

**Tandridge District Council - Response to National Highways consultation on Route Strategies, 2021****Introduction**

National Highways (formerly Highways England) are consulting on route strategies for the Strategic Road Network (SRN). These strategies are one of the steps in the development of the national Road Investment Strategy (RIS), which is a rolling programme produced by the Department of Transport that sets out plans for the SRN.

National Highways (NH) currently are preparing route strategies for RIS 3, which covers the period 2025-2030 and beyond, and are seeking feedback by 30<sup>th</sup> November on planning for the future. Further information on route strategies is given in the document, 'Vision for Route Strategies – planning for the future of our roads':

[vision-for-route-strategies.pdf \(highwaysengland.co.uk\)](https://www.highwaysengland.co.uk/vision-for-route-strategies.pdf)

This response is concerned with the London Orbital (M25) and M23 to Gatwick Route Strategy.

Tandridge District Council welcome this opportunity to help inform where investment is required.

**Issues**

The key issue on the SRN in the context of Tandridge is M25 Junction 6. This is not only a key access point for Tandridge-related drivers (residents, visitors, commuters, business and freight), allowing them to join and leave the M25, but also it is the main crossing point on the M25 for the north-south A22 primary route which serves the district, London and the South East. It also acts as an alternative route through to Gatwick when the M23 is congested.

A junction assessment (using LinSig) based on 2018 observed data shows that the junction is operating over-capacity in both the AM and PM peaks, with a Practical Reserve Capacity (PRC) of -15.7% and -24.8% respectively.<sup>1</sup>

By 2025 it is forecast that background growth will have resulted in increased congestion with a detrimental impact on the operation of the junction: the PRC is forecast to increase to -146.6% and -81.4% in the AM and PM peaks respectively.

**Tandridge Local Plan and other strategic pressures**

Tandridge District Council has prepared a draft Local Plan, which is undergoing examination. As part of preparing the Plan and to inform the examination, a study was undertaken on M25 J6 to understand what mitigation would be required at this junction and to test suggested interventions. In order to answer further questions from the Inspector, this work was revisited and updated during summer 2021. Additional work is in progress to ensure that the Council, as well as SCC Highways and National Highways, have the necessary understanding of the junction's capacity and potential mitigation options.

Tables 1a and 1b below show the total volumes of motorised vehicles passing through the junction, both observed volumes and forecast volumes (excluding the flows on the mainline M25). Both the

---

<sup>1</sup> Transport Technical Note, M25 Junction 6 Godstone, DHA (on behalf of Tandridge District Council), July 2021

forecasting and modelling methodologies for this work, undertaken in 2021, were agreed between DHA (Tandridge District Council’s consultants) and National Highways and Surrey County Council.<sup>2</sup>

Table 1a: Total flows passing through junction (AM peak hour)

<b>AM Peak Hour</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>Base/Do-minimum</b>	<b>Plus Local Plan</b>	<b>Total Growth</b>	<b>Local Plan proportion</b>
<b>2018</b>	5952			
<b>2025</b>	7908	7992	2040	4.1%
<b>2030</b>	8163	8361	2409	8.2%
<b>2035</b>	8465	8892	2940	14.5%

Table 1b: Total flows passing through junction (PM peak hour)

<b>PM Peak Hour</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>Base/Do-minimum</b>	<b>Plus Local Plan</b>	<b>Total Growth</b>	<b>Local Plan proportion</b>
<b>2018</b>	5893			
<b>2025</b>	7796	7942	2049	7.1%
<b>2030</b>	8032	8316	2423	11.7%
<b>2035</b>	8309	8852	2959	18.4%

Source: Transport Technical Note, M25 Junction 6 Godstone, DHA (on behalf of Tandridge District Council), July 2021, Figures 1-14

These tables illustrate that by 2035 the vast majority, over 80%, of the forecast growth in vehicle volumes passing through the junction, is expected to be due to background growth (including committed development) rather than non-consented potential Local Plan related growth.

### **Merge & Diverge assessment**

A Merge & Diverge assessment to accompany the junction assessment shows that by 2025 the current arrangements will need enhancing to accommodate the forecast flows in both the AM and PM peaks. The current junction types are shown in the Table 2. However, by 2025 the assessment indicates that with just background growth the eastbound diverge needs upgrading to Type D and the westbound merge requires upgrading to Type F. The same improved merge and diverge types are required to meet the background growth forecasts for 2035.

Table 2: M25 J6 current merge / diverge types

<b>Junction Link</b>	<b>Merge / Diverge type</b>
Eastbound diverge	C
Westbound diverge	C
Eastbound merge	D
Westbound merge	E (1)

<sup>2</sup> Transport Technical Note, M25 Junction 6 Godstone, DHA (on behalf of Tandridge District Council), April 2021  
 Transport Technical Note, M25 Junction 6 Godstone, DHA (on behalf of Tandridge District Council), July 2021

The assessment reveals that the relatively modest forecast growth associated with the draft Local Plan can be accommodated by the amended merge and diverge arrangements.

### **M23 and relationship with M25 and A22**

The M23, which forms part of the London Orbital and M23 Route Strategy, runs through Tandridge District from just north of Gatwick Airport to just south of M25 junction 7 with the A23.

From the technical work which has been carried out on the junction (M25 junction 6) to date, it is evident that the current junction has been operating at capacity since 2018 and this will continue to worsen even without any Local Plan growth. In addition, Gatwick Airport are also currently preparing a Development Consent Order (DCO) which sees them increasing their flights and passenger numbers with the opening of their northern runway. The M25 is a major route of access to the airport and should the scheme go ahead, vehicle movements will increase adding further pressure. Such pressures would be felt directly at junction 6, not just from traffic flowing westbound to Junction 7 and the M23, but also via junction 6, onto the A22 which is utilised as an alternative route onto the M23, when there are issues on the M25. It is anticipated that the DCO will be submitted in 2022.

### **Summary**

Assessments undertaken to support Tandridge District Council's submission draft Local Plan show M25 J6 currently is operating at capacity. By 2025 it will need upgrading to accommodate background growth, setting aside any growth associated with the Tandridge Local Plan, which is considered below, or with other districts' Local Plans or the current proposals for Gatwick Airport. Enhancements will be required to the slips, circulatory carriageway, approaches on the local road network and the merges and diverges with the M25 mainline.

The growth in demand associated with the Local Plan is modest, and by 2035 is forecast to be less than 20% of the total growth over the period (2018 – 2035). Furthermore, and particularly pertinent to the merge and diverge junction types, the improvements required to meet background demand will be able to accommodate demand associated with the Tandridge Local Plan.

Even without the Local Plan (and its successors) capacity issues at M25 J6 have wider implications. Without investment the junction will be a major infrastructure constraint on future movement and development in Tandridge District, as well as in relation to Gatwick-related traffic travelling via the M23, M25 and A22, and neighbouring districts including Sevenoaks District to the east. It should be noted that Sevenoaks District is also producing a Local Plan, and that both Tandridge and Sevenoaks can be anticipated to produce successive plans to shape growth in their localities.

Tandridge District Council request that these upgrade requirements are considered positively when developing the London Orbital (M25) and M23 to Gatwick Route Strategy to inform the Road Investment Strategy.