



## Response to DTA Technical Note Attached to David Lock's EX228

<b>DATE:</b>	16 March 2021	<b>CONFIDENTIALITY:</b>	Public
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Symondshyde New Village - Public Transport Strategy Response to DTA Technical Note Attached to David Lock's EX228		
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### Introduction

001. This *Technical Note* (TN) has been prepared in support of the *Public Transport Strategy (EX202E)* prepared by WSP (May, 2020), on behalf of Gascoyne Cecil Estates (GCE), for the proposed "Symondshyde New Village". It has been prepared in response to comments made in the *Symondshyde Public Transport and Access Strategy Transport Review* prepared by DTA (October 2020), on behalf of Tarmac, which primarily focus on how future demand was derived and questions, in particular, the mode share by bus that was presented, together with comments on the operational costs of providing new vehicles. DTA subsequently prepared an alternative financial appraisal scenario whereby they concluded that the bus service would never break even with a subsequent ongoing subsidy required. Unfortunately, this document was not uploaded onto the Examination website when it was submitted and it has only recently come to the attention of other parties, including GCE and Hertfordshire County Council (HCC).
002. It should be noted that, in preparing the *Public Transport Strategy (EX202E)*, WSP engaged with officers of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (WHBC) and HCC – Transport Strategy, Highways and Passenger Transport teams – and UNO (the key established bus operator in the area). A statement provided by HCC to WHBC in June 2020 (**Appendix A**) confirms that, in their view, the evidence presented was robust and confirmed that a viable, high-frequency public transport service for Symondshyde New Village could be delivered throughout the development of the site and would subsequently be self-sustaining. Crucially, the HCC statement (**Appendix A**) states that:
- "HCCs Public Transport team have reviewed the work at several stages and conducted their own exercise to calculate the viability of a frequent service, confirming and supporting the public transport strategy presented.*
- The detail of the work is beyond what would normally be conducted for a local plan allocation. It is considered that the method used is appropriate and that this is the best approach that could be taken to evidence the public transport proposals at this stage providing confidence that the location for the new village is sustainable."*
003. It follows that HCC, acting as the Authority responsible for transport and highways in the District and County, has therefore endorsed the acceptability of the *Public Transport Strategy (EX202E)* for Symondshyde New Village. Furthermore, UNO have confirmed (in a letter dated 29 October 2020, provided as **Appendix B**) their support in principle to the *Public Transport Strategy (EX202E)* and assessment.

## Mode Share

004. Initial trip generation for Symondshyde New Village was calculated using trip rates obtained from the industry standard *Trip Rate Information Computer System* (TRICS) database. The mode share of peak hour trips were calculated using 2011 Census journey to work data for nearby residents (Welwyn / Hatfield villages – including the existing rural Symondshyde location), which indicated that bus trips would amount to 3% of commuting trips. It is important to note that additional journeys would be undertaken for varying other journey purposes throughout the day (leisure, retail and education) that have not been accounted for within the assessment at this stage. It is also worth noting that the 2011 Census journey to work data assesses a 12% mode share for rail and that a significant proportion of these trips are likely to use bus to access the appropriate rail station.

005. Policy 1 of *Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (LTP4) 2018-2031 – the Transport User Hierarchy* – represents a shift in emphasis to increase rates of travel by more sustainable modes and the *Public Transport Strategy (EX202E)* considers potential public transport improvements which could serve Symondshyde New Village. The HCC statement (**Appendix A**) states that:

*“This aligns the proposal to HCCs Local Transport Plan policies and overall vision for increasing the use of sustainable transport modes.”*

006. Following national and local policy, the *Public Transport Strategy (EX202E)* will be supported by other “Smarter Choices” measures (including marketing and information provision) to ensure that future residents are aware of, and adopt, active and sustainable travel patterns from the outset. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the existing mode share under-estimates the achievable and target mode share for bus, and as such reasonable adjustments were applied. These adjustments were supported by HCC, as demonstrated in the HCC statement (**Appendix A**) which states:

*“It is also HCCs view that the inputs and method used ensures the proposals are robust and based on standard industry practice for public transport delivery.”*

007. In addition to trips undertaken for purposes other than commuting (not included within the patronage assessment), and measures that would embed active and sustainable travel patterns within Symondshyde New Village from the outset (increasing the bus mode share), additional analysis looking at the distribution of the proposed trips associated with Symondshyde New Village indicates that 43.7% of existing commuter journeys of Welwyn / Hatfield residents are to Welwyn Garden City or Hatfield thereby demonstrating a significant local demand that could be supported by bus, in particular when supported by a good frequency of service and a competitive fare level.

008. The travel patterns of existing residents, used as a proxy for travel patterns of future residents of Symondshyde New Village, represents an excellent opportunity to encourage modal shift by providing a high-frequency public transport service with strong links to key destinations (town centres, employment locations, industrial sectors and public transport interchanges). Due to the distance from Symondshyde New Village to key destinations beyond the neighbouring site (Stanborough – “North West Hatfield”) and business park, it is likely that the majority of modal shift will transfer to bus rather than by foot or by bicycle. The HCC statement (**Appendix A**) states that:

*“Public Transport will supplement and strengthen the options to travel sustainably and will be in addition to the walking and cycling connectivity proposed.”*

009. In addition, longer distance commuter journeys to London and Stevenage also represent significant destinations for commuter travel (13.8% and 5.6% respectively). Both Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield railway stations are located on the East Coast Main Line (ECML) and provide opportunities for onward travel into London and to Stevenage, operating at good frequencies with relatively short journey times (Hatfield to Stevenage: 20-minutes; Hatfield to London: 27-minutes).
010. The ECML and stations along its route also provides connectivity to a range of other destinations further afield, thereby supporting long-distance commuters. As noted in the *Public Transport Strategy (EX202E)*, on average, 13% of work trips by rail stations are supplemented by bus as linked multi-modal journeys; therefore, increasing the potential bus mode share and patronage.
011. Based upon the aforementioned assumptions, summarised below, it is considered that the patronage numbers presented within the *Public Transport Strategy (EX202E)* are reasonable, and indeed conservative (and were, of course, accepted by HCC):

Additional trips generated by difference journey purposes not accounted for
“Smarter Choices” measures supporting active and sustainable travel patterns from the outset
Significant demand for local journeys (Welwyn Garden City / Hatfield key destinations)
Attractive frequencies and fare scales
Potential for linked multi-modal trips (bus to rail stations for longer distance commuting)

## Viability

012. The *Public Transport Strategy (EX202E)* indicates that, in order to provide an attractive alternative to the private car for future residents of Symondshyde New Village, bus services would be provided at 20-minute intervals (07:00-19:00 Monday to Saturday), 30-minute intervals (19:00-22:00 Monday to Saturday) and 30-minute intervals (09:00-17:00 Sundays). The HCC statement (**Appendix A**) indicates that:

*“HCC will seek to ensure this level of service through the planning process. The Bus Operators have been consulted and confirm their support, in principle, to the Public Transport Strategy proposed.”*

013. It is recognised; however, that there may be merit in extending the deployment of a bus to include weekday early mornings (06:00-07:00) and late evenings (19:00-23:00), Saturday early mornings (07:00-08:00) and late evenings (18:00-23:00) and Sundays / Bank Holidays (09:00-18:00) in order to cater for long-distance commuters, the leisure and retail markets – subsequently supporting higher patronage. Whilst extending the service is claimed by DTA to increase the operating costs to circa £229,000 (annually) it will not necessarily increase the number of buses required to support the service. Discussions and correspondence from the commercial manager from Uno – letter dated 29 October 2020, provided as **Appendix B** – states that:

*“there may be scope to re-route either our 601 and / or 610 routes to serve the new development in Stanborough and Symondshyde. It’s possible that this could be done in such a way to have a minimal impact on the running time, so could be achieved economically and would provide links for new residents to other areas of Hatfield and nearby towns.”*

- 014. As a result, it is considered that the number of services presented within the *Public Transport Strategy (EX202E)* across the forecast period is sufficient to accommodate an extended service as it can be achieved without a significant impact on running time.
- 015. An initial re-routeing as described above could be achieved at commencement of construction, with a dedicated service following on slightly later. The distance from Symondshyde to Hatfield Station through Stanborough is approximately 5 kms, thus a return journey would be 10 kms, which is the distance assumed in the vehicle calculations.
- 016. In addition, to provide a realistic estimate of fare revenue, the *Public Transport Strategy (EX202E)* assumed a low fare of £1.00 per boarding passenger and that 25% of passengers would be concessionary travellers entitled to free travel. The average revenue of £1.00 per passenger boarding is very conservative, when taking into account the full passenger and ticket-type mix, including concessionary pass holders. As such the assessment could retain the full passenger volume as the revenue of £1.00 per passenger boarding is typical of the average allowing for concessionary pass use, indeed is almost certainly a conservative estimate.

## Summary

- 017. The annual operating cost of £160,000 (per bus) used in the *Public Transport Strategy (EX202E)* assessment was only an approximation and a more detailed analysis would naturally take place at the later stage within the *Transport Assessment (TA)*. Notwithstanding that, a financial appraisal sensitivity test of the bus service for Symondshyde New Village has been assessed taking on board the operating cost figures suggested by DTA and the following key inputs:

**The annual patronage presented within the *Public Transport Strategy (EX202E)* has been retained due to the aforementioned modal shift assumptions (as agreed with HCC)**

**The full passenger volume has been retained as the revenue of £1.00 per passenger boarding is typical of the average allowing for concessionary pass use**

**The number of buses required to support the service presented within the *Public Transport Strategy (EX202E)* has been retained as there would be a minimal impact upon running times**

**The extended deployment to cater for long-distance commuters, the leisure and retail markets has assumed the annual cost per bus suggested by DTA, that is, £229,000 per annum**



018. **Table 1** below shows the outcome of this sensitivity test and indicates that the expected revenue for the service at full build-out (Year 15) outweighs the annual operational cost and that the service would still break even after 13-years, which coincides with the timeframe presented within the *Public Transport Strategy (EX202E)*, even with increased operational costs as suggested by DTA . The subsidy required during buildout is forecast to be £1,943,411; but, even at this increased contribution, the viability of Symondshyde New Village is not impacted.



**Table 1: Annual Subsidy Requirement for Bus Service**

YEAR	DWELLINGS		ANNUAL PATRONAGE	LESS CONCESSIONS*	REVENUE / BOARD	FREQUENCY	BUSES	ANNUAL COST	SUBSIDY / SURPLUS	SUBSIDY (NON-RECOVERABLE)
	CUM.	P/A			£1.00			£229,000 / Bus		
1	50	50	14,901	14,901	£14,901	20-30 mins	1	£229,000	-£214,099	-£214,099
2	125	75	37,251	37,251	£37,251	20-30 mins	1	£229,000	-£191,749	-£191,749
3	275	150	81,953	81,953	£81,953	20-30 mins	1	£229,000	-£147,047	-£147,047
4	425	150	126,655	126,655	£126,655	20-30 mins	1	£229,000	-£102,345	-£102,345
5	650	225	193,707	193,707	£193,707	20 mins	2	£458,000	-£264,293	-£264,293
6	925	275	275,660	275,660	£275,660	20 mins	2	£458,000	-£182,340	-£182,340
7	1,225	300	365,063	365,063	£365,063	20 mins	2	£458,000	-£92,937	-£92,937
8	1,525	300	454,467	454,467	£454,467	15-20 mins	3	£687,000	-£232,533	-£232,533
9	1,825	300	543,870	543,870	£543,870	15-20 mins	3	£687,000	-£143,130	-£143,130
10	2,125	300	633,273	633,273	£633,273	15-20 mins	3	£687,000	-£53,727	-£53,727
11	2,425	300	722,676	722,676	£722,676	15-20 mins	4	£916,000	-£193,324	-£193,324
12	2,725	300	812,080	812,080	£812,080	15-20 mins	4	£916,000	-£103,920	-£103,920
13	3,000	275	894,033	894,033	£894,033	15-20 mins	4	£916,000	-£21,967	-£21,967
14	3,150	150	938,734	938,734	£938,734	15-20 mins	4	£916,000	£22,734	£0.00
15	3,250	100	968,535	968,535	£968,535	15-20 mins	4	£916,000	£52,535	£0.00
<b>Total</b>	3,250								<b>-£1,943,411</b>	

\*Full passenger volume retained as the Revenue per Boarding @ £1.00 is typical of the average allowing for Concessionary pass use.



## APPENDIX A

1<sup>st</sup> June 2020

To Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Re; HCC Statement in support of the Public Transport Strategy for Symonshyde new village prepared by WSP for Gascoyne Cecil Estates, Spring 2020

Following the hearing sessions of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan submission in March 2020, HCC have engaged with Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council and the promoters of Symonshyde (Hat15) in further considering the sustainable transport options that would be viable for the site, notably that of bus provision.

Detailed technical work to examine and consider a public transport strategy has been undertaken by the promoters, alongside further analysis by HCCs Passenger Transport Unit to develop and validate the evidence for a deliverable and high quality public transport service. This has been conducted to further support the position that Symonshyde is considered a sustainable location for development by HCC as it will be served by frequent public transport service, providing real choice for transport modes for the residents. Public Transport will supplement and strengthen the options to travel sustainably and will be in addition to the walking and cycling connectivity proposed within the site and in particular the connections to Hat 1 site and the Business Park which collectively provide access to retail, employment and community facilities in a sustainable way negating the need to travel by car...

Public Transport – Deliverable and viable bus services to Symonshyde

The promoter has completed a detailed public transport strategy for Symonshyde, providing evidence that a high frequency public transport service is deliverable throughout the development of the site and self-sustaining beyond completion of the development.

The detail of the work is beyond what would normally be conducted for a local plan allocation. It is considered that the method used is appropriate and that this is the best approach that could be taken to evidence the public transport proposals at this stage providing confidence that the location for the new village is sustainable.

HCCs Public Transport team have reviewed the work at several stages and conducted their own exercise to calculate the viability of a frequent service, confirming and supporting the public transport strategy presented. HCCs own work to consider bus provision supports that presented by the promoter. It is also HCCs view that the inputs and method used ensures

the proposals are robust and based on standard industry practice for public transport delivery.

As set out in table 2.3 within the document, it is shown that the site will be served by a twenty minute service 7am to 7pm six days a week (Monday to Saturday), half hourly until 10pm on those days, and a half hourly service on Sundays. HCC will seek to ensure this level of service through the planning process. The Bus Operators have been consulted and confirm their support, in principle, to the Public Transport Strategy proposed.

The broader transport context for Symonshyde and Hatfield discussed within the strategy, in terms of the Local Transport Plan, A414 Strategy, Growth and Transport Plans and future transport opportunities are also recognised and supported.

The Public Transport Strategy presented supports the position that Symonshyde can provide real choice for sustainable transport. It is in addition to measures that will reduce the need to travel from the development itself, and support active modes to other facilities and services. This aligns the proposal to HCCs Local Transport Plan policies and overall vision for increasing the use of sustainable transport modes.

The Public Transport Strategy demonstrates how a viable, frequent and reliable bus service would be provided to Symondshyde Village and North West Hatfield connecting to key rail stations, town centres and employment areas to demonstrate the sustainable location of the new village. It has been progressed in consultation with Hertfordshire County Council, their Passenger Transport Unit and bus operators.

Provided by HCCs Local Plan and Strategic Development team and the Passenger Transport Unit.



## APPENDIX B



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29 October 2020

To whom it may concern

### **Bus routes in proposed developments at Stanborough and Symondshyde**

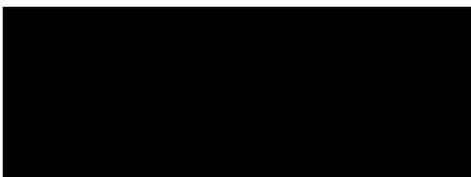
I have been introduced to the scheme outlines for the new village of Symondshyde and housing developments in north west Hatfield by Peter Mitchell. Uno, a subsidiary company of the University of Hertfordshire, run a comprehensive and established network of scheduled local bus services throughout Hertfordshire for a purpose-built depot in Hatfield Business Park. Although our network is focussed on meeting the needs of staff and students at the university, our bus services are open to all and very widely used by the local community.

We already operate a number of services close to the areas in question, including route 601 (Borehamwood – St Albans – Hatfield – Welwyn Garden City), route 610 (Luton – Hatfield – Potters Bar – Cockfosters) and 341/641 (Hatfield – Hertford – Broxbourne). Our route 602 also runs to Hatfield Business Park on Sundays and public holidays, ensuring connectivity every day of the week.

I can see from the initial plans that there may be scope to re-route either our 601 and/or 610 routes to serve the new development in Stanborough and Symondshyde. It's possible that this could be done in such a way to have a minimal impact on the running time, so could be achieved economically and would provide links for new residents to other areas of Hatfield and nearby towns.

Peter and I also talked through initial proposals for a new circular route in Hatfield, connecting Symondshyde with Hatfield station, town centre and the university campuses. Uno would support the proposal in principle and would welcome further discussion around the exact routing which would depend on whether other routes are diverted to serve part of the developments. We are also actively looking at whether Demand Responsive Transport has a role to play in complementing our existing network and would be open to considering DRT as part of the solution for Symondshyde.

Yours sincerely,



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