

Lower Heyford and Caulcott Parish Council's s Response to the Revised Traffic Assessment

LH&CPC welcomes the traffic measures at Middleton Stoney which will alleviate the traffic impact on Lower Heyford and Caulcott. We also strongly hope that a weight restriction will be imposed at Rousham Bridge for the reasons stated in our first response.

However, we take issue with the recently revised traffic figures using the Bicester Saturn model. We can only deduce that there is an error in this model as it concludes - astonishingly - that the presence of a built out Heyford Park will actually reduce traffic through Lower Heyford before the traffic measures at Middleton Stoney are taken into account. This is despite the fact that (1) we are the next door village (2) on the main access route to the site and (3) forecast in the Traffic Assessment as having the greatest traffic impact from the development.

A built out Heyford Park is also forecast to reduce Caulcott's traffic by 90% with the traffic measures at Middleton Stoney. While less traffic will use this route to Bicester, the model does not appear to have considered the traffic that will travel through Caulcott to/from Heyford Park. It will be the main route for all vehicles travelling west from Chilgrove Drive (and eastbound to) and will also become a quicker route for those wishing to access the M40 from the west. This stretch of road is already in particular need of traffic calming as it is well known for speeding (see reasons in our earlier submission).

Lower Heyford's reduction in traffic is attributed to a reassignment of background traffic. One reason offered for this is a delay on the network. If this is the case, where is this delay and what alternative routes are being used? Another reason offered is that people working in Bicester may move house to Heyford Park. These reasons are phrased as supposition and no information has been provided to support them.

We have no explanation for the huge disparity between the forecasts in the new model and those in the Traffic Assessment. The new model predicts that the development will reduce traffic through Lower Heyford in daily peak hours while the Traffic Assessment predicts it will increase it by 858 vehicles in daily peak hours. It is significant that 858 vehicles with a reduction of 366 for traffic measures at Middleton Stoney would justify calming at this village.

The validation report does not demonstrate that the model is 'fit for purpose'. Guidelines state that the model should predict within 100 vehicles per hour of observed flows. The junction at Lower Heyford fails this test as its am peak is 200 vehicles out - this is double the permitted margin of error. Even if a mean average is taken between -200 at am and -60 at pm, it would still not meet the criteria. While this may not matter for validation if enough other junctions comply, it does matter if traffic calming is reliant on the model being accurate at this location. See guidelines at 3.22, TAG unit M3.1 *'The achievement of the validation guidelines ... does not guarantee that a model is 'fit for purpose'. 'Local*

Model Validation Reports should therefore not include statements to the effect that, because the validation standards have been (largely) achieved, the model is necessarily fit for purpose'.

It is significant that all traffic flows which fail validation are on the major routes in/out of Heyford Park (at Ardley, Middleton Stoney and Lower Heyford) while those on quieter rural roads with traffic levels well below 700 - the lowest level of validation - generally meet it. It is also significant that the B4030 does not meet the validation criteria at Middleton Stoney, Caulcott and Lower Heyford.

If these new figures are accepted despite our objection then the section 278 obligation to provide more capacity at the Hopcroft Holt junction should be lifted. The developer should not be expected to pay for its expansion if it is judged that the development is causing a reduction in traffic here. It would also fail to comply with the statutory tests for such agreements.

It is simply not credible that Lower Heyford and Caulcott would have more traffic if Heyford Park did not exist when we are on main routes to the development. OCC have informed us that they are seeking further explanation from the traffic consultants. This should be made available and consulted on before any decisions are made in relation to this application. This is particularly important if the technical note supercedes the Traffic Assessment already submitted and determines where considerable sums of money on traffic calming is spent. Lower Heyford and Caulcott are at locations where the impact from this major strategic site is likely to be severe and should therefore receive S106 for traffic calming.