

Inspectors Q52

I would welcome the Council's observations on the representations by (422) Dr Glynn White of the Hampden Fields Action Group, (1154) by N Freer of David Lock Associates on behalf of Hallam Land Management attaching a Review of the Transport Evidence Base by Markides Associates and (347) by Phil Yerby attaching reports by the Transport Planning Practice on the operation of the Walton Street gyratory and on the Draft Aylesbury Transport Strategy and on the County Council's Transport Modelling and Assessment which suggest that the transport strategy and proposals of the plan may not be soundly justified, with particular reference to the representations made (i) on the capability of key elements of the network, such as the Walton Street gyratory, to handle the traffic resulting from the chosen development strategy (ii) on the poor validation score of the county's model and (iii) on the identification and quantification of effects which the road proposals are intended to deal with.

1) Representation:

422 Dr Glynn White (Hampden Fields Action Group)

Rep issues:

The plan will lead to economic stagnation and social change as a result of a flawed Transport Strategy. The claimed jobs growth with development will not materialise and thus it will leave Aylesbury increasingly becoming a dormitory town. The proposed Garden Town which seems to include 16,000 houses to the South of Aylesbury is misguided and consideration should be given to taking advantage of the Oxford Cambridge Expressway for a well designed New Town.

2) Representation:

1154 N Freer (David Lock Associates on behalf of Hallam Land Management)

Please note that this representation number has been misquoted and should be 1134:

Summary of key rep issues:

- *Ability to deliver of quantum of development identified without there being a severe adverse impact on the road network*
- *Unclear if development allocations between A418 and Wendover Road, would meet the test set out in NPPF of not having a severe adverse cumulative impact*
- *Concerns that the current transport evidence base does not demonstrate that the proposed Local plan allocations can be achieved in line with the NPPF requirement to avoid a severe adverse traffic impact.*

3) Representation:

347 Phil Yerby

The following representations contain material for consideration in Phil Yerby's response contained within this question:

Rep 130: TPP reports

Please see attached reports from Transport Planning Practice. I do not consider that the Transport Strategy has been accurately or fairly assessed and would like to present evidence at the Examination in Public both as an individual and on behalf of the Hampden Fields Action Group.

Rep 360: ATS

The ATS is flawed. It is based on flawed modelling which is criticised by BCC's own Transport Consultants Aecom. Key parts of the orbital strategy are aspirational which means they will not happen until at least the next plan in 2034 and beyond. It is simply not credible to approve a partial plan on the basis that we have to start somewhere when it will have known deficiencies that will not be addressed for many decades.

377: Traffic Modelling

This model is flawed. It is truly staggering that having had over 7 years since the scrapping of the South East Plan that BCC and AVDC have been unable to produce a fully compliant webTAG model. AV faces the largest quantum of development in its history and decisions are being taken on a transport strategy based on flawed information. It puts the whole plan into jeopardy from the outset.

AVDC response on the following key issues highlighted as part of Q52 (i) the Walton Street gyratory (ii) the poor validation score of the county's model and (iii) the identification and quantification of effects which the road proposals are intended to deal with.

(i) The capability of key elements of the network, such as the Walton Street gyratory, to handle the traffic resulting from the chosen development strategy (as highlighted in rep 130, 360 and 377)

The capability of the Walton Street gyratory to handle the traffic resulting from the VALP development strategy is discussed in the TPP paper on traffic forecasts and capacity assessments, and states that the forecasts from the Hampden Fields Cumulative Assessment are misleading. Jacobs who work as framework consultations on behalf of BCC as the local highways authority would argue that at the time they were not aware of the developments around the A413 and B4443 corridors and the modelling would have been representative of what they understood the development picture at the time. It should be noted that the modelling did cap to Tempro 6.2 growth levels, and so overall growth would have been unaffected by the inclusion of those developments (since they would have been discounted from the background growth levels). It should also be noted that Tempro 6.2 has since been replaced with Tempro 7.2 which tends to have slightly lower growth forecasts; if Tempro 7.2 was used then flows through Walton Street gyratory may well have been lower. There is always a level of uncertainty around modelling forecasts and the assumptions of specific future development and levels of background growth, however, that is the case for any modelling work which is done and does not mean that the forecasting is misleading.

Additionally, since the Transport Assessment for the Hampden Fields development proposals from February 2016, further work has been undertaken by Jacobs on the Countywide Model in December 2016. These modelling outputs have fed into the Aylesbury

Transport Model and provided a robust evidence base for assessing the local plan impact on the town.

(ii) The poor validation score of the county's model (as highlighted in rep 130 and 377)

As with all transport models, consideration must be given to the uses to which the model is put. In specifying the scope of work for the Local Plan assessments, the appropriate guidance is contained in NPPG which states that “for most Local Plan assessments, the full (WebTAG) methodology will not be appropriate”.

The modelling and forecasting guidance set out in WebTAG is primarily used to inform the assessment of major highway schemes, typically schemes greater than £5m. As per WebTAG, the guidance ‘enables practitioners to produce adequate evidence to support the business case for major transport schemes’ however the guidance ‘may be useful for other purposes including ‘proportionate use of parts of the guidance or...simpler methods’. Models that do not meet full validation standards may still be useable for certain applications.

The Countywide Model was built with a WebTAG compliant model structure and functionality, with the potential for upgrading to full WebTAG compliance for major transport schemes within the County. The model was also built to serve as a useful tool to inform the delivery of strategic planning (e.g. local plans) and in doing so the approach remains consistent with WebTAG insofar as ‘evidence should be of adequate quality to make decisions, compiled using proportionate resources’.

It should be noted that the modelling work done to assess local plan impacts has focussed on qualitative, rather than quantitative data. For example, the impacts by areas have been broadly categorised using a RAG analysis. The model highlights areas which may be impacted by the local plan development, but does not go into detail on the scale of the impact in quantitative terms. The use of the model in providing this sort of information is entirely in proportion to the requirements of the assessment, and cognisant of the resources used in building the model.

The Aylesbury town model was developed using the Countywide Model to support a business case bid for the combined Stocklake (Urban)/ELR (South) funding bid, a scheme that received funding approval. As such observed origin-destination data was used in the model derivation, and link and journey times were validated in line with WebTAG criteria. This model is also routinely used as the common tool for forecasting and assessment for land use, strategy, and local scheme assessment.

In reviewing the note by Transport Planning Practice (TPP) ‘Initial Review of Transport Modelling and Assessment undertaken in support of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP)’, Jacobs finds the comments from AECOM, TPP and representor 347 in criticism of the model disingenuous as both use model outputs in support of their contentions. Where the model outputs support TPP’s viewpoint the model data has apparently been considered valid (for example, “there are forecast to be significant increases in flow on a road that is already congested at peak times”), despite previous assertions that the model is deficient.

Where the TPP note raises concerns regarding the validation and suitability of the model, Jacobs reaffirms the position that the local highway authority provides the definitive view on an acceptable transport evidence base in relation to development planning matters. The

Aylesbury Transport Model was built with capability to assess the impacts of new land use development, including the Hampden Fields planning application which the note refers to. The model was built using observed origin destination data, with link and journey time calibration and validation compliant with WebTAG standards. It is therefore an entirely suitable tool to provide data to inform the assessment of the Hampden Fields planning application. Additionally the TPP attempts to argue that the validation is on the margin of meeting the DfT guidelines and that there should be concern that the modelled totals are lower than the counts in concern. However Jacobs have confirmed that given that modelled flows are within 5% of observed flows across almost all screenlines, the model meets the WebTAG criteria in this regard.

(iii) The identification and quantification of effects which the road proposals are intended to deal with (including potential flaws in the Transport Strategy as highlighted in rep 422 and 360)

The Aylesbury Transport Model was built with capability to assess the impacts of new land use development and it uses observed origin destination data, with link and journey time calibration and validation compliant with WebTAG standards. This assessment has been undertaken by Jacobs working as framework consultations on behalf of BCC as the local highways authority. They have been responsible for developing and providing transport modelling support to BCC and consequently AVDC to help assess the transport impacts of the proposed growth within Aylesbury but also across the rest of the district. The Aylesbury town model is WebTAG compliant, and the Countywide local plan model is a sufficiently robust tool for assessing local plan impacts. Both have been used appropriately, cognisant of the purpose for which each was intended.

The Do Something growth scenario's used as part of the Aylesbury transport modelling assessment was based on the household growth proposals detailed by AVDC up to 2033, with the 2013 Base Model. The final iteration of modelling was undertaken in December 2016 (Countywide Model Outputs Phase 2 December 2016) to assess the impacts of the Transport Improvements highlighted in the Transport Strategy document. From the modelling outputs, it is clear to see that the DS1 Mitigation scenario impacts flows around Aylesbury and reduces levels of congestion and delay in some areas. The A41 and A413 in southern Aylesbury show the greatest reductions. There are consistent reductions in flows on routes through the Town Centre with the outer link road network in operation, although impacts on the inner ring road are less pronounced.

Overall, the results indicate how the proposed new link roads around Aylesbury can help to alleviate traffic on the existing inner roads, providing space for infrastructure to support alternative modes on these roads, such as new shared paths or bus lanes. This therefore highlights that the infrastructure improvements proposed in this strategy support the objectives and are likely to positively support the proposed growth. These infrastructure improvements are set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and include the link roads around Aylesbury. Infrastructure has been identified as critical where sites are coming forward in the next five years, and a review of this position will be taken in the next 18 months to reassess the infrastructure needs to ensure the critical links are in place at the appropriate time.

A number of transport improvements are listed in the ATS to mitigate and support the growth allocations for Aylesbury, including the sites potentially coming forward in the south of the town which are not as advanced in their development status compared to other sites. As identified in representation 1134, South and South West of Aylesbury includes development proposed between A148 and Wendover Road as part of Sector 4 of the Aylesbury Transport Strategy, is heavily impacted by HS2 proposals which would divert the A4010 into a new junction with the B4443. Further link roads to the A413 and A418 are also proposed in this Sector, as well as a number of transport improvements including cycle and bus route amendments, aspirations for a PPTC on the A413 and improvements to the Stoke Road Bridge. Sector 4 includes VALP allocations AGT1 and AGT2 where approximately 2,500 new dwellings are proposed and the infrastructure delivery requirements are set out in the VALP IDP. These sites were included as part of the Aylesbury Transport Model and assessed as part of the wider package of growth measures for the town.

Noting the second part of rep 422, AVDC have taken the view that as the alignment and routing of the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway is not yet known, and an announcement of the preferred route by the NIC is not expected until autumn 2018, it would be premature to speculate on the route of the expressway without having more detailed schemes to provide an alternative policy direction. Therefore subject to information forthcoming, implications of the route for growth in Aylesbury Vale will be taken into account in an early review of the Plan.