

MID SUSSEX
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Statement of Common Ground

**Transport: Mid Sussex District Council
(MSDC) and National Highways (NH)**

23 October 2024

1. List of parties involved

Mid Sussex District Council
National Highways

2. Signatories



Date: 23rd October 2024

Mid Sussex District Council

Ann Biggs – Assistant Director for Planning and Sustainable Economy



Date: 23 October 2024

National Highways

Kevin Bown BSc(Hons) MPhil CMS MRTPI Spatial Planner

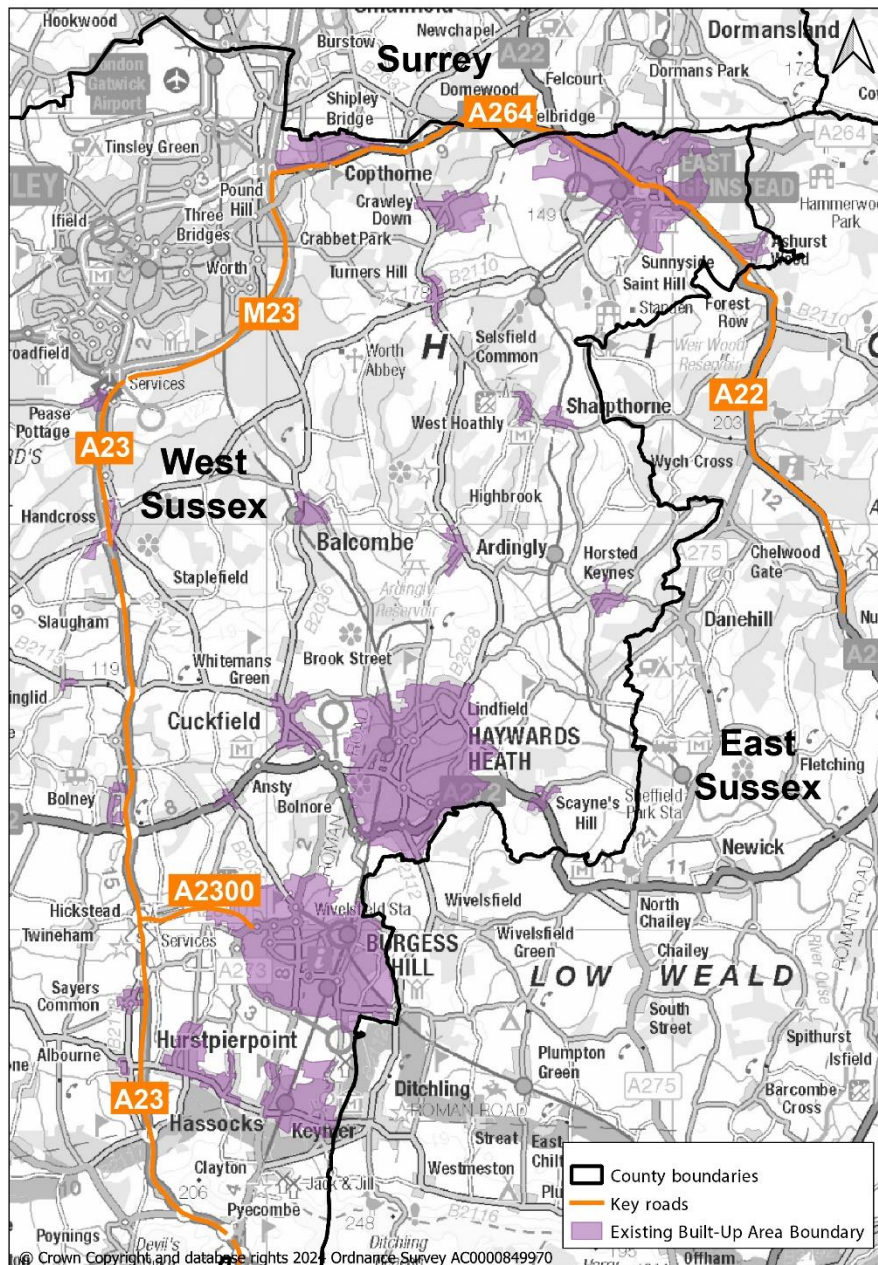
Spatial Planning Team, South East Region Operations Directorate

National Highways, Bridge House, 1 Walnut Tree Close, Guildford GU1 4LZ

3. Strategic Geography

Mid Sussex district is situated within the county of West Sussex and adjoins Surrey to the north (Tandridge District Council) and East Sussex (Wealden and Lewes District Councils). Crawley Borough Council and Horsham District Council are neighbouring authorities within West Sussex County, and Mid Sussex also shares a boundary with Brighton and Hove City to the south.

MSDC is one of the local authorities that make up the Greater Brighton City Region, along with Arun, Worthing, Adur, Crawley, Lewes, and Brighton & Hove. MSDC is a member of the West Sussex and Greater Brighton Strategic Planning Board. Mid Sussex is also one of the districts in the Gatwick Diamond – a business-led initiative to attract jobs and investment to the area.



The National Highways network A23/M23 runs north to south through the district and is the main arterial route for vehicles between London and the south coast. The

route is heavily used and the majority of the section which runs through Mid Sussex is the A road section.

4. Strategic Matters

The Parties agree:

- a) National Highways (NH) and West Sussex County Council (WSCC) have informed and validated development of the Mid Sussex Strategic Transport Model, the subsequent strategic and local junction modelling and Merge/ Diverge Assessment on the A23/ M23, in line with standard good practice as set out in the Department for Transport's (DfT) Circular 01/2022 and transport analysis guidance (TAG).
- b) There has been effective ongoing engagement between the parties during the preparation of the transport model including sign-off of the methodology, model calibration, and discussion of results at each stage.
- c) During July 2024 National Highways (NH) and Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) agreed a Memorandum of Understanding which set out the agreed position at that time.
- d) During the period of July 2024 to September 2024, further evidence has been produced by the Council's transport consultant Systra and shared with NH and a total of 4 meetings have been held between the Parties.

Further Evidence provided to National Highways 24 September 2024

- **Model Assumptions Note** – A model assumptions note has been produced which sets out further evidence and justification to underpin the assumptions made in the Scenarios 4 and 5. It also informs the modest changes to the Scenario 6 modelling regarding growth outside the district in the plan period, which were unrealistically high in the Scenario 5 modelling.
- **Scenario 6 model run** - results of the Scenario 6 model run have been shared with NH and have been used to inform the Merge Diverge Assessment.
- **Covid Assessment work** – Covid assessment work has been undertaken to determine how more realistic background growth, when compared to the current 2019 base, could affect the modelling results to ensure the results are not being overestimated.

As at 18 October 2024, National Highways are now largely content that the modelling is fit for purpose for use as a basis for the Local Plan traffic impact assessment. However, given the outstanding matters set out below, the interpretation of the outputs of the modelling is not yet complete.

- **Merge Diverge Assessment** – A merge diverge assessment has been developed based on the modelling outputs, It demonstrates that in a number of locations the Local Plan will have traffic impacts that, to comply with national policy in NPPF, C1/22 and DMRB, would require the delivery of mitigation, mainly on grounds of safety.

The precise list of locations of the necessary mitigations is not yet agreed. Further discussions are required between MSDC and National Highways to finalise the list.

Agreed locations for mitigation are:

M23J11

National Highways are content that the mitigation identified in support of the Crawley Borough Council Local Plan at M23 Junction 11 is sufficient to address both the Crawley Local Plan and Mid Sussex Local Plan impacts.

However, the MSDC LP policy/text and IDP need to be modified to demonstrate how the mitigation will be delivered in practice under a variety of scenarios, such that Mid Sussex Local Plan led development will be proportionately and appropriately mitigated in a timely fashion.

Locations mentioned by either party as potentially requiring mitigation but not yet agreed are:

- i) MSDC consider that mitigation may be required at

A23/A272 (Bolney) southbound on slip merge

A23/B2117 (Hurstpierpoint) southbound on slip merge

National Highways are content that mitigation is not required at these locations.

ii) National Highways consider mitigation may be required at

- A) The A23/A2110 Northbound merge (Handcross)
- B) The A23/A2300 northbound diverge (Burgess Hill)
- C) The A23/A2300 northbound merge (Burgess Hill)
- D) The A23/A2300 southbound diverge (Burgess Hill)
- E) The A23/A2300 southbound merge (Burgess Hill)
- F) The A23/B2118 northbound merge (Sayers Common)
- G) The A23/B2118 southbound diverge (Sayers Common)

National Highways accepts that some of the above merges or diverges are substandard in both the Reference Case and Local Plan scenarios. It is agreed that there are mitigation solutions where practicable to achieve at, or in support of, these locations, however these are not yet agreed. In cases where fully compliant mitigation may be agreed by National Highways as not achievable, we will need to carefully consider any road safety implications before reaching conclusions on the way forward at each location. This can be a complex process involving discussion and consideration by various teams within National Highways. Internal discussions have commenced, with the aim of providing a further update at the examination.

Should the safety implications not be acceptable, we will work with Mid Sussex to identify alternative, appropriate and proportionate mitigation options.

Therefore, taking account of the latest available evidence and its analysis to-date, further work is required to make (MSDC) and test (NH) the case for any further departures from policy and/or standards. And depending on the outcome, present (MSDC) and test (NH) any still required mitigation.

Further details regarding National Highways recent assessment and considerations are set out in its Examination Statement submitted on 30 September 2024.

Next Steps

The Parties agree to continue to work together to agree a final position in terms of road safety. This may require further work to determine further / alternative

mitigation requirements and the governance, funding and other practicalities of implementation.

5. Governance Arrangements

The parties are committed to working positively together, sharing information and best practice throughout the plan preparation phase and beyond.

In terms of governance, the parties agree:

- They have engaged on an ongoing basis throughout preparation of the District Plan Review and consider that the Duty to Cooperate has been met.
- The parties will continue to work together on strategic transport issues affecting their respective areas of interest.
- The parties have worked collaboratively on plan preparation and evidence and will continue to do so.
- The parties will update this SoCG when necessary, as progress continues towards the adoption of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039.

6. Timetable for review and ongoing cooperation

LPA	Present Plan Adoption	Proposed Plan Review Date	Regulation 18 Date	Regulation 19 Date	Submission Date
Mid Sussex District Plan	March 2018	2022-2024	November 2022	January 2024	July 2024