



# Stafford Western Access Route Design and Access Statement

**August 2015**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Staffordshire County Council to support a full planning application for Stafford Western Access Route. It provides an overview of what has influenced the preferred design and the access requirements for all users. It needs to be read in conjunction with the Environmental Statement, Statement of Community Involvement, Planning Policy Statement, Statement of Case and Utilities Statement. A suite of detailed and indicative drawings also support this statement.

1.1.2 The planning application is for development within the red line boundary (SWAR/PLANNING/02) and includes:

- Construction of new highway from Greyfriars Place to Road and Doxey Road to Martin Drive
- Associated demolition of buildings at Saint Gobain
- Associated flood compensatory storage within Doxey and Tillington Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest

1.1.3 The highway authority is permitted to carry out improvements within or adjacent to the existing local highway and therefore does not require planning permission for the areas within the blue line boundary (SWAR PLANNING/02). This is in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. This includes improvements and re-alignment of:

- Existing Doxey Road between West Coast Main Line and Castle Street, including provision of a new service road
- Greyfriars Place to A34 Foregate Street and along A34 Foregate Street to Browning Street

## 2 SCHEME CONTEXT

2.1.1 The objective of the Stafford Western Access Route is to:

- Provide high quality transport infrastructure required to deliver development in Stafford
- Reduce congestion on routes into and around the town centre which act as a constraint on growth proposals
- Facilitate improved access by sustainable modes between housing growth areas and the town centre

2.1.2 The context for the Scheme is the need to accommodate new development in Stafford as proposed in The Plan for Stafford Borough. The Scheme is fundamental to the delivery of 'Policy Stafford 1 – Stafford Town' and 'Policy Stafford 3 – West of Stafford'. It is also significant to the delivery of the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan. This is outlined in detail in the Planning Policy Statement.

- 2.1.3 Significant evidence was produced by Staffordshire County Council and Atkins Consultants to help identify the appropriate transport infrastructure to enable delivery of The Plan for Stafford Borough. The evidence concludes that it is essential that the Stafford Western Access Route is delivered as part of a wider package of measures as proposed in the Stafford Borough Integrated Transport Strategy 2013. Further details are provided in the Planning Policy Statement.
- 2.1.4 The overall rationale for the Stafford Western Access Route is summarised in the Logic Map provided in the Statement of Case. The Logic Map shows how strategic policy documents and baseline evidence demonstrates the need for the Scheme; the key actions required; and the path towards achieving the expected objectives. Success will be achieved by delivering the benefits summarised in the Statement of Case which will then in turn help to ensure the delivery of strategic policies.
- 2.1.5 The Statement of Community Involvement provides details of all consultations that have taken place since the first community events in December 2009 and January 2010 when initial scheme options were considered. The aim of the consultation process has been to:
- Raise awareness and inform stakeholders, road users and residents about the Stafford Western Access Route
  - Promote public information events to ensure everyone who wants to have their say has the opportunity to do so
  - Engage all stakeholders, road users and residents with an interest in the project
- 2.1.6 An Options Assessment Report was produced in March 2010 by the County Council in line with Department for Transport's WebTAG guidance. It assesses the potential interventions and demonstrates a clear path from identifying the problems in Stafford to arriving at the preferred solution. The Report is provided as Appendix 2.1 of the Environmental Statement.

### **3 SCHEME DESCRIPTION**

#### **3.1 Phasing**

- 3.1.1 The Scheme will be delivered in the following three sections. The phasing of delivery is detailed in the Environmental Statement:

#### **3.2 Section A: A34 Foregate Street to Timberfield Road**

- 3.2.1 Central to this planning application is the construction of a new 700m section of road to be constructed over the River Sow, across existing car parks and a lorry park, linking to Doxey Road. Passing through Madford Retail Park the road will be raised on a piled embankment retained vertically using buff coloured blocks. There will be a new six span viaduct, raised on supporting columns, passing over the River Sow and long stay car park; from this viaduct the road will be raised on a piled embankment with a vertical wall on

both sides made up of buff coloured blocks. The piled embankment will continue to the proposed Doxey Road roundabout.. All other changes along Section A will be within or adjacent to the existing highway network.

- 3.2.2 As part of the improvements to the A34, it will be necessary to carry out localised carriageway widening to Grey Friars/Browning street signal controlled junction. This includes the provision of a new dedicated left turn lane from the A34 into Browning Street as well as signal upgrade work which is to incorporate improved pedestrian facilities.
- 3.2.3 The A34 existing traffic signal controlled junction will be significantly upgraded. This will involve the widening of Grey Friars' Place to provide three lanes out onto A34 Foregate Street and two lanes in from A34 Foregate Street. The signals will be linked to the Stafford urban traffic control system. To the south, the route links through Madford Retail Park to the River Sow.
- 3.2.4 Within Madford Retail Park there is an existing mini roundabout junction that will be replaced with a new traffic signal controlled junction linked to the traffic signal controlled junction on the A34. Pedestrian facilities will be provided at this location.
- 3.2.5 A new roundabout junction with a controlled staggered pedestrian crossing point is proposed on Doxey Road at the entrance to the existing Sainsbury's supermarket. From this new roundabout to Timberfield Road, Doxey Road will be realigned to take the main carriageway away from existing properties. A section of the existing Doxey Road will be utilised as a separate access road serving fronting Castletown properties and incorporating on street parking.
- 3.2.6 From North Castle Street walking and cycling facilities will be separated from the highway by up to 20m of planting at the widest point. This connects with National Cycle Network (NCN) 55 that travels south along Jerningham Street. A new toucan crossing located in the vicinity of the Isabel Trail (NCN 5) will provide a safe connection between the NCN routes.

### **3.3 Section B: Timberfield Road to Doxey Road Rail Bridge**

- 3.3.1 Section B, approximately 160m in length, will only include changes within or adjacent to the existing highway.
- 3.3.2 There will be localised realignment of Doxey Road, between Timberfield Road and the rail bridge; in addition alterations to the existing Doxey Road/Rosewood Gardens and Doxey Road/Timberfield Road priority junctions will be completed to accommodate modifications to the main carriageway. The existing public right of way in the vicinity of the Doxey Road/Timberfield Road will be accommodated by the provision of a safe crossing facility for pedestrians and cyclists. The 3m wide shared footway/cycleway continues across the front of Timberfield Road residential area to

join the off-road Isabel Trail (NCN 5) which travels north from the entrance of Timberfield Road.

- 3.3.3 There will be minor works to the existing Doxey Road rail bridge in order to accommodate a realigned carriageway across the bridge to the south. This will reduce the width of the southern footway to a hard strip with no pedestrian access and create footway/cycleway on the north of at least 3m wide (with 7.3m carriageway). Other minor works are expected to include upgraded vehicle constraints. The railings will be replaced with more sympathetic and less intrusive street furniture to prevent vehicle incursion and damage to the bridge.

### **3.4 Section C: Doxey Road (west of the Railway Bridge) to Martin Drive, Castlefields**

- 3.4.1 Section C includes a new 320m road between Doxey Road to the existing roundabout at the Martin Drive/Rose Hill junction at Castlefields which will be modified to incorporate a fourth arm. The route crosses an existing employment site, which is an area proposed for mixed use development in the Local Plan. The planning application includes the demolition of the remaining buildings on this site. The route also crosses railway sidings, currently owned by Network Rail, and an area of low lying scrubland. Facilities for non-motorised users are to be provided in the form of a shared footway/ cycleway. One right of way across this section of the route will require realigning.
- 3.4.2 The remaining changes will be within or adjacent to the existing highway. A short section of Doxey Road to the west of the West Coast Main Line rail bridge will be realigned as a 7.3 metre wide, 200 metre long, single carriageway and a new roundabout provided at the junction with the new access route.

## **4. DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPTS**

- 4.1.1 The new route has been designed as a 7.3m wide, single carriageway road, with a 3m wide shared footway/cycleway, good quality signage and lighting and subject to a 30mph speed limit. Key features of the Scheme include:
- A34 improved signal junctions at Browning Street and Foregate Street
  - Vertically retained piled embankment at Madford Retail Park between Lidl and Tenpin
  - Six span viaduct over the River Sow flood plain
  - Vertically retained piled embankment along Pans Drive
  - Complementary habitats created adjacent to the new road and Doxey and Tillington Marshes Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI)
  - New roundabout at the junction with Doxey Road and Sainsbury's
  - Service road for Doxey Road properties
  - Realignment of Doxey Road
  - Enhancements to the West Coast Main Line rail bridge
  - Roundabout at new junction with Doxey Road

- At-grade crossing of redundant rail sidings
- Fourth arm at existing Martin Drive roundabout
- Flood compensation area within Doxey and Tillington Marshes SSSI

4.1.2 Detailed drawings have been provided to support the planning application and are listed in Table 4.1. They show all the relevant design and access considerations.

**Table 4.1: Planning Application Drawings**

| <b>SWAR/PLANNING/<br/>NUMBER</b> | <b>DRAWING TITLE</b>                       |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 01                               | Location plan                              |
| 02                               | Red and blue line boundary                 |
| 03                               | Existing general layout                    |
| 04                               | Existing detailed site layout              |
| 05                               | Enhanced general arrangement               |
| 06                               | Land requirements                          |
| 07                               | Phasing plan                               |
| 08 – 12                          | Junction designs                           |
| 13                               | Cross section and long sections            |
| 14                               | Demolition works                           |
| 15                               | Vegetation clearance                       |
| 16                               | Local watercourses                         |
| 17                               | Existing public rights of way              |
| 18                               | Position of services and utilities plan    |
| 19                               | Construction and working areas             |
| 20                               | Structures location and viaduct elevations |
| 21                               | Pedestrian and cycle facilities            |
| 22                               | Street lighting                            |
| 23                               | Drainage proposals                         |
| 24                               | Flood compensation areas                   |
| 25                               | Environmental mitigation                   |
| 26                               | Landscape concept                          |
| 27                               | SSSI Land Calculation                      |
| 28                               | Artist Illustration                        |
| 29                               | Photomontage                               |

4.2.3 The design has been heavily influenced by land uses surrounding the Scheme. It is within an urban environment that creates design constraints. The site is crossed by public rights of way, the national cycle network, the River Sow and its tributaries (Pans Drain and Doxey Drain), the West Coast Main Line and rail sidings (currently proposed to be decommissioned). Land uses surrounding the site include scrubland, areas designated with environmental protection, car parks, existing industrial, residential and retail areas and major development sites.

4.2.4 The design has had to take into account ground conditions, in particular the probability of river flooding and, given the historic industrial nature of the area, the potential for isolated pockets of land contamination. The design

has also been affected by the close presence of the Doxey and Tillington Site of Special Scientific Interest.

- 4.2.5 The location of the Scheme has been guided by the need to provide a primary access to the Burleyfields Strategic Development Location at the same time as being sufficiently close to the town centre to provide a suitable alternative route to congested town centre roads. Over half of the land within the red line boundary of the application is owned by the two local authorities. It has not been possible to avoid the need to acquire land from seven other land owners although the aim has been to limit the extent and impact of this land acquisition.
- 4.2.6 All aspects of the Scheme have followed the required design standards including catering for emergency services. It ties in with existing levels where the route intersects the local highway network. The design of highway junctions and geometry has taken into account forecast traffic flows.
- 4.2.7 The Environmental Statement provides details of the design considerations for all the elements listed in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2: Summary of Design Considerations**

| <b>Element of the Design</b> | <b>Design Considerations</b>   |
|------------------------------|--|
| Highway Junctions            | ARCADY and LINSIG analysis based on predicted flows from the SATURN model and DMRB design standards.   |
| Highway Geometry             | Based on DMRB design standards taking into account local environmental constraints.  |
| Vertical Alignment           | The viaduct height reflects potential flood impact; allows headroom over the River Sow; and safe future repair and maintenance. It ties in with existing highway levels.                           |
| Design of Structure          | The design visually fits in with the local environment. It allows for required loadings and future maintenance.  |
| Lighting                     | 6m - 12m lighting columns to current standards designed to fit in with the local environment and reduce light spill.   |
| Signing                      | Signs designed to current standards taking into account the requirement to down-grade the town centre route.   |
| Site Waste Management        | Well planned and auditable management of waste produced and designed to minimise the volume of waste.  |
| Drainage                     | Traditional road gullies and/or combined kerb and drainage units designed to maximise use of existing outfall locations. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) have been provided where practicable. |
| Flood Compensation           | Compensation storage is within the SSSI providing the additional benefit of ecological enhancement.  |
| Landscaping                  | Landscaping will enhance environmental quality and visual amenity.   |
| Utilities                    | Appropriate protection and diversion measures will be provided as part of the design of the Scheme. Clearance to Western Power Distribution's overhead power line has been achieved.               |



## 5 MEANS OF ACCESS

- 5.1.1 Access requirements for all modes of transport have been considered during the development of the Scheme. The new route ties in with the existing highway network at Foregate Street, Grey Friars' Place, Doxey Road, residential roads along Doxey Road (North Castle Street, Timberfield Road and Rosewood Gardens), Martin Drive and Rose Hill at Castlefields. From Martin Drive, the route links to Newport Road via Kingsway. Madford Retail Park and Sainsbury's have direct access to the Scheme, together with the proposed mixed use development site at Saint Gobain.
- 5.1.2 The Scheme itself does not include any public transport facilities, except for a requirement to enhance the bus stop facility by Timberfield Road. However significant benefits will be experienced by bus services using the bypassed route through the town. Based on local consultations, the proportion of heavy vehicles is not considered to be higher than expected in a similar town centre location.
- 5.1.3 The Statement of Case considers the extent to which there are differences in the way the impacts of the Scheme affect different groups in society. It concludes that overall there are no concerns about how benefits will be distributed. It demonstrates that benefits are seen for all sectors with a particularly strong focus in the town centre and west of Stafford.
- 5.1.4 The Environment Statement includes a Traffic and Transport section (Section 2.7), Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians and Community Effects Chapter (Chapter 12) and Vehicle Travellers Chapter (Chapter 13). The access issues that have been discussed in these chapters are summarised below.

## 5.2 Traffic and Transport

- 5.2.1 This section of the Environmental Statement presents the level of traffic that will use the new road; the impact on public transport services and parking provision. Table 5.1 presents the forecast average traffic flows on the new road in the AM and PM peak hours and throughout the whole day. The highest flows are expected on the route from Foregate Street to Doxey Road.

**Table 5.1: Use of the Stafford Western Access Route**

| Stafford Western Access Route | 2018  |       |        | 2033  |       |        |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|--------|
|                               | AM    | PM    | AADT*  | AM    | PM    | AADT   |
| Foregate St to Doxey Road     | 1,501 | 1,503 | 16,372 | 1,832 | 1,988 | 20,819 |
| Doxey Road                    | 1,536 | 1,438 | 16,205 | 2,302 | 2,229 | 24,695 |
| Doxey Road to Martin Drive    | 835   | 894   | 9,426  | 1,523 | 1,612 | 17,087 |
| Kingsway                      | 867   | 883   | 9,537  | 1,289 | 1,378 | 14,535 |

\*Annual Average Daily Traffic Flow

### **5.3 Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians and Community Effects**

5.3.1 There will be numerous pedestrian and cycle movements made along and across the Scheme, but there is no known horse culture in the area. This Chapter of the Environmental Statement considers changes to journey length and travel patterns, changes in amenity and differences in the level of severance for these pedestrian and cycle movements. The Scheme is expected to benefit journey length and travel patterns. A number of new crossing facilities are proposed along the route and also on local roads where traffic flows are predicted to increase. This will reduce severance and improve amenity for pedestrians and cyclists.

### **5.4 Vehicle Travellers**

5.4.1 This Chapter of the Environmental Statement assesses the 'View from the road' and 'Driver stress' in terms of road layout and geometry, surface riding characteristics, junction frequency, and speed and flow per lane.

5.4.2 It concludes that there are no over-riding access issues for vehicle travellers. There will be beneficial impacts in terms of improvements to delays on the wider local network, however traffic levels will still be high, particularly in 2033, and these residual issues will need to be mitigated through the delivery of the Stafford Borough Integrated Transport Strategy provided as an appendix to the Planning Policy Statement.