

MSDC Ref: DM/26/0238 – LVS Hassocks, Sayers Common: National Highways Consultation Response

Ref: DS/ITS19984-018
Date: 13 May 2026

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This Technical Note has been prepared following receipt of the National Highways response, dated 1st May, to the Transport Assessment and additional information submitted as part of the hybrid planning application for the development of a new SEN School and up to 210 dwellings on Land at LVS Hassocks, Sayers Common (*ref: DM/26/0238*).

1.1.2 The comments raised by National Highways cover the following matters.

- 1 Queue length data
- 2 Traffic Impact Modelling, including
 - Committed development
 - Traffic flow diagrams
 - Junction assessment
 - Merge / diverge assessment
- 3 Achieving the Vision

1.2 Queue Length Data

1.2.1 While full survey outputs received from the survey company have been provided (See Appendix A – ITS19984-017 – submitted 3.3.26), the survey company has advised that video files have been deleted in accordance with GDPR guidelines and cannot be supplied.

1.3 Traffic Impact Modelling

1.3.1 Additional information note ITS19984-017 TN was submitted to seek to address matters raised in the National Highways response dated 3rd March 2026. In its comments dated 1st May 2026, further information has been sought in addition to an extended scope of assessment and further technical assessments. This includes the following:

- Confirmation regarding committed development.
- Update geometric parameters of assessed junctions.
- Undertake detailed merge and diverge assessment at a number of junctions.

1.3.2 While the Applicant is keen to reach technical agreement on the matters raised, it is important to note the context of the application in relation to the Mid Sussex District Council Local Plan Submission Draft (Regulation 19) and the technical work undertaken to prepare an evidence base to support the plan, which has been developed and progressed in consultation with key stakeholders including National Highways. A Statement of Common Ground has been made between MSDC and National Highways dated 23rd October 2024.

1.3.3 The content of this evidence base, which includes the documents listed below, assesses cumulative traffic impacts well beyond that of the application site in isolation and across a much wider scope than that included within the Transport Assessment including with the planning application. The application site itself forms part of the MSDC growth strategy as site DPSC 7 all of which has been included within the tested scenarios (ref: SHLAAID 1003, Fig.2 of Transport Study Scenario 6 Report (T9)) and taken into account within the following:

- Transport Study Scenario 6 Report (T9)
- Merge Diverge Assessment Report (T11)
- MSDC LP National Highways Modelling Methodology (T13)
- Safety Study Review (T15)

1.3.4 From these studies, an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IV6) has been developed - all developments included as allocations are expected to contribute to the identified schemes, and the Applicant has stated that it is willing to enter into a Section 106 Agreement with MSDC to secure the necessary funding, consistent with the requirements of CIL Regulation 122.

1.3.5 The NH consultation response identifies the need for a detailed merge and diverge assessment at the following locations:

- B2118 NB Merge to A23
- A23 SB Diverge with Mill Lane
- A23 NB diverge to A2300
- A2300 Merge with A23 on slip to Brighton

1.3.6 All locations identified above formed part of the scope of, and have been assessed through, the Merge Diverge Assessment Report (T11) at Sections 2.10 (A2300 – A23) and 2.11 (A23 – B2118). To mitigate the cumulative impacts of development, physical capacity improvements have been identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IV6) as follows:

- Physical capacity intervention at A23 / B2118 NB On-slip Merge Junction - £1,500,000.00
- Physical capacity intervention at A23 / B2118 SB Off-slip Diverge Junction - £TBC

1.3.7 In addition, the development is expected to make a proportionate contribution towards the following improvement scheme:

- Physical capacity intervention at A23 / A272 SB On-slop Merge Junction - £1,100,000.00

1.3.8 These contributions are to be utilised to implement measures to achieve the Vision of the Local Plan growth strategy through the 'Monitor and Manage' process. The Transport Infrastructure Management Group (TIMG) has been established and is now active, operating in accordance with the Terms of Reference (T16).

1.3.9 While the Transport Assessment accompanying the application does include assessment of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) governed by NH, both scoping and subsequent assessment was undertaken during the period in which the MSDC LP was paused and documentation such as the IDP has not yet been prepared. Given the change in the planning landscape since this time, plus the further assessment work undertaken as part of the LP Evidence Base and development of the IDP, any further assessment is both redundant and abortive. A strategy has been identified to manage SRN impacts, and the Applicant is willing to adhere to it.

1.3.10 There is perhaps a more fundamental point regarding the approach by National Highways to any development site across the District, particularly for requests that duplicate existing transport evidence base assessments (e.g. merge / diverge assessment) as, if this approach is applied to all identified growth sites, then it will effectively require the transport assessment work to start again and either repeat or ignore the extensive evidence provided through the MSDC transport evidence base. It may also risk MSDC losing some of the wider, overarching infrastructure that has been identified as part of the growth strategy as a result of looking at developments in isolation, undermining the Vision that has been established through the Local Plan.

1.4 **Vision**

1.4.1 The NH response states that "the updated Travel Plan needs to demonstrate alignment with the development vision and associated supporting measures".

1.4.2 Paragraph 48 of Circular 01/2022 states that “where a transport assessment is required, this should start with a vision of what the development is seeking to achieve and then test a set of scenarios to determine the optimum design and transport infrastructure to realise this vision”. This is achieved through the MSDC evidence base, and the development is to bring forward new community infrastructure, footway improvements, public transport improvements and road safety improvements as envisaged within this vision and secured via the IDP / Section 106 obligations.

1.4.3 The proposed development is to provide a range of measures, secured by Section 106 Agreement and planning conditions, to deliver the Vision. The Travel Plan forms part of this package of works, providing a monitoring strategy in accordance with WSCC guidance. It includes measures for site specific intervention should remedial action be required, while the development will be required to ‘front load’ financial contributions to enable delivery of off-site infrastructure through the aforementioned TIMG.

1.5 **Summary and Conclusion**

1.5.1 National Highways has provided a response to planning application DM/26/0238 that requests further technical assessment.

1.5.2 The application site forms part of the MSDC growth strategy set out in the MSDC Local Plan Submission Draft (Reg 19), which has been subject to extensive assessment through the associated transport evidence base. This work goes beyond what is sought by National Highways and identifies a range of infrastructure measures required to mitigate the cumulative impacts of development on Strategic and Local Road Networks. The Applicant is willing to provide proportionate financial contributions in accordance with the MSDC Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

1.5.3 The need for further assessment is at odds with the conclusions of the evidence base and would be redundant given the infrastructure requirements which have already been identified and agreed through the local plan process with NH. While the Applicant is keen to reach technical agreement with NH, should this approach be applied to all developments coming forward as part of the Local Plan strategy, it risks undermining the evidence base and justifying a departure from the infrastructure requirements identified through the IDP should it be concluded that development impact is isolation is not deemed to be ‘severe’.