

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL – 21 FEBRUARY 2013  
EXECUTIVE – 5 MARCH 2013

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR  
STRATEGIC PLANNING AND TRANSPORT

TRANSPORT MODELLING UPDATE AND DIAMOND RESULTS

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

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**Purpose/Summary of Report**

- This report presents the results of the DIAMOND transport modelling of a range of development scenarios. It is explained that DIAMOND provides key messages in relation to options for large urban extensions, and these are set out in a Non-Technical Summary attached to the report;
- Further work on transport modelling still needs to be completed, including the Harlow-Stansted-Gateway-Transport model, and this delay has implications for the District Plan work programme which are explained further in the District Plan update report.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE**  
**PANEL AND EXECUTIVE: That:**

<b>(A)</b>	<b>the DIAMOND transport modelling work be supported as part of the technical evidence base to inform the District Plan Part 1 - Strategy; and</b>
<b>(B)</b>	<b>East Herts Council implores the relevant transport authorities, including Essex County Council, Hertfordshire County Council, and the Highways Agency, to urgently work to identify a pragmatic solution to the evidence base for long-term transport planning issues, to enable East Herts Council to finalise a consultation draft of its District Plan and enable it to comply with its responsibilities as Local Planning Authority.</b>

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL: That:**

<b>(A)</b>	<b>the DIAMOND transport modelling work be agreed as part of the technical evidence base to inform the District Plan Part 1 - Strategy; and</b>
<b>(B)</b>	<b>East Herts Council implores the relevant transport authorities, including Essex County Council, Hertfordshire County Council, and the Highways Agency, to urgently work to identify a pragmatic solution to the evidence base for long-term transport planning issues, to enable East Herts Council to finalise a consultation draft of its District Plan and enable it to comply with its responsibilities as Local Planning Authority.</b>

1.0 Background

- 1.1 A brief overview of transport modelling was provided to Members at the workshop on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2013, and this is attached at **Essential Reference Paper 'B'**.
- 1.2 This shows that there are a number of transport models, which may be used at different stages in the preparation of the District Plan, and other tools which are too detailed and local for strategic planning and are used in relation to planning applications.
- 1.3 This report explains the wider significance of transport modelling within the District Plan process.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 DIAMOND is a spreadsheet-based tool to enable early testing of the likely impacts of various development options. Transport modelling is a specialist field, and for this reason East Herts Council asked Aecom, the transport consultants appointed to carry out DIAMOND modelling for this District, to prepare a Non-Technical Summary of the outcomes and implications contained in their technical report. The NTS is presented at **Essential Reference Paper 'C'**. A more detailed Technical Note is also available (see Background Papers).
- 2.2 Caution should be exercised in interpretation of the results, particularly in terms of the detailed numbers, because understanding depends to a large extent on technical knowledge

of transport modelling, and for this reason East Herts Council has worked closely with specialists at Hertfordshire County Council to extract the key messages. The County Council's interpretation of the work to date is provided in **Essential Reference Paper 'D'**.

- 2.3 DIAMOND is not a full transport model, and is limited because it cannot assess the impacts of new highways infrastructure. For this reason other modelling work is necessary. However, the additional transport modelling requirements involve a number of external bodies and are more difficult to resolve. The remainder of this report explains these issues.
- 2.4 Paragraph 32 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that "*development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.*" Without further transport modelling, it is not possible to demonstrate the likely impacts of a particular development option when highways infrastructure is provided.
- 2.5 The NPPF also requires that "*the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities*" (Paragraph 182). For this reason, East Herts Council has been working closely with Hertfordshire County Council, Essex County Council, and the Highways Agency as important stakeholders covered by the Duty to Co-Operate, and the bodies responsible for maintenance of the highways network.
- 2.6 There are two major complications arising from these NPPF requirements.
- 2.7 Firstly, there is no accepted definition of 'severe' impacts at present. A definition will emerge over time through practice, interpretation and decisions by the Planning Inspectorate, through the appeals system or in the courts. Prior to this, the transport authorities are working to establish a robust definition, which can be used to provide a clear position on particular development options.
- 2.8 Secondly, it is not possible to either include or reject development options where there is likely to be significant new transport infrastructure required, until such time as sound evidence for or against the options is available. Failure to justify with evidence a decision to either drop or carry forward a particular option is likely to lead to challenge at Examination in Public.

- 2.9 This is of particular concern in relation to the Harlow-Stansted-Gateway Model (HSGTM). East Herts Council has made strenuous efforts to resolve the transport issues, including engagement with the key transport stakeholders.
- 2.10 Despite these efforts, the latest estimate from Essex County Council and Aecom in respect of completion of the HSGTM modelling is June 2013. The transport authorities have advised that it is not possible to say whether, or how much, feasibility work will be necessary in order to have a robust basis to either include or exclude some large development options, notably north of Harlow, until the HSGTM transport modelling has been completed.
- 2.11 This has major implications for progress on the District Plan, because in order to meet levels of objectively assessed housing need in the period after 2021, it is becoming clear that one or more large urban extensions requiring significant transport infrastructure will be required. This is addressed in Agenda Item 5: District Plan Part 1 – Update Report.

### 3.0 Implications/Consultations

- 3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

#### Background Papers

DIAMOND Transport Modelling – Technical Note (January 2013)

[www.eastherts.gov.uk/technicalstudies](http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/technicalstudies)

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