

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT SOUTH WEST MILTON KEYNES

STATEMENT ON HIGHWAY MATTERS

BY NIGEL WEEKS

STIRLING MAYNARD TRANSPORTATION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement has been produced by Nigel Weeks, Head of Stirling Maynard Transportation.
- 1.2 The Statement has been prepared and is given in accordance with the guidance of my professional association and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions. I was the Transport Planner responsible for consideration of the original application 15/00169/FUL which is now the subject of this appeal. At the same time I reviewed the application for the full development submitted to the (then) Aylesbury Vale District Council on which Milton Keynes Council were consulted. I am currently reviewing the new application on which Milton Keynes Council have been consulted (20/01656/CONS).
- 1.3 The original application was accompanied by a Transport Assessment (TA) produced in 2016. This was subsequently superseded by a new TA produced in 2020 which accompanied the revised application to the new Buckinghamshire Council and is also being used to support the appeal. I was involved in the scoping of the 2020 TA and discuss this further overleaf.

2.0 2020 TA SCOPING

- 2.1 The original meeting to discuss a scope for a revised TA took place on 15th January 2020. I was not invited to that meeting as a Milton Keynes Council Officer attended but I was sent a copy of the Meeting Notes and subsequently asked to comment on the revised Scoping Note that was produced after the meeting. My response is attached as Appendix 1 to this Statement.
- 2.2 There are several key points to note about the process. The first is that the approach is now based on “count and multiply” rather than using the Milton Keynes Strategic Model (which was the basis of the 2016 TA). This was because some parties thought the Milton Keynes Model was now too old and out of date. Given that “count and multiply” gives a robust analysis I did not feel the need to challenge this.
- 2.3 Thus, as is clear from my response, although I raised some points of detail I did not have an issue with the proposed response.
- 2.4 However it is also the case that agreeing to the scope of the analysis does not automatically mean that there will be subsequent agreement to the way the analysis is actually applied or with the conclusions reached. As a simple example it may be agreed that a particular roundabout needs to be analysed for capacity but it doesn’t mean the coding of the resultant models produced are accepted as correct.
- 2.5 Further of course the position of the Local Authority is influenced by what the TA actually shows. In this case there were a number of concerns regarding the analysis and the proposed mitigation which raised doubts about the weight that could be given to the TA. In that respect I would agree with the sentiments expressed in paragraph 3.1 of the Statement of Common Ground between Hydrock (for Milton Keynes Council) and the Rule 6 Party. This is reinforced by the fact that significant elements of the TA have been superseded by the subsequent Technical Notes.
- 2.6 This all follows common industry practice whereby an approach is agreed, some questions over the implementation of that approach are raised and further work is required. The agreement of the scope (or approach) is thus just the first stage in the process. The main difference here is the extent of the additional work that has been required.

3.0 ADDITIONAL POINTS

- 3.1 It is relevant to make a few additional points on the current situation. The first is to confirm that, as is clear in the response to the latest application, I agree that extensive additional work on the junction models was required.
- 3.2 Secondly there is no reference to redistribution of traffic due to congestion in the scoping report. It follows therefore that if this is to be relied upon as part mitigation additional data is required to justify the extent and the ability of the network to accommodate. Without this it is impossible to judge whether there is any spare capacity on adjacent routes or whether this would merely shift the congestion.
- 3.3 The 2016 TA was a valuable document at the time but it is now five years old. The base data on which it is based is considerably older. In addition the forecast design years have had to be moved further into the future. It is therefore a document of its time. The need for a new TA is not therefore challenged just its application.
- 3.4 It is also relevant to note that the discussions took place over the scope in anticipation of a new application. It was not until late in the day it was appreciated it was to support an appeal.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

4.1 In conclusion therefore:

- i) The 2016 TA is now out of date due to age, particularly for the base data and the forecast timelines.
- ii) Milton Keynes Council positively engaged over the scoping for a revised TA.
- iii) Acceptance of the scope is only the start of the process. It is reasonable to question elements as to how that scope was applied and how the results were interpreted.
- iv) The validity of this is confirmed in the subsequent extensive Technical Note that had to be produced.
- v) Outside of the appeal Officers are recommending objection to the revised application (reference 20/01656/CONS) based on all the latest information available.



Nigel Weeks
12 April 2021

Appendix 1
Response to Scoping Report

Sherlock, Justin

From: Stirling Maynard Transportation <smt@smtrans.co.uk>
Sent: 25 February 2020 13:27
To: Sherlock, Justin
Cc: Howard, Stephanie; Paddle, Martin; Phil.Caves@Milton-Keynes.gov.uk
Subject: SOUTH WEST MILTON KEYNES - SCOPING

Justin,

I refer to your email of 3 February with the undated scoping note and minutes of the meeting of January 15th on highways with the various interested parties. Phil Caves (MKC) has asked me to respond directly. In general I have no issues with the proposed scope which is comprehensive but I have just a few observations which I set out below:

- i) I note Buckinghamshire County Council have decided that the MK model is not suitable for analysis of junctions within Milton Keynes. I do accept the model base data is old and the proposed approach is robust so I do not propose to revisit this argument but please note the comment on distribution below.
- ii) I welcome the “lane movement” approach for some roundabouts especially Bottledump. This roundabout caused particular grief with Newton Longville Parish Council who insisted the ARCADY Lane simulation approach should be used to reflect what is on the ground. My experience is that this option is not robust. My view has always been the lane markings at the roundabout are unbalanced and when it is improved the lane markings could be changed to better reflect demand with a bit of merging on the far side. Traditional ARCADY reflects this and shows the true potential of the roundabout. The proposed data collection will allow for a more thorough analysis.
- iii) The sensitivity test includes for Shenley Park which changes the grid road network and the need for redistribution is noted. The use of the Bucks County Council model is suggested. I would reserve our position on this for further discussion. Distribution and redistribution was the main reason for using the MK Model as, apart from any changes to the network, the model also reflects congestion on the network and the reassignment it causes which is one of the strengths of the grid road network. The proposed traditional approach with turning movements and TEMPRO doesn't account for this. It actually is less of a concern in some ways for the main analysis because if traffic is not reassigned from the H8 corridor, which is the most congested, then a worst case will be tested. However Shenley Park with the extra grid road link will however have to be modelled and I am not sure at this stage whether the Bucks model is the best way to do it. I think this is one area where further discussions will be required.
- iv) I note queue surveys are being done to calibrate models. ARCADY/PICADY output mean maximum queues over a time period so the correct comparison will need to be made. Also, despite the comments on slow running traffic, the accuracy of queue length surveys needs to be noted. However it should improve confidence in the model.
- v) Bucks County Council might have confirmed the severity of residual cumulative impact, as required by NPPF, is accepted as opposed to nil detriment. I would await to see how this is interpreted before we comment as “severe” is hard to define. We shall take our own view on this when we see the proposed mitigation.
- vi) TRICS comment refers to excluding Central London. I assume this should say Greater London.

vii) I note the comments on Travel Planning and a target of 12%. This is welcome but I would warn that our focus of traffic impact is a worst case no modal shift.

viii) The brief for the surveys is very comprehensive.

Happy to discuss further if required.

Kind regards,

Nigel Weeks

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