



# Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan Review

## Paper 4: Roads and Transport

### Introduction

In the earlier report (May 2018) two recommendations were made on roads and transport.

- Request RCC to undertake traffic studies to inform transport policies, in the NP and for the Local Transport Plan, including potential longer-term routes around sections of the town.
- Request RCC and the LEP to fund/undertake a feasibility study for a new means of exit for the Station Road industrial estate.

These have been pursued but it has not been possible to obtain commitment at this stage. Understandably, RCC will need to consider the matters through a due process and may be willing to become formally engaged once the NP review is underway. In addition, as described in other papers, the LEP (Greater Cambridge and Peterborough) has become “The Business Board of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority” with a focus on the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Corridor proposals. When the picture is clearer on the future LEP alignment of Rutland, the issue of Station Road can be promoted.

However, to support the case that can be put to RCC and the LEP, this paper includes a review of the context (based on policy documents and studies) and current data (see Paper 1) and reference to the outcome of discussions with local businesses (See Paper 3). In addition, an informal discussion has been held with RCC Highways Officers.

### Main Conclusions

- 1 - The potential Ayston Road to Leicester Road is supported by the findings of the 2010 Strategic Transport Assessment/Feasibility Study and it could be facilitated by development in the preferred locations West and North of Uppingham, referred to in the emerging Local Plan.
- 2 - The potential improvements to the Station Road Industrial Estate are supported by elements of the LTP, the Local Plan and (especially) the RCC Economic Growth Strategy.
- 3 - Data on the economic importance of Station Road will be required to support argument for investment by RCC and the LEP.
- 4 - Contact should be maintained with RCC to formally discuss the potential for support for traffic-based feasibility studies and, if possible, to engage the LEP in projects.
- 5 - Without large scale development NE of Uppingham, which may not be desirable or feasible, based on topography/landscape, a link from Glaston Road to the A47 is unlikely to be feasible.

*November 2018 - Prepared for Uppingham Town Council by Clive Keble Consulting Ltd. on behalf of OPUN (the Architecture and Design Centre for the East Midlands).*

## **Introduction**

1.1 Based on the existing NP and recent confirmation of continued interest by the town council, the report examines the justification of three potential links and improvements.

**1** - Ayston Road (opposite Uppingham Gate) to Leicester Road using the road layouts for the committed housing off Leicester Road, the potential “Larkfleet” site and Town Council land.

**2** - A possible link from the A47 to Glaston Road (in the proximity of Launde Farm on relatively level ground) associated with development to the east of Uppingham Gate.

**3** - An egress route from the eastern part of the Station Road Industrial Estate to Seaton Road.

(Additional work may be needed to quantify the benefits that could arise for each of the above).

1.2 The current assessment is based on the premise that, although the Town Council has pressed for a full by-pass in the past, it is now acknowledged that, because of the scale and cost of construction of such a route and the level of new development required to support it, a complete road is not feasible. It is also accepted that any measures should take account of the importance of access by car and parking to the success of town centre shops and businesses.

## **2. Review of past documents and studies**

### **Rutland County Council: Oakham & Uppingham Strategic Transport Assessment Sept. 2010**

*(commentary is provided in italics)*

2.1 Ove Arup and Partners were appointed by RCC to evaluate the impact of proposed residential and employment sites in Oakham and Uppingham. It was also commissioned to assess the feasibility and cost implications of providing for a north-south bypass of Uppingham.

2.2 Three potential residential sites (with a capacity of 250 dwellings each) and a potential employment site were assessed. It was concluded that the key links in and around Uppingham would continue to operate comfortably within their theoretical capacity with the addition of anticipated background growth in the period to 2026. *(It is relevant that the new Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan will look beyond this date to 2036 and that the conclusions may not apply that far into the future).*

2.3 With reference to a potential Uppingham bypass, Section 7 of the report provided details of the high-level studies conducted regarding the preliminary study of selected issues associated with construction of a bypass around the town of Uppingham. Reflecting the wishes of RCC, consideration was given to potential opportunities for bypass route options for safeguarding land for construction which could in turn impact the availability of developable land.

2.4 Two primary outline route alignment options were developed, comprising an east and west route option. The assessment of both alignment options resulted in a broadly comparable cost implication for each option (c. £37M for the east option and £36M for the west option).

However, the undulating land topography to the east of Uppingham would significantly increase the risks associated with the eastern route. Additionally, physical constraints would result in an inferior alignment that would require an off-line connection to the A47.

2.5 Finally, the analysis demonstrated clear potential for an initial link of the bypass between the A47 / A6003 junction to the north of the town and the old Leicester Road to the north-west to serve as a local distributor road in advance of the long-term delivery of the complete bypass. *(This principle may apply to the current consideration of Scheme 1 - Ayston Road (opposite Uppingham Gate) to Leicester Road using the road layouts for the committed housing off Leicester Road, the potential "Larkfleet" site and Town Council land).*

2.6 The results of the analysis demonstrated a clear distinction in favour of a western bypass alignment option. An evaluation of potential for developer funding to contribute to the construction costs was undertaken and demonstrated that whilst a potentially significant funding contribution might prove feasible, it was likely that additional funding from other sources would be required to complete the initial link. Other funding sources identified as offering potential to lever or contribute towards providing the necessary funds included:

- Section 106 Developer Contributions;
- Local Transport Plan (LTP);
- Department for Transport Major Scheme Business Case; and,
- Community Infrastructure Funding.

2.7 A further evaluation was undertaken to investigate scope for the bypass to accommodate future development beyond the scale of that proposed. The scale of development required would likely be very significant and could have substantial, wide ranging implications for the future of the town and wider region. *The study estimated that the entire western route would create the potential for an additional 2000 dwellings on "enclosed" land, but this is not something that the Town Council wishes to promote, given other growth pressures on the town.*

2.8 The study proposed a number of (traffic based) mitigation measures in Uppingham, principally along the A6003 Ayston Road corridor through the town centre, possibly including:-

- Reducing carriageway widths in the town centre to assign space to pedestrians and cyclists.
- Increasing formal and informal pedestrian crossings between the E & W of the town centre.
- Implementation of dedicated, secure cycle parking facilities within the town centre and at key locations including outlying education and employment locations.
- Enhancement of bus infrastructure within the town centre.
- Use gateway features rationalise vehicular access and speed and behaviour.
- Rationalisation of on and off-street (in accordance with the 2010 Parking Study).

*(Some of these measures may remain desirable and could be considered as part of the NP review independent of any other road schemes or improvements).*

*Overall, it is pertinent that the initial segment of the Western Route, equates to the linked related to development that the Town Council wishes to consider now.*

The diagrams and plans showing the East and West routes are included in Appendix 1.

## Local Transport Plan (LTP)

2.10 LTP 4 (Moving Rutland Forward) is in Draft form and out to consultation from 8<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2018 until 11<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2019. Overall, the Draft LTP is focussed on sustainable transport options, rather than infrastructure projects, but the following extracts relate to Uppingham. The elements which are relevant to the issue of roads and transport in this paper are (with key points **in bold**).

In shopping, the “Challenges we face” include:

- WRC2 - A need to make our market towns fit for the future.
- WRC3 - A shortage of new **business sites with good road** and rail connections.

The Solutions to these challenges include:

Traditional high streets continue to face a number of challenges. More retail activity is taking place online and out of town. **Action is required** to prevent town centres from experiencing a gradual decline with lower footfall, fewer retail premises and a trend away from inward investment. Furthermore, as identified in chapter 5 (PGC2), **lack of parking** could limit opportunities to increase footfall and limit economic growth and vitality. **Sufficient parking is essential** for ensuring residents have adequate time for shopping and leisure activities. Lack of parking could result in residents travelling out of county to retail parks where parking is often more plentiful and free of charge.

To help us achieve our goal we will look to implement the following solutions.

6.5.1 WRS4 - UNDERTAKE A STRATEGIC PARKING REVIEW **We will undertake a strategic parking review** – enabling us to determine how projected population growth may impact on parking availability within the county and allow us to optimise our existing facilities. Results of the review will be considered within a revised parking strategy, alongside dates for future reviews.

6.5.2 WRS5 - IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER PARKING PROVISION **If a need for further parking is identified, we will investigate** potential development areas and sources of funding.

6.5.3 WRS6 – PRODUCE MARKET TOWN PLANS We will look to develop, with involvement from stakeholders, town centre plans. **Within the plans we will set out the challenges faced by our market towns, including those relating to transport, parking and highways infrastructure....**

THE CHALLENGE: WRC3 - A SHORTAGE OF NEW BUSINESS SITES IN THE COUNTY WITH GOOD ROAD AND RAIL CONNECTIONS. Our 2016 Employment Land Assessment Update identified a requirement for an additional 29.09 ha of land to 2036. **Within Rutland however, there are a limited number of suitable new sites – with even fewer supported by strong road** and rail networks. Such limitations may deter businesses from moving to Rutland and could constrain the growth of our existing businesses – although **potential development opportunities at St George’s may help alleviate this problem.**

2.11 It is considered the highlighted points could be used to justify investment in Station Road as a key employment site and to the possible link road as a way of taking unnecessary traffic out of the town centre. In addition, the other references to market towns support potential NP policies on parking and the public realm.

## Draft Local Plan 2017

2.12 The spatial strategy has implications for the potential links considered in this paper and elements which are relevant to this issue are highlighted in **bold**.

Spatial strategy (P28) - 4.10 Uppingham will be able to support development of a moderate scale appropriate to the size of the town. **The Local Plan recognises the role of the Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan, which was made part of the Development Plan in January 2016** and allocated sites for housing and employment development. However, the allocations in the neighbourhood plan only address development needs to 2026, as required by the Rutland Core Strategy. This new Local Plan extends the plan period to 2036, therefore, **additional housing and employment land will need to be allocated in Uppingham. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies land to the W and N of Uppingham as the most desirable direction for future growth. The Council has noted this in the assessment of potential sites for allocation in this Local Plan.**

P34 - Policy RLP3 – The Spatial Strategy for Development. **Uppingham will be a focus for moderate growth accommodating primarily on allocated sites to the west or north of the town**, where development will have the least impact on the local landscape.

Transport & Accessibility (P84 - 86) - Policy RLP30 – Securing sustainable transport and accessibility through development.

New development will have an impact upon the County's transport network. Therefore, the Council expects that development proposals should demonstrate how the proposal will:

- 1) promote a range of transport choices for the movement of people and goods;
- 2) minimise the distance people need to travel to shops services and employment opportunities
- 3) reduce the need to travel by car and encourages the use of alternatives such as walking, cycling and public transport;
- 4) include a range of appropriate mitigating transport measures, including travel plans, aimed at improving transport choice and encouraging travel to work and school safely by public transport, cycling and walking;
- 5) provide safe and well-designed transport infrastructure in accordance with any council policies** – wherever possible this should include foot ways and cycle ways;
- 6) make adequate provision (where appropriate) to put in place or improve bus routes, services and passenger facilities serving the County, and to put in place or improve rail facilities in Oakham including bus, pedestrian and cycle links to the rail station;
- 7) provide adequate levels of car parking in line with Council's published car parking standards;

In addition, commercial; mineral extraction; and waste proposals.....

Parking standards are set out in Appendix 5

2.13 The acknowledgement of the potential for development to the north and west of Uppingham supports the notion that the access required could facilitate a link between Ayston Road and Leicester Road. Overall, in a similar manner to the LTP, there are no specific infrastructure proposals in the Draft Local Plan but, should these emerge in the next version of the Local Plan, investment around St Georges can be anticipated.

## RCC Economic Growth Strategy (2014 -21)

2.14 This document recognises the importance of good infrastructure and has implications for the potential improvement of the Station Road Industrial Estate, Comments which are relevant to this issue are highlighted in **bold**.

The vision for Rutland is: “..that, by 2021, we want a vibrant, prosperous, sustainable and diverse economy. We plan to achieve this by:

- Playing on our strengths – building on our wealth of natural, cultural, leisure and heritage assets.
- **Maximising public and private investments.**
- Encouraging growth while retaining our unique characteristics.
- Supporting growth at a community level.”

The strategy acknowledges the importance of transport infrastructure, as illustrated by this extract from the Executive Summary. “**It is critical that business growth is not constrained by poor infrastructure**, that housing and business development is appropriately located and there is greater access to affordable housing. **Prioritisation will be for transport schemes that support our rural businesses and local economy.**”

Reference is also made to the **importance of partnership working with the LEP.**

Theme 3 of the Strategy concerns “**Land, Development and Infrastructure**” with a stated intention to “..provide the right physical environment for sustainable growth.”

It is also noted that “**Emerging Neighbourhood Plans...will play a significant role in economic and community development** going forward.”

In terms of existing employment, it is noted that in Uppingham, Uppingham Gate, is the main office park and is home to a number of knowledge-based businesses. **Station Road is identified as the principal location for manufacturing businesses and the Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan highlights the need for improved access into Station Road to accommodate future growth and to assist with business retention.**

In terms of the wider economy, it is noted that Rutland’s population is **entrepreneurial with a high level of self-employment. Supporting farm diversification and micro-businesses in rural areas is important.** The socio-economic profile is seen to provide latent capacity for entrepreneurship and business start-up potential.

The need for: “**Transport solutions that support businesses and the local economy**” is seen as a key challenge to growth. It is one of the Key Objectives to: “...**provide the right physical environment for growth It is critical that business growth is not constrained by poor infrastructure....Transport plays a vital role in our communities,.... Supporting and facilitating economic growth will continue to be a core objective in the refreshed LTP and priority will be given to schemes that meet this core objective....**”

### 3 Business Breakfast Session (See Paper 3 for full details)

3.1 A strong message which came out of this was that businesses on Station Road like to be there and would not wish to see comprehensive redevelopment (relocation with new housing). They would welcome improvements to access, parking and servicing and would support a new access (exit) road, if it was feasible.

3.2 In order to engage RCC and the LEP using an evidence-based approach, it was decided to collect local data on the following aspects of the Station Road Industrial Estate.

- Site area;
- Number of units;
- Number of businesses;
- Vacancy rates;
- Numbers employed;
- Ownership, size and viability of site required for new access (exit) & possible expansion.

3.3 It is believed that this data will show that Station Road is a larger focus for employment and business activity than Uppingham Gate.

3.4 Using OS and Google Maps, a route from the end of the existing access to/service area to Seaton Road would be only 100 to 200 metres. It would not seem to be ~~contained~~ constrained either by topography or visibility/junction requirements. It is assumed that the route would be one way running North East.

However, the option for a longer, 2-way route could be considered alongside a release of land for new small units. However, residential amenity and landscape impacts need consideration.

### 4 Assessment Grid

4.1 The table summarises how the three potential schemes fulfils the requirements of the documents which have been summarised above.

Potential Scheme/Benefits	Fit with RCC Plans /Strategies	Notes/Comments
<b>Ayston Road - Leicester Road</b>	Local Transport Plan - Reflects some of the benefits of the (western route) bypass at a lower cost, linked with a reasonable level of planned and potential development.	Takes advantage of access into existing and potential housing sites to benefit existing and future residents.
	Local Plans (existing and emerging) in terms of existing site allocations and possible future sites.	The Town Council could pro-actively support a scheme involving land which it owns.
	Reflects (in part) the existing Neighbourhood Plan.	

<b>2 Glaston Road to A47</b>	Local Transport Plan - Reflects some of the benefits of the (eastern route) bypass at a lower cost.	Could bring local benefits but may require more extensive identification and release of land for new residential development.
<b>3 Station Road Improvement</b>		
(Link to Seaton Road)	Local Transport Plan. Supports sustainable development, but it is not directly addressed in this higher-level document.	The importance of Station road is underestimated, commitment to quantify this, including (see below):
	Local Plans. Again, supports sustainable development, but it is not directly addressed in this higher-level document.	Size. Number of units. Number of businesses. Numbers employed.
	Neighbourhood Plan – A priority in the existing Plan which will be carried through into the review,	See above as part of new evidence base.
	Economic Growth Strategy – A strong fit with the priority for infrastructure investment to enable business growth and retention. It is specifically set out in the document.	See above as part of economic justification for RCC and LEP Investment, supported by the TC.
	Other – Local Business (owners and tenants)	Expressed a strong desire to work together and in partnership with the TC, RCC and LEP to find simple practical solutions.



## Appendix 1 - Diagrams and plans showing the possible East and West by pass routes



**Western Route Option** - Key characteristics of the selected alignment include the following:

- The northern end of the bypass route joins directly to the junction of the A47 and current A6003 alignment. It is anticipated that this may require some reconfiguration of the existing A6003 / A47 junction, the feasibility of which should be investigated in more detail;
- The southern terminal of the bypass route would join the A6003 to the south of Uppingham. It is assumed that this connection would be made by way of a new roundabout junction or priority arrangement with priority maintained for traffic on the bypass; and
- The route crosses two existing roads to the west of Uppingham, namely the B664 Uppingham Road and old Leicester Road to the north-west. The indicative route alignment currently anticipates that connections will be made by way of new roundabout junctions in each case.

**Eastern Route Option** - Key characteristics of the selected alignment include the following:

- Owing to the geometry of the settlement pattern related to the position of the A6003 and the A47, a direct link between the bypass and the A6003/A47 junction is not reasonably practical.
- The northern end of the eastern bypass would be expected to form a new intersection with the A47, to the east of the A6003 A47 junction. We have assumed a distance, between a new intersection and the current roundabout of 600m broadly consistent with design standards.
- The eastern alignment would generally skirt the eastern extent of the settlement.
- The alignment crosses two existing routes to the east of the town, namely Glaston Road and Seaton Road. The topography of the eastern alignment is considered challenging.

