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For the Attention of: Planning Policy Team, Epping Forest District Council

Proposal: Epping Town Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 Consultation

National Highways Ref: NH/24/07864

Dear Planning Policy Team

Thank you for your email dated 9 September 2024 inviting us to participate in the consultation referenced above.

National Highways was 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). 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.

We are a key delivery partner for sustainable development promoted through the plan-led system, and as a statutory consultee we have a duty to cooperate with local authorities to support the preparation and implementation of development plan documents. National Highways is aware of the relationship between development planning and the transport network, and we are mindful of the effects that planning decisions may have on the operation of the SRN and associated junctions. We cannot cater for unconstrained traffic growth generated by new developments, and we therefore encourage policies and proposals which incorporate measures to reduce traffic generation at source and encourage more sustainable travel behaviour.

In response to your Regulation 16 Consultation, I would like to draw your attention to National Highways document 'Planning for the Future: A guide to working with National Highways on planning matters' (October 2023). This document sets out how National Highways intends to work with local planning authorities and developers to support the preparation of sound documents which enable the delivery of sustainable development. The document indicates that National Highways will review and provide comments on local plans proposed by local planning authorities that have the potential to affect any part of the SRN.

In this instance, we would specifically be concerned with any proposals which have the potential to impact the M25 and the M11, as well as Junction 27 of the M25 and Junction 6 of the M11, both of which are within or in close proximity to the Epping Town Neighbourhood.

We understand that development allocations are not within the remit of the Neighbourhood Plan, and these will instead be determined within the Epping Forest District Local Plan 2011 - 2033. The Neighbourhood Plan currently references site allocations for approximately 705 dwellings, a new health hub, new school and leisure centre, improved car parks, and areas for specialist housing, the elderly and young / affordable homes. We understand that Epping is

recognised as a main centre within the District, sitting within the London Stansted Cambridge Corridor, and this Neighbourhood Plan sets out proposals to develop the heritage / tourism role for the town and area, including a proposed town centre development.

Although we support and encourage sustainable growth, where proposals and developments have the potential to impact the SRN, National Highways would expect to be part of early discussions with both developers and Epping Forest District Council for any proposed future development which is likely to have a significant impact on the SRN.

This letter clarifies our views on this Neighbourhood Plan Reg 16 Consultation, primarily focused on the potential impacts of allocated sites on the SRN, and highlights parts of the SRN which may experience significant increases in traffic. Our interest in plan-led system is focused on the council's approach to highway and transport matters in relation to regeneration and new development.

We look forward to continuing to participate in future consultations and discussions. In the meantime, if you have any questions with regards to the comments made in this response, please do not hesitate to contact us at planningse@nationalhighways.co.uk.

Regards,

Janice

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