

Maldon Local Development Plan Examination
Chelmsford City Council Hearing Statement to Matter 3

Representation References:
0145-5273-S2-12, 0145-5274-S2, 0145-5276-I1-12

Matter 3: Strategic Housing Growth – North Heybridge Garden Suburbs
S2, S3 and S4 (also H1, H2, I1 and I2 – but only as they affect these sites)

Issue 1: Whether policies S2, S3 and S4 with their associated text dealing with North Heybridge Garden Suburbs is justified by the evidence, consistent with national policy, and effective

Q4: Are these sites also affected by the necessary highway improvements at Eves Corner at Danbury? (See also my similar question on Matter 4). Should policy S4 mention both this and any mitigation measures necessary at Hatfield Peverel?

Q6: How much development can take place on each allocated site before a specified piece of infrastructure in CED10 Appendix 13 has to be provided?

Q14: In the policy S4 general development principles:

- (b) Is the road network capacity capable of accommodating the developments?**
- (c) What highway mitigation measures and junction improvements?**

Response

This Hearing Statement should also be read in conjunction with Chelmsford City Council's (CCC) Hearing Statements in respect of Matters 2, 4 and 10.

1. CCC has sought to avoid repeating comments made in its other Hearing Statements. In brief, the City Council considers that the Local Development Plan (LDP) transport and access evidence base¹ indicates that the new Garden Suburbs are predicted to have a direct adverse cross-boundary impact on Eves Corner junction and Well Lane mini-roundabout in Danbury. From the City Council's review of the LDF transport and access evidence base, these junctions are currently operating over capacity during peak times on their A414 arms. This means drivers can experience lengthy queues and congestion. Therefore, CCC considers that these junctions would be incapable of accommodating additional traffic flows from the planned developments in their current form.
2. CCC is satisfied that whilst not a perfect solution, the potential traffic impacts at Well Lane mini-roundabout in 2026 could be potentially mitigated by the implementation of a new priority junction. The effectiveness of a priority junction is indicated in Table 5-2 of EB004d². As such, CCC specifically requests that the LDP and Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) be modified to require this mitigation measure as part of strategic sites S2(a) and S2(d). Please refer to the City Council's Hearing Statement on Matter 2.

¹ Including Refs: EB004a, EB004b, EB004c and EB004d

² Technical Note - Impact of Proposed Development Sites in Heybridge and South Maldon at Eves Corner and Well Lane Junctions on A414, Danbury (Essex Highways, November 2014)

3. CCC does not consider that the installation of pre-signals at Eves Corner could provide adequate mitigation once the LDP developments are in place. Instead the City Council considers that the residual impact along the A414 arms (post pre-signals mitigation) as assessed in the LDP highways transport and access evidence base is likely to be severe. This is considered contrary to paragraph 32 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Please refer again to the City Council's Hearing Statement on Matter 2.
4. In specific response to the Inspector's Question 4, CCC considers that the North Heybridge Garden Suburb is directly affected by the necessary highway improvements at Eves Corner junction and Well Lane mini-roundabout in Danbury (as indicated in EB004d). As outlined in the City Council's Hearing Statement to Matter 2, CCC considers that the Essex Highways analysis demonstrates that pre-signals would not provide suitable mitigation at Eves Corner. However, if the Inspector disagrees and finds the LDP sound on this matter, CCC request that Policy S4 specifically mentions these mitigation measures along the A414 in Danbury.
5. Furthermore and in response to Question 6, CCC considers that Policy S4 should be modified to require pre-signals at Eves Corner and a priority junction at Well Lane mini-roundabout to be a Section 106 requirement of at least strategic sites S2d (see also paragraph 4 of the City Council's Hearing Statement to Matter 4). Accordingly, the Infrastructure Phasing Plan (CED10 Appendix 13) should also be amended and identify the construction of both highways projects in 2016/17. This is considered essential given that each scheme is directly related and both would be necessary to reduce the traffic impacts on the highway network through Danbury arising from the proposed LDP developments. These suggested changes would also ensure that these highway mitigation measures in Danbury are a requirement of the planning permission and provided alongside the strategic developments. This is particularly important given that the junctions are already operating at capacity at peak times (see paragraphs 13-16 and 21-23 of CCC's Hearing Statement to Matter 2). These changes would also allow the financial contributions to be ringfenced for these specific highway mitigation uses. Please refer to the City Council's Hearing Statement on Matter 10.
6. For the avoidance of doubt, having reviewed the LDP transport and access evidence base, CCC considers that Eves Corner junction and Well Lane mini-roundabout are not capable of accommodating the proposed Garden Suburb developments in their current form (Question 14). Both junctions are considered to be currently operating above capacity during peak periods and would naturally come under greater pressure in 2026 once further background growth and the LDP strategic developments are factored in. CCC accepts that whilst not a perfect solution a priority junction at Well Lane mini-roundabout could provide adequate mitigation. However, CCC does not believe that the evidence base demonstrates that there is a suitable or available solution for Eves Corner junction. If the Inspector is not of this view, CCC request that Policy S4 specifically mentions both of these mitigation measures for the reasons given above.