



## Briefing Report

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<b>Title:</b>	<b>IVER AREA TRANSPORT MODEL: AUTHORISATION</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>27 February 2020</b>
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### SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek authorisation to use the new Iver Area Transport Model for the purposes of assessing the impacts of major schemes and development proposals on the Buckinghamshire highway network and the use of a bespoke charging mechanism.

### RECOMMENDATION

**That:**

- 1) The Iver Area Transport Model is formally authorised for application by BCC. This includes:**
  - a) Using the model to assess planning applications around Iver, including undertaking charged model runs for developers**
  - b) Further development of the business case for the proposed Iver Relief Road**
- 2) Implementation of a bespoke model user charge for this model by developers**

### I. BACKGROUND

The Transport Strategy Service keeps a suite of transport models which are used for various purposes including assessment of the impacts of planning applications on the highway network, local plan evidence and transport scheme business cases. For several years BCC has made some of its transport models (those that are sufficiently detailed) available to developers for their transport assessments for a nominal charge.

In 2019 BCC's Transport Strategy team commissioned Jacobs to develop a strategic transport model encompassing the Iver Parish area. This was deemed necessary to form an evidence base to assess planning applications and appraise forthcoming major schemes around Iver. This included a potential planning application for proposed development around Thorney Lane, Iver; (referred to in the Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan as "Area North of Iver Station") and associated infrastructure.

The model has also been developed for the preparation of a business case for the Iver Relief Road and therefore it was specified that the model needs to be of a sufficient standard for business case development. It is intended that the developed model will also have ongoing, as yet undefined, uses for transport assessment and appraisal in the Ivers area, so it has also been developed with consideration for that ongoing use.

The Iver area will also suffer from the cumulative impacts of several National Strategic Infrastructure Projects, including Heathrow expansion and Western Rail Link to Heathrow and the model has been built to ensure that it is capable of assessing these impacts once data is available.

## **2. ASSESSMENT OF FITNESS FOR PURPOSE**

The model is constructed in a manner consistent with Department for Transport (DfT) Transport Appraisal Guidance (TAG) guidance, and exceeds their calibration / validation of models criteria in a number of areas. It has been shown to be representative of traffic conditions in the immediate vicinity of Iver Village and Richings Park and is therefore considered suitable for the purposes of assessing a potential Planning Application at the Area North of Iver Station and for business case appraisals in the study area.

In addition to the model meeting the TAG criteria, further confidence in the ability of the model to represent current traffic conditions has been shown from the modelled journey times through the study area, which demonstrate that the model reflects observed levels of congestion at all points to a high degree of accuracy.

A secondary purpose intended for the model is that it can be used for other more general assessments of impacts of various transport and development schemes around Iver, such as the secondary impacts of construction of the Western Rail Link to Heathrow, and it is considered that the model is fit for this secondary purpose as well.

## **3. THE NEED FOR A BESPOKE CHARGING MECHANISM**

BCC invested approximately £200,000 in the development of the Iver Area Transport Model. It was considered that at least some of the costs of developing this model should be recouped from the development sites and developers that will use the model as this was its primary function.

A bespoke user charging mechanism was developed in collaboration with the Highways Development Management (HDM) team. This is based on a £80 'cost per unit' to ensure the charge can be applied fairly across all development sites, currently known and future unknown sites that may come forward. For example:

- Thorney Lane South development, Iver: 1,000 dwellings x £80 = £80,000
- Thorney Lane North development, Iver: 500 dwellings x £80 = £40,000

In order not to double charge, it has been agreed that the standard BCC model access and maintenance charges<sup>1</sup> would not be charged on top of this fee, but that the developer(s) would need to also cover Jacobs's time in the application of the model.

Following formal sign off of the Iver Area Transport Model, these charges will be put into practice. Any further development sites that come forward and require the use of the Iver Area Transport Model in the future will be charged on a similar basis.

If the model is used by Network Rail or HAL for assessment of NSIP schemes, charges will also apply.

## **4. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

As with the use of any traffic forecasting model it is possible that it might generate forecasts of highways impacts which may not be wanted or supported by Council policy. The outputs for instance might show that a development cannot go forward (e.g. some site allocations in local plans are not viable), or that an already consented site might have unacceptable impacts on the transport network.

This could present a reputational risk to the Council and must be carefully managed. In this context, the modelling alone should not form the key decision making tool, instead it should form part of an assessment process which considers the wider context. These relationships would primarily be managed by the Highways Development Management team in liaison with Transport Strategy and Jacobs.

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<sup>1</sup> [BCC Application to access Transport Models - https://www.bucksc.gov.uk/media/4513764/application-for-traffic-model-access.pdf](https://www.bucksc.gov.uk/media/4513764/application-for-traffic-model-access.pdf)

Democratic Services have advised that the authorisation of the use of the model does not constitute a key decision requiring Cabinet Member or Cabinet approval. Legal advice has also been sought, which indicated that the sign off process was a matter of officer discretion. Service Director approval is therefore being requested to sign-off this model for use.