



Submitted to  
Fradley Neighbourhood Forum

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# Fradley Neighbourhood Forum

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Final Report

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## Glossary

DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
HCA	Homes and Communities Agency
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PPG	Planning Practice Guidance
LDLP	Lichfield District Local Plan
HA	Highways Authority
HE	Highways England

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# 1 Introduction and Approach

1. Fradley Neighbourhood Forum developed from Fradley Parish Council with the express aim to protect and enhance the environment and character of Fradley as a village. Fradley sits within Lichfield District Council and there are a number of significant development proposals planned for the village set out within the Development Plan and currently progressing through the planning process.
2. Fradley is a village of approximately 3,700 residents located to the north of Lichfield. Fradley Aerodrome sits to the west of the village and was the site of RAF Lichfield before being sold off. The 'Fradley Park' area now hosts a lot of warehousing/ storage and distribution. The village has 1350 houses planned on a number of sites, much of it enabled by the strategic development allocation in the Development Plan. These include:
  - Airfield site – 750 homes
  - Hay End Lane – 250 homes
  - Brookfield – 70 homes
  - Bridge Farm – 80 homes
3. The issues for the Neighbourhood Forum with the proposed development are understood to be: Construction traffic – which has hopefully been resolved; and the phasing of access road infrastructure, which the NF feels is of potentially significant impact.

## Aims

4. AECOM has been commissioned to provide a 'Facilitation' support package to Fradley Neighbourhood Forum in terms of helping them develop their plan following recent and current planning applications to deliver the strategic development allocation planned for Fradley. This was with a view to supporting the group to:
  1. Obtain clarity over how they can influence through Reserved Matters which haven't been discharged in relation to the strategic development sites not yet granted permission;
  2. Work with the new developer; and
  3. Provide support to feedback this work to the LPA etc.
5. After initial work to engage relevant parties on this project it was agreed that a technical focus on highways data was vital for providing relevant background information and advice, particularly as both AECOM and the group found it difficult to engage with the developer directly during the support period. In particular a robust understanding of the junction issues and evidence base behind it would be able to provide an essential understanding of the issues affecting the planning permissions granted and those yet to be considered.
6. Additionally it would be most useful in providing a data source to be used by the NF and LPA later in the process given the reality that future engagement would be partly through written evidence and appropriate evidence is a key area for the group in order for it to be taken seriously.
7. If the evidence base is sound, it will allow further liaison to create better understanding between the forum and council, potentially in the form of informing emerging Neighbourhood Plan policy. If the highways evidence base can be challenged by this review, then it will provide the evidence on behalf of the Forum to pursue with the Council.
8. The outcome of this support was agreed as a short report prepared by AECOM that summarises the outcomes of the evidence base investigation. This will help provide clarity and a clear set of next steps with regard to key transportation issues in the preparation of their plan.

## The Purpose of the Plan

9. Fradley Neighbourhood Forum has been active for approximately two years and is currently developing their policies. The Fradley Neighbourhood Plan Objectives as set out by the Steering Committee in July in 2016 include:
- To provide suitable facilities for the village as it expands
  - To prevent duplication of these facilities by the various developers on different sites
  - To encourage residents to take an interest in and participate more in village life and the wider community
  - To promote the integration of Fradley village and Fradley South
  - To maintain Fradley as a safe environment to live
  - To protect and enhance the integrity of the environment
  - To remain attractive to residents and visitors
  - To continue to have a close relationship with the open countryside around it
  - To resist developments that may look to join Fradley with neighbouring villages or Lichfield
  - To develop and grow cycle paths and footpaths through the Parish

## 2 Planning Context

10. Strategic development at this location has been planned for some time and forms part of the Lichfield Council Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2015). This is part of the Local Plan and planning policy evidence base.
11. Further, there are a number of planning applications that form part of this strategic development allocation that are either determined or under consideration at an outline or reserved matter stage. These applications include the following:
  - Hay End Lane Site – 250 Units  
App Ref: 13/00633/OUTM (*Outline application granted 08/06/16*)
  - Brookfield Site – 70 Units  
App Ref: 14/01038/OUTM (*Outline application granted 03/06/16*)
  - Airfield Site – 750 Units  
App Ref: 10/01498/OUTMEI  
App Ref: 16/00001/REM (*Reserved matters for Phase 1 at the Airfield – 216 units approved 30/06/16*)
  - Bridge Farm – 80 Units  
App Ref: 16/00272/OUTM (*outline application validated 16/03/16*)
12. AECOM made contact with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) in both Neighbourhood Planning support teams and Development Management. This was to understand both the extensive and complicated planning application context and also the engagement that has taken place and further opportunities possible for the Neighbourhood Forum (NF).
13. Discussions with the Local Planning Authority (including area case officer Jon Allinson, 27/05/2016) indicate that the development proposals have been planned for up to 30 years and there is understood to have been tension over the phasing and delivery of such development for some time. This is especially the case with multiple parties involved such as the developers of the industrial park and the housebuilders who are building out the development plots.
14. Phasing of development was understood by the LPA case officer to be resolved by discussions with the Highways Authority (HA) and Highways England (HE). It is understood that both HA and HE staff would be unavailable to engage directly over these phasing and delivery issues at this time due to restricted resourcing of the HA for development management cases since the service was outsourced. However, should further review of the planning applications bring forward new information, there would be the opportunity for the Council and Neighbourhood Forum to formally approach both HA and HE to resolve the matter.
15. AECOM also made attempts to contact developers, but at the point in time that the report was coming to a conclusion, we could not get a response. Should we have got through to developers we would have advised that they work constructively with the NF and the LPA to deliver appropriate and agreed infrastructure enhancements and mitigation to be agreed by the NF and LPA.

### **Reserved Matters**

16. There are two types of planning application: full applications, which determine all the detail for the project, and outline applications which establish the principle of development at a location, with only certain details being specified (such as access). For outline applications where the principle of development has been established (such as residential extension to Fradley) reserved matters applications fill in the details that support the outline principle established in the outline application.
17. The time limit for an approval of reserved matters is usually three years from the date that the outline permission was granted. Once permission is granted, conditions imposed on the grant of permission will need

to be discharged. This involves further detailed work to determine and approve details which require approval from the LPA. The LPA then endeavours to discharge conditions within 21 days.

18. To be able to maximise the potential benefits of proposed development in terms of influence, the NF will need to be able to utilise a sound evidence base with relevant parties. What the NF might expect from developers would be a willingness to provide relevant infrastructure and capacity to meet development needs and that it would be detailed and in line with the evidence base that supports the planning permission.
19. What the NF might expect from the council is the ability for the Council to advocate on behalf of the NF to ensure the developer meets identified needs of the local population identified through the public consultation process, planning application process, and through identification of neighbourhood planning policies.



### 3 Analysis

20. We have approached our review from two angles. Firstly to briefly look at the evidence base surrounding the Litchfield Local Plan as set out in:
  - *Integrated Transport Strategy 2015 – 2029*;
  - *Infrastructure Delivery Plan* (August 2015);
  - *Litchfield Developer Contributions SPD*; and
  - *Fradley Spatial Strategy Report – May 2012*.
21. Secondly, to examine each of the following residential planning applications to check the adequacy of assessment:
  - 13/00633/OUT – Hey End Lane – 250 Units;
  - 14/01038/OUT – Brookfield – 70 Units;
  - 10/01498/OUT – Airfield Site – 750 Units;
  - 16/00272?OUT – Bridge Farm – 80 Units.

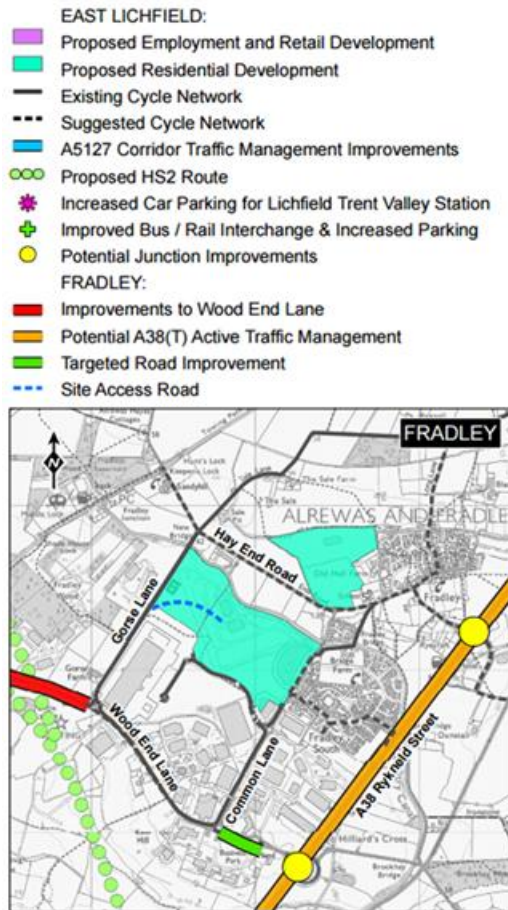
**Review of Evidence Base**

22. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) is a high level document which is subject to ongoing change and review through an annual monitoring programme. The current version acknowledges that 1,250 homes will be delivered in Fradley in the period 2015 – 2024 and sets out the infrastructure needs to accommodate this development as follows:

Infrastructure Requirement Fradley SDA	Cost	Funding	Phasing	Delivery Lead
Junction access on to the A38 and local highway improvements will be addressed where necessary, and also local connections to the surrounding villages and Lichfield. Measures will need to be modelled to ensure that they are an effective solution and should be capable of delivery at an appropriate time in the delivery of the development.	Will vary	S278	Alongside development 2015 - 24	Developer with Staffordshire County Council and Highways Agency.

23. This extract from the IDP clearly identifies that any improvements will be identified on an application by application basis and funded by the developer as a Section 278 improvement scheme. A Section 278 scheme allows a developer to carry out improvement works to the public highway associated with a planning approval, in line with Section 278 of the Highways Act, 1980.
24. It should be noted at this stage that the A38 forms part of the Highways England core network and is therefore managed and maintained by them. All other roads in the Fradley area are managed and maintained by Staffordshire County Council as the local highway authority.
25. Appendix A of the IDP contains the Lichfield District Integrated Transport Strategy 2015 – 2029. This states at paragraph 5.7 that ‘.....*Highways England has identified that a range of measures, including junction improvements, will be required for the A38(T), .....*’ It also identifies at paragraph 5.22 that the transport package in Plan 3 (reproduced below) will support the delivery of Strategic Development Allocations in Fradley.

### East Lichfield Local Transport Package (including Fradley)



26. The measures are multi-modal in nature and include rail station access improvements, urban traffic control, sustainable transport link enhancements, new or extended bus services to the City, HGV routing and parking measures and A38(T) junction improvements. These measures are identified as long term measures (up to 2029 depending on the case by case applications).
27. The Litchfield Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out the Council's approach to planning obligations ([http://lichfielddc-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/develop\\_contribs\\_spd?pointId=3721888#document-3721888](http://lichfielddc-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/develop_contribs_spd?pointId=3721888#document-3721888)) and states in Appendix B that generic long term junction improvements have been identified for the A38(T) at Hilliards Cross and Fradley South junctions at an estimated cost of £10million to be led and funded by Highways England.
28. The Fradley Spatial report provides the most detailed assessment of capacity and improvement requirements. Detailed junction modelling has been carried out by Highways England (in 2011) to test the impact of an additional 1000 residential units on the Hilliards Cross and Fradley South junctions. The conclusion of this work was that there are very modest changes to the performance of the Fradley South junction and that no capacity improvements were needed. Works were recommended for the Hilliards Cross junction comprising signalisation of the Wood End Lane / A38 Slips junction and widening of the northbound A38 off-slip to two lanes. It also highlighted capacity problems on the local highway network, particularly congestion at the Lancaster Road roundabout.

29. The area for clarification in this evidence base section is the basis of the £10m junction improvements identified in Appendix B of the Lichfield SPD as this seems to be out of step with the remainder of the evidence base.
30. The Integrated Transport Strategy, the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and the Fradley Spatial Strategy are all consistent in identifying relatively modest and small scale developer funded improvements to the two A38 junctions to accommodate the 1,250 residential units. It is only the Litchfield Developer Contributions SPD that identifies major junction improvements at an estimated cost of £10million. As the funding body is identified as Highways England, this would be likely to be high capacity roundabouts or limited grade separation to accommodate the longer term increase in baseline traffic flows rather than to accommodate specific developments.

#### **Site Specific Development Proposals.**

31. Our review of the planning applications has concentrated on a review of the Transport Assessment (TA) information submitted with the applications and the mitigation proposed to accommodate the development proposal. Where available, we have cross referenced with the committee report so that any amendments made to the assessment during the consideration of the planning application are picked up. Our findings are as follow:
32. 13/00633/OUT – Hey End Lane – 250 Units (CONSENTED):

<b>Has a TA been provided?</b>	Yes
<b>Overview of the Baseline</b>	Five Peak Hour Junction Counts undertaken in September 2012. VISSIM modelling undertaken at A38 junctions at Fradley village and Hilliards Cross; SCC have highlighted that there is an existing highway capacity constraint at the Hilliard's Cross junction on the A38 where the southbound on/off slips connect to Wood End Lane; Committed Development includes Airfield Site (750 Units), Prologis and vacant units on Fradley Park Employment Area.
<b>No. of Dwellings and Delivery</b>	Up to 250 dwellings. Assumed completion by 2023.
<b>Mitigation Proposed</b>	Existing roundabout at Hay End Lane / Turnbull Road to be removed and returned to priority junction. Proposed development to be served by one-way loop with entrance to west of Turnbull Road and exit to east; Development to provide footway connections to existing routes through to Hay End Lane, Old Hall Lane and existing residential development to the east of the site; Shared surface street from the access to Church Lane; Right turn lane facility on Wood End Lane for vehicles travelling south on A38; Taxi-bus service to be introduced to provide one additional return service in the AM and PM peak periods to/from Lichfield to complement existing Arriva service. Funding is to be provided to SCC to procure service for initial five year period.

33. 14/01038/OUT – Brookfield – 70 Units (CONSENTED):

<b>Has a TA been provided?</b>	No but a Transport Statement has been provided.
<b>Overview of the Baseline</b>	Count obtained for the Hay End Lane / Turnbull Road junction undertaken in September 2012.
<b>No. of Dwellings and Delivery</b>	Up to 70 dwellings. Assumed completion by 2019.
<b>Mitigation Proposed</b>	2 metre wide footway on Hay End Lane across the site frontage and extending south along Turnbull Road for 40m to provide access to NB bus stop;

	<p>Pedestrian crossing to be provided across the southern arm (Turnbull Road) of the Hay End Lane / Turnbull Road roundabout;</p> <p>Contribution towards highway improvement works at Hilliards Cross through a Section 106 agreement specifically the introduction of a right turn lane on Wood End Lane;</p> <p>Contribution towards enhancement of bus service which serves Fradley village through Section 106 agreement.</p>
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34. 10/01498/OUT – Airfield Site – 750 Units (CONSENTED):

<b>Has a TA been provided?</b>	Yes
<b>Overview of the Baseline</b>	Base traffic flows taken from HE's 2008 Base VISSIM model
<b>No. of Dwellings and Delivery</b>	Up to 750 dwellings.
<b>Mitigation Proposed</b>	<p>New pedestrian crossings on Common Lane and Hay End Lane;</p> <p>Developer to support a peak hour enhancement to existing services in the early phases of development, then provide a new half hourly bus service on occupation of the 425<sup>th</sup> dwelling. Developer has agreed to provide sum of money to SCC to tender the service under an agreed phasing plan. Sum of money would be equal to running the bus for five years.</p>

35. 16/00272/OUT – Bridge Farm – 80 Units (CURRENTLY IN PLANNING):

<b>Has a TA been provided?</b>	No but a Transport Statement has been provided.
<b>Overview of the Baseline</b>	7-day ATC on Worthington Road dated Feb 2015; Count obtained for the Hay End Lane / Turnbull Road junction undertaken in September 2012.
<b>No. of Dwellings and Delivery</b>	Up to 80 dwellings.
<b>Mitigation Proposed</b>	None

- 36. A multi-modal approach to mitigation is being promoted by the consenting authorities in an attempt to minimise as far as possible the impact on the highway network. Travel Plans have not been individually reviewed as the substantial work required to do this would fall outside this brief.
- 37. The current policy background against which development proposals are judged (in transport terms) is paragraph 32 of the National Planning Policy Framework which states that consent should only be withheld where the impacts of development are severe.
- 38. In conclusion, it is considered that the applications are being assessed on a case by case basis against the known baseline conditions and the mitigation measures proposed are consistent with the problems identified in the evidence base. On the strength of this response, our recommendations are set out below.

## 4 Conclusions and Recommendations

### Outputs

39. AECOM's commission sought to support Fradley Neighbourhood Forum to:

1. Obtain clarity over how they can influence through Reserved Matters which haven't been discharged;
2. Work with the new developer; and
3. Provide support to feedback this work to the LPA etc.

The conclusions of the report are framed by these identified aims.

40. After initial work to engage relevant parties on this project it was agreed that a technical focus on highways data was vital for providing relevant background information and advice. In particular a robust understanding of the junction issues and evidence base behind it would be able to provide an essential understanding of the issues affecting the approach to reserve matters relating to planning permissions granted and those yet to be considered.

### Influence on Reserved Matters

41. Regarding the Site Specific Development Proposals, the mitigation proposed in reserved matters is seen as consistent and appropriate. This means that the Neighbourhood Forum is unlikely to be able to bring forward the delivery of any further mitigation. The analysis undertaken appears to have adopted sound processes, with the 'asset owner' (Highways England) having assessed capacity and possible improvements to protect the overall function of the A38 (which is the expeditious movement of long distance traffic).

42. Against this baseline, developers have promoted proposals incorporating the improvements identified as necessary by the HE. The measures required to be implemented by developers are considered to be satisfactory. However, there remains a need for the LPA and Highways Authority to clarify the issue of the £10m A38 junction improvement which AECOM understands would be funded by the Highways England rather than developers since these are likely to be general works to improve traffic flow (such as roundabout capacity) rather than development-specific works. Litchfield DC setting out more clearly in writing a definitive list of what is due from strategic to local level would also help the Forum in terms of its own community infrastructure priorities and use of its CiL share. This may also help with the contentious issue of the phasing of highways works.

### Engaging with Developers

43. We sought to engage with the developer through contacts provided by the Neighbourhood Forum but received no feedback, in spite of e-mail and telephone requests at the time we were reaching our conclusions. This was fed back to Navigus Planning, who are providing support to the Neighbourhood Forum in the preparation of the plan.

### Provide support to feedback this work to the LPA

44. AECOM had useful conversations with the LPA in both Neighbourhood Planning and Development Management. From this it became clear that a clear awareness of the evidence base of the highways issues would be required. This approach was also agreed with Navigus Planning.

45. We conclude here that the Council's approach to reserve matter and the mitigation measures being discussed with developers is reasonable. Whilst there appears to be little to be gained by the Forum further attempting to influence the reserve matters, there are clearly longer term policy issues to address and a more consistent approach to future development of transport policy relating to Fradley and especially more clarity on who will deliver what transport infrastructure is required. This would be ideally tackled with a topic-based sub-group in the Forum dealing with Traffic and Highways issues and a more positive dialogue with Litchfield and the Highways Authority. There are also other issues relating to community infrastructure that neighbourhood planning can prioritise, but this also requires further open discussion with the LPA.
46. District Councillors also have an important role with regard to good engagement and communications during a neighbourhood plan process. They work between the Parish and District and are able to liaise and make progress with Council officers as well. We recommend that the Neighbourhood Forum undertake a 3-way meeting between parish, district and LPA. We would still see the optimal approach to be a round table process to take the groups through evidence found and try to come to an accommodation to take it forward. District Councillors and MPs have also been mobilized by some neighbourhood planning groups to help gain access to their Highways Authority and Highways England. Given the current resource restrictions, this might be useful here.
47. More specifically, given that the mitigation proposed for the current applications reviewed here have been deemed to be satisfactory it is therefore recommended that the Forum seeks to develop local accessibility policies in conjunction with Lichfield District Council in order to re-focus the delivery of developer contributions as future proposals are determined through the planning process, These could include:
- Pedestrian or cycle access to amenities through footpath or cycleway enhancements;
  - Safeguarding and developing public transport provision;
  - Electric vehicle charging points;
  - Highways layouts that minimise potential conflicts between cycles, pedestrians and cars;
  - Potential for shared space in agreed areas;
  - Ensuring through vehicular routes and the avoidance of dead ends; and
  - Particular junction alignments and improvements could also be set out to help direct future development.
48. By tackling the commission in the way we have we believe there has been significant progress made in the group's understanding of the evidence base underlying the highways proposals supporting the planning applications for the extension of Fradley. AECOM has provided here evidence for the NF to approach the LPA and other key parties to discuss the details of the highways works associated with the housing proposals; and also a list of potential policy areas for the NF to approach the LPA with when developing their plan policies.
49. It is likely, however that the NF group would benefit from further support with regard to face to face engagement with key parties and the subsequent refinement of neighbourhood planning policy.
50. AECOM is happy to support a further bid to Department for Communities and Local Government by the Forum for an additional technical facilitation package to address, facilitate and resolve any further issues. AECOM would of course be keen to continue working with the Forum along these lines, if invited; and
51. That, after consideration of this report, if the Forum still wishes to proceed with additional technical facilitation packages it do so via the Locality's mycommunity.com application portal who will receive a copy of this report.

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