

**Chelmsford Borough Council's
Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Town Centre Area Action Plan**

Statement of Common Ground on Strategic Transport Matters

August 2007

Between: 1) Highways Agency,
2) Essex County Council
3) Chelmsford Borough Council

1. Purpose of This Document

1.1 This document supercedes the SoCG prepared in June 2007 and has been prepared to give the Inspector on the latest position between the three relevant parties on matters of strategic transport infrastructure and delivery, following an ongoing programme of work between the parties.

1.2 For clarity the comments contained with this document relate to all areas of the Trunk Road and Principal Road Network where it is believed that the development proposals contained within the Core Strategy will have an impact. This includes the proposed NE Chelmsford Bypass, Boreham Interchange and connections into the A12.

1.3 All parties believe that the work outlined in this statement demonstrates the soundness of the strategic transport proposals within the Core Strategy of the Chelmsford Local Development Framework.

2. Background

2.1 During the formal consultation period on the Core Strategy (CS) and Chelmsford Town Centre Area Action Plan (TCAAP), the Highways Agency (HA) submitted a representation on various aspects of the proposals. The HA has no objection in principle to the transport policies and issues covered by the CS and TCAAP, subject to appropriate mitigation measures being put in place. However the HA had difficulty understanding the impacts of the CS and TCAAP on the trunk road network which proved difficult to give a robust view. Consequently the HA was unable to offer comment on the deliverability of mitigation measures required to delivery of the CS and TCAAP.

2.2 To allay these concerns a programme of work was agreed, with the objective of giving the Highways Agency the confidence that the required mitigation measures could be delivered.

2.3 Essex County Council (ECC) supports the Core Strategy to ensure the provision of appropriate transportation infrastructure and alternative modes of transport to deliver sustainable development. ECC believe it is essential that new development and necessary infrastructure is delivered in a timely way.

2.4 Following on from these respective positions, a joint CBC/ECC document (Background Document Reference BD/CFD/075vi) was prepared and submitted to the Inspector for a Preliminary Meeting on 16 May 2007. This document addresses strategic transportation issues and included an Infrastructure Trajectory.

2.5 Also presented to the Inspector was a letter submitted by the Highways Agency (BD/CFD/075iv) via the LDF Programme Officer that stated “the Highways Agency is confident in the approach that is being taken to support this work and fully expect that through joint working between Essex County Council, Chelmsford Borough Council and the Highways Agency, it will deliver appropriate clarity prior to the Examination in public in September.”

2.6 In July 2007 CBC produced a number of Background Topic Papers to assist the Examination of the Core Strategy. Topic paper number 5, Infrastructure included a table of categorized strategic infrastructure. This prioritised the infrastructure trajectory in background paper reference BD/CFD/075vi.

2.7 Following completion of the agreed programme of work outline above at 2.2 the outputs are sufficient to provide the necessary evidence for the Highways Agency to support the Core Strategy of the Chelmsford Local Development Framework, provided the measures described at 3.1.c below are introduced.

3. Key Transportation Infrastructure Principles and Projects

3.1 As a result of this joint partnership working, the three Authorities have established common ground and an agreed programme of work on a number of key themes and issues:-

a. Boreham Interchange

All parties are in agreement that a long term solution for Boreham Interchange is integral to unlocking the proposed growth in NE Chelmsford. It is critical that this scheme is brought forward in the spirit of partnership between the parties. There is virtual sign off by all parties to an agreed layout for the junction of the North East Bypass and the A12 at Boreham Interchange.

b. North East Bypass and Cross Valley Link

All parties support the long term objective of a North East Chelmsford Bypass to better manage the local traffic and provide a strategic route option for north south movements. To this end development work continues in partnership developing this scheme to a level where regional funding streams can be allocated to ensure delivery within the CS plan period. A decision on a Cross Valley Link is to be deferred for 12-24 months pending further investigations.

c. A12 Widening and Management

The Highways Agency, through its experience of managing the trunk road network regionally and nationally, believe that it is possible to develop measures, which may include access control, that would facilitate delivery of the CS without requiring specifically the widening of the A12 around Chelmsford, as shown in the CS Key Diagram.

d. Proposed North East Railway Station

All parties support the long term objective of a North East Chelmsford Railway Station to facilitate the proposed growth while reducing the need to make car borne trips and will continue to work in partnership to understand its implications on the wider road and rail networks. The three parties are signatories, along with the rail industry, the Department for Transport, and Countryside Properties to a Statement of Common Ground on the railway station, including a business case. This has been submitted to the Inspector.

e. Area wide sustainable travel planning

Following the publication of Government Circular 02/07 the HA have an increased responsibility to lead on issues of managing demand through the introduction of sustainable transport initiatives such as area wide travel plans.

ECC are taking a lead in developing a strategy to deliver a raft of measures in support of this objective and to minimise the additional travel demands associated with the growth proposed in the CS. Measures include Park and Ride, dedicated bus priority measures, walking and cycling improvements, public transport service enhancement and school/work/residential travel planning. All parties are supportive of delivering these initiatives.

f. Transport modelling

A programme of modelling tests, as outlined in the section of the document relating to NE Chelmsford which was submitted to the Inspector on the 16th May 2007 (BD/CFD/075vi) has been completed. This modelling programme tests the principal elements of the Core Strategy that are connected with the A12 in the Boreham area, i.e. the new residential neighbourhoods, the north-east bypass, the rail station, the Park & Ride site, so as to ensure a robust examination of soundness from a transportation perspective.

4. Ongoing joint working

The three parties continue to work in partnership on a number of projects that will provide inputs to other Development plan Documents including the Chelmsford Town centre Area Action plan, North Chelmsford Area Action Plan and Site Allocations Document, as well as informing the Local Development Framework, Core Strategy Examination in Public. These include:

a. Chelmsford North East Study

Includes: Bypass, Rail Station, Cross Valley Link, Boreham Interchange, housing access road, and further modelling to confirm phasing of infrastructure in relation to release of housing.

b. Park and Ride

Feasibility work on Park and Ride sites in North, North East and West of Chelmsford including sites at Widford, Essex Regiment Way, and Boreham Interchange.

c. Sustainable Travel

- Includes: Walking and Cycling, high quality passenger transport connections to new developments (including bus based rapid transit), travel planning
- Development of Chelmsford Wide Sustainable Travel Planning Strategy (ECC/CBC/HA)

d. Chelmer Waterside Development

Includes integration of Army and Navy Improvements (medium and long term), Chelmer Viaduct replacement, New Eastern Gateway link road.