

Agenda Item 10

Report Number (AFM /05/10)

Response to Great Baddow Cycle Route

From: Alex Moriarty Secretary to the Cabinet Office **On Behalf Of** Norman Hume Member CC
Sent: 17 February 2010 11:35
To: 'allan.trigg@intamail.com'
Cc: John Symonds Mid-Essex Area Co-ordinator
Subject: CHELMER VIADUCT & GREAT BADDOW CYCLE ACCESS TO TOWN

Dear Mr Trigg,

Thank you for your question tabled at the Mid Essex Forum on the 6th January.

In this email you make reference to the 15th December County Council statement on the issue of cycling in relation to the Chelmer Viaduct proposal and ask a number of subsequent questions which I have listed below for clarity:

Routes across the Meads

Some research was carried out by the Highway Authority's Mid Area office into a number of potential routes across the Meads. This concluded that whilst a route may be achievable in practical terms it would be difficult to deliver in land ownership terms etc at the present time, this being the case, it was set aside to try and concentrate on a more deliverable option. This itself is proving difficult to take forward in a reasonable timescale.

HA Requirements for Public Art

The County Council does not have any information regarding the cost of public art in relation to the replacement of the new structure – it is suggested that you approach the Highways Agency directly for this information.

Route under the New Viaduct

Please see extract below from a report of the Highways Agency's Consultants:

Design Issues for a cycleway underpass at the Army and Navy Roundabout:

2.1 Land ownership – The Highways Agency have developed the Chelmer Viaduct Replacement Scheme in close liaison with affected landowners and we understand that the scheme is unlikely to receive objections from Landowners.

Additional land would be required to accommodate an underpass and access ramps (see attached annotated plan for assumed layout). We are aware that the landowner has aspirations for development in the area and therefore an objection would be likely from the Landowner.

2.2 Flooding – The Chelmer Viaduct Replacement Scheme has been developed to ensure that it is acceptable to the Environment Agency requiring extensive Flood Modelling and Flood compensation proposals. A cycleway underpass would obstruct the Baddow Meads Channel

near to the Army and Navy requiring significant diversion of the channel (a route for which is not immediately apparent) and additional flood compensation (on private land, again unlikely to be acceptable).

An underpass located on the flood plain would require agreement with the Environment Agency and would need to pass an "exceptions test" for "essential infrastructure" in accordance with PPS25. A new cycleway may not pass this test. The feasibility of the Scheme would need to be proven by flood modelling and a new Flood Risk Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment undertaken to demonstrate no increase in flood risk.

2.3 Landscape and Visual Appearance – The Chelmer Viaduct is located in a Conservation Area and has required extensive liaison with the Planning Authority to minimise adverse impacts and to enhance the Conservation Area. I would expect the Planning Authority to consider an underpass of this size and type to be a significant adverse impact to the appearance of the conservation area which may not be acceptable.

2.4 Practicalities of layout and construction – An underpass would need to be founded approximately 4m below ground level to achieve the minimum internal headroom of 2.4m and to leave sufficient space for services above. Assuming an 8% gradient was acceptable this would require 50m long ramps extending away from the underpass (see annotated sketch). The entire structure would need to be protected from inundation by flood waters, therefore requiring 1.4m high concrete walls to the ramps. Pumped drainage would be required to clear rainwater with tanking/waterproofing to minimise leakage rates as the base would be 2m below the groundwater level. The route suggested for a new cycleway does not appear to provide best value considering the possibility of an alternative route under the new viaduct.

To summarise, the Chelmer Viaduct Scheme has been developed with careful consideration of stakeholder requirements including those of Essex County Council which did not include a cycle underpass in this location. The Planning Application is proposed for submission in January 2010, a change to the scheme as significant as the inclusion of a new cycleway underpass on private land within a functional flood plain would delay the delivery of the Project and jeopardise a successful Planning Application for the essential replacement of this old and deteriorating structure.

On this basis we have looked instead at returning to the idea of a route across the Meads given the change in circumstances below;

New opportunity for a route across the Meads

This is contained in a very recent planning application for Flood Defence Works in Chelmsford Town Centre (09/01466/SCOPE refers) to which we responded;

Recommendation

Application No: CHL/1466/09

Applicant: Mr H Davey

*Site Location: Land in Chelmsford Town Centre on Each Bank of the River Chelmer
Chelmsford, Essex*

Proposal: Flood defence works.

The Highway Authority has no objections to this proposal as it is not contrary to the relevant transportation policies contained within the County Council's Highways and Transportation Development Control Policies as originally contained in Appendix G of the LTP 2006-2011 and refreshed by Cabinet Member decision on the 19/10/07, however further discussion is required

with the Local Planning Authority with regard to the Chelmsford Flood Alleviation Scheme Scoping Document Addendum (Town Centre Works) October 2009, listed below:

1. *The access to the site compounds for the construction phase as identified in table 2.*
2. *The proposed cycle route improvements (site 25 and 26) for joint use by pedestrian and cyclists needs to reflect current practice i.e increased width to 3 metre minimum and provide connectivity with existing routes.*

Note - *All works within the highway to be laid out, constructed and completed to the satisfaction of the Area Highway Manager, details to be agreed before the commencement of works.*

We are working with colleagues to develop a scheme based on the use of the underpass of Essex Yeomanry Way by Meadgate School, the available headroom under the new viaduct and the above proposal. Detail regarding exact routes and issues such as lighting are still emerging at this stage.

Difficulties with Land Negotiation

A number of improvements in this location, including potential cycle routes are contingent upon development sites coming forward, timing for this is obviously difficult to predict. Delivery of a practical route across the Meads is as I have stated above reliant on the emerging flood defence proposals which should provide the appropriate route to the acquisition of the land required.

I hope that this information is useful to you.

Sincerely,

Norman Hume

Cabinet Member for Highways & Transportation

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