



Adrian Clothier
Keir Services, Highways
Woodlands Annexe,
Manton Lane,
Bedford,
Bedfordshire, MK41 7NU

19/03/18 (Sent via Coggeshall Parish Council)

Re: Highways England: Study of crossing points of the A120 in the vicinity of Coggeshall to Marks Tey, & linkages to bus stop.

The Coggeshall Neighbourhood Plan group has carried out research on both footpaths and public transport. To assist Keir Services and Highways England we set out below the findings of our work and some detail regarding our emerging policies.

A120 Crossing Points

1. The Parish & Traffic Congestion Community Consultation

- The Parish of Coggeshall is noticeably 'cut off' by the A120 by pass constructed to relieve traffic congestion through the village. To the extent that many new residents are unaware that the parish boundary extends as far north as Marks Hall Estate. See figure 1.

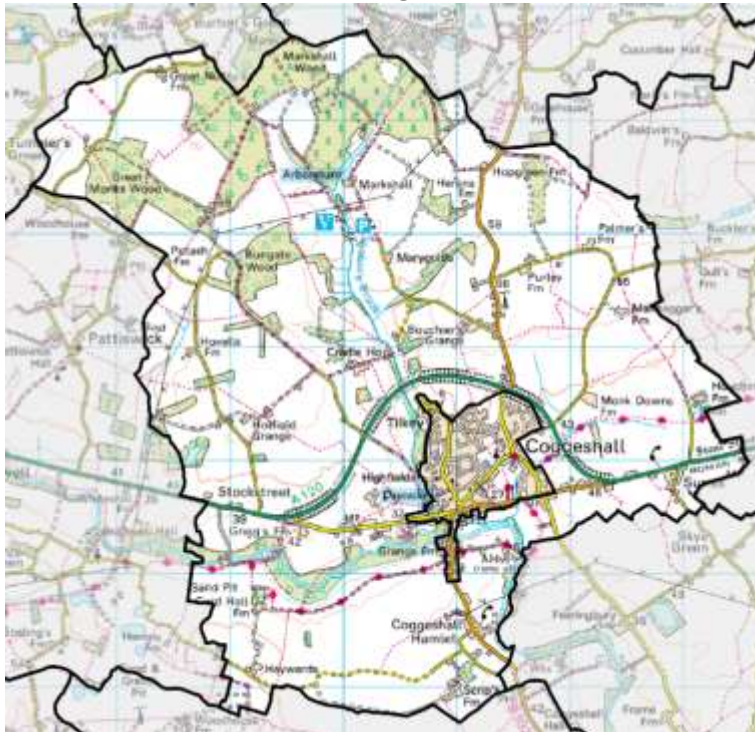


Figure 1: Coggeshall Parish and The Village Envelope.

- Traffic volumes are now at a level which prevents the safe crossing of the A120 by people, wildlife and often cars. Residents of the Parish are aware of people within the community who have lost loved ones to this road. The CNP are aware of plans to reroute the A120 and down grade the existing route. However, the group have submitted evidence in the various consultation exercises carried out on these plans that we do not anticipate that in the long run traffic will ease along the road. This is due to 3 factors.
 - Recent studies that demonstrate that building roads generates traffic flow.
 - The purpose of the road as set out by the consortium behind the proposals is to enable more traffic to access the ports and development along its length. This is at odds with the stated definition in the consultation documents of relieving traffic congestion.
 - The development of 24,000 homes at West Tey, and many additional developments in this area of 1000's of new homes even with 4 additional lanes of a rerouted A120 will ensure that the current route continues to operate at peak flow in the future.
- The A120 acts as a boundary which prevents people from physically crossing and in addition imposes a psychological boundary to the area north of the built envelope.

2. Community Consultation

- The CNP has carried out extensive consultation exercises over the last few years. The results set out below demonstrate the enthusiasm and need shown by residents in the parish for recreation walking routes, safe crossing place for people and the importance of ensuring that the parish's wildlife is provided for into the future.

June 2016 Queens Day Consultation:

- 5 question SWOT Analysis.
- What do people Love about Coggeshall? 29.37% said walks / footpaths and 18.88% said green space / rural character.

November 2016 CNP Roadshow:

- 97% of respondents said yes they walked regularly, at least once a week.
- 84% of respondents said yes they walked beyond the village centre.
- 96% of respondents said no, we don't do enough to make our open spaces wildlife friendly.
- 93% of respondents said yes to developing more footpaths and tourist information signage for the Parish.
- Comments included: More walking needed; 'Better paths'; Under countryside / walking' – attractive design green spaces accessible' and 'should be able to walk along'; Under protecting wildlife 'Protect wildlife areas / prevent loss of eco chain.'

2017 Coggeshall Community Questionnaire.

- 82% 'strongly agreed' that the CNP should protect and enhance our natural environment.
- 90% said we should resist new development which makes it more difficult to get to rivers and areas of woodland.
- 88% said we should encourage development that will create new places where animals and birds can live.
- 94% said we should oppose dev that will result in the loss of places where animals and birds can live.
- 91% said we should oppose dev that will make it more difficult to get to open spaces and open countryside.
- 94% said we should oppose development that will spoil footpaths or bridleways.

3. Green Infrastructure

- The CNP emerging policy includes a parish wide policy on Green Infrastructure. Our objective is 'To preserve and enhance the Parishes Green Infrastructure.'
- The draft policy incorporates the following aims:

- To increase green and blue infrastructure connections to improve biodiversity and connect and enhance wildlife corridors.
- To increase green infrastructure to develop recreation routes and new footpath, cycle and bridleway links into the village and encourage community cohesion.
- To increase green and blue infrastructure connections across parish boundaries.
- New development to demonstrate green infrastructure within the development and between the public and private open spaces (e.g. back gardens) though increase use of hedgerows boundary planting and semi permeable boundary solutions such as walls and fences with hedgehog holes to allow small mammals and amphibians to move within all open space.
- To preserve and enhance the parishes green and blue infrastructure in accordance with the emerging 'national framework of green infrastructure standards'
- Policies on Green infrastructures are supported at a national level in the NNPF and at a local level in the draft Braintree District Council District plan. These principles and more are also supported in the new 25 Year Environment Plan (Jan 2018)

4. The 25 Year Environment Plan (HM Gov Jan 2018)

- The 25 Year Environment Plan supports Green infrastructure in chapter 3.

"Chapter 3: Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing.

We will:

5. *Help people improve their health and wellbeing by using green spaces including through mental health services.*
6. *Encourage children to be close to nature, in and out of school, with particular focus on disadvantaged areas.*
7. *'Green' our towns and cities by creating green infrastructure and planting one million urban trees.*
8. *Make 2019 a year of action for the environment, working with Step Up To Serve and other partners to help children and young people from all backgrounds to engage with nature and improve the environment.*

3. Greening our towns and cities

Green and blue spaces in our built environment are essential to health and happiness. Yet urban greenspace is unequally distributed. The provision of more and better quality green infrastructure,23 including urban trees, will make towns and cities attractive places to live and work, and bring about key long-term improvements in people's health. Better green infrastructure will promote local social interaction and help to develop strong community networks through participation and shared achievements.

We want to encourage more investment, in part by doing a better job of explaining what 'good' green infrastructure actually looks like. We will do this by defining a set of standards in close consultation with stakeholders, including the Parks Action Group.

i. Creating more green infrastructure

Our aim is to improve existing green infrastructure by encouraging more investment while making sure there is a presumption for sustainable development. Initially, we will focus on areas where we know that there is not enough accessible green infrastructure, or that what is there is of poor quality.

We will draw up a national framework of green infrastructure standards, *ensuring that new developments include accessible green spaces and that any area with little or no green space can be improved for the benefit of the community. This will involve finding out what local authorities, developers and other stakeholders think is most important, and where good practice is being demonstrated. There is likely to be some cross-over with the work of the Parks Action Group, whose members' knowledge will be captured and shared. Consistent with the Industrial Strategy we will make sure the important contribution made to economic growth by high-quality environmental assets and green infrastructure are taken into account when we make decisions. "*

9. 2017 Landscape Sensitivity and capacity Appraisal.

- This study carried out by the Landscape partnership and commissioned by Coggeshall Parish Council on behalf of the CNP sought to assess areas which were not assessed in the 2015 Braintree Sensitivity and Capacity Analysis

commissioned by BDC. In regard to Green infrastructure and the crossing points of the A120 it made the following comments:

Parcel B (This parcel incorporates the Essex Way leading from St Peters road and crossing the A120)

Para 5.6.3:

“Additional woodland planting would reinforce the existing hedgerow, preventing views from this direction and would enable the establishment of a robust and defensible green edge to the village. Any development of the site should also consider opportunities to upgrade the crossing of the A120 to create a safe and attractive crossing for pedestrians using the Essex Way. Consideration should also be given to creating a safe crossing of the A120 for wildlife, to mitigate the negative impact of any development, and to improve connectivity. This could be by means of an underpass or widened culvert for example.”

10. Aspirational Projects

- The CNP have identified a number of ‘Aspirational Projects’ as a result of research and community feedback. These will be included in the final plan. Their status will not be equal to that of planning policy, however their inclusion as projects of importance identified by the community will give them greater status when money becomes available to pursue them.
- One of the aspirational projects is a ‘green bridge’ to span the A120. The bridges have a long span to enable a ramp rather than steps and are planted with grass and shrubs. They provide a safe, effective and aesthetically pleasing method of crossing a road. These bridges are now being employed on the continent and there are a few examples in the UK. Their purpose is to address the problems imposed by roads such as the A120 which act as a barrier to people and wildlife moving around. The result is a detrimental impact on the recreational needs and enjoyment of people, and the ability of animals to be able to move unharmed through the countryside and reach new habitat and feeding areas.
- This idea enjoyed support at the consultation day and would be the preferred method to cross the A120 second only to tunneling the road.

11. The Crossing Points.



Figure 2: Crossing Points of the A120

- a) Highfield farm to Holfield Grange
 - Public footpath crossing the A120.
 - Visibility: This footpath lies on a relatively straight section of road. Visibility of on-coming traffic is therefore reasonable. However, speed of traffic is particularly fast at this point.
 - Landscape Character: Open agricultural.

- Green Infrastructure: As part of the parishes green infrastructure this foot path is could be greatly improved. Currently it provides recreational walking opportunities for walkers but there is no vegetation or cover for small or large mammals, or birds. Signage of this path is poor.
- b) Ambridge Road
 - Former minor road now used as a footpath. On the southern side the tarmac has overgrown to the width of a footpath. To the northern side the road remains. Long distance walks to use the norther footpaths are popular from here.
 - Visibility: This footpath lies on a relatively straight section of road, however views to the east are more limited.
 - Landscape Character: Sunken path with raised banks to each running to the north on gently rising ground. A ditch to the western edge of the path. Remnant hedgerow along the western side. Hedgerow to the eastern side. Open fields to east and west. North of the A120 the track is 'banked' to each side at the crossing point.
 - Green Infrastructure: As part of the parish's green infrastructure this crossing has greater viability as green infrastructure due to the presence of hedgerows.
- c) Path to Gatehouse Farm
 - Public foot path crossing the A120
 - Visibility: This footpath goes up a slight embankment to the level of the A120.
 - Landscape Character: Open agricultural fields. Hedgerows / shrub planting at A120 crossing.
 - Green Infrastructure: Room for improvement. This footpath passes though mainly open agriculture fields offering no cover for wildlife. There is some shrubbery and hedging near Gatehouse.
- d) Tilkey Road
 - Public foot path tunnel under the A120
 - Visibility: N/A
 - Landscape Character: Connecting woodland to the north and a willow plantation and hedgerow to the south along the bank of Robins Brook (part of which is a local wildlife reserve. This is a valuable part of the parishes green and blue infrastructure. The tunnel itself does not incorporate any designs that would enable wildlife to use this route.
- e) Honeywood School to Bouchiers Grange
 - Public footpath crossing the A120.
 - Visibility: The road at this point is straight, with reasonable visibility.
 - Landscape Character: Open agricultural fields.
 - Green Infrastructure: Some shrubbery around the crossing.
- f) Tey Road
 - Public footpath crossing the A120.
 - Visibility: Poor when crossing the road due to the bend of the road to the north west. This is a common place for people to cross the road, particularly cyclists. Lives of pedestrians have been lost here.
 - Landscape Character: Former country road to the Teys. The northern section of the road retains its original landscape character with hedgerows and ditches to each side of the road. The southern section has been 'urbanised' with housing from 30's and 50's. The last 100m of the road has been narrowed to a footpath with tall hedgerow planting to each side.
 - Green Infrastructure: The existing hedgerow planting along the road to the north and along the footpath the south provide cover for wildlife. However, otherwise the surrounding landscape is agricultural field which provides minimal cover. A development has been approved within the

triangle of land to the north of the southern section of footpath. The impact upon green infrastructure at this point is yet to be understood.

- g) The Essex Way
 - Nationally important public footpath crossing the A120 used by large groups of walkers.
 - Visibility: Reasonable when crossing however this is a straight section of road so traffic speed is increased.
 - Landscape Character: The footpath to the north and south passes through open agricultural land with remnant hedgerow. There are large hedgerows along this section of the A120. The level of the road is raised at this point, so the footpath goes up steps and a stile on each side of the site. Repair is needed to this infrastructure.
 - Green Infrastructure: There is a good basis for green infrastructure at this point. There is no housing and increased tree planting and hedgerow planting would benefit wildlife. The elevated road level also provides an opportunity for a tunnelled crossing at this point. Please refer to the comments in section 9 of this report from the 2017 Landscape Sensitivity and capacity Appraisal.

12. Conclusion

- Coggeshall parish has been 'cut in half' by the now at capacity A120. The CNP do not foresee that this will improve in the future given predicated development even with a new A120 in place south of the parish. The community in Coggeshall have communicated to the CNP group at consultation exercises their enjoyment of the Coggeshall as a village in a country side setting, their appreciation for wildlife and their desire and need to use the footpaths, cycleways and bridle ways. However, they and any future residents must be enabled to do this safely. Provision must also be made to comply with national and local policy to develop Green Infrastructure. Therefore measures, bridges (ideally green), and tunnels which would enable these ambitions would not only be welcomed but are required in order to ensure that the community and the environment are able to develop positively to create a happy, health and productive living environment which benefits the people of the Parish and surrounding areas.

Bus Linkages

13. The only public bus service is the number 70 between Colchester and Chelmsford via Coggeshall and Braintree. The service is good during the weekend on Saturdays, running every half an hour. However, evening travel is severely restricted.
14. A N/S route crossing the A120 would be welcomed to connect Hallstead in the North via Earls Colne, Coggeshall. Kelvedon/ Feering to Tiptree and Witham. There is no such service at present.
15. Bus stops are within the villages not along the A120 where it passes through Coggeshall Parish

The Coggeshall Neighbourhood Plan has carried out a lot of research in these areas as part of the plans development. Thank you for including our findings in your study.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Kohn

Chair Coggeshall Neighbourhood Plan