

Statement of Common Ground

Between Rochford District Council (RDC) & Essex County Council (ECC) as Highways Authority in support of the Rayleigh Area Action Plan (RayAAP) Examination in Public

Dated 3 March 2015

Introduction and Purpose

- 1.0 This Statement has been prepared between Rochford District Council (RDC) and Essex County Council (ECC) as Highways Authority. The purpose of the Statement is to clarify matters of agreement between the two authorities concerning highways and transportation issues within the Rayleigh Area Action Plan Pre Submission Document (November 2013), which is the subject of the examination.

Background

- 2.1 The Adopted Rochford District Core Strategy (Core Strategy) commits RDC to produce Area Action Plans for the District's main centres of Rayleigh, Rochford and Hockley (Policies RTC 4-6). Core Strategy Policy RTC4 establishes two objectives relating to transport for the Rayleigh Area Action Plan;
- Improved accessibility to and within the town centre
 - A safe and high quality environment for residents and visitors
- 2.2 The preparation of the Rayleigh Area Action Plan has been through several iterations including:
- Issues and Options Document (September 2009)
 - *Proposed Submission Document – informal consultation (May 2013)*
 - *Pre-Submission Document (November 2013)*
 - *The Submission Document (December 2014) (Post Pre-submission document)*
- 2.3 The key issues between ECC and RDC at each stage are outlined below.

Issues and Options Document (September 2009)

- 2.4 ECC provided a response to the Issues and Options consultation, which included reference to traffic circulation and the technical feasibility of any highways and transportation proposals, having regard to their impact on the functioning and safety of the highway network and the cost and deliverability of highway and transportation requirements

Proposed Submission Document – informal consultation (May 2013)

- 2.5 ECC provided a response to the Proposed Submission document – informal consultation (7 August 2013).

Pre-Submission Document (November 2013)

- 2.6 ECC's response to the Proposed Submission document – informal consultation (7 August 2013) was supplied during this consultation and the comments remain valid.

The Submission Document (December 2014)

- 2.7 During the compilation of the Consultation Report for the Pre-Submission Document it became apparent to RDC that several issues raised by ECC at the earlier Proposed Submission – informal consultation, had not been addressed to the joint satisfaction of RDC and ECC.
- 2.8 Consequently RDC sought to rectify this issue by working with ECC to evaluate and consider ECC's recommendations prior to the submission of the Rayleigh Area Action Plan. RDC prepared a table of proposed modifications based on discussions with ECC. RDC produced a schedule of modifications as part of the Rayleigh Area Action Plan Submission Document (December 2014) submitted on 5 December 2014 (ref:RCAAP003).

Issue

- 3.1 The Pre-Submission Document (November 2013) is the subject of the examination and the highways issues raised by ECC in the response dated 7 August 2013 are still valid and remain unaddressed. The key issues and position statement are outlined in Table 1 below:

Table 1 – ECC Key Issues to be addressed and Position Statement in response to the Proposed Submission Document (November 2013)

	<u>ECC Outstanding Issues</u>	<u>Current Position between RDC / ECC</u>
1	The key issues raised by ECC in the Highways issues note, dated 22 May 2014 reiterated the Highway Authority's earlier concerns within the ECC response 7 August 2013(see SUBDOC6). These are listed below.	RDC suggested changes to address the concerns raised and then requested revised estimates from AMUP (Consultants) to reflect the proposed changes.
2	ECC as Highway Authority are supportive of the need to add value to the town centre. Our primary focus will be to ensure that proposals do not negatively impact upon highway capacity and circulation, and we are keen to work with you in developing these proposals.	Agreed See also RCAAP 009, Page 3 - Bullet number 2 and as agreed in Appendix D (paragraphs 11 & 12)
3	ECC concerns arise mainly from the suggestion to alter the traffic flow movement as well as changes to the taxi rank, further information would be required on the benefits before a fuller judgement could be made	See comments below (points 4-7) See also RCAAP 009, Page 3 - Bullets number 1 & 2 and as agreed in Appendix D (paragraphs 11 & 12)
	Key areas of feedback are:	
4	Taxi rank layout- there was concern regarding any possible reduction in taxi facilities within the area. Taxi ranks are regarded as a sustainable form of transport, reducing pressure on the town's car parks.	There is potential for these to be investigated through traffic modelling and associated Road Safety Audit of options (subject to approval of funding by the LHP)
5.	Traffic Circulation - The proposed traffic circulation changes including full or partial circulation, as well as the reintroduction of two way traffic in all areas, would need to be treated with caution.	RDC confirmed that the reinstatement of two way circulation is not proposed.
6.	A full traffic modelling (S Paramics) exercise would need to be undertaken however these can prove to be lengthy and costly, and when compared with other town centre schemes, can prove too costly to implement the engineering required when compared with the benefits of the scheme. As referred to in the Sustainability Appraisal, configuration changes have the potential to shift traffic elsewhere, which it could be suggested has the potential to cause opposition from local residents.	The LHP separately funded and approved the Traffic Survey and modelling work in September 2014 (see paragraph 4.1 & Annex 1 below). This work has commenced. See also RCAAP 009, Page 3 - Bullets number 1 & 2 and as agreed in Appendix D (paragraphs 11 & 12)
7.	Congestion at junctions as a cause for concern. Given the above it would most likely be more effective to consider signal upgrades been considered and local junction changes.	This is within the scope of the modelling work that has commenced, as referred to in point 6 above.

<p>8.</p> <p>9.</p> <p>10.</p> <p>11.</p> <p>12.</p>	<p>Other key factors to note within any modelling work:</p> <p>The A129 is a major strategic carrier of road traffic and for this reason, it is unlikely the Highway Authority will be able to provide its support when either traffic flows or capacity are reduced.</p> <p>Traffic speeds, it is unlikely due to the strategic nature of the A129 that any form of vertical deflection would be considered (for example speed humps or rumble strips).</p> <p>Bus operators would need to be consulted at an early stage to avoid conflicts with bus routes and possible removal of affected routes by commercial operators.</p> <p>Increase in informal pedestrian crossings - any increase in the number needs to be treated with caution. It is unlikely this would work on the A129 due to the volumes of traffic and the consequent congestion.</p> <p>Improved traffic signal crossings would direct pedestrians and general motor traffic more efficiently and minimise conflicts.</p>	<p>This is within the scope of the modelling work that has commenced, as referred to in point 6 above.</p> <p>This is within the scope of the modelling work that has commenced, as referred to in point 6 above.</p> <p>This would be undertaken at a later stage (see paragraph 4.5 below)</p> <p>RDC confirmed that these are not proposed (see RCAAP003 Figure 8 page 4)</p> <p>This is within the scope of the modelling work (see point 6 above).</p>
<p>13.</p>	<p>Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investigations to improve local bus services would be considered, including enhancing links with the local rail station. - Whilst cycling is considered and the recommendation to provide racks, the cycling element should be considered further to include enhanced directional signage for routes to enhance permeability of the town centre, and to consider cycle storage as part of the role of cycle/bus interchanges, and rail albeit further afield. - Whilst reference is made to improving links, liaison would need to occur with the Cycling Officer to determine the most suitable routes, as well as the opportunity to capture feedback from the existing cycle user groups. 	<p>Agreed, as set out in RCAAP009 point 3 and Appendix D paragraphs 11 & 12</p>

Areas of Agreement between RDC & ECC

- 4.1 ECC and RDC recognise the need to undertake survey work and modelling to understand the congestion concerns and to test options. This is being addressed through a separate traffic survey and modelling work commissioned by the Rochford Local Highway Panel on 25th September 2014 (see Annex 1).

- 4.2 RDC suggested changes to address the concerns raised by ECC and then requested revised estimates from AMUP (Consultants) to reflect the proposed changes (ref: RCAAP003). ECC will work with RDC to update the proposed modifications and will formally respond to any consultation on the suggested schedule of modifications at that time. To assist the examination, set out in Table 2 below are ECC comments in respect of Figure 8 and the four annotations (as presented in RCAAP003).

Table 2 ECC comments in respect of Figure 8 (as presented within RCAAP003)

Figure 8 Annotations (RCAAP003)	ECC Comments
- Rationalisation of taxi rank and improvements to make the area more pedestrian friendly.	There is potential for these to be investigated through traffic modelling and associated Road Safety Audit of options (subject to approval of funding by the LHP)
- Potential for surface treatments, changes to signage and other soft traffic measures.	Public realm improvements are not currently under the remit of LHPs for funding. RDC will continue investigating other funding sources
- Potential changes include adapting zebra crossing, or simply changing the timing of the current crossing.	This forms part of the traffic survey and modelling investigation (LROC132029)
- Potential for soft traffic measures, including changes to road texture, indicator markers, and improved signage, to assist traffic flow and pedestrian movement.	The LHP has approved the traffic survey and modelling work (ref LROC132029). Any actions or outcomes from the modelling would be subject to decisions taken by the LHP regarding funding bids for schemes. Other finance would be from any developer contributions

- 4.3 RDC & ECC will continue to work together through the Rochford Local Highway Panel (LHP) to address this matter; in parallel with the preparation of the Rayleigh AAP. To date, funding has been secured from the LHP to undertake the initial traffic survey and modelling work as outlined in Annex 1 (ref LROC132029). The traffic survey and modelling work is being carried out within the scope of the LHP Terms of Reference.
- 4.4 The Rayleigh Town Centre Area has recently been declared an Air Quality Management Area as such any changes to the highway network need to take account of this and contribute to the associated plan.
- 4.5 ECC has commenced the traffic survey and modelling work for Rayleigh Town Centre and this modelling is likely to be available in Spring/ Summer 2015. The outcome(s) of the modelling are not known at this stage, however the anticipated next steps in this iterative process are highlighted below

1. To test options
 2. To review the emerging outcome(s) and present to ECC Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation;
 3. To consider and present any recommendations to the LHP for funding
 4. The LHP to determine whether any actions are to be taken; to secure and/or allocate funds; and to prioritise any action(s) within their remit.
- 4.6 The above is subject to the nature of the findings, further investigations which may be required and subject to identifying any potential funding streams.
- 4.7 With the support of the modelling work, RDC and ECC will continue to work closely together to seek to resolve the transport issues identified. The modelling work has the potential to form a valuable next stage to addressing the transport and highway issues of Rayleigh centre in conjunction with the Rayleigh Area Action Plan. Any allocation or prioritisation of funds will be subject to respective bids within the terms of the Local Highways Panel.

Conclusions

- 5.1 RDC and ECC agree that the Rayleigh Area Action Plan does not set detailed prescriptive plans or policies for the transport network in Rayleigh and can therefore accommodate the findings of the modelling work. The RayAAP is not dependent upon the detailed outcomes of the Traffic Survey and modelling work. ECC and RDC agree that this is a separate piece of work that the authorities will continue to progress through the LHP.

Dated: 3 March 2015

Rochford District Council

Essex County Council

 DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT
& ECONOMY

Rochford Local Highway Panel

25 September 2014

Agenda Item 6

Rayleigh Town Centre – LROC132029

During the 2013/14 financial year, a scheme request was made to look at the congestion of traffic along Crown Hill, Rayleigh due to numerous pedestrians using the zebra crossing at the top of Crown Hill.

In the LHP meeting it was made apparent that this junction was not the only site within Rayleigh Town Centre that has congestion problems due to crossing points. It was then suggested that the panel investigate Rayleigh Town Centre and the congestion problems. £4,000 was recommended by the panel Members to the scheme.

During the initial investigation, discussions with Network Management, the Intelligence Transport System Team and Transport Planner Officers within Essex County Council and Essex Highways, it was suggested that to get a true picture of the congestion problems within Rayleigh Town Centre a micro-simulation should be carried out.

Before the simulation can be carried out, numerous surveys will need to be carried out within and around the Town Centre to gather sufficient data for the modelling. These surveys will collect data on vehicle movements and cost around £14,000. The simulation model will cost £40,000.

The micro-simulation is a computerised analytical tool that will perform highly detailed analysis of activities such as traffic flow through an intersection, the ability to simulate queuing conditions and predict the likely impact of changes in traffic patterns resulting from changes to the physical environment. In this case Rayleigh Town Centre.

If the Panel Members are in agreement for the surveys and modelling to continue, I would be grateful if £54,000 can be recommended.

The surveys will be taken from the revenue budget and the simulation from capital budget.

