

Matter 10: Infrastructure I1 and I2

My name is Keith Andrew Ballinger also known as Danny, I have lived in Maldon since 1973, and I appear here today at this Local Development Plan Examination as a **Resident** of Maldon.

Professionally, I am Chartered Civil Engineer, a Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers, a Fellow of the Institution of Engineering and Technology, Registered Member of the Association for Project Safety and a Registered CDM Co-ordinator.

I am also qualified in Surveying, Highways and Traffic Engineering and currently hold a Construction Skills Certification Scheme Card.

I have had specialist training in Highway and Traffic Signal Design, Contract Specification and Management, PRINCE2, Site Experience and Health and Safety Regulations.

I have over 41 years of Local Government experience, which includes design and project management of highways, bridges and other capital infrastructure schemes within Essex.

On all my representations (0028-5046 Misc to 0028-5054 Misc) sent to you (the Inspector); I ticked the box "Yes "to legally compliant; on the basis that "it would be unlawful for Maldon District Council (MDC) to do otherwise" but it does not preclude MDC from acting foolishly, half heartedly or for not following and developing previously accepted concepts of earlier Local Town Plans, Structure Plans, etc or wasting Public Funds.

I believe the LDP and the Masterplans concept to be ill-conceived, they do not develop on previous concepts and strategies of MDC, they do not utilise the Crouch Valley Transport Corridor, there are 4 railway stations in MDC administrative area not being included for development within the LDP, the existing highway infrastructure is being downgraded, rather than new significant highway infrastructure being promoted, these are the main reasons why I believe the LDP is UNSOUND.

Inspector, I do not believe, MDC has fully examined all the various options equally whilst developing the LDP, and I am amazed that the Crouch Valley Transport Corridor has not been included for development in terms of both Road and Rail infrastructure; this I believe makes LDP UNSOUND. I am sure you will be examining this major omission from the LDP for yourself as well.

I am concerned about the undermining of the LDP Process that is currently happening within MDC Administrative Area, with all the various Planning Applications that have been submitted and some now granted by MDC. I am concerned about the lack of new highway infrastructure provision and the continual additions of new side roads to an already congested strategic highway network; this concept has been promoted by this UNSOUND LDP.

I cannot understand how these Masterplans were allowed to be developed without significant new highway infrastructure both inside the MDC Administrative Area and neighbouring Authorities to ensure high quality access to the A12 and A130 and beyond; this is another reason why I believe the LDP to be UNSOUND.

I include below an extract of my letter sent to MDC concerning South Maldon Garden Suburb Planning Application (OUT/MAL/14/01103) which is self explanatory and raises a number questions to be answered.

Re: South Maldon Garden Suburb Planning Application – OUT/MAL/14/01103

I am writing to you to object to the above planning application which is based on South Maldon Garden Suburb Masterplan (SMGSM) to voice my strong concerns regarding the adverse impacts that the above development proposals will have on the strategic highway infrastructure of Maldon.

Please ensure this letter is brought to the attention of the Planning Committee at the appropriate time.

I understand your difficulties with all the “related applications” being submitted prior to outcome of the Local Development Plan Examination in Public (LDPEP), the Planning Committee, I believe, should not determine any application before the conclusion of the LDPEP, as this would be prejudicial to the LDP process.

The recent shakeup of Planning Policies has meant all the saved MDC Policies and the Essex Structure Plan were wiped away at a stroke and all logic and reasoning from former Town Plans and the existing Maldon Town boundary of the A414 Maldon Bypass and B1018 Southern Link Road (now Limebrook Way) as the extremity of Maldon Settlement has been lost. However commonsense should prevail, none of these roads were ever designed for development on the west and south side respectively. The reasoning behind the original highway design and capacities are now lost.

I believe the South Maldon Garden Suburb Masterplan (SMGSM) is incomplete and flawed thereby making it unsound, and therefore any Planning Application based on this plan as well.

I am not sure how this SMGSM has evolved whether it was led by MDC or led by a Developer, however it matters not; no account has been taken of the needs of Highway Infrastructure and motorists.

The SMGSM destroys the whole concept of the strategic highway network by introducing three additional roundabouts on the network which will have a detrimental impact of journey times and will increase queuing traffic, noise and air quality will also rise due to stop/start of traffic. These roads will become residential roads with I assume 30mph speed limit rather than strategic routes with a higher speed limit.

The SMGSM, in my opinion, requires a new strategic route from A414 Spital Road to B1010 Farnbridge Road along the southern boundary of the suburb to maintain the strategic network (B1018) and to be the designated HGV Route rather than for the HGV Route to be running through the centre of the residential area as now proposed.

This new strategic route would then permit the conversion of and the reclassification of the B1018 Limebrook Way to a residential distributor road, and then add the three pedestrian crossing point and roundabout without any detrimental impact on the strategic network.

I have other highway concerns relating to proposals in regard to Bus bays provision, Traffic Regulation Order's if any and the signing strategy, which I am sure are being addressed but it is not clear from the details that I have.

The design and construction of B1018 Southern Link Road (now Limebrook Way) was a statutory part of Southend Estates Developments Planning Consent circa 1980s.

It would seem to me that SMGSM on the above basis is in complete, and the Developer is not funding the correct Highway Infrastructure for this development, (Profit before Public needs). Somewhere during the evolution of this SMGSM the needs of the general travelling public has not been taken into account. Making the SMGSM unsound!

Should the SMGSM be granted Planning Consent and be constructed, I would estimate that in 10-15 years post construction the need for new southern bypass of the development would be necessary and the cost of this scheme would fall to the Public Purse via Highway Authority rather than being funded by the Developer of the SMGSM at the time of Planning Consent.

Surely, there is duty on MDC to extend and develop the growth of Maldon in a systematic way and build on previous Planning Decisions and using all existing infrastructure to its best advantage. As you know, I believe the location of current SMGSM is in the wrong place, which I reckon gives more disadvantages than advantages as I have identified above.

A general comment on the LDP strategy, I believe MDC in their Local Development Plan should liaise with Chelmsford City Council and Braintree District Council and focus on and encourage the developers to focus on other strategic routes to MDC Administrative Area, namely A132/B1012 and B1019 respectively.

Over thirty years ago these roads were designed in accordance with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and as such delivered a high speed high quality alignment with appropriate visibility standards, no new accesses to give uninterrupted flows of traffic to maximise the distribution of traffic around Maldon.

Thirty years on with the general increase in traffic volumes and with some expansion in and around Maldon the nodal junctions do require improvement and limited traffic management measures to deal with the increased capacity.

However, in the vicinity of the South Maldon Garden Suburb proposal this destroys the whole concept of the strategic highway network by introducing three additional roundabouts on the network which will have a detrimental impact of journey times and will increase queuing traffic, noise and air quality will also rise due to stop/start of traffic. These roads will become residential roads with I assume 30mph speed limit rather than strategic routes with a higher speed limit.

I would also take issue with Item B (New Relief Road) I believe this is a local distributor road rather than a relief road; the title is misleading to the average member of the public.

The economic assessment justification for downgrading the whole of the network in this area must therefore be overwhelming for this development to proceed, although I cannot believe this to be the case. I can only see a great burden to all motorists and especially to businesses with increased costs due to the lower speeds that result from this development.

I'm not sure what traffic and growth modelling has preceded these development proposals, but to me it seems that there will only be partial retrofit solutions at all nodal points that will be in the long term a great disbenefit to everyone in and around the MDC Administrative Area.

I have other highway concerns relating to proposals in regard to Bus bay provision, Traffic Regulation Order's if any and the signing strategy, which I am sure are being addressed but it is not clear from the details that I have.

The South Maldon Garden Suburb proposals, in my opinion, requires a new strategic route from A414 Spital Road to B1010 Fambridge Road along the southern boundary of the suburb to maintain the strategic network (B1018) and to be the designated HGV Route rather than for the HGV Route to be running through the centre of the residential area as now proposed.

This new strategic route would then permit the conversion of and the reclassification of the B1018 Limebrook Way to a residential distributor road, and then add the three pedestrian crossing points and roundabout without any detrimental impact on the strategic network.

Referring back to Item B, it also requires a strategic link from A414 Spital Road roundabout (at B) to connect to the existing Spital Road roundabout at A414 Maldon Bypass.

I would now like to comment on the A414 route through Danbury; any chance of a northern bypass was lost in sometime in back the 1980s. In my opinion there is very little that can be done with this route from A414 Oak Corner Roundabout to A12 Sandon Interchange other than some minor highway and traffic improvement works.

The Eves Corner Traffic Signal solution as proposed states it will improve traffic flows, I have my doubts about that statement. Hopefully with the predicted traffic growth figures and pedestrian activity at this new TS junction layout the appropriate signal timings can be achieved.

My real concern is that the whole route should be considered as an entity not just Eves Corner, there are many other features along this route that adversely affects traffic flows; these I do not think have been addressed!

I want Maldon District Council (MDC) to retract the current, unsound version of the Local Development Plan (LDP) and submit a revised LDP based on consolidating all the growth in a new settlement near the existing railway line.

I can only find a 'token' New Settlement Proposal of about 100 properties in the LDP which was ruled out as not sustainable; which of course would never be the case. I cannot find within the MDC Minutes any serious debate about the real New Settlement of say about 5000 properties along the B1012 Corridor utilizing the railway infrastructure. "The Crouch Valley Line" Wickford to Southminster operated by Greater Anglia Abellio as part of the Essex & Suffolk Community Rail Partnership has 4 railway stations (North Fambridge, Althorne, Burnham-on-Crouch and Southminster) within MDC Administrative Area). Currently the frequency of the rail service is hourly.

If a new settlement somewhere along the Crouch Valley Line were to be established the service could possible become half hourly, and the new settlement could have its own purpose built railway station, (either additional to the existing four stations or a relocated station still maintaining the four in order to maintain the timetabling of train services.

The recent shakeup of Planning Policies has meant all the saved MDC Policies, the Essex Structure Plan were wiped away at a stroke and all logic and reasoning from former Town Plans and the existing Maldon Town boundary of the A414 Maldon Bypass and B1018 Southern Link Road (now Limebrook Way) as the extremity of Maldon Settlement has been lost. However commonsense should prevail, none of these roads were ever designed for development on the west and south side respectively. The reasoning behind the original highway design and capacities are now lost.

Did you know there is not a single high quality highway route into the MDC Administrative Area; shame!

It would appear to me that everyone has taken the easy option by tagging onto an inadequate infrastructure.

I'm not sure what traffic and growth modelling has preceded these development proposals, but to me it seems that there will only be partial retrofit solutions at all nodal points that will be in the long term a great disbenefit to everyone in and around the MDC Administrative Area. This will only make the next LDP say 2029-2044 even harder to deliver in the future. Unless my new B1012 settlement proposal could be designed for say 10,000 properties at the outset to accommodate any future growth forecasts.

I hope the requirements of the "Duty to Cooperate" can be demonstrated between MDC and Chelmsford City Council and MDC and Braintree District Council in developing the former Essex Structure Plan approach in delivering the A132 extension to Burnham and Hatfield Peverel Bypass respectively connecting MDC Administrative Area to the strategic highway network of the A12, A130, A127 and to the M25 beyond.

I will be interested to learn of the outcome of the Modelling Impacts of all the Strategic Routes connecting MDC Administrative Area to the rest of the Essex!

Not using the railway corridor is contrary to the principles of Sustainable Development. There must be a Duty to Cooperate with Network Rail, Greater Anglia Abellio the Rail Operator and Essex & Suffolk Community Rail Partnership; to what extent has this happened?

I am confident that any Terms of Understanding or Terms of Reference with regards to all matters concerning the "Duty to Cooperate" will be fully examined.

However, if the current LDP is approved at the Examination in Public (EIP) I want the MDC to reduce the number of houses planned for Maldon and Heybridge and deliver the entire relevant infrastructure (including roads, educational and medical facilities) alongside a new settlement development elsewhere.

The current LDP will not benefit the district of Maldon and better our lives and that of future generations (as the National Planning Policy Framework says it should). And if MDC still believe that that, then they will soon realise that the people of Maldon and Heybridge have woken up, will prove them wrong and will blame them.