

## **WRA Open Meeting, 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023 – agenda.**

- 1) Welcome and introductions.**
- 2) Brief history – Birmingham Plan, Outline Planning Consent, Langley Consortium (members), Consultative Group (SPD's and since).**
- 3) Current “Full Application” -- full content – concentrating on highways/traffic impact, in particular on the local highway network.**
- 4) The current Planning submission includes supportive documents comprising the Transport Assessment (March 2021) and Transport Assessment Addendum (November 2022). Those documents make a number of fundamental assumptions:-**
  - a) Based on traffic surveys carried out in 2013 and 2017.**
  - b) The only significant site generated traffic using existing highway network will be employment-based (education, retail, medical and other community facilities will be catered for within the Langley development itself).**
  - c) The pattern of hgv's will be similar to that surveyed in 2017 -- but we now have Amazon as the first phase of Peddimore (65 hgv loading bays + 185 hgv parking bays + 790 car parking bays). The rest of Peddimore Phase 1 is still to be designed plus Phase 2.**
  - d) The development will be carried out in phases comprising some 820 dwellings in 2023-2026, rising to approx.. 2,630 dwellings in 2026-2033 and completing to 5,220 dwellings by 2040. This programme is already running some 2-3 years behind schedule.**

e) The phasing will start from the western boundary (*Springfield Rd, Thimble End Rd, Webster Way*) and will progressively develop towards the northeast of the site.

- 5) The “Indicative Master Plan” assumes that most of the northern half of the development will be accessed via Springfield Rd/Ox Leys Rd/Thimble End Rd and new direct slip roads to the A38; the southern half will be served via Webster Way/Walmley Ash Rd and the new Peddimore Roundabout. BUT we do not know when the new accesses onto the A38 will be made available to newly generated traffic – until then, reliance will be placed on the existing local highway network. We are advised that the new accesses into Langley off the A38 will initially be dedicated to construction traffic to reduce impact on existing roads.
- 6) We now urgently need to examine the above assumptions and the current detailed plans for the proposed new junctions from the site to the existing highway network – refer to overall highway map. In addition to being included in the overall “Full Application”, each of the new junction layouts has been separately submitted for approval – this is needed to allow the Developers to progress the critical Highways Agreements with B’ham CC Highways. It is therefore crucial that we examine and comment on these layouts before B’ham CC approve them.
- 7) Peddimore Roundabout and footbridge over A38 – complete and in use, arm into Langley, initially for construction traffic – will eventually serve the southern area of Langley plus new route for current Walmley traffic via new junction on Calder Drive.

- 8) Webster Way/Calder Drive – existing mini-roundabout to be converted to a signal-controlled junction with arm into site. Bus lane added 160m north of Calder Drive and 70m south) plus new “right turn” lanes. Cyclist and pedestrian crossings.
- 9) Webster Way – new 3-arm junction, not signalised, ghost turn priority junction with additional lane for vehicles turning right into the site. Cycleway and footway crossings on two arms of the junction.
- 10) Fox Hollies Rd/Webster Way/Thimble End Rd junction – existing 3-arm roundabout to be converted into a signal-controlled 4-arm junction. Existing central island to be removed. Cycle and pedestrian crossings. The currently “stopped-up” end of Fox Hollies Rd would be opened up with direct access to Thimble End Rd for buses only\*.
- 11) Thimble End Rd/Signal Hayes Rd junction – western arm to remain “stopped-up”, eastern arm (near Gardeners World) to be signal-controlled, additional “right turning” lane to be introduced, new cyclist and pedestrian crossings.
- Signal Hayes Rd would continue to be open to all traffic but only as far as Langley Heath Farm. A “bus gate” would be created at that point to restrict the vehicular use of Fox Hollies Rd to buses.
- 12) Thimble End Rd. – new 3-arm junction, not signalised, ghost turn priority junction with additional lane for vehicles turning right into the site. Cycleway and footway crossings on two arms of the junction.
- 13) Reddicap Heath Rd/Springfield Rd/ Ox Leys Rd (Anvil PH) – existing mini-roundabout to be converted to a signal-controlled junction with

road widening on Ox Leys Rd side. Cycleway and footway crossings on all four arms.

14) Churchill Rd/Springfield Rd junction – existing uncontrolled T-junction converted into a 4-arm signal-controlled junction with one arm into the site. Road widening to all three existing arms. Cycleway and footway crossings.

15) Ox Leys Rd/A38 slip roads (not the subject of an individual junction application) – off-road slip from A38 northbound to Ox Leys Rd (west side) and on-road slip from Ox Leys Rd to A38 southbound (east side) plus diversion of Bulls Lane. Details are still being developed but we are advised that the two junctions with Ox Leys Rd. will be synchronised signal controlled (visibility over A38 is poor). We are also advised that the section of Ox Leys Rd between Fox Hollies Rd and Springfield Rd will be realigned both horizontally and vertically to improve this accident-prone section of road – still await details. The Consultative Group has raised major concerns that only two slip roads on the A38 are proposed hence:-

a) Langley-bound vehicles travelling south along the A38 towards Minworth must continue to the Peddimore Roundabout then U-turn to join the on-road slip to Ox Leys Rd,

b) Vehicles leaving Langley and wishing to proceed north (towards Lichfield) must proceed south along the A38 then U-turn at the Peddimore Roundabout.

16) We have raised concerns that the phasing of the development and the timing of these new road junctions must be synchronised to ensure that the existing local highway network does not temporarily suffer a disproportionate volume of site-generated traffic. In particular, if the

availability of connection to the Peddimore Roundabout is delayed, then more site traffic will use existing roads that the Transport Assessment predicts.

- 17) A major concern arises from the proposal to widen existing carriageways, construct new cycleways and footways, plus the new bus lanes within existing verges thereby destroying mature trees and hedgerows. Regrettably, the submitted plans do not show these existing trees, hedges, etc and I have raised an objection with B'ham Planning to correct this oversight. In the meanwhile, site measurements across the verge of Webster Way clearly indicate the devastation that would be caused. The proposal for Webster Way would widen the existing 7.3m wide carriageway to approx. 14m near the Calder Rd junction (additional 2 lanes) and to approx. 11m (one additional lane) at the new Webster Way junction plus the approaches to the reconfigured Fox Hollies Rd/Webster Way/Thimble End Rd junction. In addition, it is proposed to construct a 3m wide cycleway plus 2m wide footway for the full length of Webster Way (to supplement the existing 2.4m wide footway on the west side) – ie. another 5m width of hard surfacing. These proposals would obliterate existing copses , the line of single trees plus much of the existing hedgerow.

Similar destruction would occur along Thimble End Rd and Springfield Rd. Whilst carriageway widening might be justified to cater for the new road junctions, we strongly object to the construction of new cycleways and footways on existing highway verges. The perceived demand for these features arises specifically as a result of the Langley development

hence these features, if strictly required, should be provided on the site side of existing hedgerows. They can then be directly linked to the “green corridors” and other “greenways” which are allowed for within the development site. We do not want our verges and mature plantings therein obliterated; this is supposedly a “sustainable development scheme”.

18) The volume of pedestrians and cyclists currently using the local highway network is very low. The Developers’ Transport Assessments refer to a current modal split comprising of only 1% cycling and 11% walking during the peak traffic hours and accepts that these percentages are unlikely to change. We therefore question whether there is sufficient justification for the existing verges to be obliterated with further hard surfacing.

19) As previously noted, many of the proposed junctions include facilities specifically for buses (bus lanes, bus gates) but we cannot assess the relevance until we are informed of the bus routes to/from the development site. B’ham Planners have advised that the site will be served by Rapid Transit/SPRINT buses operating between the site and B’ham city centre – but will these junction proposals accommodate such large vehicles? For example, the opening-up of the “stopped-up”

section of Fox Hollies Rd near the Webster Way/Thimble End Rd junction is perilously close to that proposed 4-arm junction. An extra lane is proposed for buses to merge with other traffic to join Thimble End Rd and a “right turn” lane is shown for buses to leave Thimble End Rd and proceed up Fox Hollies Rd towards the farms – but the close proximity of this access to the main junction would at best create congestion and, at worse looks dangerous. Justification is required for the proposed bus lane on Webster Way and its encroachment into the existing verge – how will buses enter/leave the site and what are the offsite routes (Walmley Ash Rd)?

20) The existing section of Fox Hollies Rd connecting Signal Hayes Rd with Ox Leys Rd is currently well used by traffic heading to Lichfield (A446) or Tamworth (A4091) or the M42 motorway or B’ham via the A38.

Restricting this section of road to “buses only” will receive widespread objections from local residents, particularly when alternative routes will become more congested as a direct result of Langley generated traffic.

21) Consideration must be given to offsite junctions which will be impacted by this development. The Developers’ Traffic Consultants (WSP) have liaised with Highways England re motorway and trunk road junctions and with Local Highway Authorities (mainly B’ham CC) for other local roads. However, detailed analysis has not yet been

published for the impact of Langley based traffic on major junctions on the local highway network. My immediate concern is for the effects on Minworth Island. The Developers' Transport Assessments note that Minworth Island "has recently undergone a partial signalisation scheme". It predicts that, when account is taken of Langley and Peddimore generated traffic, the Average Queue Length will increase during the pm peak hour (17.00 – 18.00hrs) from 9 to 12 pcu (A38 north arm), from 90 to 119pcu (Kingsbury Rd southeast) and 26 to 78pcu (Kingsbury Rd southwest). The increase in queuing during the am peak hour (08.00 – 09.00hrs) will be slightly less. The unit of pcu is "passenger car units"; each car is taken to be 6m long to include normal separation between vehicles. Hence, we are led to expect average peak hour queues to be up to 700m long.

22) B'ham Highways commissioned its own traffic model for Minworth Island in 2015 as a basis for the improvement works carried out in 2016. Those works comprised an additional circulatory carriageway into the central island and signalisation of some of the exits. Account was taken of likely traffic from Langley and Peddimore, albeit we do not know whether that allowance accorded with current projections. That traffic model predicted that the total throughflow would exceed the maximum recommended capacity of the roundabout at several arms even after



the improvement works had been completed. That deficiency was not addressed at the time but, clearly, further major works are required and, given the land constraints, will not be easy to carry out.

In addition to capacity deficiencies, the current layout provides for substandard queuing lengths between exits. When traffic lights turn “red” there is only space for two hgv’s to queue before the previous exit is blocked. Chaos reigns when drivers unfamiliar with the lane system get into the wrong lane and have to make “last minute” changes. There is inadequate weaving lengths between exits! Now that we have Amazon as the first occupier at Peddimore, the number of hgv’s passing through Minworth Island will substantially increase – but there is no agreed scheme to deal with these problems – we need better assurances.

23) The Transport Assessments recognise that the Langley generated traffic will significantly increase the volume of traffic using the existing local highway network. Lindridge Rd and Wylde Green Rd are predicted to suffer a 15% increase; Reddicap Heath Rd, Coleshill Rd, Kingsbury Rd are likely to see a 10-12% increase. Springfield Rd, Walmley Rd, Whitehouse Common Rd, Thimble End Rd and Webster Way are predicted to see a decrease in traffic because they will be relieved by

**drivers diverting to new roads within the Langley development (!!).**

**BUT that will depend on the internal site roads and connections to the existing local highway network being available to accommodate those diverted trips.**

**24) In terms of junction capacity, we are unable to reach any conclusions until the phasing of both the housing and the site infrastructure is clarified. The Transport Assessments note that connection of the site generated traffic to the Peddimore Roundabout will be provided “as soon as reasonably practical during the first phase – to reduce traffic permeating through the surrounding residential areas of Sutton Coldfield.” Phase 1 refers to years 1-3 of the development programme. Again I would draw attention to the assumptions made that trips from within the Langley site for all purposes except employment trips will remain within the site boundary (little impact on existing roads) and that the % of future hgv trips will be the same as the pre-Peddimore model!**

**25) The Transport Assessments have regard to the need for mitigation works at several of the major offsite junctions. Total person trips from Langley are predicted to be between 7,000 and 8,600 during peak hours, of which some 63% will be by car and 19% by public transport.)**

Outline traffic models have been provided for discussion with Highways England (motorway and trunk road junctions) and with B'ham CC, Warwicks CC and Staffs CC for other road junctions. The Developers advise "Financial contributions will be provided by the Applicant (*Langley Consortium*) towards the delivery of the identified mitigation.

The mitigation strategy includes improvement schemes at offsite junctions, monitor and manage strategy, ,,, " It is intended that, for junctions within its control, "B'ham CC will be delivering direct the highway schemes from the S106 contributions for Langley SUE"

Reliance on works to be implemented by B'ham CC using S106 contributions in the past has proved to be somewhat disastrous and we are not convinced that B'ham Highways have even outline plans for future mitigation works (Minworth Island, Tyburn House junction, ---).

We need to be vigilant in assessing the detailed proposals submitted by the Developers and comment before such plans are approved. Walmley

Residents Association will publish information for our members to understand the impact of this development and will actively liaise with B'ham CC, SCTC and the Developers' representatives. The Langley Consultative Group, chaired by our City Councillors, will continue to be our most reliable forum.