

Leckhampton with Warden Hill Parish Council
Cheltenham Local Plan Examination:
Submission in response to the Inspector's Questions

Matter 8: Question 3 - Preventing severe traffic impacts

Inspector Ord's recommendation to limit development to the Northern Fields was based solely on landscape evidence. Explicitly she did not consider the issue of traffic congestion. Inspector Clark's judgement of severe cumulative traffic congestion in rejecting the Bovis-Miller appeal in 2015 was in the context of the proposal then for around 1200 new dwellings on the Leckhampton Fields. Following the removal of the Leckhampton strategic allocation from the JCS that number has reduced to 377 new houses on the development west of Farm Lane plus the 250 houses proposed on the Northern Fields. There is also a proposal for 200 new homes at Shurdington which will add significantly to the traffic on the A46.

A total of 627 homes would be expected to add about 190 vehicles into Cheltenham in the peak morning traffic period, mainly on the A46. At the typical vehicle spacing in the A46 queue this could add about 0.8 miles to the queue length. In practice some traffic will divert into Cheltenham via Warden Hill Road, but this also has bad congestion and passes Bournside School. Other traffic is likely to bypass part of the A46 queue by diverting via Leckhampton Lane and through the new estate to the A46 at Kidnappers Lane, passing the proposed site of the new secondary school.

The Parish Council's traffic surveys in Church Road in Sept/Oct 2018 showed the traffic flow there was the same as in surveys in autumn 2012. The road is at maximum capacity in the peak morning period. The disruption of the traffic flow by parents taking children to Leckhampton Primary School significantly reduces the throughput and the expansion of the school will probably make this worse, depending on the success of mitigation measures. A key issue is to avoid Church Road and adjacent roads gridlocking as occurs occasionally. In this regard, traffic to the proposed new secondary school together with the expansion of Leckhampton Primary is of considerable concern.

The Council's surveys on the A46 in 2018 show the A46 traffic throughput at the A46/MPR junction (responsible for the A46 traffic queue) has deteriorated by about 15% since the surveys there in 2013. This is due to increased traffic on MPR occupying a larger proportion of the traffic-light sequence. The precise traffic-light timing makes a big difference to the throughput. It has recently been optimised including reducing as much as possible the time allowed for pedestrians to cross.

A key problem is that the A46 is single lane to within a few car lengths of the junction and there is no space to widen it. The flow is sometimes transiently blocked by vehicles queuing to turn left towards the Park. It could also be blocked by vehicles queuing to turn right into MPR and this is a concern for the proposed new secondary school if substantial numbers of parents returned from the school via the A46 and MPR.

REFERENCE LIST

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[REF 3] Land at Farm Lane/Church Road Leckhampton, Cheltenham, Landscape and Visual Appraisal (Final Report) – Landscape Design Associates, Oxford, 32pp, July 2003. Accessed on 11/10/17. Available at:
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[REF 5] CBC Engaging Communities Project Report, Part 2, Chapter 4 – Leckhampton, GRCC. January 2017. Available at:
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[REF 6] Report to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government by P W Clark MA MRTPI MCMI. Inquiry held on 22 – 25 September and 29 September – 2 October 2015. Land at Kidnappers Lane Leckhampton, Cheltenham. File Ref: APP/B1605/W/14/3001717 11 January 2016 AND Secretary of State covering letter, Julian Pitt, APP/B1605/W/14/3001717, 5 May 2016. Available at:
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[REF 7] Inspector's Preliminary Findings on Green Belt Release Spatial Strategy and Strategic Allocations - EXAM 146, 18th Dec. 2015. Available at: <http://www.gct-jcs.org/PublicConsultation/Gloucester,-Cheltenham-and-Tewkesbury-Joint-Core-Strategy-Examination-Document-Library.aspx>

[REF 8] Inspector's Interim Report – EXAM 232, 31st May 2016. Available at:
<http://www.gct-jcs.org/PublicConsultation/Gloucester,-Cheltenham-and-Tewkesbury-Joint-Core-Strategy-Examination-Document-Library.aspx>

[REF 9] Leckhampton with Warden Hill Parish Council Neighbourhood Planning Revised Local Green Space Application - Dec 2015, EXAM 121A. Available at:
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Cheltenham is section 6, p14-17, extract [E1]. Available at: <http://www.gct-jcs.org/PublicConsultation/Gloucester,-Cheltenham-and-Tewkesbury-Joint-Core-Strategy-Examination-Document-Library.aspx>

[REF 11] ENAT 100 JCS Greenbelt Assessment (Final, Sept. 2011), sections (5.2.6), (5.4.5) and (7.3.8). Available at: <http://www.gct-jcs.org/PublicConsultation/Gloucester,-Cheltenham-and-Tewkesbury-Joint-Core-Strategy-Examination-Document-Library.aspx>

[REF 12] Cotswolds AONB Conservation Board – Position Statement 2010 – Development in the Setting of the Cotswolds AONB.
<https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/setting-position-statement-2016-adopted-with-minor-changes-30616-1.pdf>

JOINT CORE STRATEGY CORE REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- EXAM 121 LHWHPC Priorities for the Leckhampton fields green space
- EXAM 121A Community LGS common ground requested by the Inspector
- ENAT 101 Habitats regulations assessment – screenings report (Dec 2011)
- ENAT 106 Ecological Survey Work (Cheltenham 2010, 2011, 2012, Gloucester 2006, 2010; Tewkesbury 2009, 2010, 2011)
- ENAT 107 Joint Core Strategy Historic Environment Assessment (Mar 2014)
- ENAT 108 Green Infrastructure Strategy (2014)
- EXAM 108A Natural England greenspace guidance June 2010