

PUBLIC INQUIRY

DIDCOT HIF1 ROAD PROPOSALS

CASE REF: APP/U3100/V/23/3326625.

REBUTTAL

Of the evidence of County Council Witnesses and Origin Technical Note 1 v1

On the “Decide and Provide” traffic forecasting Methodology

Evidence of Roger Williams C Eng MICE

On behalf of POETS

9 February 2024

REBUTTAL

1.0 Introduction. A number of the County Council witnesses and Origin Consultants imply in their evidence that the traffic modelling for the HIF 1 Scheme adopted a “Decide and Provide” forecasting approach. This note shows that this was not the case.

2.0 County Council Witnesses and “Decide and Provide”.

2.1 John Disley. *“a ‘decide and provide’ based approach compliant with OCC policy in this area has been adopted”* (2.45).

However, he also includes a table (2.43) which *summarises what a ‘predict and provide’ methodology could have meant if the Scheme had been assessed and designed in this way”*.

He also suggests that the *“Scheme meets the principles of the ‘decide and provide’ approach because reduced future year traffic and housing assumptions were used”*.

2.2 Claudia Currie. *“The traffic modelling followed a ‘Decide and Provide’ approach, even before the LTCP requirement to do so was adopted, thus ensuring that the scheme forms part of a balanced transport strategy.”* (6.24). *Transport model rate assumptions..... assume that the model growth in the 2034 year only allows 80% of the demand for vehicles.”* (6.25).

2.3 Aron Wisdom. *“The Development of the Scheme has followed a ‘decide and provide’ approach. The Scheme forms part of a balanced transport strategy; the modelling assessment has accounted for modal shift from private vehicles to active travel and public transport”* (5.37)

2.4 Origin (Technical Note pursuant to the Inspector’s Pre Inquiry Note 9 Nov ’23) *“Decide and Provide’ has been taken into account with sustainable travel measures included as key components of the scheme as well as trip reduction assumptions”* (3.9).

2.5 What can be drawn for these statements : . There is a lack of consistency and some contradictions but the impression gained from all these witnesses is that a D&P approach has been followed or has taken into account. In support, a factoring of the traffic generation assumptions for new development by 80% plus the provision of “high standard” slow mode facilities and improved public transport is quoted.

3.0 Background to Decide and Provide

The LTCP including policy 36. Decide and Provide, was adopted in July 2022.

In September 2022 the CC published “Implementing ‘Decide and Provide’ : Requirements for Transport Assessments” . In the introduction to that document Duncan Enright the Cabinet Member for Travel and Development Strategy says *“The ‘decide and provide’ approach decides on a preferred vision and then provides the means to work towards that...”*. The document sets out procedures to be adopted, referring to guidance from

TRICS¹ which was first published early in 2021. Key features of the methodology are the testing of scenarios and the definition of mode shares.

4.0. Rebuttal

4.1. Requirements for a proper ‘Decide and Provide’ approach have not been met. The visioning and scenario testing, as described in the TRICS and OCC advice, has not been undertaken. Additionally, there has been no assessment of mode shares arising from the transport changes. It is significant that there are no explanations in the Transport Assessment, the Environmental Statement or the Statement of Case of the application of a Decide and Provide approach.

4.2 The 80% Factor

Factoring the new traffic generation by 80% is a very crude tool and the basis for doing so is very scanty and not backed up by any scenario testing or mode share statistics.

4.3. Opportunities for Review Missed.

The LTCP ,including Policy 36, will have been in gestation many months before adoption in July 2022 . Also. the TRICS guidance was published in early 2021 . So those responsible for the Scheme would have been aware of the new thinking as the Scheme was developing. It is also relevant that there has been at least one independent audit of the modelling process as the scheme has developed. It’s clear therefore that (a) there would have been awareness of the change in the County Council policies towards Decide and Provide before the Scheme was finally adopted and (b) there will have been opportunities to review these proposals in that light.

Also, in their evidence the Council witnesses could have tested the approach adopted with the procedures set out in the September 2022 County Council document “Implementing Decide and Provide”. They seem to have ignored that document.

5.0 Conclusions

The ‘Decide and Provide’ approach has not been adopted.

The application of an 80% reduction is a crude and inadequate proxy.

Opportunities to update the approach and apply ‘decide and provide’ in Didcot have been missed.

¹ Trip Rate Information Computer System