

ROAD TRANSPORT IN CUFFLEY – OVERVIEW

Introduction

It is agreed between HCC and NCPC that

- The growth in traffic volumes during the life of the plan will conclude with a 37% increase in traffic from Goffs Oak and Cheshunt through Cuffley along the B156.
- The junction at Station Road/Plough Hill/Northaw Road East is operating at, or very close to, capacity and without mitigation measures the traffic issue will inevitably become severe given the anticipated growth.

Background

- HCC proposed junction changes in 2016 following an application for some 500+ homes in Cuffley.
- NCPC commissioned a report in the same year, conducted by AECOM, that concluded these proposals would only provide marginal improvements not the scale of mitigation that is required.
- This debate was never resolved until the Stage 8 hearing sessions asked for a SOCG between HCC/WHBV/NCPC to provide evidence of the best approach to deal with this issue.

Approach

Following agreement with HCC and WHBC, NCPC commissioned a technical study of the proposed changes to the junction of Station Road/Plough Hill/Northaw Road East. The objective was to evaluate their effectiveness to mitigate growth in traffic withing Cuffley during the life of the Local Plan (to 2036).

Exclusions

- Another mitigation scheme at Cattlegate Road/Northaw Road West/Northaw Road East. This was agreed to be of a lower priority and could be examined at a later date if required.
- The consequences of capacity NOT being mitigated (e.g. 'rat runs', air quality)
- Congestion created in Station Road (activity created by a supermarket car park, on street parking, public car park, Cuffley Station, Sopers Road industrial estate, a pedestrian crossing and 4 access roads) and its impact on the junction that feeds this.

Approach

- The choice of software (Junction 5), data, configuration, and parameters used in this evaluation exercise were all agreed or supplied by HCC.
- The first iteration of the model drew comments from HCC which, where appropriate, were reflected in a second iteration.
- Following this second iteration it was verbally agreed that there was no value in making any further cosmetic changes.

Results

The results were the same for both iteration 1 and 2:

- **Neither the existing layout or the proposed layout will accommodate the growth of traffic without significant queues and delays.**
- **There is no evidence to suggest that the proposed junction changes offer any significant capacity.**
- **The proposed changes will have some marginal improvement in the early years but will quickly erode as traffic increases and, toward the end of the plan, be considerably worse than the current configuration.**

Other considerations

- These results were considered best case (from a perspective of mitigation) scenario given the exclusions which will only exacerbate the severity or move the problem elsewhere. It is clear there are no capacity gains coming from the proposals.
- The COMET 5 2014 assessment shows many unrealistic and highly misleading traffic flows and congestion points. The 2036 modelling results show many illogical and unreasonable congestion points. Some are explained by the high-level assumptions that were used in generating the model results. They may also be explained by COMET LP5 being a high-level strategic modelling tool that does not appear to have the precision to deal with micro level detail.

Conclusion

- The 2020 study emulates the same study and results that were completed in 2016. Both studies were conducted by independent subject matter experts and, using slightly different methods, came to the same conclusions.
- There is no credible evidence to suggest that the proposal from HCC will mitigate any traffic increases. There are 2 independent studies that provides evidence that it will not – indeed, it is evidenced that the proposal will only exacerbate the issue and reduce the time before congestion becomes severe.
- HCC have not responded with any counter argument or alternative proposals.
- NCPC believe that this exercise has run its course and we respectfully submit our findings to the Local Plan examination.