

Our ref: Local plan issues and options d1
Your ref:

Mark Norman

Woodlands
Manton Lane
Bedford MK41 7LW

Simon Meecham
Tendring District Council
Council Offices
Thorpe Road
Weeley
Essex. CO16 9AJ


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Dear Sir

TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN ISSUES AND OPTIONS

We welcome the opportunity to comment upon your local plan. We note that the three authorities of Braintree, Tendring and Colchester have coordinated their local plans and that the first part of the plan applies to all three authorities. This approach is to be commended as it gives a much better overview of the effect of development over a wider area than an individual district.

We have been talking to the Districts for a long time about their aspirations for growth, it is recognised that large parts of the district are rural and access to public transport difficult. Parts of the strategic road network running through the districts are already close to capacity and cannot reasonably cope with large amounts of additional development without significant improvement.

This has been recognised in the governments first Roads Investment Strategy (RIS 1) published in 2014, which committed Highways England to commence widening of the A12 between junctions 19 to 25 to three lanes, and to prepare options for consideration in RIS- 2 (2020-25) for widening between junctions 11 to 16 and 25 to 29.

It has also been recognised that the A120 between Braintree and the A12 is nearing capacity, most noticeably at peak times. Essex County Council has been examining the feasibility of upgrading this route to a dual carriageway. With a view to submitting this for inclusion into a future RIS-2

Until housing and employment is committed the above schemes can really only deal with existing challenges allowing for a limited amount of growth as the designs are based on previously envisaged growth rates rather the much more ambitious level

proposed in these consultations. This means the need careful planning to ensure proposed development is in the most appropriate place with the necessary facilities and infrastructure available at the right time and a steep change both in the provision and take up of public transport, if this level of development is to be sustainable.

We support the policies in the plan aimed at reducing the need to travel by private car, such as improved walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure, and the provision of high speed broadband allowing people to more easily communicate and work remotely reducing the demand for travel.

Turning to specific Tendering site comments

Most of the proposed allocations are either some way from the A120 or at a scale which is unlikely to result in a severe impact on the A120

The only real issue for Highways England is the proposed Garden Community on the eastern edge of Colchester. It is unclear on how it is proposed to access the existing A120. Depending on the type of junction, could impact on the free-flow of A120 traffic. For instance, if a grade separated junction was built, rather than an at-grade roundabout, the impact to traffic flow on the A120 would be less.

The provision of a new junction at this location could also result in a redistribution of traffic movements through Colchester, with short on and off movements on the A120 and A12 to avoid the town centre.

This proposal will need to be modelled so a full understanding of the impact is obtained. An economic business case will need to demonstrate the need for a link road and what the effects would be, before we could agree to the creation of a new junction. Any new junction on the A120 would need to be fully compliant with the standards as set out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.

The growth identified in the draft Local Plan and in neighbouring Local Plans, will need to be supported by appropriate transport infrastructure. Highways England has been working closely with Essex County Council and the Districts to consider the impacts of this growth and appropriate means to mitigate its impact, where possible.

In order to inform the selection of a 'preferred strategy', ECC/Ringway Jacobs were commissioned by Tendring District Council to undertake highway modelling to inform the emerging spatial strategy and its implications. Traffic modelling has been undertaken to identify the likely impact on key junctions and identify preliminary feasible and affordable improvements. This takes account of the potential for changing trip patterns and model choice and review ongoing strategic studies/projects.

In addition, an 'Interim Assessment' has also been undertaken to; identify the likely impact on key junctions; identify preliminary feasible and affordable improvements;

potential for changing trip patterns and model choice; and review ongoing strategic studies/projects.

It is clear that mitigation is not feasible at all key junctions to enable them to operate 'within capacity' at 2033. Increased focus will need to be placed on encouraging model shift, as most journeys to work are by car. It is recommended to improve access to railway stations by sustainable modes, given the high level of trips between settlements with rail links.

A12, A120 junction (J29) is operating very close to capacity at present and is hemmed in by development which could make improvement very difficult and expensive.

We look forward to working with you to deliver growth in Tendring District

Yours sincerely



Mark Norman
Operations

