

Kindly forward this and the attachment to the Inspectors for their consideration.

My original representations were to-

Policy SC3 Transport South Colchester . ID 6064 1946 Nicholas Chilvers

Policy SC2 Middlewick ID 6068 1946 NC

Policy EC3 East Colchester referring to Local development Areas incl. Whitehall. ID 6076 1946 NC

Policy DM20. Sustainable transport. ID 6069 1946 NC

I seek to argue that the inclusion of Middlewick is 'Unsound' and it should be ruled out of the plan. I have lived within a mile from 'The Wick' for 50 years.

I submit the following under the headings of Main Matters **4a Infrastructure and mitigation** and **MM18 Sustainable transport**.

(The attachment is a list of challenging pressure points along the network that lead off from Middlewick. together with comment. This was provided to CBC and ECC Highways early this January 2021)

1000 homes on Middlewick will need considerable supporting road infrastructure.

I have looked at the traffic modelling forecasts provided by Stantec and ECC highways and don't have the expertise to query the rationale of the statistics but I do question whether the evidence is up to date and whether it takes account of local conditions in terms of social demographics and the quality of the road network. Norms and averages shouldn't be applied to this area. It isn't an average area.

In fairness they do acknowledge that many of the sections and junctions work at over capacity.

I've read the assessments and reviews of transport in the south and south east of Colchester (Old Heath/Berechurch/ Monkwick and Hythe) and the suggested mitigation measures. I note also that there are no assurances about whether or not they can be actually be enacted. Or whether they will be effective. I think they are simply words to ease the process.

The DIO say it can be 'positively managed'. Frankly, there isn't much scope to do anything, including laying down cycle lanes. Apart from a section along Mersea Rd to the west of Middlewick, much of the SE network is too narrow. A couple of roundabouts and some speed bumps won't make the necessary difference to vehicle flows and levels.

The ATTACHMENT is a compilation of stress points with description along roads for about 1.5 miles out from the Wick that the new homeowners would use.. They are not exaggerated. I'm confident that local residents and Ward Councillors will confirm that the facts set out and my remarks are accurate.

I note that the majority of objectors to Middlewoick referred to over-loaded roads and congestion. They were not wrong.

The reports supplied seem to assume that the impact of traffic evaporates after half a mile from the Wick.

They haven't taken account of the fact that whilst there has been considerable house building at Rowhedge, Mersea, Berechurch and the Hythe since the LP was submitted.,

No new leisure or health services, infrastructure or employment opportunities have been provided nearby.

From the SE one has to travel to access pretty well any and everything.

Routes from the Wick are-

To the town centre via Mersea Rd

To the town centre via Abbots, Old Heath Rd and Military rd.

To Whitehall industrial estate/ the Hythe and on to Colne Causeway to the A133

To A12 Ipswich Rd via Mersea rd, Bourne Rd, Wimpole rd, Brook St. and East Bay.

.Or towards Gosbecks and the west (A12) via Mersea rd and Berechurch Rd. .

My attachment sets out the constraints and pollution problems along those routes.

The nearby industrial estate of Whitehall has no room for expansion and poorly located from a connectivity point of view so it is unlikely to be a source of more employment. Nor does the small industrial area at Gosbecks. The Hythe industry is moving out to be replaced with high density flats.

One wonders if the report writers stood on the narrow pavements on the eastern end of Abbots Rd at school time or in the regular floods along Haven Rd. Or stood at the bottom of Mersea Rd into St Botolphs roundabout in the pollution? Because they haven't conveyed any sense of how bad things really are..

(Not forgetting Brook St, A major east of centre link but one of the narrowest and most polluted in town).

Matters are complicated by the fact that this is predominately a 'blue collar' area. The admin and professionals tend to live in the north or west where the connectivity is much better for employment and has good access to commuter rail services..

The SE tends to work more in the service industries in Colchester town and hands-on skilled and semi-skilled trades scattered about.. Many of which are self employed.

This takes me to the argument of home working. .

Not much of it can be done at home despite the claims by CBC that home-working will reduce car use. It will elsewhere, but not by the same level in the SE and Middlewick. That is wishful thinking.

Middlewick home owners will add considerably to the burden on the road network because of lack of nearby employment and services and there are no plans to improve matters. If they find a job, they'll have to travel some distance to get to it.

I note that at the time of writing, traffic monitoring is being done along certain stretches of roads. I hope account will be taken of the lower than normal levels of car use during this lock-down. The figures won't reflect pre-Covid and are bound to be distorted.

When the pandemic is over they will all pile into key junctions again. Middlewick will add to them and worsen an already bad situation.

Sustainable transport.

The town centre retail scene is shrinking which provided a lot of employment..

Employers nowadays require greater levels of flexibility from their staff. The idea that Middlewick residents can safely cycle or walk the distances required to access employment up and down the local hills and around the bends at all hours is unrealistic. They won't. They'd rather sit in their cars. .

Distance, together with worries about personal safety, nature of roads and pavements are a disincentive. These roads don't compare with London's Mile End Road or Hackney Rd. Nor with wide, straight continental boulevards. .

I concede there is a reasonable bus service along Old Heath Rd from Town to Rowhedge and from Mersea to the centre. .But there is only a very slim service west to east via Berechurch to Shrub End.. The prospects of ever getting a better one are also slim. Worthy reports can recommend it but can't make it happen or ensure it gets used.

From Colchester town centre people can change, but frankly, who will do that in any numbers?

While promoting sustainable transport is laudable, the idea that it will be embraced by young family Middlewick home-owners for essential journeys is unrealistic. .

I acknowledge people are walking and cycling more but for leisure, not for other purposes. It worked in the days when we lived a mile from the factory gates and used the corner shop but not as housing is pushed further out from the central core and employment and services are centralised. They are now difficult to reach for three-quarters of the town's population living on the boundary..

This seems to be lost on the optimistic report writers.

Middlewick may well help the the council reach it's housing numbers but the harm it will do to an already over-burdened road network and the inevitable increase in pollution levels will outweigh those benefits. And they cannot be seriously mitigated because there isn't the road capacity at the crucial points to make a difference.. There have been no serious attempts address the problem in the reports. Probably because they can't.

Congestion and tailbacks will worsen.

Sorry. But as far as the SE is concerned, for the reasons set out above, it will not embrace cycling, walking or bus use. It either isn't practical or safe. The Sustainable Transport argument for Middlewick isn't a serious runner.


I respectfully argue that inclusion of Middlewick is unsound and should be ruled out of the Plan. The harm will outweigh the benefits and cannot be mitigated.

I'm sure those with the relevant expertise and local knowledge will make other valid arguments to Save the Wick. They will emphasise it's importance as an open space for leisure, health and protection of ecology and environment.

All in all, housing on Middlewick should be ruled out.

Thank you.

Nicholas Chilvers



Kindly forward this to the Inspectors for consideration.

This is further to my submission of 6th March and CBC's Update (just advanced) re. Middlewick allocation.

One has to be impressed with the detail the transport overview has.

It paints a pretty dire picture yet ECC highways and CBC, say it can be managed and impact mitigated.

They obviously haven't looked at the eastern end of Abbots Rd alongside the Church and School.

Nor have they given full weight to fact that the majority turn left into Old heath Rd and then a right into Whitehall Rd (Industrial area) .

I couldn't see any reference to the fact that all the traffic, and a lot of HGVs, take the route to Colne Causeway from Whitehall along the narrow Haven Rd which floods all across at every high tide.

They can wrap it however they like. It will be a disaster with the extra weight of traffic joins our SE network if Middlewick is approved.

The knock-on effect will go far beyond the immediate area because one has to drive everywhere to do anything. Jobs, leisure, services. Everything.
CBC hasn't a strategic plan for the SE. It is housing only. Nothing else.

Nicholas Chilvers

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Middlewick Ranges

Compiled by Nick Chilvers, the following is a list of problematic transport junctions, pinch points and areas of stress along routes to and from Middlewick. Based on 50 years of local knowledge.

Berechurch Hall Road. (BH Rd)

A section of Colchester's Informal Southern Circular (ISC) route east/west from B H Rd to west Colchester, B1022 Maldon rd. and onwards towards southbound A12. It provides an alternative route for Mersea Island residents and for those using the island's recreational facilities.

Comment. Constriction at eastern end of from Lethe Grove to Berechurch Hall Road junction with Mersea Rd. This residential road straddles the 1950's Monwick social housing estate with three roads joining BH Rd from estate. Recent years has seen considerable housing expansion along this largely rural road on the edge of the Garrison. Traffic levels also increasing due to several new developments on Mersea and plans for additional 170 along B H Rd. Caution needed.

B1025 Mersea Rd. Between Birch Glen and Monkwick estates. (also part ISC)

1. Section south of Queensland Drive to north of Stansted Rd.

Comment. Convenience shops and small car park on eastern side. Two pedestrian crossings and a mini roundabout which accesses Birch Glen housing estate. Then on to a main junction with access to Monkwick housing estate via Stansted Rd. Caution needed.

2. Junction with Abbots Rd.

Comment. Busy junction where traffic converges with Abbots and on to and from Colchester centre along Mersea rd. Regular long tailbacks north and south at peak times. Complicated by petrol station with cluttered forecourt directly opposite entrance to Abbots Rd leading to uncertainty of priority. Poor visibility of access and exit to petrol station. Caution needed.

B1025 Mersea Rd. from Abbots Rd towards Colchester town centre.

1. Section between Pownall Crescent and Berechurch Rd.

Comment. Road narrows. Co-op supermarket and car park, fish 'n chip shop and pedestrian crossing. Narrow pavements. Close to St Georges infants/primary school. Extra busy at school start and finishing times. Access also to/from Claudius Rd and Merrick Crescent into *New Town. A section that demands extra caution.

2. Drop from junction with Napier Rd to the town gateway roundabout of St Botolphs.

Comment. Ancient Abbey wall on western side. No pavement alongside this wall. Busy narrow pavement fronting houses and petrol station on east. A canyon, which is at the top of Colchester's pollution list.

Abbots Rd. (ISC)

1. Junction with Mersea Rd. (covered above)

2. Lidl. *Comment.* Opened within last three years. Proving very popular. Trolley shopping destination rather than baskets. Will clearly increase its turnover and car trips with an estate directly opposite. No other comparable local shopping choice except Tesco's at Hythe.

3. Section from Swallowdale Close past church and school.

Comment. Downright dangerous. Miracle that there hasn't been a serious accident. Becomes very narrow. Doors from houses on western side open directly onto one metre pavement. Cars parked straddle pavement except at controlled peak school times. Church front doors just three metres from kerb. Hazardous when school finishes, weddings and funerals and even Sundays with cars pulling up outside church to pick up elderly/disabled attendees. Drops down to very busy junction where traffic comes and goes into town or to Rowhedge and Fingringhoe villages via Old Heath Rd or back west towards Mersea Rd.

Old Heath Rd. (part ISC)

1. Section between Speedwell rd and Abbots alongside School.
Comment. Narrow pavement in front of school. Vehicles passing close to school to turn left into Abbots or onward towards town Centre. Much busier recently due to Rowhedge housing expansion.
2. Section from Abbots to Whitehall Rd.
Comment. Bends and drops in level. The busiest section due to taking all the traffic from east (Rowhedge/Fingringhoe) and west (Abbots) with much of it going into Whitehall Rd heading north and north east across river. Residential road with cars parking on-road on both sides. Narrow pavements used by parents and children attending Old Heath School. Community centre on D'Arcy Rd just off southern side. A difficult section to cross at any time. Additional traffic will make it horrendous.

Whitehall Rd through to A133 (ISC)

1. Drop down to Haven Rd. *Comment.* Steep drop to riverside and sharp bend into Haven Rd. Used by lorries of all sizes calling at Whitehall industrial estate and buses leaving and returning to depots. Although Whitehall industrial estate is well established it's connectivity to main strategic routes falls well short of ideal.
2. Haven Rd. *Comment.* What can one say? Narrow, uneven and frequently floods across entire road when tides are high or heavy rain. Never been sorted by authorities and never will. Some businesses have recently abandoned trading along there because of the disruption to trade due to flooding. High density building of flats both sides of the river has added to the traffic levels and tailbacks.
3. Tescos and B&Q (tb Sainsburys).
Comment. Superstore Tesco Hythe can claim to draw customers from south and south east of Colchester. Massive car park. Popular with students living on or near to Essex university campus. Large B&Q along Lightship Way. Only DIY store in area. Scheduled to soon be converted to a Sainsburys presumably to serve the demand from growing Hythe and Eastern Garden Communities development. More traffic inevitable. A lack of a major DIY store will create even more car journeys further afield.

Old Heath Rd. Alternative route from Mersea Rd via Abbots to Colchester town centre.

Section from Whitehall Rd to Whitehall Close.

Comment. Tight T junction opposite bus stop into Cavendish Avenue which hosts a Co-op Local store and busy vegetable shop with car parking backing onto road. A pedestrian crossing close by. Lorries servicing these shops and illegal parking constantly disrupt traffic flow and straddle pavements hindering safe pedestrian movement.

Hazardous section.

Old Heath Rd hill from Scarletts Rd up to Wimpole Rd.

Comment. Steep and narrows. Private cars belonging to residents of this road park on both sides straddling pavements. Cars can pass both ways (just) but if a lorry or bus arrives at base or top of hill everything else in other direction stops for the larger vehicle to move up or down. Frequent tailbacks up towards Wimpole Rd junction and down to Distillery Lane.

A much used route towards A12 northbound via New Town*.

To avoid the Hythe or town centre, vehicles turn into Bourne Rd from Mersea Rd. Past a pond and into sharp bend, up a steep hill along narrow residential road towards junction with OH Rd/Wimpole Rd.

Along Wimpole towards junction with Magdalen St into narrow Brook St. (Note-Brook St is Colchester's worst polluted street.)

Then northbound via Ipswich Road towards A12/A120.

Comment. Not fit for use.

* New Town is a large inner sector of Colchester. Victorian era, densely populated and criss-crossed with narrow streets. All subject to on street parking.

Nicholas Chilvers.



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