

Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) between Colchester Borough Council (CBC), Essex County Council (ECC) and Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) in respect of Section 2 of the Colchester Local Plan

1 Purpose of the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG)

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) follows engagement and co-operation between Colchester Borough Council (CBC), Essex County Council (ECC) and Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) and sets out an agreed position in relation to the transport aspects of the proposed strategic allocation for residential development at Middlewick Ranges, Colchester.
- 1.2 The following transport evidence is provided by DIO in support of the site:
 - Stantec Middlewick Ranges – Transport Overview October 2020
 - CBC Local Plan Annex 8 – Middlewick Ranges Vision Document

2 Background to SoCG

- 2.1 DIO have undertaken the preparation of transport evidence in support of the Middlewick Ranges site. This comprises an appraisal of the sustainable options for accessing the site and travel to and from it, strategic modelling using the ECC strategic highway model and local highway assessment using data collected for the purpose of testing the capacity of the highway network in the vicinity of the site.
- 2.2 Essex County Council officers have undertaken a review of the transport evidence provided as part of the support for the Middlewick Ranges site. They have identified a series of issues which should be addressed as part of any future Transport Assessment in respect of the Middlewick site. The scope of any Transport Assessment should be agreed with ECC as the Highway Authority as soon as possible.
- 2.3 All parties agree that the work undertaken to date is sufficient to support the allocation of the site into the Local Plan.

3 Sustainable transport

- 3.1 It is agreed that the Technical Notes and supporting evidence provided to date have stated that the development would need to be supported by a Transport Assessment that stressed the importance of sustainable transport as the primary means of access and movement from the site.
- 3.2 The scope of a Transport Assessment would be agreed with ECC but it is agreed, as a minimum, that it would need to include details relating to:
 - Support for local bus services to traverse the site and provide frequent and regular connections to the town centre, railway stations and any other identified and agreed destinations;
 - Provision of bus stops within the site and upgrade of existing bus stops in the vicinity of the site (specification to ECC standards);
 - Bus priority measures at key junctions;
 - Demonstration of an extensive network of footpaths and cycleways on the site and connections at the boundaries wherever these would connect to the external network.

Improvements to the external network of footpaths and cycleways in the vicinity of the site as agreed;

- Details of the distributor road across the site to provide dedicated footpath and cycleways alongside it over its entire length;
- Provision of new sections of footway, cycleway and uncontrolled and controlled crossings in the vicinity of the site as agreed;
- Improvements to the Public Right of Way Network across and in the vicinity of the site as agreed; and
- Delivery of a bespoke Travel Plan for the development of the site, with the appointment of a Travel Plan Co-ordinator and commitment to provision of tailored Residential Travel Information Packs for each household.

4 Impact on Highway Capacity

- 4.1 The strategic modelling work commissioned by ECC was undertaken to assess the potential effects of an allocation at Middlewick in the context of both site capacity and the impact compared to other locations on the southern arc around Colchester. The modelling considered allocations at Middlewick of 1,000, 1,500 and 2,000 dwellings.
- 4.2 It is agreed that the results showed that the effects of larger numbers of dwellings on the wider highway network was likely to be unacceptable, but that 1,000 dwellings could be accommodated, subject to a suitable Transport Assessment to consider the likely impact and need for mitigation at key junctions.
- 4.3 It is agreed by all parties that:

As a minimum, the Transport Assessment would assess the following junctions:

1. A134/Wimpole Road/Brook Street
2. Mersea Road/Abbot's Road
3. Abbot's Road/Old Heath Road
4. Old Heath Road/Whitehall Road
5. Whitehall Road/Haven Road
6. A134/Haven Road
7. Colne Causeway/Eastern Approach/Hawkins Road/Lightship Way
8. Eastern Approach/Elmstead Road
9. Greenstead Roundabout
10. Mersea Road/Berechurch Hall Road and all key junctions along the route to J26 on the A12
11. Old Heath Road/Wimpole Road/Military Road/Bourne Road
12. Military Road/Roberts Road
13. Magdalen Street/Military Road
14. Mersea Road/Berechurch Road
15. Mersea Road/Roberts Road
16. Mersea Road/Napier Road
17. St. Botolph's roundabout

- 4.4 The Transport Assessment would set out that where impacts would occur and mitigation schemes that would be proposed as part of the Transport Assessment and subsequently agreed with CBC and ECC as part of the planning permission.
- 4.5 That the preliminary appraisal undertaken (and appended to this SoCG) suggests that there is a range of mitigation proposals that could be considered and these are set out in more detail in the Appendix to this SoCG.

5 Proposed Distributor Road

- 5.1 It is agreed that there is a general understanding that through traffic currently uses Abbot's Road between Mersea Road and Old Heath Road. This is supported by the snapshot traffic survey (one days' data) undertaken by the DIO to investigate local highway network conditions. The indicative masterplan shows a layout for the Distributor Road through the site that changes the priority of Abbot's Road at the site access junction. All parties understand that this idea has been proposed by DIO as a means of re-emphasising the highway network to create a more permeable layout and, in DIO's view, better cater for the through traffic movements that occur. It is agreed by all parties that the way the Distributor Road could contribute to the wider highway network should be considered as part of the Transport Assessment mentioned above.

6 Agreement

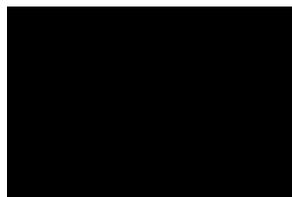
- 6.1 It is agreed by all parties that the content of this SoCG is correct at the date of endorsement. It is agreed by all parties to continue to work closely to firstly minimise the likely number of additional trips which could be generated by the Middlewick Ranges development, secondly, ensure it would be highly accessible by more sustainable modes of transport such as public transport, cycling and walking and, thirdly, assess the likely impact of those trips which would be made by private vehicle and agree the mitigation required.

Signatures:

Name /
Position

Date
16/04/2021

Signature



Colchester Borough Council

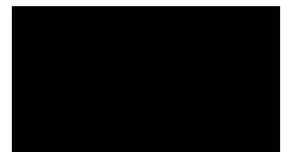
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Essex County Council

Catherine Davies - Head of
Estates

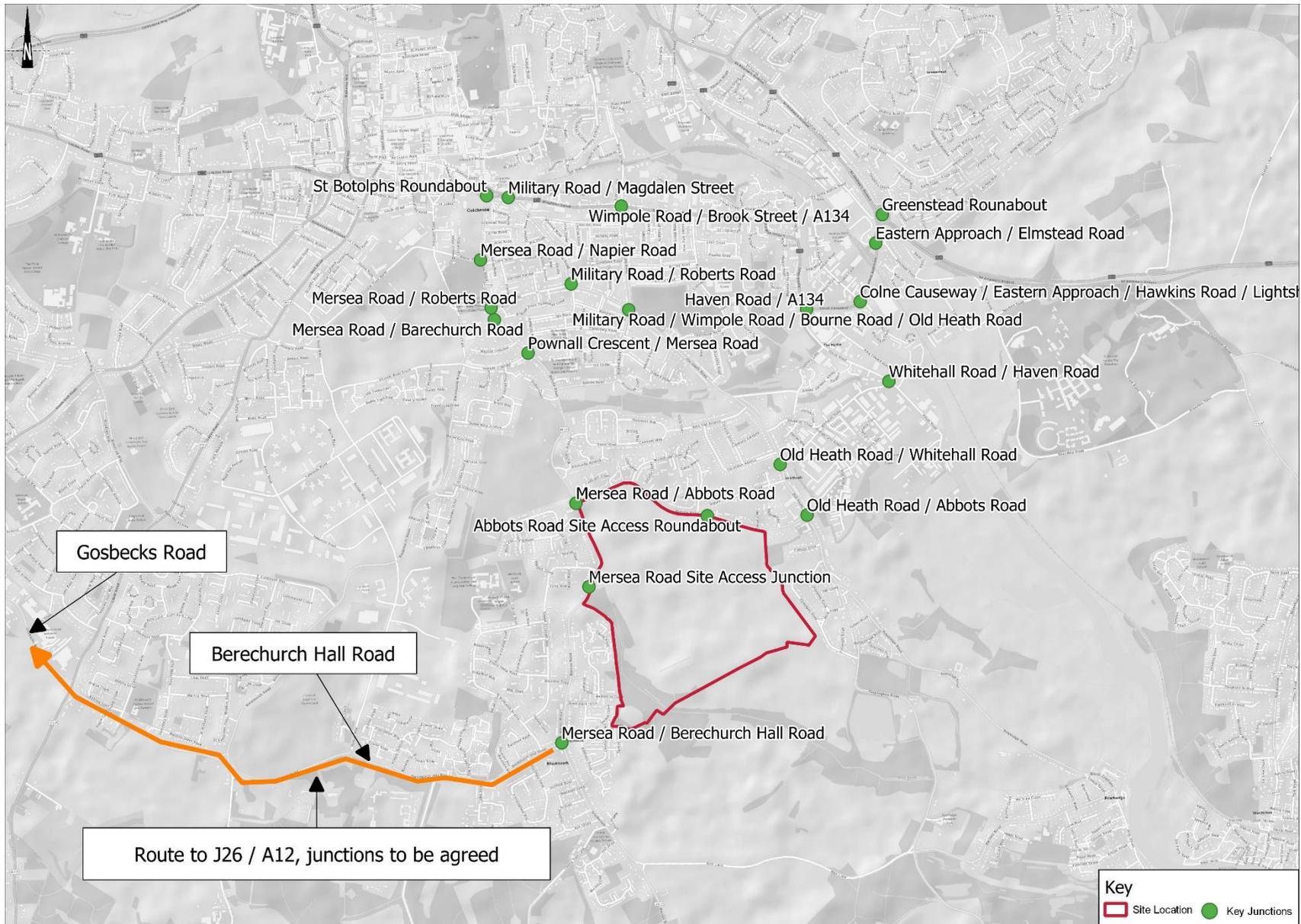
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**Defence Infrastructure
Organisation**

7 Appendix

- 7.1 Below is a preliminary appraisal of possible mitigation at several junctions.
- 7.2 The location of the junctions considered is shown on the following plan with the Middlewick Ranges site highlighted in red:



Junction Appraisals



Wimpole Road/ Brook Street/ A134 signalised crossroads

Busy crossroads, with heavier northwest – southeast traffic flows on A134. Limited opportunity to increase approach flares, due to ownership constraints.

Options:

- Review the signal timings and phasing
- Ban right turns (check re-routing)
- Implement MOVA
- Wider area improvements to reduce side road demand



Mersea Road/ Abbot's Road

Existing mini-roundabout junction. Already has a mitigation scheme proposed by Middlewick scheme – see Transport Technical Note. Utilises DIO land on south-east quadrant of junction to widen the Abbot's Road approach and increase capacity.

Options:

- Mitigation scheme already proposed – widen Abbot's Road approach using DIO land
- Could convert to traffic signals for higher capacity



Abbot's Road/ Old Heath Road

Existing mini-roundabout junction. Already has a mitigation scheme proposed by Middlewick scheme – see Transport Technical Note.

Options:

- Mitigation scheme already proposed – widening of flares and reconfiguration of splitter islands to increase capacity
- Addition of pedestrian crossings on approaches assists operation
- Could consider traffic signal scheme



Old Heath Road/ Whitehall Road

Existing mini-roundabout junction

Options:

- Scope to improve flares by reconfiguring kerb lines and managing hatched areas
- Addition of pedestrian crossings may assist operation
- Convert to traffic signal operation



Whitehall Road/ Haven Road

Existing mini roundabout within industrial estate – unclear if this is on a strategic route and suffers congestion – TA scope needs to review

Options:

- Revert to tee junction with better alignment
- Improve approaches and define priorities better
- Convert to traffic signals / add traffic signal-controlled pedestrian crossings to improve opportunities for vehicle movement



A134/ Haven Road

Normal roundabout with flared approaches. High capacity junction – levels of congestion to be reviewed as part of TA scope.

Options:

- Improve / extend approach flares
- Partial traffic signal control to manage dominant movements
- Full signal control – check circulatory carriageway queue lengths
- Convert to traffic signal junction



Colne Causeway/ Eastern Approach/ Hawkins Road/ Lightship Way

Normal roundabout with flared approaches. High capacity junction – levels of congestion to be reviewed as part of TA scope.

Options:

- Improve / extend approach flares
- Widen approaches into verges
- Partial traffic signal control to manage dominant movements
- Full signal control – check circulatory carriageway queue lengths
- Convert to traffic signal junction
- Consider “hamburger” to cater for dominant movements



Eastern Approach/ Elmstead Road

Normal roundabout with flared approaches. High capacity junction – levels of congestion to be reviewed as part of TA scope.

Options:

- Improve / extend approach flares
- Widen approaches into verges
- Partial traffic signal control to manage dominant movements
- Full signal control – check circulatory carriageway queue lengths
- Convert to traffic signal junction
- Consider “hamburger” to cater for dominant movements



Greenstead Roundabout

Complex gyratory comprising a large roundabout with internal mini roundabouts

Wide verges and central area create considerable scope for improvement – TA needs to consider dominant movements and derive a scheme to suit.

Options:

- Re-configure approaches using verges
- “Break” the gyratory to prioritise movements
- Partial traffic signal control to manage dominant movements
- Full signal control – check circulatory carriageway queue lengths
- Convert to traffic signal junction
- Consider “hamburger” to cater for dominant movements



Mersea Road/ Berechurch Hall Road

Existing mini-roundabout junction

Options:

- Scope to improve flares by reconfiguring kerb lines and managing hatched areas
- Addition of pedestrian crossings may assist operation
- Convert to traffic signal operation



Old Heath Road/ Wimpole Road/ Military Road/ Bourne Road

Busy crossroads, with constraints on three sides
Limited opportunity to increase approach flares, due to ownership constraints.

Options:

- Review the signal timings and phasing
- Ban right turns (check re-routing)
- Implement MOVA



Military Road/ Roberts Road

Recently improved signalised T junction (Roberts Road built in 2013). Flared areas create scope for improvement, with some use of verges.

Options:

- Review the signal timings and phasing
- Localised re-configuration of kerb lines and hatching to improve capacity
- Implement MOVA



Magdalen Street/ Military Road

Complex traffic signal interchange lying to the east of St. Botolph's Circus Roundabout near the Railway Station.

Improvement would require detailed modelling to confirm suitable re-allocation of road space and junction controls.

Options:

- Re-configure approaches using verges
- Comprehensive overhaul design to crossroads plus slip road Military Road to A134 west



Mersea Road/ Berechurch Road - South junction:

Recently improved signalised T junction with associated northern junction at Roberts Road. Constrained on two sides but scope to use verge to the west.

Options:

- Add right-turn lane by the removal of unused (pedestrian) refuge on southern arm
- Review the signal timings and phasing
- Localised re-configuration of kerb lines and hatching to improve capacity
- Implement MOVA



Mersea Road/ Roberts Road - North junction:

Recent traffic signal-controlled T junction with associated southern junction at Berechurch Road. Constrained on two sides but scope to use verge to the west.

Options:

- Review the signal timings and phasing
- Localised re-configuration of kerb lines and hatching to improve capacity
- Implement MOVA

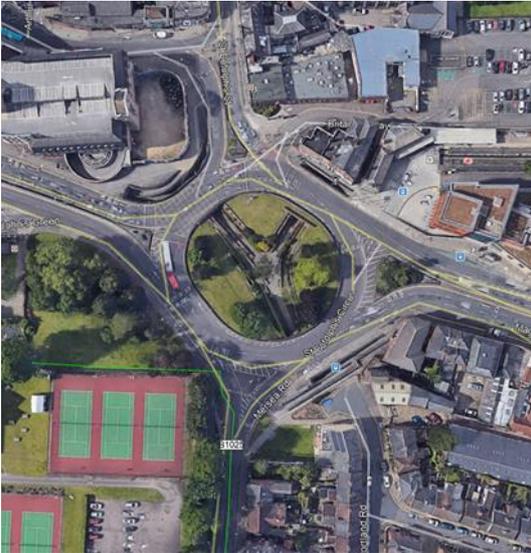


Mersea Road/ Napier Road

Signal controlled T junction, with wide footway and verges that offer some scope for upgrade.

Options:

- Review the signal timings and phasing
- Localised re-configuration of kerb lines and hatching to improve capacity
- Implement MOVA
- Increases in flare on the southern arm



St. Botolph's Circus Roundabout at Railway Station

Existing partially signalised roundabout. Improvement would require detailed modelling to confirm suitable re-allocation of road space and junction controls.

Options:

- Re-configure approaches using verges
- Add lane on circulatory carriageway
- Consider traffic signals on other arms
- Full traffic signal control
- Add linked signals (pulse/ MOVA)