

HARBOROUGH LOCAL PLAN (MARCH 2025) EXAMINATION

HEARING STATEMENT OF KEITH WEBSTER ON BEHALF OF THE RESIDENTS OF THE A563 RING ROAD

STAGE 2 MATTERS, ISSUES & QUESTIONS

MATTER 10 – DESIGN OF DEVELOPMENTS AND MANAGEMENT OF IMPACTS

POLICY DM06 TRANSPORT & ACCESSIBILITY

1. Introduction

1.1 My original Regulation 19 Pre-submission representations ID 12939 to 12941 still stand on behalf of the residents of the A563 Ring Road which is partly in Oadby & Wigston and mainly in Leicester City Council administrative areas.

Question 2: - Following PN6 [ID7], the Council has confirmed [HDC6] that the potential for an orbital route to the south and east of Leicester is not constrained, albeit the route is not being actively promoted by the Council, whilst the extension of the route remains an aspiration of Leicester County Council as the Local Transport Authority. Could the Council confirm the status of the route, how it relates to the policies map, and whether the Plan includes policies which would ensure that the route could be developed in the future, beyond the Plan period?

2.1 I do not believe the transport modelling behind the Local Plan reflects the existing and future Volume Over Capacity of the A563 Ring Road between the A6 Racecourse Roundabout and the Fosse Park/Meridian retail and employment areas next to Junction 21 of the M1. This strategic transport orbital route referred to in the South Leicestershire Joint Transport Evidence as Key Impact Area D is already heavily congested, not only on weekdays but also now at weekends, mainly because of the extraordinary success of the Fosse Park retail centre. This will only get worse and intolerable though the cumulative impact of proposed housing developments south and east of Leicester in both Harbough and Oadby & Wigston including:

- Land South of Gartree Road (4,000)
- Land East of Stoughton Road (500)
- Land North of Glen Gorse (150)

2.2 The South Leicestershire Joint Transport Evidence indicates that because of the cumulative impact of the proposed housing and employment developments in Oadby & Wigston, Harbough and Blaby Districts, a strategic highways solution of a major new South & East Leicester Orbital Route is necessary linking the A6 at Stretton/Great Glen to a new Junction 20a on the M1. This recommendation for existing and future housing growth has seemingly been avoided in the Local Plan as being 'too difficult' to deal with. The can has been kicked down the road.

2.3 The attitude of Leicestershire County Council and Harbough to the cumulative impact of the proposed growth in the District on the Strategic Highway Network is that it should be addressed at the planning application stage for individual developments through transport assessments. I consider that such an approach does not constitute an effective, properly planned approach to the issue. It would lead to vague, piecemeal, under-funded solutions and miss the opportunity to raise adequate financial contributions towards the cost of this inevitable strategic solution.

2.4 The respective Local Plans of Oadby & Wigston, Harborough and Blaby, either now or at an early Review should include a suitable safeguarded reservation for this strategic South Leicester orbital corridor route in their respective Policies maps. This will be even more important if housing numbers are increased in the Plan, otherwise highway congestion and pollution on the A6 through Oadby and along the A563 Ring Road will become even more intolerable.

Question 9: - Where strategic sites are only required to contribute to targeted site-specific infrastructure could this approach result in off-site cumulative impacts of the developments proposed within the Plan not being adequately addressed? How would the Council respond at the planning application stage were the cumulative impacts following mitigation considered severe?

3.1 It is evident that there is existing considerable congestion on the A6 through Oadby and along the A563 Ring Road from the A6 to Fosse Park and the M1. The cumulative developments in not only the Harborough Plan, but also the Oadby & Wigston Plan will make this even worse if there are not meaningful financial contributions from the proposed developments to a radical off-site solution such as a new orbital route to the south of Leicester.

3.2 I understand that the proposed Modifications to the Plan includes the following criteria:

DS05 c) – to contribute to the reasonable costs of any infrastructure required to mitigate the impact of development including through the pooling of developer contributions where it is demonstrated that the impacts can only be addressed in a comprehensive way including cumulative and cross boundary impacts.

3.3 I welcome this proposed Modification, as long as it is robustly applied to enable contributions towards improvements to the Strategic Road Network as well as local highway mitigation measures.

4. Recommended Changes

4.1 It is notable that the current Regulation 19 Submission of the Blaby Local Plan contains the following policy:

POLICY S8 STRATEGIC SITE WHETSTONE PASTURES (4,500 dwellings and 15 ha of employment land)
18. Land to be protected from built development within the site for the provision of a new Junction onto the M1 Motorway (Junction 20a), together with local capacity and safety enhancements to the A426 and Willoughby Road to accommodate the new junction. Further land to the east of the junction to be laid out so as not to prejudice the delivery of a future growth corridor. needed to facilitate long term growth to the south and east of Leicester.

4.2 This more robust approach to off-site infrastructure, identifying off-site improvements and planned safeguarding for them, must as a minimum be included in the Harborough Local Plan. There must be a strategic highway corridor reservation in any masterplan for site OA1 land South of Gartree Road together with a more coordinated effective cross-boundary approach so that the future provision of a new strategic orbital highway is not prejudiced. The Plan could then be regarded as more effective and sound.

4.3 I am assuming that the making of an off-site safeguarded reservation for a strategic South Leicester orbital route corridor is too problematic to deal with through this current Local Plan and will have to await a future Review.

Keith Webster

30th September 2026