

Response from Director of Environment and Transport to representations from Dr. R. K.A. Feltham CC and Mr. P. King CC

Whilst all of the routes on Leicestershire's Major Road Network (MRN), including the A6 South, meet the base criteria for inclusion in the MRN (volume and composition of traffic, and role in providing strategic connectivity and wider network resilience for the SRN), it has been necessary for the Council to rank the relative performance and economic importance of the county's MRN corridors to ensure the Authority has a priority focal point for its limited resources going forward and so it can maximise its ability to seek additional investment from as many sources as possible, including the Government, Midlands Connect, and private sector funds.

All of the routes on the county's MRN have therefore been assessed and ranked using a comprehensive scoring framework, aligned to Government's five central MRN policy objectives and based on transport and economic criteria used previously by Midlands Connect to establish the Midlands' MRN. Among other things, this considers peak and off-peak journey times, through-traffic and HGVs in environmentally sensitive areas, SRN resilience/access and future levels of housing and employment growth.

The supporting data used to determine the scoring also represents the most robust evidence base we have at present, making use of data and intelligence held or accessible by the Council and Midlands Connect. This includes Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) locations, Traffic Master journey time data, the Councils permanent traffic counter sites and temporary traffic count locations, committed development sites from adopted Local Plans and Natural England- Sites of Scientific Special Interest locations.

For the purposes of assessment, the A6 South corridor has been considered as one continuous route from the city boundary at Oadby to the county boundary near Market Harborough. Traffic counts used for the purposes of through-traffic assessment have been based on traffic data recorded in March 2019 at the city boundary (40,000 AADT (HGV 2.5%)) and from a permanent automatic counter on the Market Harborough bypass (14,500 AADT(2.8%)).

The following considerations have also been factored in as part of the scoring and overall assessment:

- the role the route plays in terms of A14 access and resilience,
- access and connectivity to Leicester, Corby and Kettering .
- future growth sites committed in Oadby and Wigston and Harborough's adopted Local Plans.
- the AQMA through the Kibworths

It is acknowledged that there are traffic and congestion, air quality and growth challenges along the A6 South corridor, but when these are considered in the context of the wider Leicestershire MRN and the each corridor is scored accordingly against current Government MRN objectives and Midlands Connect's criteria the A6 South is amongst the lower scoring corridors.

In comparison, the A6 North/A6004 corridor, for example, provides access to the M1, A50 and A46. It links the largest county town to Leicester and to East Midlands Airport and will become a key link to a 73ha Science and Enterprise Park at Loughborough, the HS2 station at East Midland Parkway, East Midlands Development Corporation and Freeport proposals at Ratcliffe-on-Soar Power Station, and the continued expansion of East Midlands Gateway SRFI. It is also the focus for significant housing growth in Charnwood Borough Council's current adopted Local Plan and within Loughborough the route causes major severance, especially between the town centre and the University campus.

To conclude, reflecting the Government's MRN objectives and Midlands Connect criteria, the evidence identifies the A6 North/A6004 as the authority's next MRN priority corridor. Whilst I recognise that you will find this response disappointing, nevertheless I hope that you find this response of some assistance in confirming that this matter has been thoroughly considered in arriving at that conclusion.