

Longsight Road Langho

PINS Ref: 6002485 | LPA Ref: 3/2025/0196

Note on the interpretation of the Connectivity Tool Overall Score of 50 for the Appeal site, Langho

Introduction

Peter Blair for the Appellant and Chris Carter for RVBC have been asked by the Inspector to prepare a note to explain how the Connectivity Tool score of 50 (excluding driving) as presented in the Evidence of Mr Blair at page 79 of CD9.7, should be interpreted.

Background to the request

That score was described in Mr Blairs Evidence (CD9.3 Paragraph 3.47) thus “..... *the overall connectivity score (except driving) for the existing site is at an average level in national terms.*”

Mr Carter referred to CD 6.30, the DfT guidance titled Applying the Connectivity Tool and noted a statement that a score of 50 is not an “average” and to a table within a section titled “*Interpreting Connectivity Scores*” to suggest that a score of 50 placed the existing site around the 20th percentile level, such that only 20% of areas in England and Wales were more poorly connected.

Mr Blair queried that on the basis that many of the 100m grid squares in the UK are rural.

An agreed note of how to interpret the results was requested by the Inspector.

Interpreting the Overall Score of 50

Referring to CD 6.30 and the Gov .UK website “*Transport connectivity metric*” the following quote is relevant.

*“To compare the scores across different starting locations, they are scaled such that the starting location with the best score receives a scaled score of 100 and all other areas receive a score which is relative to that. As such, **a starting location with a score of 50 is considered to be half as ‘connected’ as the best location in England and Wales.**”*

(authors bolding)

The document mentions that the best connected area in England and Wales is Central London

That is the answer to what the overall score of 50 (for travel modes excluding driving) means in relation to the existing site location.

Interpreting the comment that an overall score of 50 is at the 20th %ile level

It is agreed between the parties that reference to application site being at the 20th %ile level of connectivity of land within England and Wales by RVBC is withdrawn.

The table, on page 6/27 of the PDF in CD6.30 shows that the 20th %ile score for Overall (all modes exc driving) would be 52.7. As the Inspector requested an explanation of how to interpret the Connectivity Tool 20th %ile level of connectivity, that is set out below.

The relevant text is on page 5 of CD6-30. *“A location which scores at the 10th percentile means that location is more connected than 10% of Output Areas across England and Wales. Given that Output Areas have similar populations to one another, this means that a score at the 10th percentile is (approximately) more connected than 10% of the (residential) population in England and Wales.”*

Importantly, this is 10%ile of Output Areas, not 10th %ile of the 100m squares of land area that make up the Connectivity Tool. The term Output Area is not defined in the Connectivity Tool Guidance, but is assumed to refer to this ONS definition as population is referred to elsewhere in the note, *“Population is measured at the **Output Area (OA)** level, which is the smallest geographic unit for census statistics, typically containing 40–250 households and 100–625 residents.”*

As the key parameter of an OA is for them to have a similar population size, the area covered by an output area varies greatly between urban and rural situations. There may be more than one output area in a single tower block, whereas in less populated areas they could cover many tens of square miles.

It is reasonable to assume that the lower 20th %ile of output areas in terms of connectivity will be the lower population density, i.e. more rural, areas where there are fewer alternatives to driving and fewer destinations to travel to. As those areas will also have the lowest population densities, they are likely to be the largest Output Areas in terms of area. Government statistics show that, as of April 2021, only 10.5% of England’s land area is built up, and Mr Blair has undertaken a GIS exercise showing that the largest 20th %ile Output areas equate to 93% of the area of England and Wales.

This is relevant because when the connectivity overall score of 50 is said to be at the 20% ile level of output area connectivity, it means two things. For the purpose of the Inquiry, it is agreed that a score of 50 correlates reasonably well with:

- a level of connectivity better than that enjoyed by c.20% of the population of England and Wales
- a level of connectivity better than that enjoyed by c.90% of the land area of England and Wales.