Reply to a letter from Jackson Planning dated 19th November 2020

I write in response to a letter from Jackson Planning to Andy Watt, 19th November 2020 responding to a critique of the needs assessment for a crematorium at Turners Hill.
I have followed the section headings in that letter.

Assessment

"The Beacon Dodsworth report is entirely supportive of the need case for the above application."

I believe this to be an exaggeration.

I do not support the objection because there is insufficient information to justify the apparent mismatch between the number of cremations and the core capacity.

I cannot judge whether our figures are more or less favourable to the applicant.

Limitations

I was not specifically asked to address the rebuttal nor to consider alternative sites or scope for additional capacity. The rebuttal contains no new relevant arguments or data.

A layman's eye would suggest a site between Haywards Heath and Uckfield would be worth examining to serve the maximally distant areas efficiently. Of course, this might not be possible on other grounds.

Qualitative questions were out of scope, requiring specialist knowledge of the funeral business and the local area.

The questions in **10.5** were to serve to highlight the difficulty of linking qualitative and quantitative needs. Apparently they demonstrate a misunderstanding on my part, but unfortunately are not answered. I believe the answers to these questions (which a bereaved family would surely ask) would indicate that a simplistic approach to peak capacity measures is unhelpful. A spike in one year's peak would alter the measure for future years while not representing a trend.

I was not attempting to discredit the use of a peak measure, but to state that there are other measures possible. I believe that taking the worst week rather than the worst month is technically "extreme" in a data sense.

Speed of Funeral Traffic

I have not disagreed that the 60% formula is well-established, simply that it has no known source or evidence base. I have stated that there is no agreement about what normal speeds are and have used different sources to demonstrate that.

Para 2 supports my assertion that the software and data is a black box. What real-time information has been used? This suggests some point-in-time speeds for each road section. But which point-in-time?

"Therefore, this eliminates the risk of limiting speeds by plotting via distance, this would produce an average fluctuation across all road types". I do not understand this sentence.

Para 3 is confusing. Both methods are non-overlapping. *"This is achieved using centroid catchment;"* As far as I can understand this, it means that a LSOA is included if its centroid (geographical?, population-weighted?) is in the isochrone polygon. I agree that it would make PMA's population totals less than BD's. My assertion stands that LSOAs are too coarse to provide accurate catchment models.

It is not clear that the under- or over-estimating of population in general supports the applicant's case.

"It is perhaps unnecessary to say more about the minutiae of two different statistical modelling exercises, the outputs of which essentially agree."

The exercises are similar but use different parameters and granularity of data and because of this, two important outputs are quite different:

Population "lost" to Surrey and Sussex at 30 minutes:
44,773 (PMA) vs 75,920 (BD)

and population "gained" by Turners Hill at 30 minutes:
88,305 (PMA) vs 114,978 (BD)

The relative difference in estimated deaths "transferred" from Surrey and Sussex to Turners Hill is greater:

375 -> 807 (PMA) and 787 -> 1,134 (BD). i.e. BD calculate that more than twice as many deaths will be "lost" from Surrey and Sussex's 30 minute catchment, and 40% more deaths will be "gained" by Turners Hill.

Given the weight attached to these figures in the quantitative needs analysis, I do not consider that they essentially agree.

Office of [sic] National Statistics Data (ONS)

I do not question that the ONS is the official UK statistics body and therefore the most reliable source of population data.
I have stated that ONS themselves produce projections that have a large variation depending on different assumptions. I have also said that one assumption in the standard

data is that net migration (among other factors) will continue at the same rate as in the last few years; they do not usually model government policy that has yet to take effect.
I believe it is reasonable to state that there is a range of projected population figures.
Having said that, we have used the same standard figures in all the catchment modelling, but these are all for 2018, i.e. measured, not projected.

Qualitative Need

I have not addressed this.

Alternatives

In 7.7, 7.8 I was challenging the assertion (in **7.8**):

"This demographic context underlines the need for the new crematorium at Turners Hill in order to meet both the current and future quantitative and qualitative need for cremation among the growing and ageing local population."

Even if you demonstrate that more crematorium capacity is required, it would not, of necessity, mean the proposed Turners Hill crematorium would be the only way of achieving it.

Conclusion

We have shown that 122,000+ people live closer to the proposed Turners Hill crematorium than any existing crematorium. It is interesting that this figure is the focus (indeed, "critical") rather than the population unreached within 30 mins or the 38,847 (BD) brought within 30 mins for the first time (43,532, PMA).

Of the 112,310 that are made nearer to Turners Hill than Surrey and Sussex, the breakdown is as follows:

Transfer from	Transfer to	2018 population	Time improvement (minutes)
Surrey and Sussex	Turners Hill	33,031	0-5
Surrey and Sussex	Turners Hill	52,340	5-10
Surrey and Sussex	Turners Hill	26,939	10-15

This is illustrated in maps, Fig A and Fig B

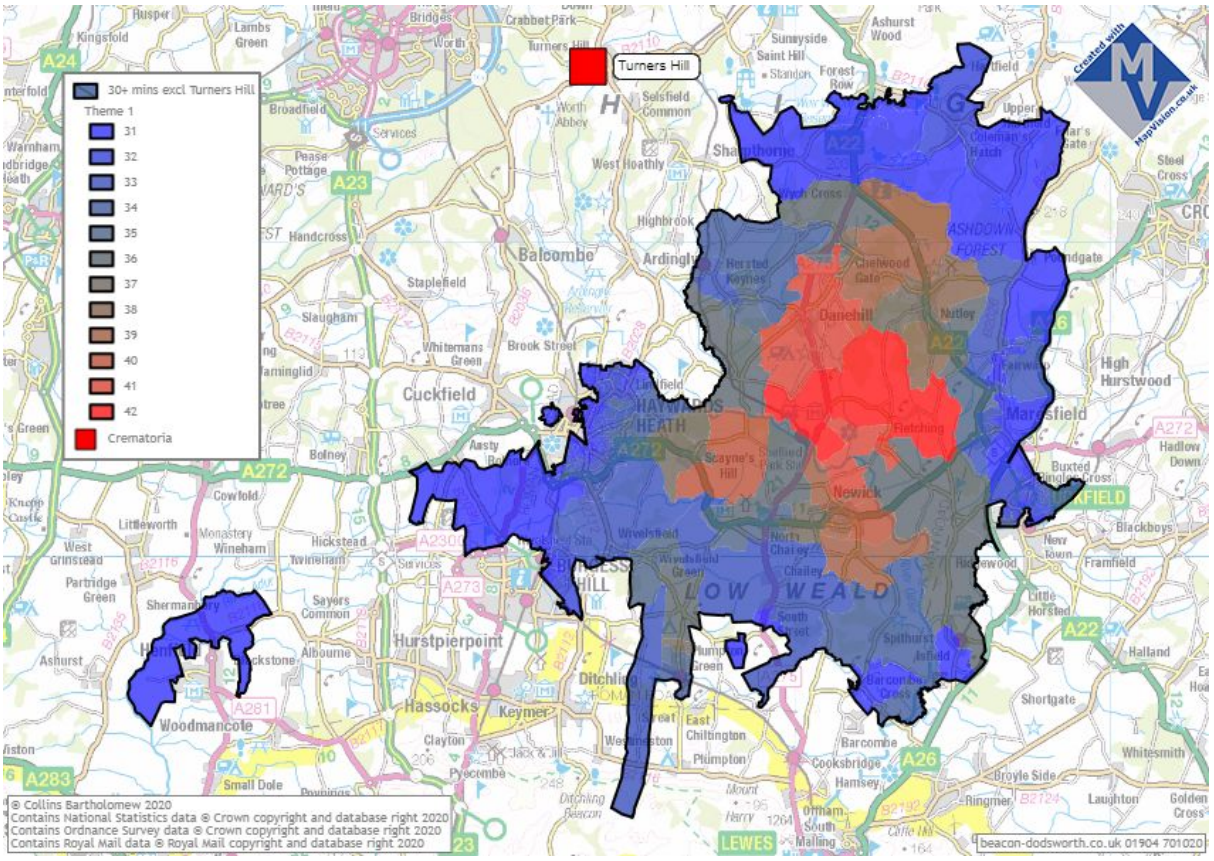

Fig A: Output areas in the 30-45 minutes drive-time catchment excluding Turners Hill

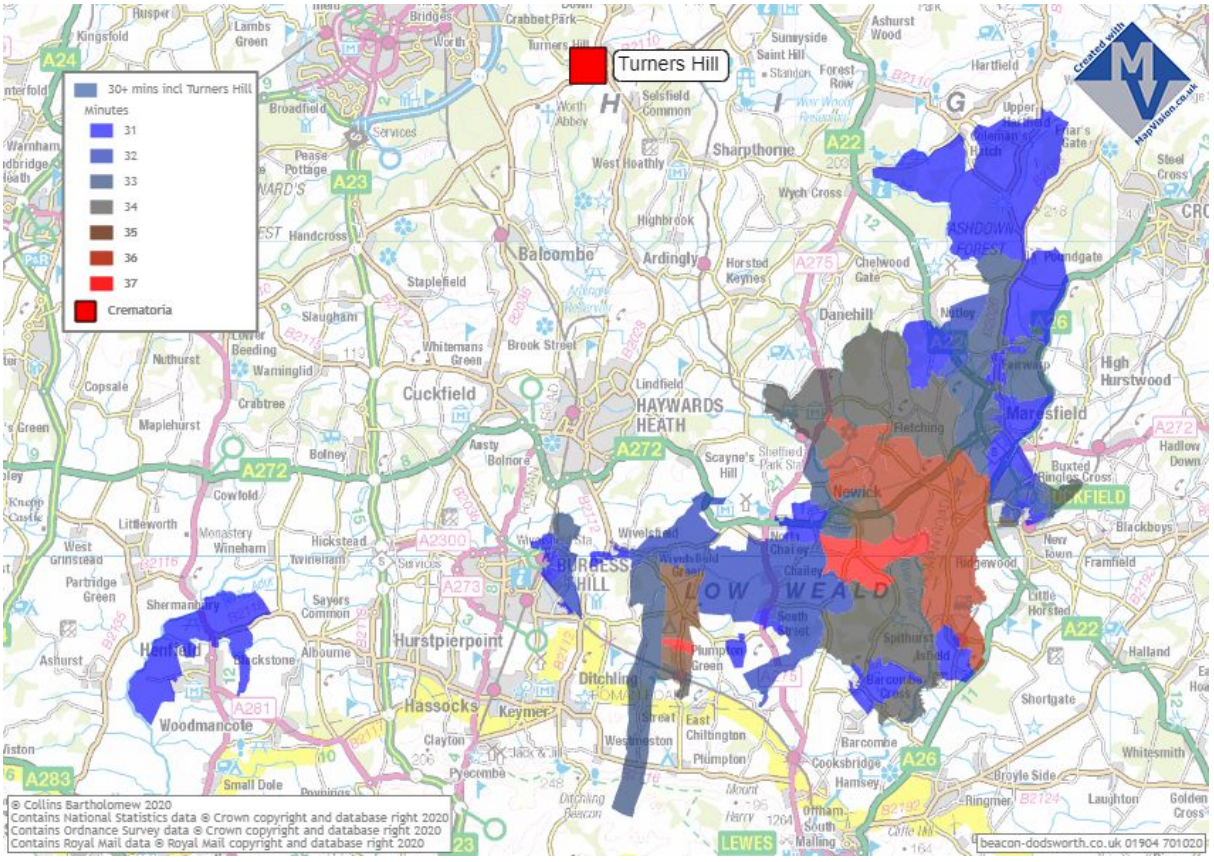

Fig B: Output areas in the 30-45 minutes drive-time catchment including Turners Hill

For completeness, Fig C shows the full drive-time catchments with the 30 minute boundary marked in black.

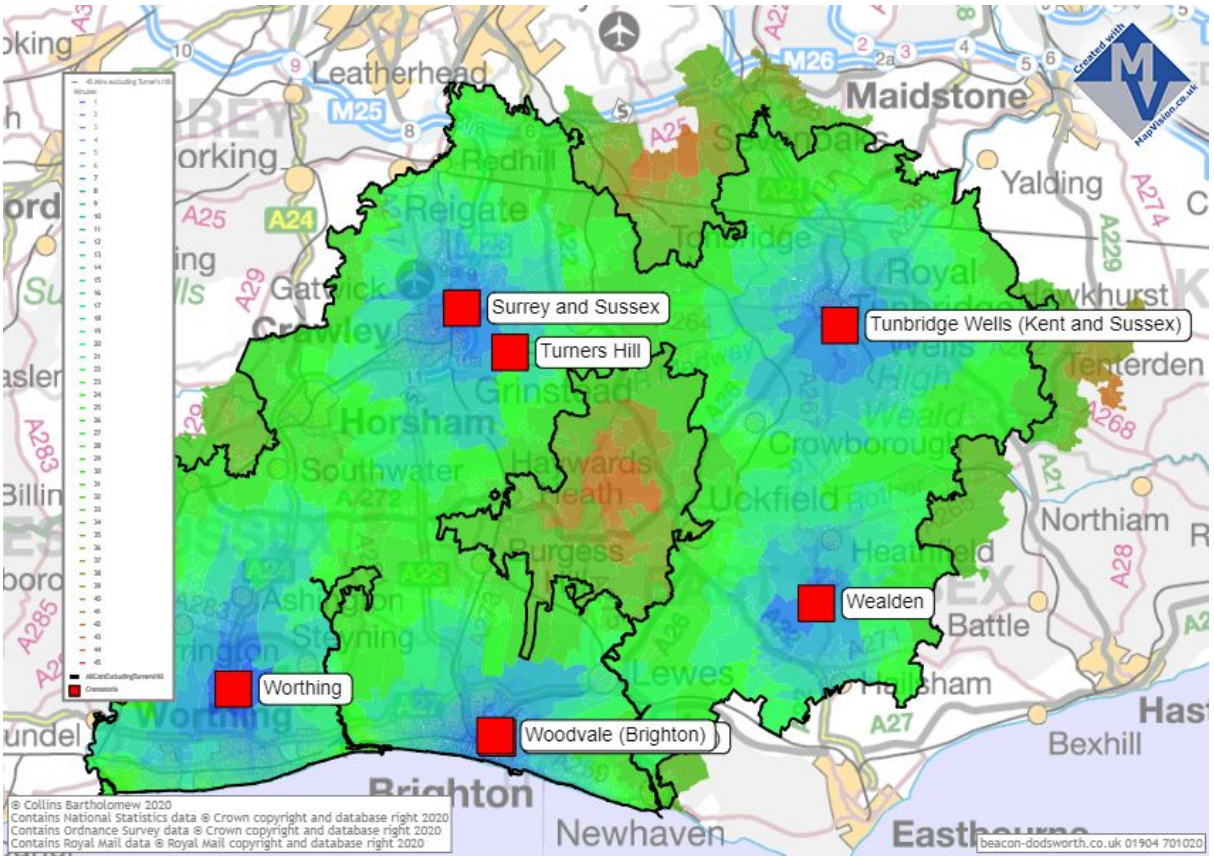

Fig C: Constrained drive-time catchments excluding Turners Hill

The largest drive-time for any Output Area in the “gap” is 37 minutes including Turners Hill, and 41 minutes excluding Turners Hill. These figures replace the 39 minutes stated in 8.31 of the BD report.