

## **Birmingham Development Plan – Examination**

### **A further response to matters raised by Dr Hoad and Mr Bruce**

#### **1 Introduction**

The purpose of this note is to respond to matters raised by Dr Hoad and Mr Bruce in December, as follows:

1. EXAM 123 – Response to EXAM 104 to 106
2. EXAM 124 – Response to EXAM104 – PRISM Local Model Validation Report [ref *Document 1*]
3. EXAM 125 - Response to EXAM 111 - [ref *Document 2*]

Our responses to the main points raised are presented below in the same structure as employed in each of the above notes.

#### **2 General comments**

We would like to thank Dr Hoad for his views on the documents, but would point out that the evidence base has been robustly prepared in accordance with national planning policy. We are concerned that some of the comments raised overlook the NPPF, which forms the basis of the production of the Development Plan and its evidence base.

The overarching Policy from which the evidence base is formed is NPPF Para 14:

*“At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking. For plan-making this means that local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area”*

The City Council has taken a positive approach to seek opportunities to meet the development needs of the area, and has positively identified a comprehensive infrastructure strategy to provide the best opportunities for sustainable travel within the urban area. The opportunity has clearly been taken to draw vehicular traffic onto the strategic network with substantial new and upgraded infrastructure on the A38 in particular and agreed measures with the Highways Agency to accommodate new trips on the Strategic Road Network (SRN).

In relation to comments where Dr Hoad has repeatedly referred to the development becoming a form of “ghetto”, and doubts about whether a mix of uses would have an influence on travel behaviour, attention is drawn to NPPF Paragraph 37:

*“Planning policies should aim for a balance of land uses within their area so that people can be encouraged to minimise journey lengths for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities”.*

The City Council has been intentional in proposing land uses that would complement the development of new residential properties on the Langley site. The evidence base clearly reflects this policy. Taking into consideration the significance of a good mix of uses providing opportunities for day to day activities to be undertaken on site NPPF Paragraph 38 states:

*“For larger scale residential developments in particular, planning policies should promote a mix of uses in order to provide opportunities to undertake day-to-day activities including work on site. Where practical, particularly within large-scale developments, key facilities such as primary schools and local shops should be located within walking distance of most properties.”*

The evidence base clearly represents the intentions of National Policy and the assumptions made regarding internalised trip making are therefore entirely reasonable.

The City Council is seeking to form an urban extension that is demonstrably sustainable, and in line with best practice and national policy. NPPF paragraph 70 clearly states:

*“To deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments”*

Again it is entirely reasonable to assume that people will use the facilities provided on site to meet their day to day needs and that trips made from a home origin may have a destination some streets away, but still not leave the site to get there.

Considering the correct level of detail within the Development Plan the City Council has referred to NPPF Paragraph 156:

*Local planning authorities should set out the strategic priorities for the area in the Local Plan. This should include strategic policies to deliver:*

- *the homes and jobs needed in the area;*
- *the provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development;*
- *the provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);*
- *the provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities; and*
- *climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape.*

National Policy dictates that at the plan making stage the “strategic priorities” for the area should be set out. The City Council has clearly complied with this and the evidence base has been produced for this purpose. We would agree that the need for important infrastructure on the local road network

needs to be assessed in detail, at the right time, but it is not a requirement of national policy to undertake this work at the plan making stage.

Nevertheless, the PRISM Model Output has clearly identified congestion hotspots on the local road network, and these will form a part of the scope of future detailed assessment. Also particular attention was given, at an early stage in the process, to strategic infrastructure. This included the rail network, SRN and strategic inter-urban roads. Again this is good practice, but also complies with NPPF paragraph 162:

*Local planning authorities should work with other authorities and providers to:*

- *assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure for transport, water supply, wastewater and its treatment, energy (including heat), telecommunications, utilities, waste, health, social care, education, flood risk and coastal change management, and its ability to meet forecast demands; and*
- *take account of the need for strategic infrastructure including nationally significant infrastructure within their areas.*

In summary, when the soundness of the plan and its evidence base are called into question, reference should be made to NPPF paragraph 182:

*A local planning authority should submit a plan for examination which it considers is “sound” – namely that it is:*

- *Positively prepared – the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development;*
- *Justified – the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;*
- *Effective – the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and*
- *Consistent with national policy – the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework.*

Positively prepared - No evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the assessment has not been objective. The assumptions made and tools used are standard within the industry. PRISM, as the over-arching transport model for the assessment, has been approved for use independently by the Highways Agency and Department for Transport.

There is every expectation that the development will be sustainable in accordance with national policy and every effort has been made to secure this by combining a positive mix of uses and a sustainable transport- led infrastructure strategy.

Justified: The evidence provided is proportionate to the level of detail required to set out strategic priorities for transport infrastructure within the Development Plan.

Effective: The City Council has demonstrated full cooperation and collaboration with neighbouring authorities, Centro and statutory bodies including the Integrated Transport Authority (ITA) and Highways Agency.

Consistent with national policy: The Infrastructure Strategy and the proposed mix of uses clearly shows how the development at Langley and Peddimore can be sustainable.

## **2.1 A note on process**

To help clarify how and why evidence was prepared, we would explain that:

- TA29 was carried out to identify strategic priorities for infrastructure and public transport services at an early stage in the process enabling more detailed work to be undertaken and consultation with the relevant stakeholders;
- Further supporting evidence was produced to consider the likely requirements for infrastructure improvement on the strategic network;
- This work informed the PRISM Model, which then considered the impact of the development with the strategic infrastructure in place;
- It is clear that specific land uses, floor space quantum, use tenure, ancillary development types and quantities, and the location of these are indicative at this stage. It was acknowledged that this would almost certainly change, but assumptions had to be made about what a mixed use sustainable development might comprise, and a demand assessment was made on that basis;
- There is insufficient information upon which to base a detailed planning application type of Transport Assessment, complete with junction assessment and mitigations schemes for approval in principle. In view of the potential for these details to change it is unrealistic to expect that the local infrastructure could be fixed and agreed at this stage; and
- With respect to education facilities on site, it is not possible at this stage to set out exactly how many school places will be provided, whether the schools will be independent, faith based, state funded, academies, or whether there will be a sixth form. Therefore it is unreasonable to suggest that a detailed assessment of home based education trips could be prepared, beyond that prepared in the evidence base.

It is concluded therefore that the evidence base meets the requirements set by National Policy, is sound and provides sufficient guidance for plan led decisions to be made at the planning application stage. When there is more certainty of the development proposals, further evidence should be provided to the relevant decision makers.

Notwithstanding the points made above, we would make the following further observations.

## **3 Response to EXAM 123**

We would thank Mr Bruce for his observations and refer him to Examination Document TA22.

## **4 Response to EXAM 124**

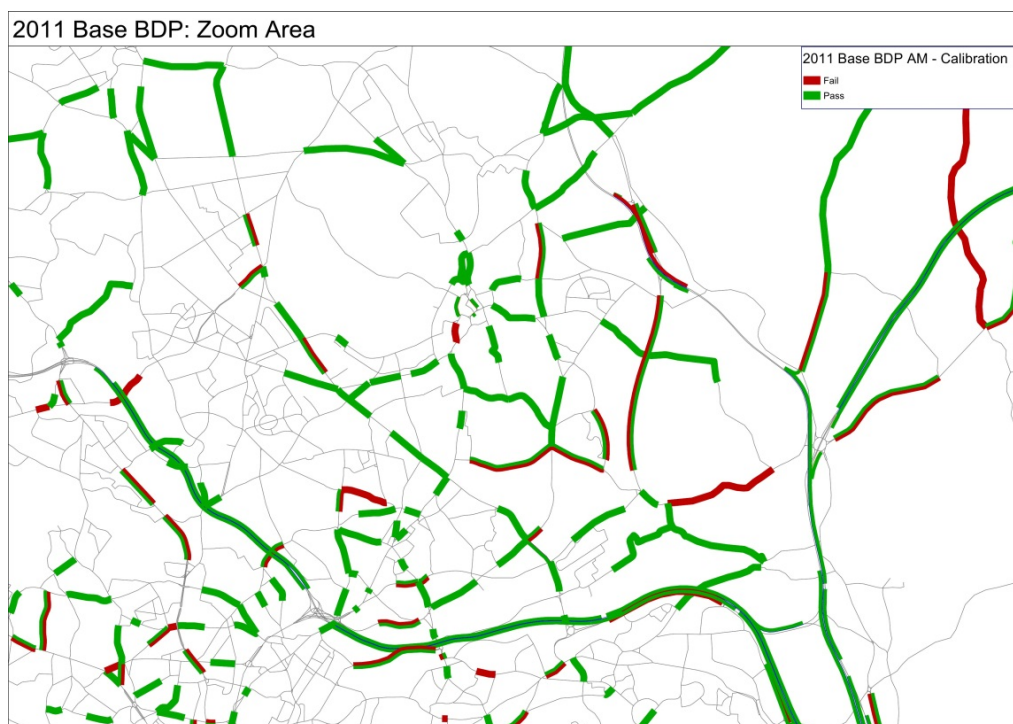
Dr Hoad has failed to present any new evidence that the PRISM Model is not fit for purpose.

WebTAG provides clear guidance in paragraph 3.1.4 –

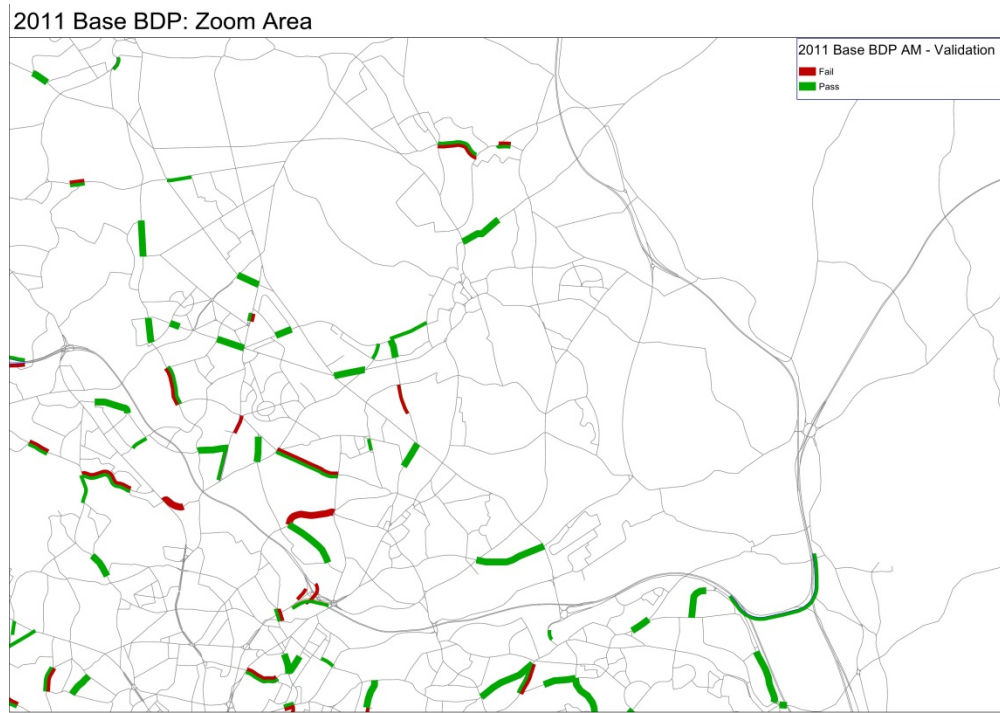
*“The achievement of the validation acceptability guidelines described in TAG does not guarantee that a model is ‘fit for purpose’ and, likewise, a failure to meet the specified validation standards does not mean that a model is not ‘fit for purpose’.”*

The overall level of fit, both overall (presented in the LMVR) and in the area surrounding the development (illustrated below) is around 80%, which is considered to be very good, with significant care and effort expended.

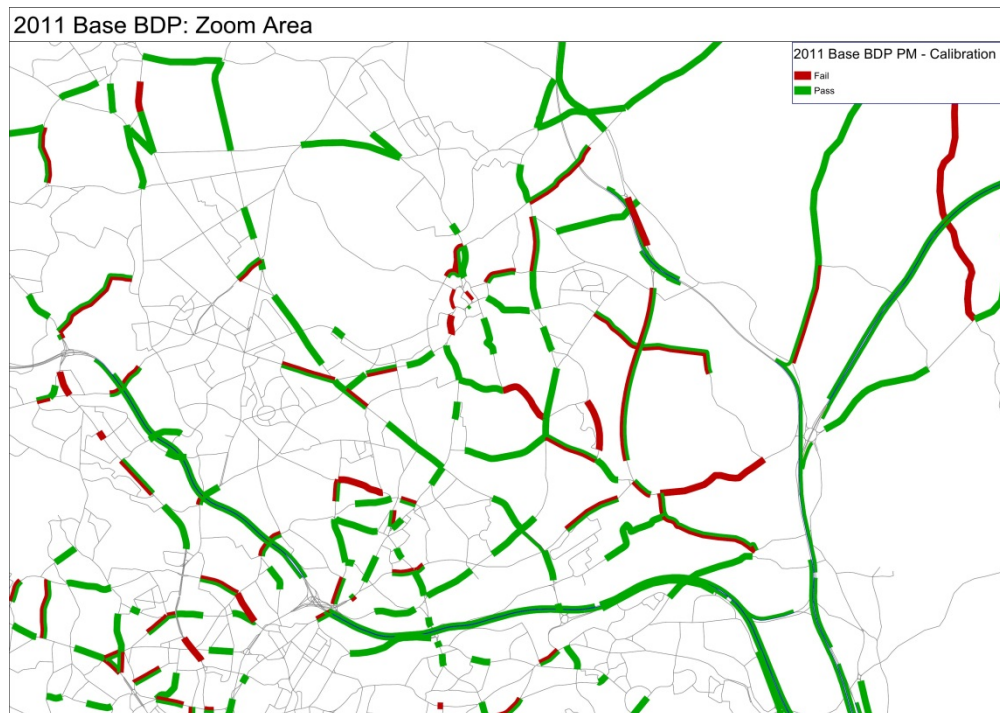
**Figure 2.1 Calibration results – AM**



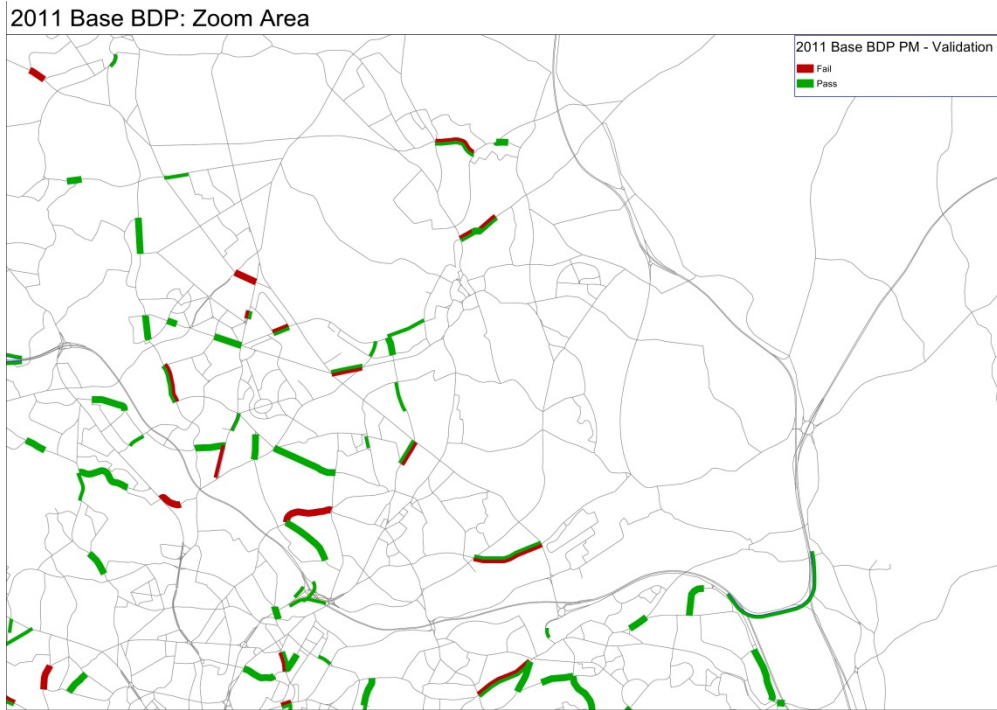
**Figure 2.2 Validation results – AM**



**Figure 2.3 Calibration results – PM**



**Figure 2.3 Validation results – PM**



## 5 Response to EXAM 125

### 5.1 Response to Section: “BCC EXAM111 Overall Response”

Dr Hoad continues to contend that the demand forecasts are incorrect, and that trips have been ‘lost’. No further evidence has been provided to demonstrate that this is the case.

However this is not the case. The reduction of 13% of trips from the final Peddimore trip generation accounts for the removal of employment peak hour trips that start or end in the Langley development. In the early stages of the demand model both the journeys to work starting in Langley and the journeys to work ending in Peddimore [in the morning peak for instance] are calculated. Those starting in Langley are then discounted from the Peddimore trip generation to avoid double counting trips and over-estimating total trip generation. This discount is calculated by treating Peddimore as an employment site alongside all other existing employment sites when calculating trip distribution for Langley. This is explained in paragraph 5.10.4 of TR29.

Dr Hoad’s concern relates to whether the Hybrid Model takes the demand figures before the discount is made or afterwards. We can confirm that the total trip generation (i.e. pre-discount) was used by the Hybrid Model.

## 5.2 Response to Section: “BCC EXAM111 Matter A.a.i”

Dr Hoad questions the assumptions made in report TA29 regarding the internalisation of education and other use trips within the GBD site, but no evidence has been provided to justify a proposal to modify the assumption. However subsequent research has been undertaken to consider the points raised.

- Nationally around 7% of pupils are educated in independent schools (“Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics”, DfE January 2013);
- This figure is heavily influenced by the large number of this type of school in London and the South East (46%, The Independent Schools Commission);
- Around 13% of these pupils are at boarding school (ISC Census 2014);
- Typically 40% of journeys to school are made by car (NTS Table 0403); and
- Transport Trends 2000 Edition, published by the DETR, states that “about one in five ‘school run’ trips in the morning made by car drivers were followed by a work trip. This appears to be low in comparison with other research findings. One particular survey, which was administered through schools in the suburbs of Leeds, found that as many as 60 per cent of drivers continued on to work after dropping their child at school. Another study in the district of Wycombe in Buckinghamshire discovered this proportion to be 40 per cent for secondary school children.”

Using this data it is possible to calculate that after discounting boarding school pupils, 6.09% are educated in independent schools. 40% of these would travel to school by car. 20-60% would be linked trips – which would mean that between 1 and 2% of all education trips might be made externally. Given the higher levels of employment in this area of Birmingham it is likely that linked trips will be higher. This might equate to an average of 40 to 60 new vehicle trips on the network, equating to less than 1 per minute.

This is not considered to be a material impact, particularly given that these trips are unlikely to affect the strategic priorities for investment in infrastructure. Nevertheless this will be considered when detailed proposals for education provision on site are brought forward, once details of the type, size and location of the school or schools are known.

Notwithstanding this, the function of the Hybrid Model means that it assumes that all Langley trips (including education trips) will be external i.e. no account has been taken of internalisation, which is perhaps the ‘worst case’ position to take. Instead trip distribution is calculated as described in report TA6.

In response to Dr Hoad’s comment relating to the ASDA at Minworth, TA29 considers trips to this land use as external trips.

## 5.3 Response to Section: “BCC EXAM111 Matter A.b”

Dr Hoad points out that the GBD AM peak hour flows were converted to average peak hour PRISM flows by a nationally derived factor of 0.7 whereas this section of our EXAM111 document noted



that locally derived data suggests a factor of 0.9 would have been more representative. The result is that the Hybrid Model underestimated the impact of development trips on the external network.

As noted in this section of our EXAM111 document, we acknowledge that 0.9 would have been a more locally appropriate factor, but this resulting under-estimate of development person trip generation was more than compensated for by the assumption that all these trips would generate off-site impacts. As demonstrated by Table 2.1 in the EXAM111 document, the Hybrid Model simulated in the order of 11% more external development car trips than predicted in report TA29, in which case the AM peak hour impacts of the development have been robustly assessed.

#### **5.4 Response to Section: “BCC EXAM111 Matter A.c”**

Dr Hoad suggests that the Hybrid Model was based on the Reference Case network and therefore underestimated the network capacity impacts of such public transport measures as bus lanes.

For clarity, the Hybrid Model was based on the Development Case network, which is today's network plus the committed schemes listed in Table 4.1 of TA6 and the GBD facilitating schemes listed in Table 4.2 of TA6. It is also pointed out that the latter table does not include bus lanes and neither were new bus lanes modelled in the Hybrid Model.

It is acknowledged that the introduction of bus lanes along the length of the A38 would affect the capacity of the corridor for private vehicles. However there are a number of measures being considered to help secure journey time reliability on the corridor, and bus lanes are only one of a number of potential solutions. Due consideration will be given to the proposals as details emerge.

#### **5.5 Response to Section: “BCC EXAM111 Matter B”**

Dr Hoad notes that the Peddimore site access junction and Minworth Island improvement schemes were designed using data based on TA29 and recommends that these should be reassessed in detail based on the Hybrid Model output. We have responded in part on Page 4 about the process used to identify strategic priorities for more detailed consideration.

The fixed demand flows, derived from calculations presented in TA29 are robust as they do not take into account any reassignment due to local congestion, which the Hybrid Model would tend to do. The flows are produced in a simple manner using an industry standard gravity model, using data from Census. The output of this work then informed Hybrid Model and the performance of the schemes are then observable through the Hybrid Model results.

#### **5.6 Response to Section: “BCC EXAM111 Matter C”**

Dr Hoad contends that further assessment of local junction mitigation should be undertaken by the Council before the Plan can be demonstrated to be sound.

The evidence provided is proportionate to the level of detail required to set out strategic priorities for transport infrastructure within the Development Plan, and complies with NPPF paragraph 182 as described above.

## **6 Conclusions**

In summary the City Council is content that the Development Plan and its evidence has been positively prepared, is justified, will be effective and is consistent with National Policy. The Infrastructure Strategy and the proposed mix of uses clearly shows how the development at Langley and Peddimore can be sustainable.

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