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This note sets out comments from the Warwickshire County Council (WCC) Transport Planning Team on the Proposed Submission Draft Harborough Local Plan 2020-2041.
- 1.2 Our comments focus on policy locations which are likely to materially impact on the A5 corridor as part of the Strategic Road Network (SRN), the A426 on the Major Road Network (MRN), and other local roads in Rugby Borough, Warwickshire, many of which are unsuitable for carrying large volumes of traffic.

2. Magna Park - Strategic Warehousing (B8)

- 2.1 Policies MP1 and MP2 propose significant further allocations of land for additional strategic (logistics) warehousing in the Magna Park area across the following two sites:
- **MP1 - Land south of George House, Coventry Road - 15.8 ha (158,000 sqm)**
 - **MP2 - Land at Mere Lane, Magna Park - 122 ha (285,000 sqm)**
- 2.2 There are two key junctions on the A5 SRN corridor which are likely to be adversely impacted by further development at Magna Park and both are currently operating beyond their operational capacity during peak periods. These are:
- **A5/A4303/B4027 Cross in Hand roundabout** - provides access to existing employment at Magna Park via the A4303 at its junctions with Hunter Boulevard and Shackleton Way.
 - **A5/A426 Gibbet Hill roundabout** – 3.75 km (2.33 miles) to the south east of Cross in Hand at the interface of the SRN and MRN which connects onto the M6 at Junction 1 via the A426 to the south and M1 Junction 20 via the A426 and A4303 at Lutterworth to the north.
- 2.3 Our concerns relating to these junctions are shared by Leicestershire County Council (LCC) which has highlighted the following issues from the South Leicestershire Joint Transport Evidence (JTE) :

64. Evidence available from the JTE work highlights that further strategic growth at Magna Park (i.e. additional to that already consented) will have, inter-alia, a material impact on levels of traffic seeking to use the SRN. It further demonstrates that without sufficient mitigation, the inability of the junctions to function effectively is forecast to cause traffic to divert away from the A5 corridor on to lower order roads, with impacts on communities

such as Claybrooke Magna, Bitteswell and Lutterworth, and on communities in Warwickshire, too¹.

- 2.4 For several years, WCC has been made aware by members of the public, Parish Councils and Elected County and Borough Council Members of issues with HGV traffic travelling through rural villages, often to avoid congestion on the strategic or principal road network in and around the A5 and A426 corridors.
- 2.5 Local villages in Rugby Borough likely to be adversely impacted by further development at Magna Park due to traffic diverting away from A5/A426 Gibbet Hill onto the B4112 and B4027 to access the A5 via Cross in Hand roundabout include Newbold-on-Avon, Harborough Magna and Pailton to the north west of Rugby.
- 2.6 There may also be some unwanted routing of HGVs generated by new development at Magna Park heading across towards the A45 and A46 near Coventry via the B4027 and B4455 which would adversely affect the villages of Monks Kirby, Street Ashton, Brinklow and Bretford.
- 2.7 WCC, LCC and Harborough District Council (HDC) are represented on the A5 Partnership which currently comprises 18 Local Highway and Planning Authorities covering a 72-mile section of the A5 from Gailey in Staffordshire to Stoney Stratford near Milton Keynes.
- 2.8 The Partnership is supported by National Highways as custodians of the A5, Midlands Connect and England's Economic Heartland as the two Sub-National Transport Bodies (STB's) for the area, East Midlands Councils and Midland Expressway Ltd (operators of the M6 Toll)
- 2.9 In terms of scheme priorities, the A5 Partnership has identified that a major improvement at A5/A436 Gibbet Hill is urgently required to:
 - i. Address congestion and delay where the A5 SRN meets the A426 MRN;*
 - ii. Upgrade and future proof this junction to enable further growth at major logistics facilities served by the A5 corridor at Magna Park and DIRFT;*
 - iii. Boost housing and employment growth around Lutterworth and Rugby, including the Lutterworth East Strategic Development Area.*
- 2.10 Midlands Connect has recently published the results from qualitative research undertaken in early 2025 which sought the views of local businesses near the A5/A426 Gibbet Hill junction to understand the challenges they currently face, as well as how they might benefit from investment in the corridor.

¹ <https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=135&Mid=7874&Ver=4>

2.11 The results from these discussions² have identified the following four key themes:

- i. *The unreliability of the existing road network consistently disrupts business operations and local communities.*
- ii. *Transport improvements are required to support future development and the local plan process.*
- iii. *Local developers have contributed considerable amounts towards highways improvements, but there's been little progress surrounding the (A5/A426 Gibbet Hill) junction.*
- iv. *The future development of the 'Golden Logistics Triangle' can be maximised by improvements to the A5/A426 Gibbet Hill junction.*

2.12 LCC in its role as Local Highway Authority (LHA) bordering the north of the A5 corridor in the area considers however there is extremely limited prospect for timely delivery of major improvements at A5/A426 Gibbet Hill which are essential to address the cumulative impacts of committed and further planned growth at Magna Park as follows:

65. From the LTA's perspective, the evidence clearly demonstrates that a strategic scale improvement is required at least at the Gibbet Hill junction in order for further strategic scale logistics growth to be delivered in the Magna Park area; the scale of scheme required is beyond that which a developer(s) could be expected to deliver and/or reasonably be required to do so in respect of the CIL tests.

66. NH (National Highways) is engaged with the LTA (and its Warwickshire counterpart) in work to explore possible ideas for a strategic scale improvement at the Gibbet Hill junction. But given the current way that NH is empowered and funded by the DfT it is unable to act to prepare and deliver a scheme at a pace necessary to enable the Plan's effective delivery; essentially, if nothing changes it appears that the delivery of a strategic scale improvement is at the very least 10 to 15 years away even if public funding for it were to be confirmed 'tomorrow'. (For the avoidance of doubt, NH has been clear that no funding commitment exists.

68. It is acknowledged that this is a national problem that requires action by the Government to resolve; it is beyond the gift of the LTA and the district council to address through a Plan making process. Nevertheless, in the light of the evidence and given that the LTA has no confidence that NH will be able to bring forward a strategic scale improvement within the Plan's lifetime, it would not be in the best interests of Leicestershire communities for the LTA to support this aspect of the Plan in the current circumstances³.

2.13 We share these concerns and therefore consider that it would similarly not be appropriate for WCC in its role as LHA to the south of the A5 corridor bordering Leicestershire to support Policies MP1 or MP2, given that we are also not convinced that National Highways is likely to bring forward a major improvement scheme at Gibbet Hill in the foreseeable future.

² [unlocking-the-heart-of-the-golden-logistics-triangle-at-the-a5-a426-gibbet-hill-junction-business-perceptions-report.pdf](#)

³ <https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=135&Mid=7874&Ver=4>

2.14 However, should these policies be included in the Harborough Local Plan upon adoption, we would strongly request that it includes policy provisions which require all promoters of new development at Magna Park to follow the steps outlined below:

- (i) Enter into formal pre-application discussions with WCC Development Management and Transport Planning Teams.
- (ii) Follow the requirements set out online in the [WCC Development Assessments and Modelling Protocol](#) at planning application stage.
- (iii) Work proactively with WCC to develop and fund enforceable HGV Route Management Strategies to protect amenity and safety in local villages in Warwickshire from HGVs generated by new development at Magna Park in accordance with Warwickshire's adopted Policy Position F7 in the Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) Freight Strategy⁴ which is as follows:

Policy Position F7

Encourage freight vehicles to use appropriate routes.

HGVs using unsuitable routes can affect the amenity of the affected area and also may present a safety issue for local communities. We will promote the use of suitable routes to help reduce instances of HGVs using inappropriate or smaller local roads, to enhance the environment and wellbeing of those living and working in affected areas.

- (iv) Under this Policy Position, we consider that the requirement for HGV Route Management Strategies is necessary to protect local villages in Warwickshire from development related HGVs to support further growth at Magna Park for the construction and operational phases of any development.
- (v) At planning application stage, WCC would be seeking to ensure (1) that there is a planning condition which requires site promoter to submit draft HGV Route Management Strategies for WCC to approve prior to occupation to enable planning enforcement to be effective, and (2) that the obligation in the S106 runs with the land should site ownership transfer to third party occupiers.
- (vi) It is anticipated that HGV Route Management Strategies for further development at Magna Park would be required to protect the following villages subject to agreement with WCC at planning application stage:
 - Newbold-on-Avon, Harborough Magna and Pailton via the B4112 and B4027 to avoid congestion at A5/A426 Gibbet Hill, and

⁴ <https://api.warwickshire.gov.uk/documents/WCCC-1980322935-2491>

- Monks Kirby, Street Ashton, Brinklow and Bretford via the B4027 and B4455, as there may be some unwanted routing of HGVs generated by new development at Magna Park heading across towards the A45 and A46 near Coventry.

3. Cumulative Development Impacts

3.1 Taken together, the following proposed allocations may lead to cumulative impacts on the A5 corridor in addition to those noted above for Magna Park (Policies MP1 and MP2):

- (i) BA1 - Land off Frolesworth Road, Broughton Astley (475 homes)**
- (ii) L1 - Land off Leicester Road, Lutterworth (230 homes)**
- (iii) L2 - Land at M1 Junction 20/Swinford Road, Lutterworth (90 homes)**
- (iv) L3 - Land south of Lutterworth Road / Coventry Road, Lutterworth (3.4 ha)
E(g)(iii)**
- (v) U1 - Land south of Ashby Road, Ullesthorpe (30 homes)**
- (vi) U2 - Land north of Ashby Road, Ullesthorpe (50 homes)**

3.2 We would therefore seek confirmation from HDC that suitable policy provision will be made in the Harborough Local Plan requiring site promoters to assess the cumulative impacts of the above developments on the A5 corridor from a capacity and highway safety perspective, including any further development which may come forward at Magna Park.