

**Committee:** Local Plan Working Group

**Agenda Item**

**Date:** 17<sup>th</sup> October 2013

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**Title:** Uttlesford Local Plan Highway Impact Assessment

**Report Author:** Andrew Taylor, Assistant Director Planning and Building Control. Key decision: **No**

## Summary

1. Uttlesford District Council commissioned Essex Highways to evaluate the Uttlesford Local Plan in terms of its likely highway impact and to identify any necessary mitigation measures. The assessment is attached.

## Recommendations

2. For information

## Financial Implications

3. The report costs are included within the existing budget. Scheme costs would be need to be met by developments.

## Background Papers

4. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

None

## Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	The report will be made available on the Council's website as a background document to the preparation of the local plan.
Community Safety	Necessary mitigation measures will be subject to a safety audit.
Equalities	N/A
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	N/A

Sustainability	Demand management measures will be introduced as part of the mitigation to help encourage a sustainable shift towards non-car modes of travel
Ward-specific impacts	N/A
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

## Situation

- Essex Highways were commissioned to undertake a study to assess the existing situation in key locations and then assess the implications of the Local Plan in highway terms A120 and M11 Junction 8. In addition to the work on the route network work has been carried out into the likely impact of the proposed development on air quality. The key findings are:

### Saffron Walden

- Essex Highways assessed 11 junctions in the Saffron Walden study area. A number of them were already shown to be over-capacity in 2026 with just committed at key junctions and specific links and to identify and evaluate mitigation measures. The Local Plan impacts were assessed for the traditional weekday peak hours within each key area. Two future years, 2018 and 2026 have been assessed with a base year of 2012. The impact of all the Local Plan proposals over the wider network was then assessed in order to discuss their likely impact on the strategic road network, specifically on the development in place, a situation which would be exacerbated with the addition of the traffic generated by the Local Plan sites.
- The assessment found that the proposed link road between Thaxted Road and Radwinter Road would help to relieve congestion at the Thaxted Road/Radwinter road and High Street/Audley End Road junctions. However this would lead to the junctions on Peaslands Road, Mount Pleasant Road and Borough Lane experiencing an increased flow as traffic routes via the south of the of the town centre. Additional mitigation measures are therefore required to enable delivery of the plan.
- Mitigation measures include the implementation of a northbound traffic restriction on Thaxted Road, north of the junction with Peaslands Road in order to reduce the flow on the Thaxted Road approach to the junction with Radwinter Road. A second measure was a similar north bound traffic restriction on Debden Road at the junction with Mount Pleasant Road and Borough Lane. Other mitigation measures have been devised and assessed to reduce the traffic on the junctions along the Mount Pleasant/ Peaslands/Debden Road route.
- Of the eleven junctions assessed, taking into account the committed and proposed development sites and mitigation measures, nine have been found to be either unchanged or are expected to have improved capacity as a result of the infrastructure changes proposed. The two junctions which would be

expected to have slightly less capacity with the Local Plan development in place are Mount Pleasant /Debden Road and the Newport Road/Audley End Road.

11. It is recognised that Saffron Walden is a historic market town with a restricted highway network and there is unlikely to be a solution which would improve the capacity of every junction. Based on what is achievable in Saffron Walden, the mitigation measures proposed by Essex Highways in the report are considered by them to be the most suitable solution which brings about the most benefit to the most users.
12. An assessment of the Local Plan on Air Quality in Saffron Walden (Jacobs, 2013) found that there are significant differences between the predicted NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations depending on the adjustments made to take into account the rate of reduction in vehicle emissions over the long term. Using one method exceedences are predicted at all four junctions whilst using the other method there are no exceedences at any of the junctions. After September 2014 new vehicles will need to comply with the more stringent Euro VI emissions standards. As the rate at which these Euro VI vehicles will be on the road is not known and their impacts on air quality are yet to be fully understood it is likely that after 2015 actual future year concentrations would be expected to fall somewhere between the calculated results for the two methods.

### **Great Dunmow**

13. Essex Highways, assessed 5 junctions in Great Dunmow. The conclusion is that the addition of the Local Plan traffic to the network would result in slightly reduced capacity at one junction - the B1256/A120 Interchange northern roundabout. TPA consultants on behalf of the Smiths Farm development have devised mitigation measures at the Hoblongs junction. This involves a major rearrangement of the junction. It would enable northbound traffic from the A120 interchange to head into Great Dunmow via Chelmsford Road without the need to turn into a minor road. It would also incorporate a two lane route running southbound from the junction to the A120 interchange and so providing more capacity on that approach. The conclusion is that the proposed revised layout at Hoblongs and the completion of the bypass to the west of Great Dunmow would provide suitable mitigation against the impact of additional traffic in the town arising from the proposed development.

### **Newport**

14. Essex Highways assessed 3 junctions in Newport. Taking into account committed and proposed development the junction assessments undertaken have found that all the junctions would operate within capacity and therefore no mitigation measures would be necessary.

### **M11 Junction**

15. The motorway junction has been modelled with its existing layout and the layout that includes mitigation measures as specified in the Stansted G1 planning approval. The mitigation measures do not result in significant improvements in the operation of the junction and it would be expected to experience significant delays in 2026 with committed and G1 development in place. The addition of the Local Plan development results in a worsening

situation. Essex Highways have proposed and costed one possible mitigation but recommend that further work is done to identify additional improvements at the junction.

## Risk Analysis

16.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Additional development gives rise to detrimental impacts on the Highways network	3. The assessment shows that without mitigation in Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow there are capacity issues at certain junctions	3. Queuing at junctions leads to longer journey times and can adversely affect air quality at the junction.	Appropriate policies included in the local plan to secure necessary improvements to be delivered as part of legal obligations associated with the grant of planning permissions.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.