

Matter 10: Infrastructure

Issue: Whether policy I1 and I2 with their associated text dealing with infrastructure are justified by the evidence, consistent with national policy, and effective

1. Is the approach to delivering infrastructure appropriate, justified, effective, soundly based and consistent with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and national policy?

The approach is superficial and lacking detail. It is unsound, ineffectual and inappropriate. In terms of transport the residual cumulative impacts of development as proposed in the submitted Plan will be very severe indeed and would fail to meet the requirements of NPPF para.32. The importance of the role played by transport policies (para 29) has been neglected and MDC have failed to work with neighbouring authorities and transport providers to investigate and develop adequate strategies (par 31).

Maldon, although expanded significantly since the 1970's, has not been able to attract or retain employment to match the present increase in population, with residents relying heavily on Chelmsford. MDC (in their Response to the A12 Enquiry of May 2008) conceded that the local economy is stifled precisely because "connections to the strategic network are poor and therefore a deterrent to accessing employment opportunities."

And yet no firm proposals have been presented for any of the infrastructure. There is no new Highway Structure being proposed by this LDP and the proposals as presented are not justified or finalized. The LDP is destroying the existing Strategic highway network e.g. Limebrook Way. There is no proposal other than using public transport towards Hatfield Peverel. For Burnham, there is nothing proposed for the West of Maldon District going to join the A130.

All Essex Highways Reports that I have seen conclude that either further investigation or modeling is required. Surely this makes the plan unsound and cannot proceed. Following the submission of the LDP, the developers have proposed an option for Eve's Corner, but have yet to produce the evidence to justify the outcomes and address the concerns raised during the consultation.

The only way we can see Eve's corner traffic problems being solved is through a bypass but that is just not economically feasible, even were it at all practicable.

The A414 from Oak Corner to Sandon through the Chelmsford area is completely congested and the road cannot cope now. There are two schools in the vicinity, parking, Cooperative Store deliveries, HGV lorries and many pedestrians crossing the road. Along with the developments that we are aware of in Chelmsford itself, the Maldon suburbs and the new NHS Drop In Centre in Danbury serving 11,000 patients and the new Gravel Extraction HGV lorries, we cannot see how any solution will work.

We know that many people use the back roads to Chelmsford; what is disparagingly called 'rat running'. EB004b on the Impact of Proposed Development Sites in Heybridge and South Maldon on Wider Highway Network makes no attempt to assess the effect on Witham Station or the routes through Wickham Bishops or the very scenic and vulnerable* B1018 through Langford to Witham and the A12 northwards, nor the Braxted Road route via Rivenhall to the A12.

EB004c still does not attempt such assessment on routes to Witham or northward to the A12 via B1018 Wickham Place or Maypole Road/Wickham Bishops or Rivenhall/Braxted Road. Similarly the effect on the B1018 /Fambridge Road or B1418/Bicknacre southwards to the A132/A130.

We see that Chelmsford City Council are unhappy with the impact on the A414 and have submitted a response stating that the plan was unsound on this basis. Such concerns are justified. We cannot find any Cost Benefit Analysis or detailed costings of the infrastructure required in terms of the impact on the community e.g. cost to business in terms of the delays caused by highway congestion. There appears to be no Origin and Destination analysis for residential, business or leisure. The analysis conducted omits the percentage of heavy goods vehicles, and the B1018 Limebrook Way HGV route is not even considered nor the reserve capacities of existing and proposed strategic links and junctions.

We suggest that the consequences of the Plan's emerging road mitigation proposals, largely developer led, will be very serious, with much of the strategic network compromised to the dis-benefit of the community and its economy.