

## **Maldon District Council Draft Local Development Plan Consultation** **2014-2029**

Please find below Chelmsford City Council's response to Maldon District Council's Draft Local Development Plan consultation.

The City Council supports Maldon District Council's (MDC) vision to grow sustainably to meet objectively assessed housing needs over the Plan period. The City Council, therefore, supports the increase in the proposed number of new dwellings from 3,000 to 4,410 to meet this need. However, the City Council notes that the Spatial Vision states that:

*"Growth will be concentrated in the most sustainable, accessible and appropriate locations taking into account constraints and the need to protect valued local countryside."*

The City Council would like to focus on the issue of constraints and the concerns that it has on the location and distribution of housing across Maldon District.

### **Impacts on the Highway Network**

Policy S4 – 'Maldon and Heybridge Strategic Growth' is a new policy which reflects changes set out in Policy S2. These changes include an increase in the number of dwellings to the south of Maldon from 1,250 to 1,830. One of the requirements of Policy S4 is that development can be accommodated within the capacity of the Maldon and Heybridge road network and junctions. Essex Highways has already indicated that both Maldon and Heybridge have highway capacity issues and that mitigation measures are required, including improvements to the following junctions;

- A414/Spital Road roundabout
- A414/Limebrook Way roundabout
- A414 Oak Corner junction

The City Council would like further details of these junction improvements and the benefit of these junction improvements to the highway network, in particular traffic flow to and from Chelmsford and Maldon. Of particular interest are the improvements to the A414 Oak Corner junction.

'An Assessment of Impact of Proposed Development Sites in Heybridge, South Maldon and Burnham-on-Crouch on Highway Network' was prepared by MDC in May 2013. Section 8 of this report acknowledges that a large proportion of highway demand in morning and evening peaks is between Chelmsford and Maldon, along the A414 through Danbury. The report goes further to state that by virtue of the

planned development at Maldon and Heybridge, the increase in traffic along this route is likely to be significant. The demand on the A414 Chelmsford Road westbound at the Oak Corner junction is predicted to increase by 34% in the AM peak which, as the report acknowledges, is concerning given that the A414 in Danbury is already congested in the morning peak. Conversely, in the PM peak, Maldon-bound flows are predicted to increase by 36% on Chelmsford Road. Similar to the AM peak, the Chelmsford Road trips will have to negotiate Danbury and its congested thoroughfare prior to accessing the Oak Corner junction. This includes the already very busy Eves Corner roundabout. It is evitable that this junction will be impacted upon by reason of MDC's proposed growth, yet no mitigation measures have been put forward to alleviate the potentially significant traffic and congestion problems that will occur. Although, given the existing land constraints at this junction, it is a question whether mitigation is in fact possible.

Section 8 of the report also indicates that there will be an increase in demand along the B1019 which connects to the B1137 and the A12 at Hatfield Peverel. Westbound towards Hatfield Peverel, traffic is predicted to increase by 33% in the AM peak. This increase also has implications for Chelmsford as it is likely to result in an increase in traffic along the B1137 through Boreham - this route is notoriously used as a 'rat run' into Chelmsford.

In addition to the above, the increase of development in Maldon and Heybridge raises concerns that there may be more pressure on the new railway station to the North East of Chelmsford. This may attract more traffic to the area and there is concern that the capacity of the wider road network has again not been fully considered. This matter should be factored into further traffic modelling, taking account of the proposed usage of this new station from both Chelmsford residents (factoring in the major growth proposed to the North East of Chelmsford) and surrounding residents from Maldon and Braintree districts.

## **Conclusion**

It is evident that the planned growth at Maldon will have a significant and detrimental impact upon Chelmsford's road network, yet MDC has not put forward any specific mitigation measures to solve the significant traffic flow and congestion issues that will occur. Instead the traffic studies undertaken by MDC to support their Spatial Strategy are completely localised and do not take into account the wider implications the proposed growth of Maldon District will have upon the neighbouring districts of both Chelmsford and Braintree. The City Council considers that it is imperative that wider traffic studies are undertaken to identify the traffic impacts MDC's Draft Local Plan will have upon Chelmsford's road network and that appropriate mitigation measures to overcome and avoid identified adverse impacts are included within their Local Plan. This may include highway improvements within the boundaries of Chelmsford City. The relevant traffic studies which Chelmsford City Council feel are necessary should be undertaken and made available prior to the next round of public consultation on MDC's Local Plan proposed in November 2013.

The City Council considers that the improvement of major highway routes both in and around Maldon District is an integral part to the successful delivery of MDC's

growth strategy. Any failure to recognise and mitigate the potential highway impacts of MDC's planned growth on the residents of Chelmsford will result in the City Council objecting to MDC's Spatial Strategy.

Yours sincerely,

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