

Statement of Common Ground
Fenland District Council Local Plan Core Strategy

Between

**Fenland District Council
Highways Agency
Cambridgeshire County Council
Borough Council of Kings Lynn & West Norfolk
Norfolk County Council**

October 2013

1. Purpose of the Document

- 1.1 This document sets out the current position between the above named organisations regarding the Fenland Local Plan Core Strategy. The specific focus for this statement is in respect of development issues relating to the A47 in and around Wisbech in both Cambridgeshire and Norfolk.

2. Background

- 2.1 Since 2007 partnership working arrangements have been in place between Fenland District Council, Highways Agency and Cambridgeshire County Council to identify and assess the transport impacts of the Fenland Local Plan. Since 2010 additional discussions and partnership working have also been undertaken with Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council and Norfolk County Council about development on their side of the border, which is adjacent to Wisbech.
- 2.2 The Fenland District Council Local Plan Core Strategy proposes 3000 homes for Wisbech and 30 hectares of employment land. The Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council Core Strategy (July 2011) includes an allocation of 550 homes on the east side of Wisbech within their boundary. The Detailed Policies and Sites Preferred Options Development Plan Document is currently in preparation to determine the location of the 550 homes, with the public consultation closing in October 2013. There is agreement from all the organisations involved that there must be one approach with regard to the planning of the new homes and employment for Wisbech, hence the long term partnership working arrangements that are in place. For the new development to the east of Wisbech, this should be agreed through a single joint comprehensive delivery scheme/masterplan. Please see figures one and two below which show the location of the developments and testing sites.
- 2.3 This statement sets out what has been agreed by all the parties involved within the context of the current extensive evidence base available. It will also set out what further work will need to be undertaken in future. This is to provide clarity on the exact transport infrastructure that will be required and its deliverability.

Figure One – Fenland District Council Development Strategy for Wisbech

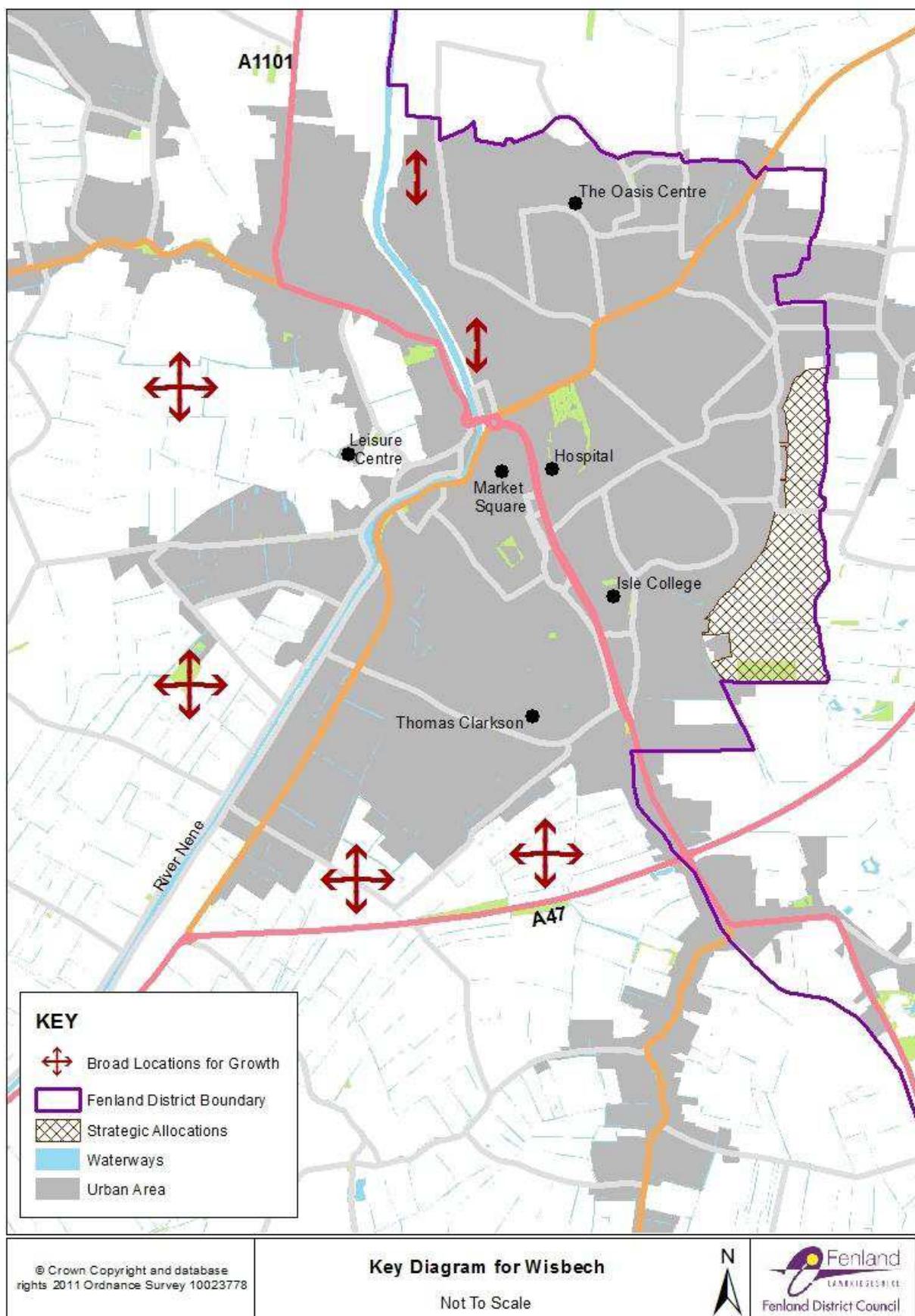
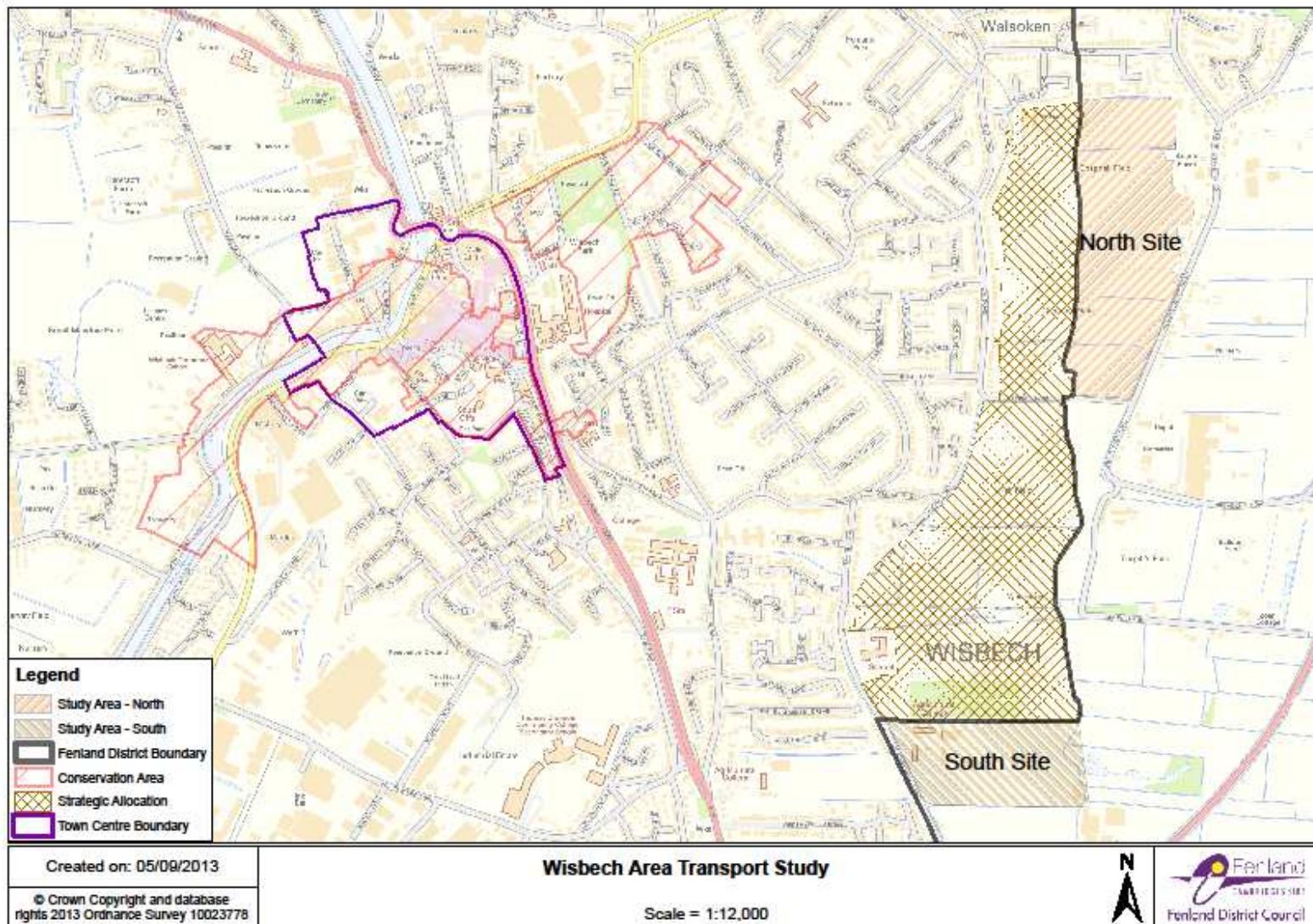


Figure Two – East Wisbech Developments – Fenland Site and testing Sites in Kings Lynn and West Norfolk



3. Transport Infrastructure Evidence and Requirements

- 3.1 An extensive transport evidence base of information and traffic modelling has been developed since 2007 to support the Wisbech elements of the Fenland Local Plan. More recently this work has been extended to include the allocation in Norfolk. This evidence has been developed through the ongoing partnership working arrangements. Details of this evidence are provided below setting out the areas where there is common ground between all parties.

Wisbech Area Transport Study

- 3.2 The Wisbech Area Transport Study (WATS) was commissioned in 2008. Following Highways Agency representation regarding a 2007 Core Strategy consultation there was agreement that a detailed evidence base was needed on Wisbech Transport issues. The aim and objectives of the Wisbech Area Transport are as follows:

Aim

- *To build and interpret a transport model that can provide forecasts for the future land use planning of Wisbech and its surrounding area.*

Objectives

- *To consider the transport issues within the market town of Wisbech and how these issues relate to a large rural hinterland that also encompasses South Lincolnshire and West Norfolk*
- *To assess the current and proposed impacts of development on the A47 between Walton highway in Norfolk and Guyhirn in Cambridgeshire*
- *To undertake surveys and provide results and analysis from the range of surveys in order to provide a better understanding of current transport issues within the Wisbech Area*
- *To develop a future strategy for the planning of transport infrastructure within the Wisbech Area using the traffic model results to test various scenarios*
- *To assist Fenland District Council with the successful adoption of the LDF Core Strategy*
- *To assist Fenland District Council with the successful delivery of its master planning programme & the planned growth of Wisbech Port*
- *To assist Cambridgeshire County Council & Fenland District Council with the review of the Wisbech Market Town Transport Strategy (2002) and the Cambridgeshire Long Term Transport Strategy as it relates to Wisbech.*

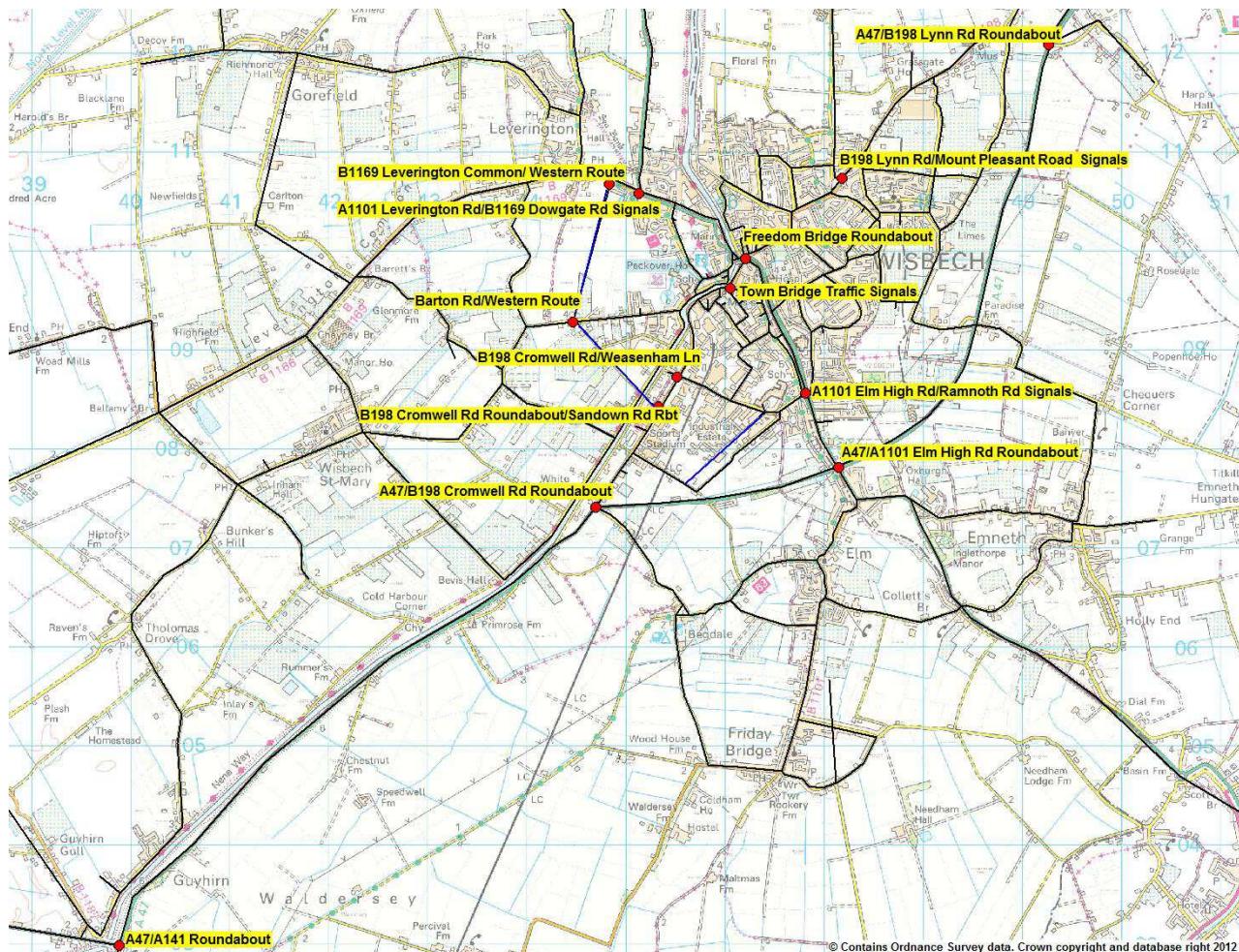
- 3.3 Since commencing the study a traffic model has been built and validated. It has been used to test a number of different scales of growth within Wisbech. Modelling has been undertaken in 2009, 2011, February 2012, December 2012 and June 2013. Further details of this modelling can be found on the Fenland District Council website at <http://www.fenland.gov.uk/article/7085/Wisbech-Area-Transport-Study>.

- 3.4 Whilst each set of tests using the model included different scales of growth, there were a number of commonalities in terms of the testing results. These results showed areas of congestion in a number of specific locations within Wisbech and along A47. These locations are as follows:

- A47/A141 Roundabout

- A47 / B198 Cromwell Road Roundabout
- A47 / A1101 Elm High Road Roundabout
- A47 / B198 Lynn Road Roundabout
- A1101 Leverington Road / B1169 Dowgate Road traffic signals
- Town Bridge traffic signals
- Freedom Bridge Roundabout
- B198 Lynn Road / Mount Pleasant Road traffic signals
- A1101 Elm High Road / Ramnoth Road traffic signals
- B198 Cromwell Road including the junctions with Sandown Road and Weasenham Lane

Figure Three – Location of Key Area experiencing Congestion

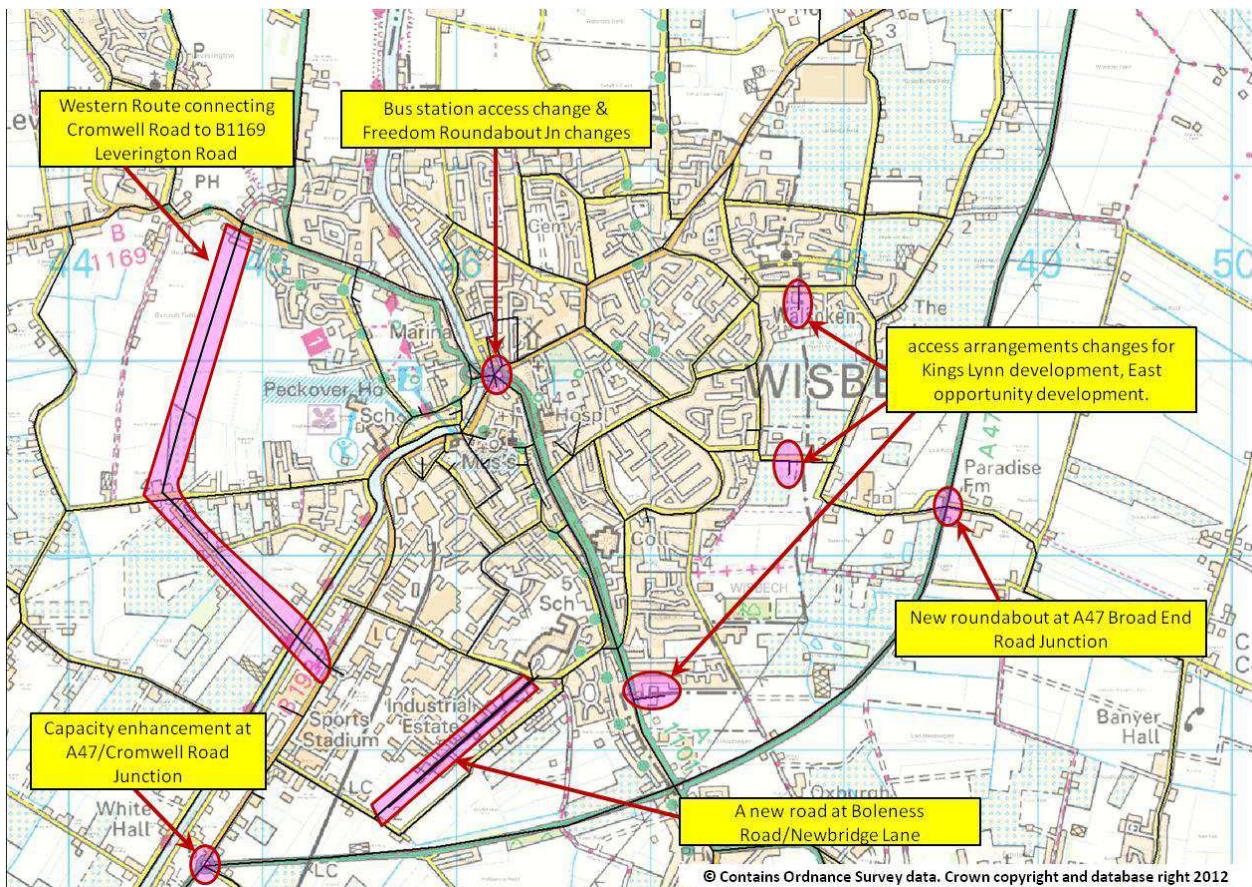


3.5 All parties agree with the evidence which clearly shows congestion in certain parts of Wisbech and A47. All parties also agree that some of this congestion is as a result of proposed developments identified in the Local Plan Core Strategy. It was therefore also agreed that plans to mitigate the transport impacts of such development need to be in place.

Wisbech Transport Mitigation Strategy

- 3.6 During 2012 and 2013 work has been undertaken to assess the evidence from WATS and accordingly develop a Wisbech Transport Mitigation Strategy. A paper setting out the full details of how the Mitigation strategy was developed is included on Fenland District Council website, it can be found from the link in paragraph 3.3 of this statement. The document is listed as Technical Note G.
- 3.7 The main elements of the Wisbech Transport Mitigation Strategy (please also see figure 4 below) are as follows:
- A new access from Wisbech Bus Station onto Nene Quay (the current access is off Freedom Bridge roundabout)
 - A47 Broad End Road Junction to be tested as a roundabout
 - A new Road at Boleness Road/Newbridge Lane in Wisbech
 - A new link road and river crossing from B1169 Leverington Road to Cromwell Road/Sandown Road
 - Capacity enhancements at A47 junctions with A141/Guyhirn and B198 Cromwell Road
 - Public transport improvements to extend the town bus service across Wisbech. This service currently operates in the northeast corner of the town only
 - A range of walking and cycling improvements including new routes and addressing gaps in the current network. All such proposals are consistent with the draft Wisbech Market Town Transport Strategy that forms part of Cambridgeshire LTP to 2026

Figure Four – Location of Transport Mitigation Strategy Measures



- 3.8 Testing of the Wisbech Transport Mitigation Strategy using the traffic model was undertaken in December 2012. The full results of this testing can be found in Technical Note F from the link in paragraph 3.3 of this statement. Technical Note G also includes a summary of the results.
- 3.9 The key results to note from the testing as taken from Technical Note F are as follows:
- Whole Network Performance as a comparison between the do minimum (no mitigation) and do something (whole mitigation strategy) – although there is an increase in the use of the network there is improvement in the performance. The improvement can be shown by a decrease in average trip distance and in total travel time. There is also a decrease in transient queues and a significant decrease in over capacity queues. There are improvements in accessibility and reductions in delays
 - For demands and delays at key junctions there are a number of performance differences. Town Bridge traffic signals, B198 Cromwell Road and Weasenham Lane junction both benefit from a reduction in traffic flow as a result of the new Link Road and river crossing
 - Traffic levels and impacts at Freedom Bridge remain similar between the do minimum and do something options. This is because a decrease in traffic as a result of the bypass is replaced by traffic using the bridge from the west development
 - For the A47, where improvements have been made at roundabouts they are showing a reduced delay time and an increase in traffic flow. For the eastern development there is evidence that a new roundabout at Broad End Road could accommodate the additional flow of traffic from Wisbech
 - Due to the Wisbech Transport Mitigation Strategy it can be seen that delays are reduced at B198 Cromwell Road/Weasenham Lane junction, A47/A141 Guyhirn roundabout, A47/B198 Cromwell Road roundabout and A47/A1110 Elm High Road roundabout
- 3.10 All parties have been consulted upon about the mitigation strategy and the traffic modelling results for that strategy. Discussions are ongoing with the Highways Agency about these results. A sensitivity test is also being conducted during June 2013 to further test the impacts of the development on A47.
- 3.11 All parties recognise that the mitigation strategy is looking to reduce the transport impacts of development in Wisbech. All parties recognise that the differences in trips with and without development are not significant and the Highways Agency does not have any major material concern on the issues. All parties agree that issues such as junction improvements and schemes in the mitigation strategy should be delivered through development.

4. Delivery of A47 Infrastructure

- 4.1 It is also recognised by all parties that there is a considerable body of evidence to support the soundness of a Local Plan Core Strategy. All parties also agree that in order for a development to come forward further work on transport issues and transport mitigation will be required. This includes items such as preliminary and

detailed designs of mitigation measures and all aspects of deliverability such as acquiring 3rd party land.

- 4.2 Policies in the Fenland Local Plan Core Strategy and in the emerging Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Detailed Policies and Site Development Plan Document are designed to support the approaches which need to be delivered, as set out in 4.1 above.
- 4.3 Policy CS15 Transport states that all development proposals must be accompanied by a transport statement or a transport assessment. The policy also states that any development that has transport implications will not be granted planning permission unless deliverable mitigation measures have been identified, and arrangements secured for their implementation, which will make the development acceptable in transport terms.
- 4.4 Policy CS8 for Wisbech makes clear that Wisbech is constrained by the capacity of the highway network within the town and outside including A47. With this in mind the policy makes clear that all Wisbech development proposals but specifically the urban extensions must have a strong focus on sustainable transport measures.
- 4.5 All parties that are recognised in this statement will consider proposals and planning applications that emerge from this Core Strategy in line with the policies CS15 and CS8. We will continue to work together in future to ensure that the transport network in and around Wisbech is properly managed as new development proposals come forward. We will also work with developers and other key stakeholders to identify and further develop mitigation measures that will need to be applied. In line with policy CS15 we will expect to see evidence that any transport mitigation measures are fully designed and can be fully implemented.
- 4.6 Whilst there is recognition of the challenges with implementing the mitigation strategy, all parties agree that, over the plan period there is a reasonable prospect of it being delivered.

5. Summary

- 5.1 In summary, following extensive joint working by all transport related partners a substantial and detailed evidence base has been completed, and appropriate policy wording is included in emerging local plans. There are no fundamental issues from a transport perspective related to the indicated levels of growth. It is however, recognised that certain mitigation measures are required for which further transport modelling and scheme development will determine the precise extent. Such detail will be covered by the developer(s) by way of detailed transport assessments for their proposals. All parties will continue to work together to ensure that the transport network is properly managed and developed in line with the delivery and implementation of the strategic growth target.