



TECHNICAL NOTE

DATE:	14 March 2022	CONFIDENTIALITY:	Internal
SUBJECT:	CC123 and implications as a result of Smart Motorway rollout pause		
PROJECT:	Calderdale Local Plan Evidence Base	AUTHOR:	Tom Randall
CHECKED:	Simon Pratt	APPROVED:	Simon Pratt

INTRODUCTION

As part of the Local Plan Transport evidence base, WSP have used traffic modelling to inform CMBC's inputs to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Within the Council's IDP (CC123), the M62 Junction 20-25 Smart Motorway scheme is identified as a scheme impacting across the Borough. The scheme was planned to be started in 2023 at the time of publishing the IDP.

A government announcement on the 12th of January has meant that the roll-out of new all lane running Smart Motorway schemes is to be paused until 5 years of safety data is available.

The Inspector has requested confirmation of whether the Government's announcement has any implications for the delivery of the Calderdale Local Plan - in terms of the scale or timing of cumulative growth and/or the delivery of specific allocation sites.

IMPLICATIONS

The IDP included this scheme as it was a significant infrastructure investment being made on the Strategic Road Network and could be seen to be supportive for the local plan, however it was not linked to delivery of specific site allocations.

CC122 – Assessment of Impact on Strategic Road Network – 2021, identified future congestion on the motorway network and suggested potential interventions that could form part of mitigation of the Local Plan impacts. A section of this report was dedicated to discussion of the M62 J20-25 smart motorway scheme that was planned.

The M62 J20-25 scheme aimed to:

- Reduce congestion and delays
- Improve journey time reliability
- Maintain a high standard of safety
- Support economic growth and job creation

As such it had a supporting role for the Local Plan (amongst other local and regional growth aspirations) but this was not its primary purpose.

The scheme as proposed was only designed to improve the capacity and operation of the mainline M62 and did not address the issues at junctions that were highlighted in other parts of CC122.

Further to this, the traffic modelling which has supported the various stages of the Local Plan has not introduced the J20-25 scheme as its impact is both difficult to model and implementation has not been certain given the continuing issues with safety and environmental impacts. This means that the reporting of impacts and subsequent infrastructure has been based on a situation without the smart motorway in place.

CC122 also stated that the mainline of the M62 was operating within acceptable levels and as such the smart motorway scheme would have improved operation but was not critical.

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Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Draft Calderdale Local Plan: Air Quality Assessment (CC149d)

The air quality assessment relating to the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), reported in CC149d, included air quality modelling of a future baseline (2032) scenario, a future baseline plus the Calderdale Local Plan (2032), and a future baseline plus the Calderdale Local Plan with the Bradford Emerging Plan (2032). In all 2032 scenarios reported in CC149d, it was assumed that the M62 J20-25 Smart Motorway scheme would be operational, which was reflected in the air quality model predictions by increasing the modelled vehicle flows by 7% on each relevant road link (see CC149d for details on how this uplift was derived).

Given that the 7% uplift due to the Smart Motorway scheme was applied to the future baseline scenario and future baseline plus Local Plan scenarios, the removal of this uplift would not materially affect the final results and conclusions reported in CC149d because an equivalent level of traffic would be removed from each scenario (i.e. no net change in impacts between the baseline and 'with Local Plan' scenarios).

Whilst it would be expected that the absolute levels of air pollution would decrease with the removal of the Smart Motorway traffic uplift, the future (2032) vehicle fleet is expected, as per Defra's Emissions Factors Toolkit, to be relatively cleaner compared to the present (i.e. increased proportion of zero emission vehicles combined with more stringent vehicle emissions standards). Therefore, the reduction in absolute air pollution levels would not be significant within the context of the results reported in CC149d.

It is noted that National Highways have paused the Smart Motorway programme until 5 years of safety data is available, so it is not inconceivable that it might be revived in the future. On this basis, the results presented in CC149d provide a conservative assessment of vehicle emissions in all future year scenarios.

CONCLUSIONS

The pausing of the Smart Motorway roll out does not mean that there is a need to alter the scale or timing of planned growth or impacts individual sites as a result of:

- It has not been linked to the delivery of specific sites as part of the IDP;
- Its primary aims were improved operations and safety rather than facilitating local plan growth;
- It did not address the areas of concern at junctions as show in CC122;
- Traffic Modelling used for cumulative impact assessment has not included the smart motorway;
- Removal of the 7% uplift to vehicle flows (to reflect operation of the Smart Motorway scheme) in all future modelled scenarios reported in the HRA air quality assessment (CC149d) would not materially change the results and conclusions of the report.

It should also be noted that the scheme may be progressed following the 5 year safety review that is underway, and this would still be within the Local Plan period.