

**Statement of Common Ground between
Ipswich Borough Council as Local Planning Authority, Suffolk County Council as Highway Authority
and Highways England**

30th September 2020

Scope

1. This Statement of Common Ground identifies areas of agreement (and any areas of disagreement) between Highways England ('HE'), Ipswich Borough Council ('IBC') and Suffolk County Council ('SCC') in relation to the impacts of the Ipswich Local Plan on the strategic road network.

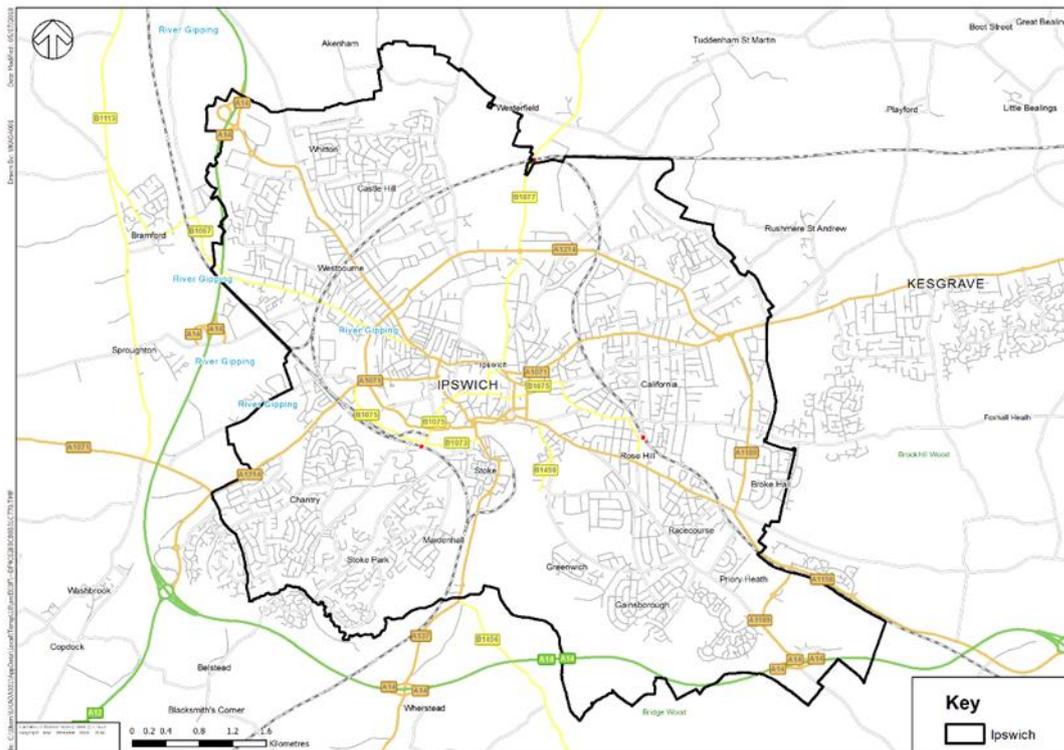
Objective

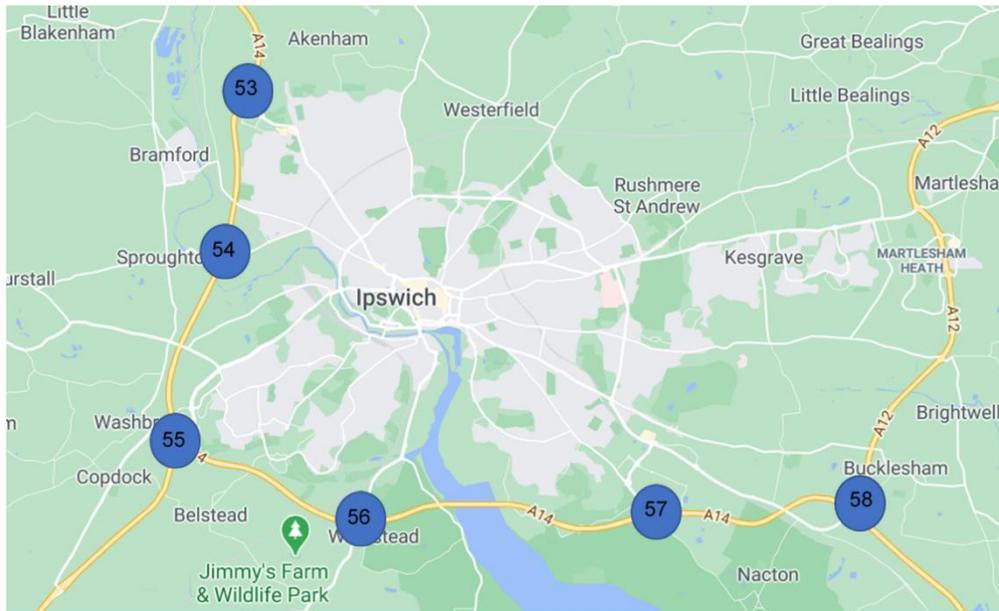
2. The objective of this Statement of Common Ground is to provide a clear and up to date position in relation to the capacity of the strategic road network to accommodate planned growth set out in the Ipswich Local Plan and how any identified issues will be addressed.

Evidence Base for the Strategic Road Network

3. The strategic road network in the vicinity of Ipswich consists of the A12 and the A14 trunk roads. The A12 approaches from the south linking Ipswich with London, Chelmsford and Colchester. The A14 passes around the southern and western sides of the town, linking Felixstowe, Ipswich and the Midlands. The two roads intersect at A14 Junction 55 Copdock. None of the A12 and only short lengths of the A14 fall within Ipswich Borough boundary. Map 1 below shows the strategic road network in relation to Ipswich and Map 2 identifies the key A14 junctions around Ipswich

Map 1 Strategic Road Network around Ipswich





Map 2 Key A14 junctions around Ipswich: Junction 53 Whitehouse to Junction 58 Seven Hills

4. Traffic modelling undertaken by WSP on behalf of SCC (CD reference D36.1) for forecast scenarios 2026 and 2036 considers the A14 Corridor from Junction 53 Bury Road/Whitehouse Interchange at the north-western tip of Ipswich to Junction 58 Seven Hills to the south east of Ipswich, between Nacton and Bucklesham in East Suffolk District. Sections 3.5 and 3.6 of the report identify that by the end of the plan period:

- The A14 junctions around Ipswich show capacity constraints as a result of background growth and Ipswich Local Plan implementation.
- The impact is most substantial for Copdock (J55), Wherstead (J56) and Nacton (J57) interchanges.
- The A14 junctions 53 (Whitehouse) and 54 (Sproughton) are not identified as impacted significantly as a result of the Ipswich Local Plan. However, a Transport Assessment-level assessment may highlight significant impacts at these junctions at a later stage, which would be addressed through the planning process.

5. The modelling predicts during the local plan period the A14 mainline will have limited capacity, particularly between Junction 55 and Junction 57 in both directions, including the section which crosses the River Orwell.

6. Based on the outcomes of the modelling, the Ipswich Strategic Planning Area (ISPA) Strategic Road Network Technical Note (CD reference D38) was produced specifically to look at the performance of the SRN and model how this would change with mitigation measures in place at the junctions. The impacts of a potential Road Investment Strategy (RIS) scheme at the A14 Junction 55 (Copdock), together with improvements at A14 Junction 56 (Wherstead) and A14 Junction 57 (Nacton) are considered in the note. Mitigation measures at Junction 58 (Seven Hills) associated with the Brightwell Lakes planning permission are also included.

7. The Technical Note concludes that the A14 south of Ipswich has significant capacity pressures with sections of the mainline operating at capacity post 2026. Whilst the modelling indicates that the A12/A14 RIS pipeline scheme and other potential future junction schemes would lead to significant easing of congestion at approaches to junctions on the SRN, their effectiveness is

constrained by mainline capacity issues. The report suggests a strategy needs to be developed which looks to easing congestion on both the junctions and mainline for the section of the SRN south of Ipswich.

8. It is important to note that the capacity issues along the A14 are largely as a result of corridor and wider background growth. The location of proposed growth in Ipswich is largely located away from the A14 corridor with regeneration sites in central Ipswich and an urban extension at Ipswich Garden Suburb. The direct contribution to the congestion issues identified along the A14 is limited, but its impacts on other east-west routes may make the A14 alternative a more attractive option.

9. The SCC Transport Mitigation Strategy for the Ipswich Strategic Planning Area (ISPA) (CD D39) sets out measures to achieve modal shift across the whole ISPA area, with interim measures aligned with the national Road Investment Strategy 2 (RIS2) timescales. The aim of the ISPA Transport Mitigation Strategy is to provide a step change in transport movements across Ipswich and provide some reduction in capacity issues on the A14 with the removal of local journeys from the trunk road. This will help contribute to facilitating delivery of the local plan growth.

10. HE representations to the Final Draft Ipswich Local Plan are summarised at Appendix 1, together with IBC's response.

How A14 capacity issues resulting from the Local Plan growth are addressed

11. The Technical Note (CD D38) identifies indicative improvements for each of the key A14 junctions to the south of Ipswich. These are set out below:

Table 1 A14 Junction Improvements

Junction	Works	Status	Cost	Promoter	Funding
J 55 Copdock	Junction capacity enhancements to provide through junction free flow movements	RIS3 pipeline scheme under development	tbc	Highways England	DfT through future RIS3 but not committed at this stage
J 56 Wherstead	Improvements to junction - signalised control junction and roundabout improvements	Improvements have been designed in connection with planning applications in Babergh/Mid Suffolk Districts Babergh Planning Committee, July 2020)	£5-10m	Developer-led	Developer contributions from development within Babergh/Mid Suffolk Districts

Junction	Works	Status	Cost	Promoter	Funding
J 53, 54, 57	Junction capacity enhancement works.	To be developed in conjunction with future development proposals	£5-10m for junction improvements.	Developer-led	Developer contributions
J 58 Seven Hills	Increase capacity at the junction, including signalisation of junctions, and adjoining local road.	Brightwell Lakes planning permission	£1.8 - £2.1m	Developer-led	Developer contributions, A12 (non-trunk road) Major Road Network (MRN) Funding

12. In March 2020, the Department for Transport published Road Investment Strategy 2 (RIS2) which sets out the Government's investment strategy for the period 2020 – 2025. This has been added to the core document library (CD I13). The strategy includes an investigative RIS3 pipeline scheme to provide a major upgrade to the A12/A14 J55 Copdock Interchange. Pipeline proposals are schemes for early development which in conjunction with newly developed route strategies will inform investment decisions for future RIS periods.

13. As noted at 7, the capacity of the A14 main line is constrained. Whilst the ISPA Transport Mitigation Strategy will have a beneficial impact on the A14 by reducing some of the local usage, overall traffic is still forecast to grow, as evidenced by the WSP Technical Note in relation to the A14 and Model Run 7 (CD D35.2), which tested the impacts of the ISPA Transport Mitigation Strategy on the whole road network.

Other related work streams

14. The section of A14 between J56 and J57, which includes the River Orwell Bridge, suffers from closures due to high winds. This has a significant effect on congestion and capacity with diversion routes are routed through central Ipswich. HE has undertaken technical studies to review this issue, which have identified particular measures to improve performance-focused on using lower or variable speed limits and lane control to manage the road's capacity and reduce the number of closures of the Orwell Bridge. HE is taking forward all the report's recommendations by the end of the financial year. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/orwell-bridge-study-offers-new-hope-for-reducing-high-wind-closures>.

15. Elsewhere along the A14 in Suffolk, HE recognises the limited capacity of the corridor and is looking at identifying demand management measures that would maximise its capacity and minimise future congestion. The outcome of this work will inform future route strategies and funding opportunities when they arise.

16. Cross boundary matters have been considered through the ISPA Statement of Common Ground iteration 6, in particular Section I Annex – Cross Boundary Infrastructure Requirements (CD A21).

Areas of Agreement

17. HE, SCC and IBC agree that the following measures can be considered for resolving identified link and junction capacity problems arising from growth and will positively facilitate delivery of the Ipswich Local Plan:

- Modal shift amongst the new and existing communities will reduce impacts on the network below what was originally modelled.
- Improvements to A14 Junction 55 Copdock identified through the RIS2 pipeline process for future RIS funding RIS3 will address junction capacity.
- A14 mainline capacity enhancement through demand management measures, such as variable mandatory speed measures on the A14 offer a potential means of managing increasing demand and growth along the corridor.
- Committed development at Brightwell Lakes (Suffolk Coastal Local Plan reference SCLP12.19) will provide additional capacity at Junction 58 during the early plan period, and Land at Felixstowe Road (Suffolk Coastal Local Plan reference SCLP12.20) will offer additional enhancement during the plan period.
- Developer funding also offers an opportunity to provide capacity enhancements at Junctions 57 Nacton and 56 (Wherstead).

Signatures

Signed 

Name Martyn Fulcher
Position Head of Development
Date 30/09/20

Ipswich Borough Council

Signed 

Name Eric Cooper
Position Spatial Planning Manager
Date 30/09/20

Highways England

Signed 

Name Graeme Mateer

Position Head of Transport Strategy

Date 30/09/20

Suffolk County Council

Appendix 1 Highways England Representations to the Final Draft Ipswich Local Plan

Rep. ID	Policy/ paragraph	Support / object	Objection/Support	IBC response
26587	Core Strategy, Chapter 4	Support	Through the process of development of this Plan and those covered by adjacent planning authorities within Ipswich Strategic Planning Area (ISPA), Highways England has worked closely with Suffolk County Council on the development of the evidence base. The modelling work shows that accumulatively growth in ISPA is predicted to pose significant strain on the transport network in and around Ipswich. Additional highway capacity will not on its own address these issues and it is noted that the local authorities across the ISPA agree that robust steps must be taken to prioritise healthy and sustainable travel. Highways England supports this position.	The support is noted and the SCC Transport Mitigation Strategy for the ISPA area takes forward this work.
26583	Core Strategy, Chapter 8	Support	In general, Highways England considers that Ipswich Borough Council's consideration of land use policy, the transport evidence to support it and the consequential understanding on the impact of the strategic road network is generally sound and consistent with government policy.	The support is noted.
26592	Policy ISPA2	Object	A14 improvements required to support proposed growth have been identified - consistent with findings of modelling and study work. Plan notes that longer term funding would comprise growth funds, developer funding and monies identified from a future Roads Investment Strategy (RIS). RIS2 hasn't been published so it isn't possible to confirm this, or whether funding would be available from a future RIS. Without robust measures identified by Suffolk County Council, it isn't certain that delivery of the latter stages of the plan can be achieved - vital that a robust manage and monitor approach is maintained throughout the plan period.	The situation has moved on with the publication of RIS2 in March 2020. This statement of common ground seeks to demonstrate that the delivery of the latter stages of the plan can be achieved.
26594	Policy ISPA2	Object	Whilst not part of this Plan, it proposes a longer term aspiration for an Ipswich Northern Bypass which would lie within the East Suffolk Council and Mid Suffolk District Council area. The scheme would	The situation has moved on following Suffolk County Council's Cabinet decision of 25 th

Rep. ID	Policy/ paragraph	Support / object	Objection/Support	IBC response
			improve connectivity between the A14 and A12, reduce pressure on the A14 and improve network resilience, especially to the sections of A14 in the vicinity of the Orwell Bridge and Junction 55 (Copdock). Highways England has no objection in principle however it is noted that Suffolk County Council on 25 February 2020 at a cabinet meeting resolved not to take this scheme forward.	February 2020. IBC now proposes through draft main modifications to delete the reference within Policy ISPA2 to the Ipswich Northern Route.
26596	Policy ISPA2	Object	The Plan aspires for a longer proposal for an east bank link road and a new A14(T) junction could work which would provide increased accessibility and reduce congestion to this area of Ipswich. As stated Highways England are not in favour of the proposals as there is concern with resultant local 'junction hopping' along the A14 which would reduce highway capacity, and more significantly it is considered that there is insufficient geometric capacity to accommodate an additional junctions on this section of the A14.	Highways England's position is noted. IBC considers that the statement in paragraph 8.251 under policy CS20 states sufficiently clearly that there is no proposed East Bank Link Road.
26589	Policy CS20	Support	The draft Local Plan identifies a package of transport mitigation measures to reduce vehicle movements and Suffolk County Council as the Highway Authority has developed a strategy which contains a package of mitigation measures to deliver modal shift and mitigate impacts on the wider Ipswich highways network. These include: - Transport infrastructure to encourage and support sustainable modes of transport - A Bus Quality Partnership - A Smarter Choices programme - Review of car parking and pricing strategies - Review of park and ride strategy - Junction improvements Highways England supports this strategy.	The support is noted and, as the representation states, policy CS20 fully supports the SCC Transport Mitigation Strategy.
26601	Policy CS20	Object	Evidence base provides indicative proposals for upgrading junctions along A14 and potentially cost-effective	Table 1 of the statement of common ground

Rep. ID	Policy/ paragraph	Support / object	Objection/Support	IBC response
			<p>measures for resolving link and junction capacity problems arising from growth. Potential measures include proposals to re-establish Bury Road Park and Ride and provision of a new site in Nacton Road. Consider these are potentially feasible options. However, measures will not address underlining A14 capacity issues. Further measures may be required e.g. variable mandatory speed limits, and substantial improvements at Junction 55 (Copdock). Funding of measures is an issue. At this stage there is no certainty of the availability of future Highways England capital funding programme funding.</p>	<p>identifies the specific improvements needed on the A14 and the range of funding sources. Design work on Junction 55 Copdock has been instigated through the RIS2 process as a RIS3 pipeline project.</p>