

## Caroline Ford

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**From:** Claudio Ricci <CRicci@velocity-tp.com>  
**Sent:** 30 November 2022 12:38  
**To:** joy.white  
**Cc:** Caroline Ford; Andrew Thompson; Alex Chrusciak; Hannah Leary; rb@reviewpartners.uk.com; Eleanor Musgrove; pmartin@firethorntrust.com; Mark Kirby; JacquiCox (OCC); Manku, Amrik - Oxfordshire County Council  
**Subject:** RE: 21/01630/OUT - Transport Response

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Hi Joy,

Please see below our response to both the comments received from Caroline on the 25<sup>th</sup> November and the ones you provided last night, without prejudice.

### Traffic Assignment

- It is noted that you have agreed to the principle of adjusting the distribution of the proposed development traffic to reflect the interim scenario where the A4095 Strategic Link Road (SLR) has not been delivered.
- The assignment of development traffic is consistent across both the AM and PM peak. The revised distribution, as per paragraph 2.4.8 of VTP TN011, is applied to both the AM peak and the PM peak and is presented at Attachment A of VTP TN011, dated November 2022.
- The trip rates for the proposed development, as presented within the Transport Assessment, show that traffic in the AM peak would be around 11% higher than the PM peak. Outbound trips are significantly higher in the AM peak but in the PM peak, the split between arrivals and departures is more even (60/40). This is perhaps why the reduction looks more significant in the PM peak, but in reality the proportions are the same.
- The proposed development (530 units) would generate a cumulative total of 287 two-way vehicle trips in the AM peak and 258 two-way vehicle trips in the PM peak.
- Attachment A shows 86 two-way vehicle trips in the AM peak and 78 two-way vehicle trips in the PM peak from the proposed development passing through the A4095 Howes Lane / Bucknell Road junction – the equivalent to 30% of the overall traffic, as per the assumptions set out within VTP TN011.
- The assignment of proposed development traffic within TN011 is therefore consistent in both the AM and PM peaks following the methodology that you have stated is acceptable. We trust, therefore, that this additional explanation will help you to follow the assessment calculations and agree that the distribution is reliable.

### Calibration

- The use of a 14% calibration factor was originally identified within VTP TN008 dated June 2022. This 14% calibration factor was based upon February 2022 surveys (which OCC subsequently decided were not representative of typical network operation and therefore they requested new surveys, which were undertaken in July 2022).
- Section 2.4 of TN008 acknowledged that the queues observed were not traditional 'static' queues that would normally be used for calibration – instead forming 'sliver' or rolling queues due to the unique nature of the junction where the dominant flows do not have priority. In this section it was also acknowledged that the queue was highly spaced out (due to vehicles slowly moving and not being static).
- It was stated within paragraph 2.4.10 of TN008 that the junction could be calibrated further, although the factor of 14% was used to be robust due to OCC being sceptical on the methodology in prior email correspondence.
- TN008 was submitted by OCC for review by an Independent Consultant, who found that the principle of the calibration methodology was appropriate.

- As noted above, upon reviewing TN008, OCC suggested that the survey data was 'atypical' and requested that additional traffic surveys were undertaken.
- Following this, TN008 Rev B dated July 2022 was produced which used July survey data. Three days of survey data were collected, with the Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> July data used for the calibration as it had the greatest total traffic flow.
- Paragraph 2.6.9 of TN008 Rev B states:
 

"It is noted that when utilising the July traffic data, a significant calibration factor would need to be applied to the Bucknell Road (north) right turn movement onto the A4095 Howes Lane in order to calibrate this arm.

This is due to there being a greater disparity in the observed vs modelled queues within the July data than previously assessed utilising the February data.

**This calibration factor would exceed the 14% presented previously within TN008 and would be in the region of 30-40%. For robustness, it is proposed to retain the 14% calibration factor, as it retains more traffic on this arm."**
- In summary, TN008 Rev B acknowledged that a higher factor could (and for accuracy probably should) be used – although for ease of agreement, it was not increased as the impact of the development was not generating 'severe' queues on the Bucknell Road approach (the threshold for severity used at that time by OCC).
- In the revised assessment within TN011, which now sought to demonstrate that there would not be an unacceptable impact on delay, the calibration factor on Bucknell Road was increased to 28% in accordance with paragraph 2.6.9 of TN008 to better represent the observed queues. Note, this is still less than the 30%-40% reduction that TN008 advised would be necessary to properly reflect the disparity between the observed and modelled queues.
- The use of these factors derived from the calibration methodology determined by OCC's independent assessor to be robust is still likely to overestimate the "on-the-ground" impact – as the observed queues are not static and are instead slowly moving, meaning the operation of the junction in real life is likely better than what the PICADY modelling would suggest.

The assessment set out within TN011 follows the independently audited and accepted calibration methodology and can be used to determine the impact of the proposed Firethorn development on the A4095 Howes Lane / Bucknell Road priority junction. TN011 also uses the latest version of the BTM, as provided by OCC.

Notwithstanding the point on calibration noted above, the OCC comment on severity instead relates to the Howes Lane arm – where no queries on the reliability of the calibration factors used were raised.

Based on the interpretation of severity that you have set out below, the proposed development would cause the delay on Howes Lane to increase from circa six minutes to circa nine minutes, which is not regarded as being severe in the interim period prior to the A4095 SLR being delivered.

On that basis, the proposed development is in accordance with paragraph 111 of the National Planning Policy Framework, as there are no highways/transport reasons that would lead to an unacceptable impact on highway safety or residual cumulative impacts on the highway network.

We trust the above in combination with the analysis in TN011 is sufficient for OCC to remove its objection in relation to the proposed Firethorn development.

To ensure we are all on the same page and to confirm the above satisfactorily addresses the points raised, can you confirm your availability for a meeting to discuss the above ASAP?

Many thanks,

Claudio

**Claudio Ricci** | Bsc (Hons) MCIHT | Principal Transport Planner

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**From:** White, Joy - Oxfordshire County Council <[Joy.White@Oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Joy.White@Oxfordshire.gov.uk)>  
**Sent:** 29 November 2022 17:19  
**To:** Claudio Ricci <[CRicci@velocity-tp.com](mailto:CRicci@velocity-tp.com)>  
**Cc:** Caroline Ford <[Caroline.Ford@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk](mailto:Caroline.Ford@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk)>; [Andrew.Thompson@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk](mailto:Andrew.Thompson@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk);  
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**Subject:** RE: 21/01630/OUT - Transport Response

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Hi Claudio

Thank you for your email, which we have considered carefully.

Whilst a development impact which increases the average delay per vehicle by 50% to 9 minutes per vehicle could be considered severe in many cases, I think that there are extenuating circumstances in this case which mean that we could remove our objection IF we were to be satisfied that the prediction of impact is reliable (currently I am not).

In the context of an increasingly urban setting, drivers will become accustomed to congestion on all routes into and around Bicester by 2026, where they may face similar delays. A doubling of delay would be severe and even an increase to 9 minutes could be seen as unreasonable. However, although there is currently no certainty of the A4095 realignment being delivered via external funding, there are current development proposals on the land required for the scheme, which means the land can potentially be safeguarded and there is some likelihood of the road eventually being delivered by developers, particularly as the most challenging element of the project, namely the bridge under the railway, has already been delivered. Therefore although the impact of the development may be felt for many years, it is likely to be temporary, if long-term temporary.

As explained in my previous response, I still remain to be convinced that the predictions set out in your most recent technical note are reliable.

Kind regards  
Joy

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**From:** Claudio Ricci <[CRicci@velocity-tp.com](mailto:CRicci@velocity-tp.com)>  
**Sent:** 28 November 2022 12:04  
**To:** White, Joy - Oxfordshire County Council <[Joy.White@Oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Joy.White@Oxfordshire.gov.uk)>  
**Cc:** Caroline Ford <[Caroline.Ford@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk](mailto:Caroline.Ford@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk)>; [Andrew.Thompson@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk](mailto:Andrew.Thompson@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk);  
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Hi Joy,

Thank you for your response below.

Before we consider the rest of your email, are you able to clarify the point on severity?

In your 'split the difference' scenario, you note that an increase in delay from 8 minutes to 13 minutes would in your opinion be regarded as 'severe'.

Can you confirm if you would consider an increase in delay from 6 minutes to 9 minutes to be severe?

Many thanks,

Claudio

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**Date:** Friday, 25 November 2022 at 14:53

**To:** Hannah Leary <[Hannah.Leary@bartonwillmore.co.uk](mailto:Hannah.Leary@bartonwillmore.co.uk)>

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**Subject:** 21/01630/OUT - Transport Response

Hannah,

I have had some correspondence with OCC and they have a few problems with being able to formally sign off their single response until probably Tuesday next week (plus they are awaiting comments from another team). The response below is what is intended to be submitted though with regard to Transport and this has been cleared by Joy's Transport Colleagues so I don't anticipate there being any further changes. The Single Response will be made available when possible.

The response, provided without prejudice at this stage, is:

**Objection for the following reason:**

An updated junction assessment contains points that require further clarification. As it stands, the conclusions of the assessment cannot be relied upon and therefore our objection on the basis of severe traffic impact still stands.

## Comments

Further to my response of 11 November, we have now received a further technical note from Velocity: *TN011 – A4095 Junction Modelling – further assessment*. This document provides the results of a further assessment of the junction, which predicts a lower level of delays and queueing at the junction of Bucknell Road and Howes Lane in 2026 than the previous assessment, upon which our previous objection was based.

This lower prediction is the result of three factors:

- Using the most recent Bicester Transport Model 2026 reference case. An interim reference case was initially provided, which did not include the A4095 realignment. However, whereas in this interim reference case the amount of development predicted at NW Bicester was in line with the 2021 Annual Monitoring Report, the reference case was subsequently updated to adjust all the development at Bicester to be in line with the 2021 AMR. This has resulted in a change in predicted traffic movements at the critical junction, notably with a 10% reduction in traffic approaching from Lords Lane in the a.m. peak.
- Adjusting the predicted assignment of southbound traffic from the development. The initial (manual) assignment of southbound development traffic assumed the A4095 realignment was in place. However, I accept that given the predicted congestion at the critical junction in 2026 (without the A4095 realignment) a larger proportion of traffic would route either through the town centre or via the eastern peripheral route, reducing the amount of development traffic predicted to pass through the critical junction. However, I am puzzled as to why the reduction appears to be greater in the pm peak.
- Further additional calibration of the Junctions 10 model of the critical junction. This was previously calibrated by applying a 14% reduction in demand traffic flow to the northern arm, such that the queueing in the base model matched observed traffic queues. However, Velocity now seem to be saying that the observed queues were in fact shorter and therefore a larger reduction factor of 28% should be used. Para 2.4.4 of TN008 says that the queue on Bucknell Rd N/Lords Lane was approx. 400m or 69.5 PCUs in the am peak, whereas Para 2.3.3 of TN011 says the queue is 170m or 29 PCUs. This requires clarification. It is worth noting that TN 008 (para 2.4.10) argued that a reduction greater than 14% could be applied 'as the RFC still exceeds 1' – this is a reason for calibration that I would not accept, as set out in my response of 11 November (point 5).

While I accept that the queueing and delays at the junction would be less than previously predicted, as a result of using the most up to date reference case, and allowing for the reassignment of development traffic, I find the results inconclusive because of the disparity in queue lengths between TN008 and TN011, and because of the seeming inconsistency in the application of the revised development traffic assignment.

While I agree that the results presented in table 2.3, which are much more modest in terms of delay and queueing than the previous assessment, would not be considered severe, I do not consider them to be reliable, for the above reasons.

However, I understand that it is highly unlikely that further assessment work will be carried out ahead of the Planning Committee meeting. Given this situation it might be considered pragmatic to 'split the difference' between this most recent assessment and the previous one.

The delay of most concern was the pm peak delay on Howes Lane, which in the previous assessment was predicted to increase from 10 minutes without the development to around 17 minutes (average delay per vehicle) with the development. The change now predicted would

be from around 6 minutes in the 2026 reference case, to around 9 minutes with the development. Splitting the difference in would result in an increase in average delay per vehicle of 8 to 13 minutes, which in my opinion could be considered as severe.

Further points relating to TN011:

- It is noted and welcomed that the applicant is no longer proposing the mini roundabout interim mitigation scheme (paragraph 1.3.4)
- Section 2.2 which flags up supposed errors in the 2026 Reference Case uncertainty log, has now been acknowledged by Velocity to be incorrect – they were looking at the wrong log. The updated reference case which they have used in the latest assessment in fact does use correct AMR data for assumptions on development. Therefore section 2.2 of TN011 should be disregarded.
- As explained in my previous response I do not agree with the interpretation of thresholds of severity for driver delay based on IEMA Guidelines, set out in paragraphs 2.6.7-2.6.16.

**Officer's Name: Joy White**

**Officer's Title: Principal Transport Planner**

**Date: 25 November 2022**

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