



National Highways

Bassetlaw Local Plan

Examination in Public

HEARING STATEMENT:

Matter 3 – Employment Land

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1 Introduction

National Highways, formerly 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.

The SRN is a critical national asset and as such National Highways 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. The SRN within and near to the district of Bassetlaw includes the A1 trunk road which bisects the plan area, and the M1 motorway approximately 8km to the west of the plan area.

This hearing statement has been prepared by National Highways in response to the Matters, Issues and Questions which have been identified by the Inspectors in relation to **Matter 3 – Employment Land**. We are not proposing to attend the hearing on this matter but do propose to attend the hearings for Matters 13 – Transport and Connectivity, and Matter 14 – Infrastructure, and delivery and Monitoring.

The questions identified for this matter focus on the issue ‘are the provisions of the plan in relation to the provision of employment land justified and consistent with national policy’ and our responses are provided under the relevant questions on the next page.

2 Response to Questions

(Policies ST7, 9, ST10 and ST11)

Issue 3 – Are the provisions of the plan in relation to the provision of employment land justified and consistent with national policy? Would the allocations be developable, deliverable and otherwise soundly based?

3.4 Are the requirements of policies ST7 and Policy 9 clear, and would the criteria identified to assess proposals on these sites be likely to be effective? In particular:

- a) Is the requirement of 3(e) necessary and what does it seek to achieve?*
- b) Is there sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the site can be implemented and that all necessary infrastructure and mitigation measures required to support it are achievable and can be delivered?*
- c) What assumptions have been made in relation to the timescale for delivery and are these justified?*

Our response to the above should be read in conjunction with our responses to Matter 13 – Transport and Connectivity and Matter 14 – Infrastructure and Delivery and Monitoring.

Policy 9 of the Local Plan relates to the strategic employment site SEM001: Apleyhead junction. As per our response to Matter 13, the Bassetlaw Transport Study (BTS) has set out to identify the cumulative transport impacts of Local Plan growth within the district up to the end of the Plan period (2038).

Although National Highways has not completed our verification of the modelling which underpinned the BTS, we have noted the BTS identified congestion at the A1 Apleyhead junction and the requirement for mitigation. Policy 9 (H,ii) identifies the requirement for a financial contribution towards improvements at the A614 Blyth Road/A57/A1 roundabout which is the western-most roundabout of the A1 Apleyhead interchange.

However, as per our response under Matter 13, until we have completed our verification of the transport modelling results, we cannot state for certain that no other highways improvements on the A1 trunk road will not be required. Given the

proximity of the SEM:001 allocation to the A1, this site above all others may have a direct impact on other SRN junctions not previously identified. This is not least the eastern roundabout forming the A1 Apleyhead interchange and the overbridge connecting the two roundabouts.

In light of the above, we raise concern that there will not be sufficient evidence to indicate that this site can be implemented until we have at least accepted the findings of the BTS. As such, we would suggest some flexibility in the wording of Policy 9 to allow for the inclusion of subsequent highways improvements, not already identified.

We would also add that whilst the BTS has identified a cumulative need for highways improvements to the A1 junction at the end of the Plan period, the precise timescale for the requirement of any mitigation is not yet known. This will be dictated by the quantum of development and build-out rates of individual development proposals and will therefore be assessed at the planning application stage.

However, given that Policy 9 refers only to financial contributions (and no other mechanism) for the delivery of highways mitigation, it should be noted that the development of this site could be delayed as a result (see our response to Matter 14).

As such, it would be prudent to allow some flexibility in the wording to include the possibility of a Section 278 as the delivery mechanism for securing highways mitigation. This may give the developer (or group of developers) more control over the deliverability of their proposals.