

Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy

Examination Hearing

Combined notes for Policy SH3 & Policy CP10

Our main concern is the impact of the traffic generated by North Whiteley on Botley. We believe that insufficient attention has been given to this matter and as such the development is inappropriate without effective mitigation measures. Additional infrastructure is required. Botley was the first crossing point of the Hamble River. The road network focuses on the bridge crossing the Hamble at Botley. This section of the A334 is known as Mill Hill. The A334 is particularly narrow and relatively steep at this point and appears similar to a 'canyon'. Recently Hampshire Highways has measured an average of 14,000 vehicles passing through Botley in a period from 7:00am to 7:00pm. The official diversion when Botley is impassable, due to say roadworks, is 11 miles long. There are a couple of local 'rat runs' to the north of the village but these are not suitable for commercial traffic. A preponderance of heavy goods vehicles use the A334 through Botley.

Much traffic entering Botley from the north Whiteley direction turns right at the top of Mill Hill into Winchester St creating significant delays. Most traffic coming from Winchester St turns left down Mill Hill. Because it is an abrupt 90° turn buses, HGVs and similar need to use both carriageways.

Additionally Botley High Street, including Mill Hill, through to the Maypole Roundabout is an Air Quality Management Zone with exceedance levels in excess of 20%. The A334 is designated as an Indivisible Wide Load Route. There is evidence of deterioration of historic buildings due to vibration, specifically the Market Hall Clock Tower has developed a persistent lean in one direction. There is also a Ministry of Transport HGV testing station at the Bottings Industrial Estate in Hillsom Road.

For the majority of the past two decades Botley Parish Council, Eastleigh Borough Council and Hampshire County Council have safeguarded a route for a Botley Bypass. At the turn of the century monies became available but were diverted elsewhere due to a 'crisis' in the need for 'refuge centres'. Very recently Hampshire County Council modified its view on the Botley Bypass into one considering it to be 'aspirational' on the basis of traffic needs. Examining the report however showed that the only apparent basis was the uncertainty over

finance in the present climate. Given the somewhat lengthy period of the plan, which spans several economic cycles and that investment in such infrastructure is a known cure to recession and slow economic growth then the conclusion is at best dubious.

Eastleigh Borough Council is of a different opinion to Hampshire CC and have preserved the route, moreover their draft Local Plan currently out for consultation, includes building a “bypass like” road almost up to the river edge. Contributions to the bypass from proposed developments in Eastleigh are stated in the Eastleigh Local Plan.

Because no Traffic Assessment has been published we have to rely on the North Whitely Access and Movement Strategy (A&M). Before making these observations we would like to draw attention to the Tables in paragraph 2.16 of the Local Plan Part 1 Joint Core Strategy and note the references to traffic congestion on the Botley Road. Also we would draw attention to paragraph 4.1 of the document. Here we note there was active participation, but this was accompanied by a signal failure to listen to and accommodate the concerns of Botley Parish Council with regard to traffic through Botley.

Turning now to the A & M strategy please note in para 2.2.6 the reference to the Traffic Model which was predicated on the Botley Bypass as a means to avoid Botley village.

We would also wish to draw attention to the numerous bus route references which pass through Botley. Whilst we would welcome the enhanced services it clearly denotes the Hedge End destination as very desirable. Not all travel would be by bus.

There are numerous reference to the train service with Botley Station being featured. Note that Botley Station is outside the recognised actual 2km walking limit. The map in Figure 3.1 is relevant. Botley Station has minimal car parking facilities, no ticket office and is totally unsuitable for most disabled people. We strongly disagree with para 3.5.14 and note it is an important route to Winchester and London. The best total travel time is via Hedge End Station which has good facilities and sufficient parking. The total travel time is equally as fast as going to Southampton Airport station. The total cost of using Hedge End is significantly lower than using Southampton Airport. It will mean more traffic through Botley.

One of the potential advantages of North Whiteley to Botley is the proposed secondary school. The two existing secondary schools closest to Botley are at Hedge End and Fair Oak. Botley of these are at or very near to capacity. Given that the Eastleigh Local Plan proposed an additional 2700 houses within Botley and its immediate vicinity there will be a

considerable need for secondary another school. Again the downside is the increased traffic induced although this will be mitigated in part by the enhanced bus services and cycle ways. Note however the cycleways do not extend into Botley. All of the proposed additional houses will be close to the proposed bypass.

We would draw attention to paragraphs 3.37 and 3.5.24 which signify the importance of Hedge End for employment and shopping.

Paragraph 2.2.46 and other make references to the A3051/A334 junction. As an aside note Station Hill is approached by turning right out of the A3051 whereas Mill Hill is reached by turning left. The main significance of para 2.2.46 from a Botley perspective is the reference to managing through traffic in Botley. How?

Paragraphs 6.2.12 and 6.2.13 are particularly relevant in regard to Botley traffic. There are various indications but given the Mill Hill restrictions we seriously question their feasibility. One wonders where traffic queues in Botley could be relocated. Recall Botley is an Air Quality Management Zone all the way to the Maypole Roundabout at Hedge End; stationary and slow moving traffic emits greater pollution. We presume that the scheme of dedicated bus lanes does not apply to Botley unless one considers a two level road such as the London end of the M4! Elsewhere (para 7.2.42) we note that suggestion of providing better bus shelters in Botley. By whom?

We would make the following observations about some of the figures:

Figure 3.1 shows various radii. These are not actual walking distances. Botley station is considerably more than 2km walking distance.

Figure 6.1 indicates proposed traffic calming at the Maypole Roundabout. By whom?

Figure 7.1 and subsequent are useful in showing that Hedge End is always a target destination.

Figure 8.1 we observe that the cycle ways and footways do not go into or through Botley. It is also unclear that they reach Botley Station. Because Botley Station is on the opposite side of the road are we to assume that a suitable crossing point will be introduced?

We would like to bring attention to the Appendices to the Access & Movement Strategy document. These are drawn from the M27 Parallel Study by Messrs Mott Gifford. In particular Figure 2 (Appendix C) shows that need to positively discourage traffic through Botley. How

this is to be achieved is not identified. Figure 3.3 (Appendix A) shows that the whole of Botley village requires traffic management.

Finally we request due note of paragraphs 11.1 and 11.2 which essentially are an apology for the absence of a Transport Assessment, whilst simultaneously declaring the Transport Assessment will provide the design concepts to be worked out in detail to solve any problems. In our view it is not sensible to agree a large development even in principle if there are major aspects which clearly cannot be resolved and no viable options are apparent.

It is our contention that the problems associated with the northern exit of North Whitely in conjunction with the actual condition of the Mill Hill bottleneck and the Botley AQMA are not solvable with the infrastructure as proposed at present.

Clearly if the Botley Bypass was in the whole area scheme the situation would be different. Equally clearly the North Whitely development itself could not sustain the cost of the river crossing.

Accordingly we would ask the Inspector to consider the following possibilities:

- i. Deferment until detailed studies confirm or otherwise the measure suggested in relation to Botley traffic;
- ii. Indication of the need to contribute to the Botley Bypass either financially or by including the road works to match those being proposed by Eastleigh Borough Council;
- iii. To recommend or as is otherwise appropriate to Hampshire County Council that they reconsider the situation of the Botley Bypass with the local context.

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