

By Friday 13th

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Regrettably, the analysis that has been presented to you is deficient. That is because it has been based on modelling that does not take proper account of local circumstances. I have been waiting for more detailed analysis of certain specific local impacts, but even in the document submitted last Friday this has not been forthcoming.

I stress at the outset that I do not want you to think that what I have to say is a content-free appeal from a NIMBY-minded village. The problem is that the issues raised by us at the outset have not been subject to proper assessment, yet they are real. We argue that they are sufficient for you to demand further analysis now, and not allow the LDP to pass on the basis that Highways will pilot their proposals, and then when they turn out to be unsustainable Highways will have no solution.

If I may refer you first to my exhibit A. The proposal for pre-signalling set out in Eb004d will place a traffic light at the position shown. The analysis makes no allowance for the complexity of traffic activity in that vicinity. You will see from the photographs that vehicles approaching either from Little Baddow Road or from the A414 may seek to turn into the road called Eves Corner – that's not the Eves Corner junction itself. There are good reasons for this as there are nearby shops, a GP surgery, and a car parking area that parents use to access the Heathcote School at Eves Corner junction. More importantly, this will become a rat-run for vehicles trying to access the A414 westwards from Little Baddow Road, who will want to cut the corner. Because of the parking, and often cars waiting for others to leave, **this area is persistently congested already**. The matter is made worse by illegal stopping on double yellow lines by locals seeking to access the cash machine on Little Baddow Road right on that junction, and by a bus stop. If pre-signalling is introduced as proposed, the additional queuing down single width carriageway will create a logjam at the junction with Eves Corner – the road. The result, quite simply, is that traffic trying to access Little Baddow Road from the A414 will back up onto the A414 causing blockages on the Eves Corner junction itself – only a few vehicles are necessary for this to occur. / No!

Also, immediately North of this area, vehicles parked legally outside of housing reduce the carriageway to single width. Several of these houses have no off-road parking option available. Then, when queues form to wait at the pre-signal lights, **this** section will logjam.

It is interesting to note in this context that, although in EB004b the **observed** queue length in the am peak period in October 2013 from Little Baddow Road onto Eves Corner was 4 vehicles, the data generated by the model in the document submitted to you last Friday suggests a mean max queue for 2013 of 0.8 vehicles. This is puzzling. What is also puzzling is how the addition of the Maldon development to 2026 base case data can result in a **reduction** in delays exiting onto the A414 from Little Baddow Road! Anyway, the model indicates roughly a 9 times multiple will arise with pre-signalling, and if we apply the model's multiple to the actual observed figure, we finish up with a peak queue of 36 vehicles, which will back up right through to the further area shown of school run parking. In that area an extensive section of road is reduced to single carriageway this time by the school run vehicles, creating a further potential for logjam. Photographs of these logjam sites appear in Exhibit A, pages 2 and 3. These logjams will, of course, affect not only cars but also our highly restricted peak time bus service.

Secondly, may I refer you to my exhibit B. Just like the majority of residents of Maldon, the bulk of working residents of Little Baddow will seek to access Chelmsford or London, or return from them, at peak times. From Little Baddow there are only 2 principal routes, marked 1 and 2, to Chelmsford. The northern route (that's route 2) floods frequently and become impassable where it transits the Chelmer and Blackwater river, forcing all traffic down route 1 through Eves Corner.

There are some 650 houses in Little Baddow and no material local employment. Significant peak time delays at Eves Corner will force more traffic to consider alternatives in order to access Chelmsford. The only possibilities are roads with extended single lane sections with passing places, and blind turns. All have at least sections that are Protected Lanes. Chelmsford City Council's LDP includes Policy DC15 which states that any proposals which would give rise to a material increase in the amount of traffic using Protected Lanes will not be permitted. Therefore, the proposed Maldon LDP and the existing Chelmsford City LDP are in this respect in direct conflict. 4 p.c.s

This will be exacerbated by rat-running by Maldon residents. For the 1375 homes to be built in South Maldon, the bulk will comprise at least one adult of working age, and the obvious route if uncongested for these people would be along the A414.

However, in EB004d Essex Highways note that there has been **no** growth in peak traffic through Danbury between 2000 and 2013. This is despite the inevitable growth in commuting from Maldon that should have occurred in that time. How can this be? It is, I submit, because the degree of congestion already faced by peak travellers through Danbury has reached the stage where drivers will do almost anything to avoid getting stuck there. Highways' recent statistics show that Eves Corner junction is already at 110% of capacity in the AM peak. In other words, the junction is already at saturation and a significant proportion of the additional traffic is already finding rat-runs.

One possible example is as shown in my exhibit C. There may be others on the south side of the A414 through Danbury on which I cannot speak, but the route I show, parts of which is a Protected Lane, has the advantage that it brings vehicles back to the A414 beyond the Well Lane junction. At present, this is not ideal westbound because it is so narrow and with restricted views, and because the flow of traffic along the A414 makes it very hard to join the A414 beyond central Danbury. However, the proposed introduction of lights at Well Lane will create gaps in the traffic, easing the problem of A414 access and encouraging the use of the route shown in exhibit C. And of course when the new rail station at Boreham is delivered this will encourage rat-running through route 2, also involving Protected Lanes.

Essex Highways do not explain why A414 traffic that has shown an increasing tendency to rat-run in recent years, and a limit on tolerance of queuing on the main through route, will not hugely increase its tendency to rat-run when faced with a **three-times** increase in average delay **from today's base case** in the morning westbound run, and a nearly **8 times** increase in the average delay on the evening run. These are the actual figures contained in the document passed to you last Friday. The reference from Essex Highways to an increase in delay of some 5 minutes due to the Maldon development assumes roughly an 80% growth in queue length without it, which also makes no allowance for growth in rat-running.

In short, sir, I am arguing that -

1. The **analysis** that has been undertaken has been overly preoccupied with what can be done to mitigate the extra impact on A414 traffic, with inadequate attention to what will happen on the access and egress roads
2. The modelling that has been used to supply the outcome data for Eves Corner cannot be relied upon, in part because as Highways admits it is founded on a shallow knowledge base about pre-signalling in the context of Eves Corner, in part because it is dealing with roads running in excess of capacity which Highways admits give cause for caution, but also because it cannot account for delays caused to A414 traffic by back-ups from Little Baddow Road
3. Furthermore, that there is no evidence that rat-running on minor roads and Protected Lanes will not happen, and every reason to believe, with the significant additional delays involved on the A414 that the model predicts, that it will

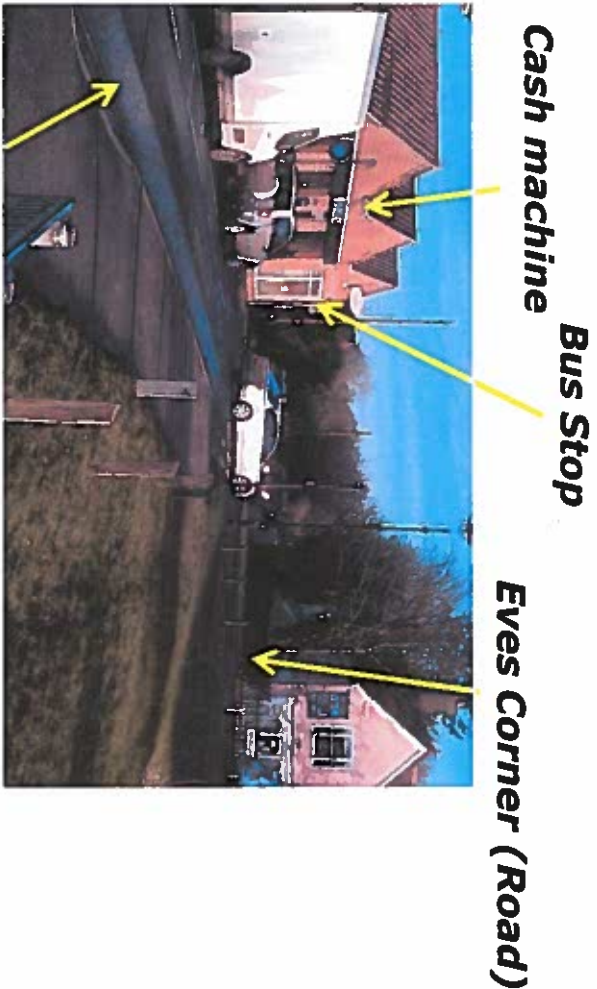
4. As a consequence, that Maldon's proposed LDP is in direct conflict with that of Chelmsford at least in respect of additional potential traffic through Protected Lanes
5. That allowing Maldon's LDP to be approved, with pilot testing of Eves Corner pre-signalling to be undertaken thereafter as proposed in EB004d para 4.4, could condemn Maldon drivers and Little Baddow residents to an unsustainable, adverse impact on their daily lives. The access and egress options for Little Baddow in particular are limited, and they are vulnerable to gridlock
6. And that accordingly, for all these reasons, you should refuse to approve Maldon's LDP until Essex Highways has come up with a better solution, or at least has run a prior pilot of several months' duration – long enough to allow for patterns of rat-running to emerge – in order to demonstrate whether or not the concerns I have raised on behalf of Little Baddow Parish Council are in practice unfounded.

I submit that the Maldon LDP **as it stands and in respect of its impact on transport and travel through Eves Corner junction**, has not provided the necessary evidence that it is sustainable within the meaning of that word in National Planning Practice Guidance.

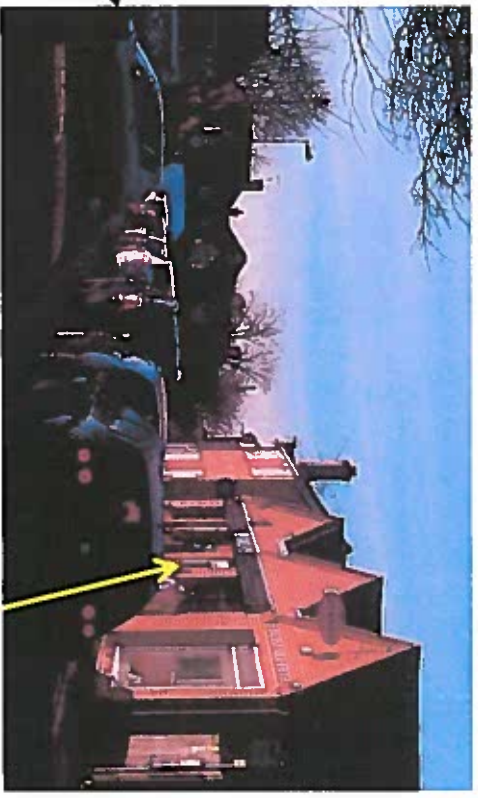
(If challenged on this last -

- It damages the conditions in which people work and travel (Clause 9)
- It breaches specific approved planning policies in Chelmsford's LDP(Clause 14))

Exhibit A (Page 2)



**Little Baddow Road
(from Eves Corner (Jctn))**



**Little Baddow Road
(towards Eves Corner (Jctn))**

Cash machine

Exhibit A (Page 3)

**Cars parked legally
Little Baddow Road**



**St John's School Run parking
(viewed northbound)**



**Cars waiting to use
Eves Corner (road) car park**



**St John's School Run parking
(viewed southbound)**



Exhibit B

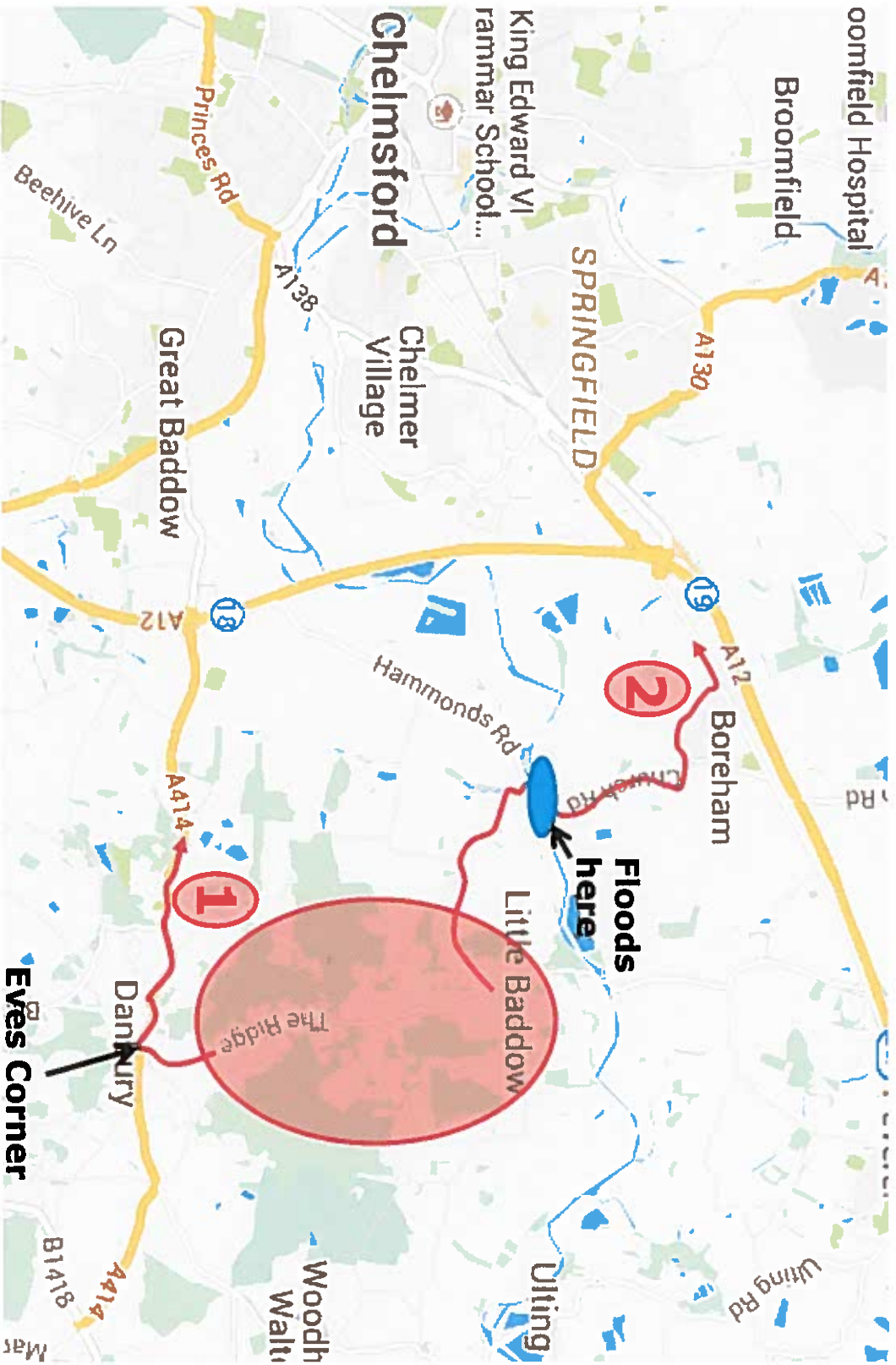


Exhibit C

