

Application no: 21/01630/OUT

Location: Land at North West Bicester Home Farm, Lower Farm and SGR2 Caversfield

Transport Schedule

Recommendation:

Objection for the following reasons:

- Severe traffic congestion impact at the junction of Howes Lane and Bucknell Road - as per our response of 6 September 2022.

If despite OCC's objection permission is proposed to be granted then OCC requires prior to the issuing of planning permission S106 obligations and conditions as per our previous response of 16 May 2022.

Comments:

We have been asked to comment on a letter from Velocity Transport Planning dated 7 October 2022. A meeting with Velocity was held to discuss this letter and our objection on 27 October 2021. At the meeting, further potential amendments to the junction modelling were discussed, and after the meeting, further data from the Bicester Transport Model was provided to Velocity. However, to date I have not received any further submissions containing amendments to the junction modelling, and OCC therefore maintains its objection on the basis of severe congestion impact.

As the letter is quite wide ranging, I have summarised the points raised and our responses to them, in the table below.

	Point made by Velocity	OCC response
1	Do not consider the traffic impact from the development at Howes Lane/Bucknell Rd priority junction to be severe	OCC stands by its response of 6 September 2022 and maintains the impact is severe.
2	'BTM data could be flawed as it is assigning more traffic through the junction than can reasonably be accommodated.' 'This in turn would mean that any further assessment of the impacts associated with the Firethorn development would always result in disproportionate impacts.'	BTM is a strategic model that assigns traffic to various routes, taking into account congestion. The demand showing at the junction is the predicted demand taking into account alternative routing choices, which may be limited or subject to even greater congestion. Drivers would experience delays, but journey time/cost may be even greater on other routes.
3	'The 2026 BTM data should have	The assessment has been made on

	<p>factored in a level of delay into the modelling that would be acceptable to OCC and the operation of the junction has to be calibrated so that it reflects the junction operating at or near capacity without the addition of the traffic associated with the proposed development.'</p>	<p>the basis of calibration of the PICADY junction model. Calibrating the model at an earlier stage, and then calibrating the PICADY model would be duplicating calibration, which is not justifiable.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>It is suggested that the measure of delay at the junction is assessed in terms of thresholds set out within the 'Guidelines for Environmental Assessment of Road Traffic'. The letter quotes paragraph 3.17 of the Guidance, saying that thresholds of 30%, 60% and 90% changes in traffic levels should be considered as 'slight', 'moderate' and 'substantial', and goes on to suggest that 90% increase in traffic would be the threshold for a severe impact, whereas the impact of Firethorn development at the junction would be less than 30%.</p>	<p>The Guidance has been quoted out of context. Para 3.17 clearly relates to noise, severance, pedestrian delay and intimidation impacts of traffic. Para 3.18 clearly differentiates the significance between the impact of increases in traffic on highway operational capacity criteria, versus environmental impacts. Para 4.32-4 discuss Driver Delay, with paragraph 4.34 clearly stating that values for delay can be determined by the use of computerised junction assessment packages. In other words increase in driver delay is not a simple function of increase in traffic flow.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>The Howes Lane approach was not calibrated on the revised modelling presented in TN008 Rev B (which set out how the Lords Lane approach had been calibrated in order to validate the PICADY junction model). The implication presumably being that the predicted queuing on Howes Lane, which OCC determined as severe, is not reliable</p>	<p>TN0008B set out a methodology to solve the problem that the PICADY model of the junction of Howes Lane/Bucknell Road did not validate against observed queue lengths. Validation was achieved by reducing the demand flows on Bucknell Rd north by 14%. This approach was accepted by OCC. It would be acceptable to compare queue lengths on the Howes Lane arm and validate that arm too, provided validation was maintained on the other arms. However, it would not be acceptable to further calibrate the model to bring RFCs down to 1. The measured traffic flows input into the model were (correctly) demand flows (see para 2.5.1 of TN008B), the demand having been measured upstream of the junction rather than what has passed the give-way line. This means that the</p>

		junction CAN operate over capacity – this is what is causing the queues to build up. Re-calibrating the model back to RFC = 1 is artificial and unrepresentative.
6	'It is considered that these Technical Notes addressed the specific concerns raised by OCC at each stage.'	OCC considers that the technical notes sought to address concerns but at each stage the assessment was not considered to be reliable. In the previous submission the methodology was finally accepted to be reliable for the without mitigation scenario, and showed a severe impact. However, the methodology was considered unreliable for the with mitigation scenario.
7	'A comprehensive assessment of the junction in the future year of 2026 both with and without the proposed development traffic would be required once the 2026 BTM data has been considered further, and OCC have confirmed the level of delay that would have been factored into the 2026 BTM scenario in order to establish an appropriate baseline to undertake the further assessment from.'	OCC believe the model data supplied to be valid. The model is supported by a validation report which can be provided. Future year reports are also available. Please see above comments regarding the fact that there is no need or justification to 'factor in delay' to the model data. However, the 2026 reference case has recently been refined for other modelling purposes, and traffic flows from this reference case have now been provided . The updated 2026 RC has the same quantum of development on NW Bicester as the RC used for this assessment, but development further afield in Bicester has been revised to reflect the latest Annual Monitoring Report.
8	Request for details of development content included within the 2026 BTM	Uncertainty logs have been provided
9	Details of the delay that has been factored into the BTM	See above – not appropriate
10	Recalibration of the model based on the agreed methodology for all approaches (not just Lords Lane approach)	See above – point 5 – not justified.
11	Defining the thresholds of severity both in terms of vehicle queues and	Whilst I consider the predicted delay on Howes Lane (as set out in OCC's

driver delay	most recent response) to be clearly a severe impact, it is harder to agree a lower threshold above which the impact would be considered severe. I am consulting colleagues on this matter.
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Officer's Name: Joy White

Officer's Title: Principal Transport Planner

Date: 11 November 2022