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Dear Linda

RIPLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Highways Agency (the Agency) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Ripley Neighbourhood Plan. It is the role of the Agency to maintain the safe and efficient operation of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) and to be a delivery partner to national economic growth as set out in the Department for Transport Circular 02/2013. The A38 runs through the middle of the Ripley Neighbourhood Plan area and there is potential for future development proposals for Ripley to have an impact on the performance of the route, in particular at the A38/A610 roundabout.

The Agency notes the claim by Ripley Town Council in its Foreword to the Plan that Amber Valley Borough Council has not fully met its duty to collaborate and provide the range of support to the Ripley Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group as set out in the Regulations. The Agency also notes some disconnect between the Neighbourhood Plan and the Core Strategy in certain areas. Whilst the Core Objectives for Transport and Connectivity of the Neighbourhood Plan are generally in line with the strategic objectives as set out in the Core Strategy (with an emphasis on promoting sustainable modes of travel and reducing the need to travel by car prevalent themes in both documents), the Agency notes that the proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan for the delivery of new houses in Ripley differs quite significantly from what is set out in the Core Strategy.

It would appear that the Neighbourhood Plan does recognise the validity of most of the preferred housing policies in the emerging Core Strategy to the Ripley area. However, although it does make provision for a similar amount of housing in the Ripley area to that set out in the Core Strategy, the strategy for accommodating the growth is different. The Agency notes that the Plan provides other sites for housing growth "*as a direct alternative to the Amber Valley Borough Council Core Strategy proposals.*"

The Core Strategy sets out two strategic allocations for the Ripley area; one at Coppice Farm which has planning permission for the delivery of 360 dwellings and the other at Nottingham Road which has the potential to accommodate 560 dwellings. As the site at Coppice Farm has planning permission, Ripley Town Council is unable to propose any amendments to this allocation. However, for the site at Nottingham Road, it is proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan

that only 129 dwellings would be achievable at this site and has identified other sites within Ripley to accommodate the remaining 431 dwellings. It is stated in the Neighbourhood Plan that none of these other sites require highway infrastructure to make the Plan's proposed settlements deliverable and that a Transport Assessment has been carried out for each of the possible housing sites that were considered for inclusion in the Plan.

The Agency welcomes that highway factors have been considered as part of the evidence base for the Neighbourhood Plan. However, the Agency considers that, although development sites may have been considered individually, proposed development in the Ripley area as a whole could have the potential to cumulatively impact upon the SRN, particularly the A38/A610 junction. Such cumulative impacts may be capable of being mitigated through the provision of traffic signal control or other infrastructure improvements, however, this needs further consideration.

Conclusions

The Agency understands that one of the Town Council's overarching concerns is to respect and safeguard the existing character and local vernacular of the area and that this potentially would be better achieved through the alternative development strategy outlined in the Neighbourhood Plan. However, from a transport perspective, the Agency considers that the principal issue for the SRN in the area is the cumulative impact of development proposals in the Ripley area and the need for this to be clarified as part of emerging plans for the area, particularly with regard to the A38/A610 junction.

Yours sincerely



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