

AFM/02/10

Forum **Mid Area Forum**

Date **11 January 2010**

Title **Response to the question on the Great Baddow Cycle Path**

Report by: **Antoinette Mortley, Committee Officer**

Contact: Tel: 01245 430565 or e-mail: antoinette.mortley@essex.gov.uk

1. **Purpose of the Item**

For the Forum to note the response presented to the Essex County Council meeting of the Full Council on 15 December 2009

2. **By Councillor Mrs M A Miller of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation**

“I am pleased that the viaduct carrying the A138 [Chelmer Road] over the River Chelmer and Baddow Meads is to be replaced by the Highways Agency with a new viaduct running alongside the current road.

However, County officers had previously proposed that the Great Baddow Cycle Route into Chelmsford should run under the viaduct, close to the Army and Navy roundabout. It now appears that the Contractor has not been asked to include this in his design.

The development of the land west of the Army and Navy roundabout will be the last opportunity to complete the Cycle Route and use the planning gain funding, which is being levied on every development in Great Baddow. If the Cycle Route is not to pass under the Chelmer Viaduct, does this mean that there are definite plans to route the Cycle Way through an improved Army and Navy underpass?”

Reply

Essex County Council through its previous highway agency arrangements with Chelmsford Borough Council has looked intensively at options for a cycle route across the Meads as an alternative to cyclists having to negotiate the Army and Navy junction. Unfortunately these options would require land negotiations to take place and all tend to direct users well away from better policed routes and into or across the flood plain. Due to these difficulties, the routes have been set

aside at present to enable us to concentrate on a route to and from Great Baddow.

A specific cycle route across the Meads was never a requirement of the scheme since the Highways Agency was only obliged to provide a like for like replacement structure. Essex County Council has since looked at the possibility of providing additional funding to achieve this facility but it has become clear that a below-ground route under the new viaduct is impractical due to land constraints, visual issues, impact on the flood plain and cost.

A more practical solution would be to look at an option that avoids the need for a subterranean solution. In parallel with the replacement viaduct scheme a flood alleviation proposal is emerging for the River Chelmer in this section of the town centre which might include the opportunity to provide a new cycle corridor alignment along the south side of the river on the west side of the viaduct. It is possible that the options across the Meads could be revisited in order to link the various project opportunities and create a new cycle corridor. However, it should be noted that the original difficulties and need for land negotiations would still remain.