

Note / Memo

Haskoning UK Ltd.
Mobility & Infrastructure

To: Edward Leigh
From: Mark Lever-Green
Date: 15 May 2026
Copy: Justin Booij
Our reference: PC7029-ITP-XX-XX-ME-TP-0016
Classification: Project related
Checked by: Geoff Burrage

Subject: Growing Baldock - NHDC Cover Letter

1 Introduction

The purpose of this Note is to respond to informal feedback on the draft Transport Assessment Addendum (TAA) that has been provided by North Hertfordshire District Council through conversation, email and recent Transport Working Group meetings. It is intended to aid review and comprehension of the formal submission by highlighting where specific topics have been covered, amended or more information provided.

All the information presented in this Note is also available elsewhere, primarily in the accompanying TAA and preceding TA. It is not considered essential for this Note to form part of the formal planning submission. Nonetheless, for the purpose of transparency and accountability, there is no reason to prevent publishing this note alongside other planning documents.

2 Thematic Comments

The issues considered to remain outstanding and subject to informal commentary are listed below. These are addressed in the following sections of this Note.

- 1 Presentation of Mitigation
- 2 2029 Interim Scenario
- 3 LG1
- 4 Station Road/North Street
- 5 Bus Service
- 6 Monitor and Manage
- 7 A1(M) Junction 9

2.1 Presentation of Mitigation

“More accessible presentation of the transport mitigations and triggers, with explanations. As Roger explained, a narrative format is easier for everyone, including councillors and members of the public, to understand (and, even more importantly, not misunderstand).”

- Alongside the detailed Gannt chart that sets out the transport mitigations, triggers and dependencies, an additional table has been added to the TAA that seeks to provide a simplified view.

2.2 2029 Interim Scenario

“Clarity on how the 2029 interim scenario in the COMET model relates to the mitigation programme. For instance, the scenario is described as having 650 homes on BA1 (and 200 on BA2), but the current proposal is for the new link road (and active travel underpass) to open at 850 homes. How significant is this, in particular in terms of modelling the impact of traffic displaced to the A1/A505?”

- When considering the appropriate trigger for opening of the new link road, this has been moved back to reflect the earlier delivery of the Station Road/North Road corridor that has been negotiated and agreed by U&C and HCC.
- A sensitivity test of the Station Road/North Road corridor using the VISSIM model to include trip generation associated with 200 additional homes in the interim scenario has been carried out and confirms negligible impact.
- The impact on the A505 will be limited since the link road is not yet in place to link directly from BA1
- There may be a temporary marginal increase in the impact at A1(M) junction 10, however as set out in the TAA, the long-term impact at junction 10 is positive. Section 2.7.2 of the TAA sets out the results of the local plan COMET runs, demonstrating that flows across the junction decrease with mitigation on the North Road corridor. It is therefore not necessary to consider any mitigation.

2.3 LG1

“I asked previously what assumptions are in the COMET model about access arrangements for LG1 (approx 900 homes). What proportion of LG1 traffic enters/leaves from the Norton Road access, and whether there is in the network model a through-route to Western Way, has a bearing on how other traffic routes, in particular at A1 Jn 10 and on Norton Road over the A1. Given that a conclusion of the modelling work is that Norton Road sees a significant increase in traffic flow, this detail may be important.”

- WSP has confirmed that all traffic from LG1 loads onto Norton Road with no through route provided to Western Way. They confirm that this was agreed with HCC through the development of the Local Plan model.
- The methodology and key assumptions underpinning the COMET model have been developed collaboratively with HCC and have been subject to their review and agreement. HCC, as the highway authority, have accepted the modelling approach and its outputs as an appropriate basis for assessing the transport impacts of the development.

2.4 Station Road/North Road

“Some intervention is need on North/Station Road, ideally from first occupation, to make the route safe for unaccompanied children to walk (even if not cycle) into Baldock.”

- Management of the existing vegetation that is encroaching on the footway north and south of the railway bridge could provide up to 0.5m of additional functional width, significantly improving conditions for pedestrians without physical works. U&C could take responsibility for this management throughout the interim period of the development.

2.5 Bus Service

“An adequate bus service is required from first occupation in BA1, largely because cycling will not be an attractive travel option until there is an off-road cycle route from BA1 to Icknield Way. A clear commitment is needed to fund a 7-day bus service between 6am and 11pm. A higher than 30-minute frequency is likely to be needed at peak times, both in terms of capacity and providing convenient connections to rail services and for school and work start/end times.”

- While the entire transport strategy will not be in place from first occupation, people moving into very early phases will still benefit from:
 - Proximity to Baldock railway station and town centre on foot and by bicycle, accepting that the later initially requires on-carriageway cycling.
 - Landscape design that places emphasis on creating people-friendly places that are not dominated by cars, including parking provision and layout.
 - Activation and community building activities coordinated directly by U&C that encourage active local living.
- On all survey work conducted to date on Station Road/North Road, people have been recorded cycling using the existing infrastructure. This is not to dismiss the need for improvements, but to reflect that there will be some who feel confident to cycle prior to the infrastructure being put in place.
- Current proposals include a 30-minute frequency in the interim scenario, i.e. before it is possible to deliver a loop service, and a 15-minute frequency thereafter. It is anticipated that this would include early and late weekday services to make it attractive for those connecting with rail services.

“Flexibility in how bus services are provided: a financial contribution towards existing or new bus services contracted by the Transport Authority may be preferred during at least some phases of the buildout.”

- It is currently proposed for a financial contribution to be made equivalent to the cost of implementing the proposed strategy. HCC will ultimately be responsible for contracting the service and therefore retain control of how the services are managed, in consultation with Urban&Civic.

2.6 Monitor and Manage

“The Monitor and Manage framework is narrow in its focus. It should also include further investment in sustainable travel alternatives: bus services, club cars, micromobility (cycle, cargo bike, e-scooter) hire schemes; and other measures to support sustainable travel choices: personalised travel planning, CCTV (e.g. for the underpass and travel/mobility hubs, if not installed at the outset), etc.”

- It is necessary for U&C to have costed schemes for their budget. These have been prepared based on proxy traffic calming and speed limit interventions for each of the locations listed in the TAA.
- It is agreed that part of the Monitor and Manage approach is the acceptance that other solutions may be more appropriate in time and therefore it is expected that an equivalent sum could be put towards the interventions suggested, subject to agreement with the monitoring group.

2.7 A1 Junction 9

“Acknowledgement that transport mitigations are required (in planning terms) for traffic displaced by the transport mitigation strategy as well as traffic generated by the development.”

“From our discussion on the 22nd, I was confused as to whether the argument being made was that the mitigation proposed at A1 Jn 9 is not necessary in planning terms (which would seem to contradict the assertion at §3.3.1: “As set out in Section 2.6.1, this scheme is proportionate to the impact of the Growing Baldock proposals in the 2043 scenarios”), or that it is likely to be negotiated out on viability grounds.”

“To argue successfully that mitigation at A1 Jn 9 is not required as a planning obligation, the modelling would need to confirm this at two points in time: at full buildout and at 849 units at BA1 (before the new road opens). But see point 2 above.”

- The mitigation scheme presented accounts for the predicted increase in traffic flow as a result of the Growing Baldock development. This is predominantly between the A1(M) south and A505 east. This is illustrated by the table below that sets out the direct impact of development trips and indirect impact of rerouted trips.

To From	A1(M) North		A505 East		A1(M) South		A505 West	
	Dev trips	Rerouted	Dev trips	Rerouted	Dev trips	Rerouted	Dev trips	Rerouted
A1(M) North	-	-	0	61	-	-	0	8
A505 East	0	34	-	-	271	-23	49	40
A1(M) South	-	-	212	-170	-	-	0	-59
A505 West	0	-7	0	65	0	-38	-	-

- The additionally requested junction improvements seek to address an existing perceived deficiency in the current layout on an arm that is not heavily impacted by Growing Baldock, namely the left turn from the A1(M) onto Letchworth Gate.
- Additionally, the proposed signalisation of the existing walking and cycling route across the north of the junction would have very limited impact to future residents of Baldock and would be reliant on further upgrades to the A505 and B197 to provide onward cycle infrastructure. The proposed approach to demonstrate that the additional upgrades could be safeguarded to allow for future implementation by HCC or another party is therefore appropriate.

“If it is accepted (by the LHA and National Highways) that no, or only partial, mitigation at A1 Jn 9 is required in planning terms, will any uncommitted measures move into the Monitor and Manage programme?”

- This is not currently proposed.

“Confirmation from HCC Highways (as asset owner) of what works may be required on the north bridge of the Letchworth Gate (A1 Jn 9) interchange to make it safe for active travel use – in particular, what works may be required to strengthen (if required) and raise the north-side parapet. I note the presence of concrete blocks and damage to the parapet recorded in Google Street View in August 2024: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/T8EpJc3B4qJrJUHr6>”

- If the blocks had been placed for structural reasons, you would expect them to also be in place on the southern bridge, which they are not. Mitigation in the form of improved lane marking and reduced speed limits may remove the need for the blocks to be in place if they are there as a result of historic collisions.
- The bridge is understood to be maintained by HCC. HCC has raised no concerns regarding the proposals.

3 Conclusion

This Note has been prepared to directly respond to informal comments provided by HCC prior to the submission of the TAA. We hope that by setting out this response, the review of the submitted material is more straightforward.

As throughout we have sought to work proactively with HCC, amongst other stakeholders, to present a high-quality proposal that adequately addresses technical matters and overcomes any reservations that may prevent a positive determination. We welcome the general support that is shown by HCC towards the scheme, in particular in relation to the extensive package of transport mitigation that is built into the proposal.

We hope that this puts us in a good position as we approach determination and welcome the opportunity to provide further reassurance or technical support as required.