

# Stroud District Local Plan Examination Pause

Short Report June 2024

## Overview

The Inspectors wrote to Stroud District Council on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024 confirming they would allow a pause in the Examination between 5<sup>th</sup> February and 5<sup>th</sup> December 2024. During this period the Inspectors require Stroud District Council to undertake and provide all the tasks set out in their letter (ID-015) sections I-VI. Stroud District Council have agreed to these actions and timescales, together with Gloucestershire County Council, South Gloucestershire Council, National Highways and the site promoters where relevant.

The Inspectors have now written to Stroud District Council (ID-018) with the following request:

*A period of time has elapsed since the Inspectors agreed to the pause of the Examination of the Stroud Local Plan. The Inspectors would like the Council to provide a short report on the progress being made on the actions currently being undertaken. The first update should be provided by the end of this month (31 May 2024) and then submitted on a monthly basis thereafter. These should also be uploaded to the Examination webpage.*

The length and content of the monthly reports will vary depending on the progress with the individual projects and tasks set out in ID-017 I-IV. The following short report is the first report (May) and has been written jointly with Stroud District Council, Gloucestershire County Council, National Highways, South Gloucestershire Council and relevant highway consultants.

## M5 Junction 12 Project

**The following update is provided by Gloucestershire County Council and Stroud District Council, who have jointly commissioned WSP:**

Since the previous update, WSP has been progressing with the highway designs and associated modelling work for the three solutions for the junction. The designs have been informed by the strategic and junction modelling outputs and iterations have been



made to ensure the preferred solution will meet projected traffic flows set out in the Stroud Local Plan. The GG104 assessment and Design Risk Management Schedule have been updated as the designs have progressed. The project risk register has been reviewed and updated this month. The Stage 2 Optioneering Report is currently being populated with the highway designs, costings, modelling outputs and the cost benefit appraisal outcomes. WSP is on track to deliver the Stage 2 Optioneering Report as planned.

**The following update is provided by National Highways:**

National Highways continues to work collaboratively with Stroud District Council, Gloucestershire County Council and with the councils' consultants to progress the development of options for improvement of M5 J12 and J14, including attendance as a contributor at the M5 J12 and J14 Working Group meetings.

**M5 Junction 12 Project Status**

Gloucestershire County Council, Stroud District Council and National Highways are working collaboratively to progress the works. WSP is on programme to deliver the required works for a September consultation with submission to the Inspectors 5<sup>th</sup> December 2024

## M5 Junction 14 Project

**The following update is Provided by Stroud District Council:**

The design for the revised arrangement of M5 Junction 14 is nearing completion, with design work with respect to the roundabout circulatory and slip roads to be finalised following consultation with key stakeholders. Environmental constraints mapping and land ownership considerations have been fully incorporated into the design. General Arrangement plans will available shortly.

The Order of Cost Estimate and impact apportionment workstreams are dependent on a finalised scheme to progress significantly, and this dependency was accounted for in the JAP programme. Background tasks to prepare and benchmark methodologies are continuing to progress. Initial optioneering has taken place in relation to the constructability of the design, which will be a material influence on the costing of the scheme.

SDC and its consultants are fully engaged in the M5 J12 work, which is being led by GCC and its Consultants. There are regular progress and technical meetings taking place across both workstreams. A core team sits across both programmes, to ensure consistency and drive progress.

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**The following update is provided by National Highways:**

National Highways has issued a report to Stroud District Council setting out the findings of microsimulation modelling for a grade separated roundabout option at M5 J14. The arrangement tested has no status in National Highways or with South Gloucestershire Council and does not take detailed account of land ownership or availability, topography, the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) or National Highways' design requirements. However, the tested arrangement is found to work very well with no substantial queueing with the 2040 demand flows (which include traffic from the draft Stroud Local Plan development allocations), despite handling a significant increase in traffic when compared to 2021 (circa 50%).

**M5 Junction 14 Project Status**

Stroud District Council, National Highways and South Gloucestershire Council are working collaboratively to progress the works. AECOM is on programme to deliver the required works for a September consultation with submission to the Inspectors 5<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

## Housing Update

The following update is Provided by Stroud District Council:

The Council are working with National Highways and GCC to verify evidence set out in SLP-AP-002 Appendix 2. This will confirm the amount of development and sites that can be brought forward before improvements are required to M5 Junctions 12 and 14.

The Council is currently updating the housing trajectory to take account of latest annual monitoring data (01 April 2023 – 31 March 2024) and changes to anticipated delivery identified during the examination hearing sessions. The updated data, including completions 2023-24 and commitments at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, will feed into an updated residual housing requirement and delivery trajectory for the plan period.

**Housing Supply Project Status**

The work is on programme for a September consultation with submission to the Inspectors 5<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

## Sharpness Vale New Settlement

**The following update is Provided by Stantec, on behalf of the promoter:**



## **1 Sharpness Passenger Rail Service**

Following meetings with Network Rail regarding next steps to progress the Sharpness Passenger Rail Service proposals it was agreed that a Strategic Outline Business Case (SoBC) would be prepared which follows the DfT Business Plan Guidance. Network Rail recommended that specialist rail consultants be commissioned to undertake this work and referred Sharpness LLP to the DfT Specialist Technical Advice for Rail (STAR) framework for a list of qualified consultants. The Sharpness LLP requested quotes from consultants on this framework and appointed a specialist to prepare a SoBC for the proposed passenger rail service for Sharpness Vale. The preparation of this SoBC is nearing completion and when the final report is received, which is expected early July, the Sharpness LLP will be re-engaging with Network Rail to discuss the outcomes. The SoBC process included a stakeholder consultation element with all key stakeholders including the relevant rail operating company.

## **2 Demand Responsive Transit**

As has always been part of the sustainable transport approach for Sharpness Vale, demand responsive express coach services towards Gloucester (before rail is introduced) and towards key employment destinations near Bristol are an important aspect of the low carbon approach to the settlement. Stantec are engaging with two demand responsive transit providers to obtain operational and cost information relating to the provision of these services. Updated trip generation and distribution assessments have been produced to inform this process. A report will be produced by Stantec incorporating information received directly from the DRT providers. This process is currently in progress.

## **3 Mobility as a Service (MaaS)**

Stantec are currently updating their evidence report on Mobility as a Service provision for Sharpness Vale drawing on additional examples of current applications. This is currently being refined further subsequent to the Land use and Transport Planning: DfT Science Advisory Council paper published on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2024 which recommends that:

*Given the limited evidence available in the UK, data should be sought from international case studies. There is a need to build a wider evidence base of what ‘good’ looks like for a variety of contexts and scales, referenced to designs of new developments for car-independency that are shown to have been successful.*

## **4 Strategic Road Network – M5 J14 Interim Scheme**

The Sharpness Development LLP have engaged with National Highways (NH) on the potential to investigate an interim highway mitigation scheme for the M5 Junction 14, which could accommodate a limited amount of traffic growth prior to the

implementation of the full upgrade scheme for the junction. NH have provided their validated Vissim microsimulation model for the testing of traffic growth scenarios associated with the Sharpness Vale Development. Stantec have used this model to determine potential housing numbers that could be provided at Sharpness Vale against possible and viable highway mitigation at the junction. Stantec are finalising a technical note on the outcome of this process which will form the basis of renewed discussions with NH and South Gloucestershire Council regarding the potential acceptability of the proposals as an interim solution prior to the full upgrade scheme. Sharpness Development LLP will be looking to set up meetings with NH starting week commencing 8 July to discuss acceptability of potential interim solutions identified for J14 and thereafter engagements with South Gloucestershire Council to discuss solutions identified for the A38/B4509 junction as part of the wider solutions for J14.

### **Sharpness Vale New Settlement Project Status**

The work is on programme for a September consultation with submission to the Inspectors 5<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

## **Wisloe New Settlement**

### **The following update is Provided by Stantec on behalf of the promoter:**

The Action Plan for Wisloe New Settlement derived from the EIP session on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2023 and has been progressed accordingly. A meeting between National Highways, SDC, the Ernest Cook Trust and Gloucestershire County Council and their agents was held on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023. During this meeting it was agreed that The Ernest Cook Trust and Gloucestershire County Council would submit the M5 Wisloe Bridge costs to National Highways, for National Highways to respond confirming its 'broad agreement,' satisfying the request made by the Inspector.

Stantec, on behalf of The Trust & GCC, produced an enhanced pack of information which sought to confirm visually the scope of work and the approach to construction, incorporating technical comments made by National Highways during the meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023. This pack was produced by Stantec's bridge engineering team who are experienced in designing these types of structures in accordance with standards. This was issued to National Highways on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024, with a costing summary updated by Ward Williams.

Costs produced by Ward Williams and issued to NH on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024, summarise the total allowance for the M5 Wisloe Bridge within the viability cost plan and have been summarised to assist National Highways in undertaking its own contemporaneous benchmark comparison. Importantly, from a viability perspective the

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overall project cost plan remains the same, i.e. the overall cost to deliver the Wisloe Project has not changed. National Highways responded (by email) to confirm agreement of the Wisloe M5 pedestrian bridge costs on the 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024 as follows: *“Whilst we don’t have full construction details or cost breakdowns, the figures that you have provided are broadly in line with what National Highways would expect the costs to be on a scheme of this nature.”*

### **Wisloe New Settlement Project Status**

The work is on programme for a September consultation with submission to the Inspectors 5<sup>th</sup> December 2024.