

## Document Control Sheet

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## Introduction and Chronology of Evidence post October 2018 Publication

This note provides a summary of the additional work undertaken to support Highways and Transportation for the Basildon Local Plan at Examination evidence prepared post-October 2018 Publication.

Since the production of the transport evidence base submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in October 2018 there have been some significant developments which have required some additional evidence to be prepared, this document provides a short explanatory note and chronology to document these additional pieces of evidence. These additional studies undertaken in 2019/20 will strengthen the Evidence Base in several key areas and will form part of additional pieces of evidence to support the Examination in Public. To assist the following diagram shows these pieces of evidence in the context of the original submitted evidence.

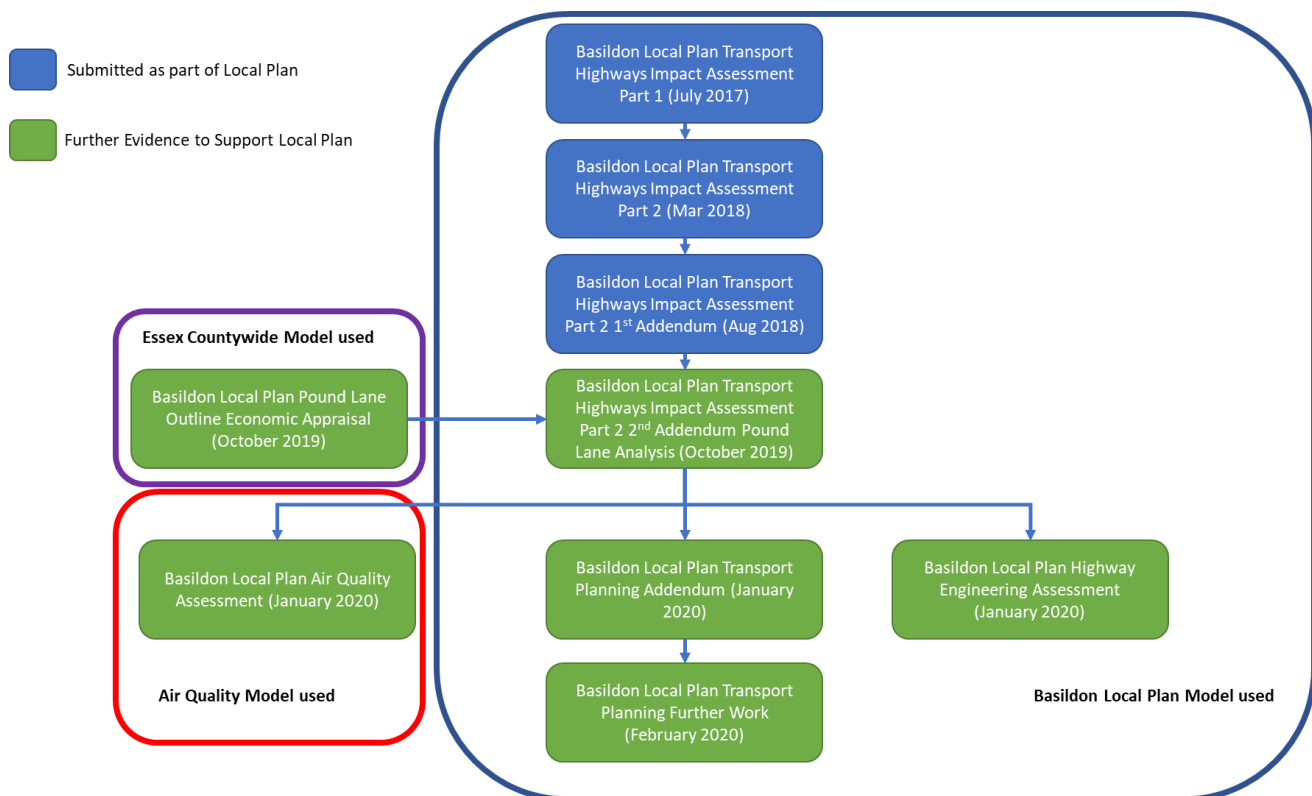


Figure 1: Existing and Additional Highways and Transport Evidence for the Basildon Local Plan

### 1. Transport Planning Evidence

- 1.1 Earlier transport and highway impact appraisal studies, as submitted, considered the need for a new grade-separated junction on the A127 as part of a package of mitigation to accommodate Local Plan growth. As a result, early work to complete an outline economic appraisal of the scheme was undertaken in 2019, concluding that there are grounds for further work to prepare a full business case assessment of the junction.
- 1.2 However, it is acknowledged that until a full business case for an A127 grade-separated junction has been undertaken, funding and delivery of the scheme is uncertain. Therefore, a package of deliverable smaller-scale junction mitigation has been assessed for the Local Plan Examination (as an alternative to the A127 junction) which demonstrates that development growth in Basildon can be accommodated within the Plan period.

- 1.3 The original transport Evidence Base prepared in July 2017 utilised a fixed-demand approach to forecasting traffic flows. This is understood to meet NPPF guidelines for a transport appraisal of Local Plan impacts and offers a good degree of modelling transparency. Fixed-demand assumptions also present a worse-case depiction of forecast traffic demand in peak hours. However, to strengthen and provide confidence with the evidence base, an assessment of mode-shift to sustainable alternatives (walking, cycling, passenger transport) is currently being undertaken to assess its potential impact on local network capacity. This will present a sensitivity test of future network conditions acknowledging elements of variable demand to view alongside the published analysis.

## 2. A127 Air Quality Modelling and Assessment

- 2.1 During 2019, pollution climate modelling was undertaken and determined that there were exceedances on the A127 between east and west Basildon, and roads leading to the business area to the south (East Mayne and Upper Mayne). These areas were shown to have poor air quality that breaks national safe limits ( $40\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$  max annual mean). To address this, an outline business case was submitted to Government (Defra) in April 2019, which included introducing a 50-mph speed limit along the section of the A127 (between Fortune of War and Pound Lane junctions), as well as proposing cycling, electric charging points and travel planning measures to support a shift to more sustainable modes.
- 2.2 As a result of the business case submission, Defra directed Essex County Council and Basildon Borough Council to urgently progress the plans for the 50mph speed limit in June 2019. This has now been approved and is in the process of being implemented. Defra also directed ECC and Basildon BC to undertake a baseline modelling exercise to identify if any charging Clean Air Zone options (excluding the A127 itself) could bring about compliance in the shortest possible time. A formal decision is awaited from Defra on whether a charging CAZ is to be implemented.
- 2.3 Given the identification of these issues and prior to examination of the Basildon Local Plan, a review of Local Plan development and forecast traffic growth assumptions used across both transport and air quality modelling studies is being undertaken. Whilst transport modelling uses Local Plan development projections, air quality modelling works with National Trip End Model (NTEM) local growth assumptions. Both approaches are considered appropriate for their relevant studies, but both present different levels of growth in Basildon. The comparative review aims to understand the differences between the growth assumptions used, evaluate their impact on study conclusions and on the evidence presented at examination.
- 2.4 The Local Plan air quality review will also provide assurance around the policies contained in the Local Plan ensuring that they are robust and have the flexibility to deal with air quality aspects. Moving forward, and to give assurance of a robust assessment, training will be provided to Local Plan case officers around the assessment of planning applications with respect to air quality.

## 3. Highway Engineering Assessment

Finally, design and engineering studies are being undertaken that expand on work undertaken to-date in identifying measures necessary to accommodate Local Plan development. Specific tasks involve engineering reviews of preliminary mitigation scheme designs, and safety-led audits of existing routes to determine further infrastructure required to accommodate future housing and employment.