

**WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
CORE STRATEGY EXAMINATION**

Session 9: Transportation (CP6 and CP10)

Evidence of Barkham Parish Council

The purpose of this document is to comment on the issues identified by the Inspector in relation to transportation.

1. Comments on Inspector's questions

1.1 Will CP6 reduce car borne travel in accordance with national policy?

Development of the Arborfield SDL will not reduce car borne travel. This is because it is a relatively remote location. It will contribute still further to the dispersed settlement pattern in east Berkshire which means that it will be very difficult to provide adequate choice in the mode of transport available.

Current social and employment patterns are not conducive to people living within the immediate vicinity of their employment. This is because the predominance of dual income households results in wage earners being employed in different places. Fluidity of employment and social structures also lead to many sub-optimal commuting patterns.

The 2001 Census show that the two largest destinations, Wokingham Town and Reading Central only attract respectively 14% and 8% of the local work force. On the other hand ten zones each attract at least 4%. The large proportion (20%) "Other" probably also includes significant areas such as Slough, Farnborough and Basingstoke. Meanwhile WBC alone contains eight identified employment areas (see CP16). On the assumption that (say) 10% of the SDL's residents also work in the SDL, in approximate numbers there would be an inflow of 3,000 round trip journeys balancing an outward saving of 1,000 – a net disbenefit of 2,000. Note that the majority of these journeys would be at peak times when the road network is at its most congested.

Similarly the provision of a secondary school and significant retail facilities is likely generate at least as many inward journeys as the number of outward journeys saved.

These factors demonstrate that the complexity of travel requirements in the area. It does not help that congestion in the two key areas of Reading and Wokingham result in poor reliability for bus services. This will make it difficult to achieve a significant modal switch to public transport.

Cycling is only a realistic option for journeys within the SDL: it is not an option for longer journeys to neighbouring centres. Besides the question of distance is the matter of safety as all roads in the vicinity are too narrow and/or too busy.

1.2 Is Policy CP10 based on reasonable evidence about future car ownership levels?

It is possible that car ownership will be lower if development is characterised by higher densities and if there is a large proportion of affordable housing. In practice this is a reflection of relative income levels.

Lower car ownership, however, does not necessarily result in lower car usage: indeed the reverse could be true in an area that is unable to support a comprehensive public transport network and which is relatively remote. For example two earners who are able to afford only a single car quite possibly will develop their daily routines around more intensive use of this vehicle, e.g. kiss and ride journeys to local stations or complex triangular journeys so that they can both get to work. Factoring in school drop-offs and pick-ups will worsen transport inefficiencies still further.

Thus wealth will determine the level of car ownership but spatial factors will determine the amount of car usage.

1.3 Will the requirements of CP10 be delivered? Is adequate funding available?

CP19 indicates that there will be measures to improve accessibility by non-car transport modes along the A327, B3030, B3349 and B3430 corridors. This is supported by a general statement in CP10 item 20 that indicates that this is integral to the core strategy and will be funded by S106 and WBC funds. With respect, this seems like wishful thinking as providing bus and cycle priority measures along these routes would be an extremely expensive measure, especially for the B roads as they are narrow and in many cases they are also residential roads without any scope for widening.

The omission of any reference to A327 improvements (except by cross reference to CP19) is a concern. There is no specific commitment to build a by-pass for Arborfield Cross.

2. Additional Notes re Transportation

2.1 Traffic Modelling

The only traffic model so far seen is the LDF Traffic Impact Report PM Model (Mouchel Parkman) Jan2008. There are serious concerns about the quality this exercise.

The work done so far does not even replicate the current situation satisfactorily. There are a number of obvious inaccuracies, including:

- Major traffic hotspots on routes to/from Arborfield and Barkham not properly reflected
 - Barkham road level crossing: need to allow extra 20 minutes in morning and evening peaks, 10 minutes other times of day
 - Winnersh cross roads: need to allow extra 15 minutes in morning peak travelling eastbound on King Street Lane, possibly longer travelling westbound on Robin Hood Lane. Also problem westbound in afternoon period 1500-1800.
 - Bearwood Rd/Barkham Rd junction: need to allow extra 15 minutes in morning peak
 - There are undoubtedly other hotspots around Wokingham, the above are the ones most frequently encountered by our residents.
- Various footpaths, bridle ways and single track roads are shown as being through routes carrying significant amounts of traffic. Specifically should be mentioned
 - Sandy Lane not a through road

- Doles Lane bridle way, not suited for through traffic
 - Nashgrove Lane unmade up road, not suited for through traffic
 - Luckley Road not a through road
 - Evendons Lane single track in places, not suited for through traffic
- There are apparent difficulties modelling the level crossing area in the base case. The consultants themselves admit that this is a problem.

Looking to the future, realistic assumptions need to be included in any traffic modelling. The following issues do not seem to have been reflected: .

- True pattern of journeys to work not taken into account, i.e. employment areas will generate more inward journeys than outward.
- Increased rail frequency at level crossing.
- “Kiss and ride” trips to railway stations or direct to places of work could be critical as they involve double journeys. These will increase so long as parking at stations remains limited and expensive.
- Secondary school will generate more inward journeys than outward. (SDL would justify 500 out of 1200 places)
- Provision of supermarket will generate more inward journeys than outward, given lack of other supermarkets in surrounding areas, especially Finchampstead.

Meanwhile a number of “soft” assumptions seem to have been used to dampen down the likely growth. While these are desirable objectives, the likely success remains unproven and in some cases relies on a significant change of attitudes amongst the population at large, which will be a major hurdle . Optimistic assumptions include:

- Transfer to non car borne modes
- Flexible working
- Car sharing
- Number of home workers – specifically this is unlikely to be achieved if housing densities are higher than average.

2.2 Inaccuracies in Appendix 7

The following points of detail should be mentioned with regard to Appendix 7 (A7.1 to A7.13)

A7.7 c) While it may be desirable to close Commonfield Lane to create a bus and cycle route, the journey onwards towards Wokingham includes many sections of narrow road that cannot remotely be considered safe for cycling. This will be expensive to resolve.

A7.7 d) Reference to B3408 is unclear. (This road is actually in Bracknell.)

A7.7 h) As in sub paragraph A7.7 c), it is unclear how bus priority corridors will be achieved.

Appendix

LDF Traffic Impact Report PM Model (Mouchel Parkman) Jan2008

Appendix B – Figure 8 2006 Base Wokingham



Note

Several of the minor roads shown at the bottom of the map are not open to through traffic (see para 2.1 above). Though the volumes on these routes are not great, the combined impact is to indicate significantly lower flows than is really the case on the remainder of the network, notably Barkham Road and Molly Millars Lane.