

MM069
Appendix 5
Statement by J Rigg (16632)

Information Governance <information.governance@hertfordshire.gov.uk>

To:rigg.jack

17 Feb at 17:08

Dear Mr Rigg

Reference number: EIR/ENV/01/20/18639

On 5th January 2020 Hertfordshire County Council received the following request for information from you:

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act please find attached my letter requesting information on Herts Highways decision to install Signalised Traffic Lights at the North Road / Graveley Road junction, together with attachments.

Your request for information has been considered under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. I can confirm that Hertfordshire County Council does hold some of the information you have requested. Our response is as follows.

1. In assessing traffic flows along North Road south of the NR/GR junction was the impact of the following fully considered in assessing peak time traffic volumes? How much additional traffic will be generated by each of these sites and what will be the impact on traffic volumes and traffic congestion?

The individual developers in their transport assessments are required to consider known committed development in the area as part of their appraisal and their assumptions and results are reviewed by the Development Management as part of the planning application process.

The Transport Assessment for HO3 included an allowance for committed development and background growth at that time (2017). Work is still ongoing on the NS1 site and we have agreed with the developers the need to take into account committed development in the area and the HO3 site in their assessments. This will provide an updated review of the junction when available.

Hertfordshire County Council also have a Countywide Transport Model (COMET). We are currently updating our future year forecasts. These include planned housing and employment development across the county including sites already in the planning system as well as Local Plan allocations. The latest forecast includes the HO3, NS1, GA1 and GA2 sites plus the Garden Centre development, Rugby Club development and EC1/4 in addition to developments across the wider North Herts and Stevenage areas. This forecast also includes the signalisation of the junction (as per the proposals in the HO3 transport assessment) in addition to the proposed A1m smart motorway scheme and other schemes outlined in strategies such as the Stevenage Mobility Strategy and North Herts Sustainable Transport

Strategy. When the results are available they will provide us with a view of the future traffic conditions in the area with cumulative growth.

The focus of the strategies as well as our own Local Transport Plan 4 are to improve sustainable travel options and we are working closely with developers to ensure that consideration is given to access from the developments by walk, bus and cycle and ensure that their mode split aspirations are realistic and supported by good quality infrastructure.

2. In assessing traffic flows on the B197 north of the NR / GR junction was the impact of the following issues factored in? How much additional traffic will be generated by each of these sites and what will be the impact on traffic volumes and traffic congestion?

The COMET model forecasting work allows us to factor in the impact of proposed development across the area and allow us to identify the cumulative impact of growth in the area. Once the latest run is available we can potentially use it to identify the impact of individual development sites. The developers own assumptions of trip numbers are reviewed by our Development Management team as part of the Planning Application.

We can also use the model to identify the type of traffic using a particular section of highway to determine the incidence of rat running and re routing.

3. WHaSH and Paramics models

The WHaSH model has now been superseded by the COMET model which is a multimodal countywide model developed in line with current DfT Webtag guidance. Forecasts from the COMET model are being fed into the more localised Paramics model.

These give us an indication of the cumulative impact of development on the network whereas the developers own modelling work previously did not take full account of all the proposed development across the wider area (other than committed sites) which may account for some of the discrepancy.

The level of development proposed in the area underlines the need to ensure development proposals are developed in line with our Local Transport Plan Policy 1 transport hierarchy which states the need to prioritise measures to reduce the need to travel, measures to support and encourage active travel and travel by public transport above measures to enable travel by private car in order to minimise the amount of private car travel to and from new development sites. We are working closely with developers to ensure that these principles are followed in relation to the design of access arrangements and mitigation measures.

Policy 1: Transport User Hierarchy

The focus of the strategies as well as our own Local Transport Plan 4 are to improve sustainable travel options and we are working closely with developers to ensure that consideration is given to access from the developments by walk, bus and cycle and

ensure that their mode split aspirations are realistic and supported by good quality infrastructure.

To support the creation of built environments that encourage greater and safer use of sustainable transport modes, the county council will in the design of any scheme and development of any transport strategy consider in the following order:

Opportunities to reduce travel demand and the need to travel

- Vulnerable road user needs (such as pedestrians and cyclists)
- Passenger transport user needs
- Powered two wheeler (mopeds and motorbikes) user needs
- Other motor vehicle user needs

4. In deciding to approve a Signalised Junction at the NR / GR junction what consideration was given to the following?

Collision Data

Safety considerations – accidents at the existing junction and potentially junction being made safer through signalisation.

Signalisation enables ability to incorporate pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities as Policy 1: Transport User Hierarchy

Signalisation enables greater control of traffic movements.

5. Traffic mitigation proposed under the Developers Traffic Assessment

The Transport Assessment identified potential for further optimisation of the signals at A1m Junction 8. This however would require updates to the signal kit which would have a cost associated with it. The North Central Growth and Transport Plan which is currently out to consultation includes a package looking at measures to improve junction 8 (Scheme SM84). Any proposals here would however need to be looked at in conjunction with Highways England's proposals for a Smart motorway between junctions 6 and 8.

A1(M) junction 8 capacity improvements in COMET model latest run- increase junction capacity for general traffic. Improvement in journey time reliability expected for all vehicles, reducing as trips are attracted to the improved route. Scheme to including safe and attractive pedestrian and cyclist crossing facilities for A1(M) J8.

6. NPPF Paragraph 109 states

Considering development proposals

108. In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:

- a) appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location;
- b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; and
- c) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, **can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.**

109. Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, quoting the reference number on this correspondence. To find out more about Freedom of Information, please visit <http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/your-council/work/foi/>

If you are unhappy with the way the County Council has handled your request for information you may request an internal review of the request. This will be carried out by a member of the County Council Legal Services Team, who has had no prior involvement with the request. Requests for an internal review should be sent to the Information Governance Unit at the address above (within 2 months of this correspondence) and should detail in writing your grounds of appeal.

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the internal review you are entitled to ask the Information Commissioner to investigate your complaint. You should write to: FOI/EIR Complaints Resolution, Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely,

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