

**Committee:** Local Plan Working Group

**Agenda Item**

**Date:** 31 March 2014

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

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## Summary

1. Uttlesford District Council commissioned Essex Highways to provide an additional evaluate on the additional housing required as part of 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. *Nil*

## Background Papers

None

## Impact

- 4.

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 at application stage.
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 additional housing required for the Local Plan in highway terms 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 2031 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 A120 and M11 Junction 8. The key findings are:

### Saffron Walden

- The 2031 assessments include a number of previously identified mitigation measures to accommodate the level of development being proposed in Saffron Walden. These include a new road linking Thaxted Road with Radwinter Road, traffic management schemes and, where possible, individual junction improvements. Of the 11 junctions assessed in the town, the various measures result in either no overall change in junction capacity or an improvement over the 'without ULP development' scenario. The exception is the Mount Pleasant Road / Debden Road junction which is expected to experience delays on both the southern and western arms as a result of the re-routing of traffic caused to the traffic restriction mitigation measures. Mitigation measure costs are estimated to be in the order of £1m.

### Great Dunmow

- Five key junctions have been assessed in Great Dunmow, two of which have required mitigation measures. The Hoblongs junction improvement scheme combines an improvement to both the B1256 / Chelmsford Road junction and the intersection of the B1256 with the A120 grade separated junction. The Stortford Road / Rosemary Lane mini-roundabout is shown to be approaching capacity in the forecast year, but it is likely that this will be further relieved by the Dunmow western bypass, and the reassignment of some traffic over and above that assumed in the study and so no mitigation is proposed.

### Elsenham

- Formal highway assessments of the cumulative effect that developments and site allocations in Elsenham would be likely to have on the local highway

network have not been undertaken. However, mitigation measures have been proposed, including demand management, improvements to Hall Road, and a western link towards the B1383 (costing between £7-10m excluding land acquisition).

10. It should be noted that, due to the location of the major site allocation in Elsenham, and the distance from it to the major road network, traffic is likely to use a number of routes to reach it. A more detailed study using a detailed highway assignment route choice model would provide more confident predictions of the site allocations' impact, and it is recommended that this is provided as part of any planning application submission. There are, however, limited options to reduce development traffic impact, and these hinge on demand management, reducing the need to travel and high quality provision of alternative modes of travel to key attractors.

### **Strategic Road Network**

11. The analysis of the impact of the UDC LP on the strategic road network has concentrated on the M11 J8. The assessment has been done assuming that the Stansted Airport G1 (35mppa), Bishops Stortford North ASRs development, and background growth is in place.
12. The previously identified mitigation measure has been revised, which provides a new exit from the motorway service area (MSA) onto the eastbound A120, improves this section of the A120 between J8 and the A120/A1250 roundabout, and also provides improved capacity on the approaches to the A120/A1250 junction.
13. However, as a strategic junction, it is anticipated that even with the mitigation measures in place, J8 will be over capacity in 2031 without the ULP traffic. It is emphasised that the assessment methodology, using spreadsheet assignment, is overly robust, as it does not allow for any changes in travel choices, routing, journey timing or destination changes. The subsequent assignment of ULP traffic to the junction, particularly that arising from the Elsenham site, is subject to significant variation, and with sensitivity testing, only a very broad conclusion can be reached about its future capacity without more detailed highway assignment modelling with route choice capability.
14. The J8 mitigation measure, which is likely to cost in the region of £5m, would free up capacity at the junction for all traffic. As such, funding contributions should not be linked to any one development site. Essex County Council (ECC), as highway authority, will also be applying for funding to support M11 corridor schemes, which include J8, from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) Strategic Economic Plan (SEP).

## Risk Analysis

15.

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.