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**For the attention of:** Epping Forest District Council - Planning Policy Team

**Consultation Topic:** Ongar Town Council Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2033  
(Submission Version August 2021) - Regulation 16 Consultation

**National Highways Tracker ID:** #15319

Dear Planning Policy Team,

Thank you for your email dated 11th November 2021 regarding the Regulation 16 consultation for the Ongar Town Council Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2033. My apologies that this reply is later than you had wanted but, nevertheless, I hope it will be useful to have our comments on file.

National Highways 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). Our network is a critical national asset and as such, we work 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. In relation to the Neighbourhood Plan (NP), the closest section of our network is M11 J7, which is positioned 6.4m miles northwest of Ongar, and M25 J27 and J28 which are positioned a further distance still from the town.

We have undertaken a review of the NP (August 2021 submission version), for which our interests relate to the operation and safety of the SRN. We are interested as to whether there would be any adverse safety implications or material increase in queues and delays on the SRN as a result of the NP proposals.

National Highways 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. Highways England 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 order to constructively engage in the local plan-making process, we require a robust evidence-base so that sound advice can be given to local planning authorities, in relation to the appropriateness of proposed development in relation to the SRN. This also extends to include transport solutions that may be required to support potential site allocations.

We would like to draw your attention to National Highways document 'The Strategic Road Network, Planning for the Future: A guide to working with Highways England (now National Highways) on planning matters' (September 2015). This document sets out how we intend to work with local planning authorities, communities and

developers to support the preparation of sound documents, which enable the delivery of sustainable development.

### Context

We acknowledge that the NP *'enables the local community to influence these changes and play a much stronger role in shaping the area in which we live and work'* and that it *'provides the opportunity for communities to set out a positive vision for how they would like their community to develop over the period of the district's Local Plan, in ways that meet identified local need and make sense for local people'*

In Para. 1. 1 of the NP, it is stated that the *'purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan policies is to guide development within the parish. When a Neighbourhood Plan is made, it forms part of the statutory development plan for the area, together with the adopted Local Plan. Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the policies of both the Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise'*.

### National Highways comments

Whilst the NP covers several topics related to the area, such as conservation, local character and design, community, cultural and leisure facilities, including local transport, movement and infrastructure priorities, etc, it is the local planning and highway authority that have jurisdiction in these areas. For National Highways, our interests lie where sizable development proposals are identified to have a traffic impact on the SRN, or where development is provided bound against or positioned close to our network, in that it could impact on drainage, boundary treatment, noise, etc. As the Ongar NP boundary is situated some distance from the SRN (6.4 miles), no boundary issues are identified as a concern. No sizable developments or traffic impacts are also identified.

In terms of traffic impact, National Highways welcomes the NP objective that seeks to promote and improve sustainable transport and accessibility. Aside from these comments, we have no issues with the NP objectives, and largely due to the distance of the NP area from the SRN, none of the policies are believed to have consequences for our network. Any sizable developments that are identified in the NP, will either form part of the Local Plan, and/or be brought forward as part of a planning application submission, for which National Highways will be consulted.

### Summary

National Highways has undertaken review of the NP documents and raises no concerns / objections for the SRN.

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@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:planningse@highwaysengland.co.uk).

Many thanks,

Janice

**Janice Burgess, Spatial Planning Manager**

National Highways Limited

Bridge House, 1 Walnut Tree Close, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 4LZ

Registered in England and Wales No. 9346363

Direct Tel: [REDACTED] | Mobile: [REDACTED]

[www.highwaysengland.co.uk](http://www.highwaysengland.co.uk)