

8 Other Related Studies & Initiatives

8.1 Introduction

The area to the north of Chelmsford is the focus for a number of initiatives and proposals in both planning, development and transport terms. These are in essence longer term measures likely to come forward over a number of years.

Many of these proposals and initiatives are to an extent inter-dependent and they should therefore be seen as part of a comprehensive approach.

8.2 Planning & development

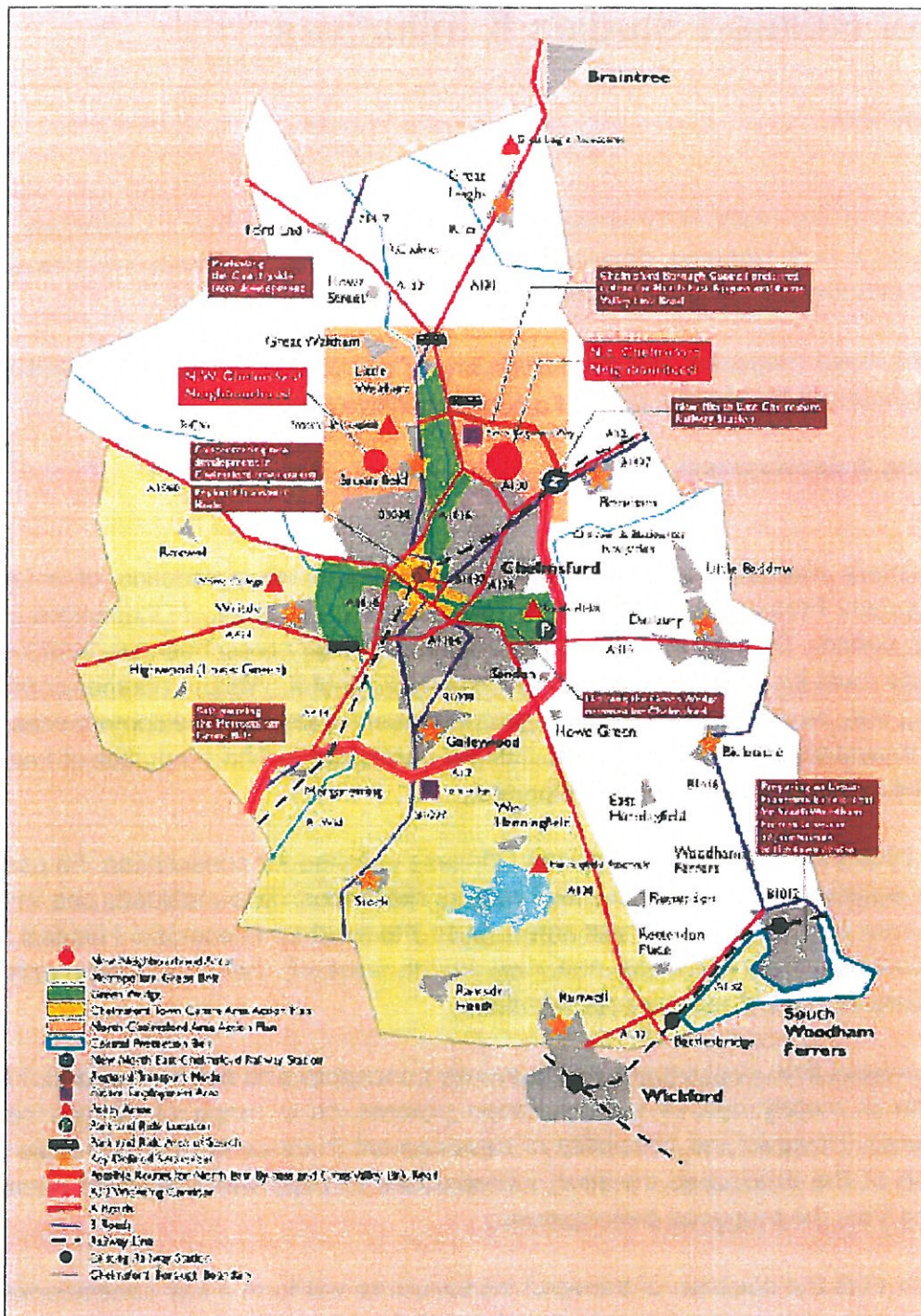
The primary planning initiative at the current time is the production of a Local Development Framework (LDF) which defines the future shape of Chelmsford for a 20 year period. During this period the Regional Strategy prescribes that 14000 new dwellings must be provided within the Chelmsford District. While a number of these dwelling may be accommodated through the re-use of existing development sites, so called brownfield development, it will also be necessary to find a number of new or greenfield sites for residential development.

In late 2006 the Core Strategy for the LDF was published for consultation. As part of this consultation two significant new housing allocations were included, one in the broad area to the north of Melbourne and to the west of Broomfield Hospital, for approximately 1000 dwellings and one to the east of the A130 and north of Springfield for 3000 dwellings approximately.

At the present time such proposals are merely conceptual and not site specific. Their inclusion is merely part of a consultation process on a range of options being considered. However the possibility of development in these areas does raise the question of the associated transport infrastructure to cope with the travel demand resulting from the proposed development.

For both sites the question of transport infrastructure will form a key consideration if either or both sites are taken forward and detailed proposals begin to form. However in respect of the proposed development north of Springfield there is already a highway proposal for a North East Bypass, the alignment of which may influence the shape that any development proposals may take. Correspondingly it is likely that sizeable contributions may be sought from developers towards the construction of the Bypass road.

At the current time the effect of these outline proposals are not quantifiable in transport terms.



8.3 Chelmsford North East Bypass

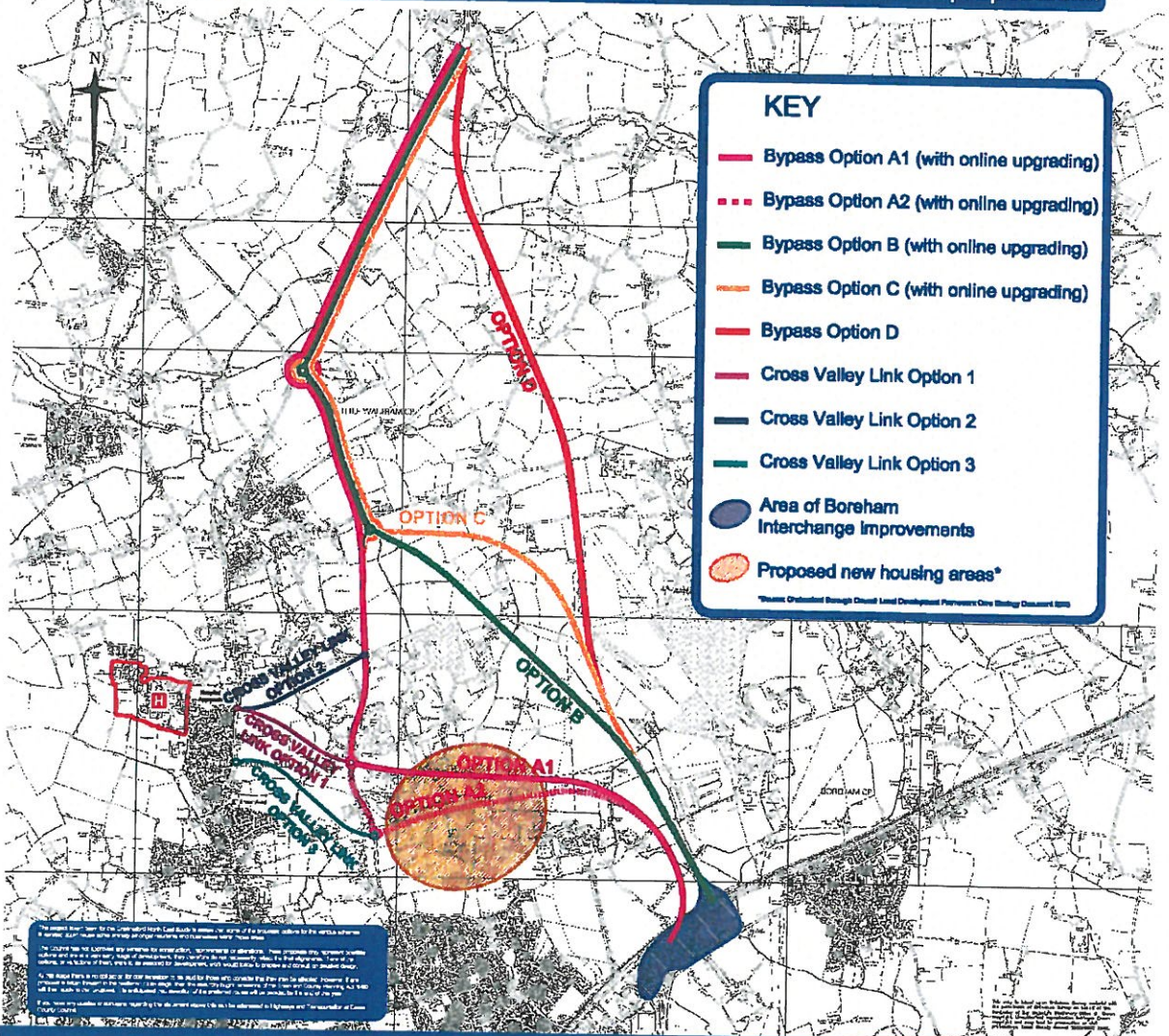
In transport terms the need has been identified for a new North-East Bypass of Chelmsford linking the A130/A131 to the Boreham Interchange and providing relief to the Springfield area in general and White Hart Lane in particular. This is

6 What Are The Proposed Options ?

As a result of the early studies the following proposals are now under consideration:-

- Four route options
- A Cross Valley Link (between Essex Regiment Way and Broomfield Road)
- Improvements to Boreham Interchange
- A Park and Ride scheme with bus priority lanes into Chelmsford
- A new railway station in the Beaulieu Park area

The preferred solution could reflect a combination of the above proposals....



The report has been prepared for the Essex County Council. It is intended to provide a summary of the options available for the Broomfield Corridor and to provide a basis for the selection of a preferred option. The report is not intended to provide a detailed description of the options or to provide a detailed description of the preferred option. The report is not intended to provide a detailed description of the preferred option. The report is not intended to provide a detailed description of the preferred option.

considered to be the missing link in the town's highway network as well as being a link of key strategic importance, completing the connection of the A130 as high quality route northwards towards the A120 and Stansted Airport. The recent completion of the Gt Leighs Bypass and the current construction of the Gt Notley Bypass highlight the need for completion of the route around northeast Chelmsford.

In 2006 the proposals were put out for public consultation with a total of 5 routes proposed. In addition three alternatives were proposed for what is known as the Cross Valley Route which is effectively a connection link between the new route and the B1008 adjacent to Broomfield Hospital. Feedback from this consultation exercise is currently being analysed and an announcement of one or two preferred routes is expected in Spring of 2007.

The current timetable envisages that at best construction could start in 2012 with a construction period of two years. So completion of the route cannot be anticipated before 2014 at the earliest.

The construction of this route is likely to take significant amounts of traffic off the existing A130 Essex Regiment Way but its impact, if any on the B1008 Broomfield Road is unclear. The picture is complicated by the fact that the construction of up to 3000 new dwellings in the area of N E Chelmsford North of Springfield would in itself load additional trips into the corridor, thus cancelling out to a certain extent, the traffic relief provided by the new bypass. To date these effects have not been quantified and hence it is not possible to comment on the benefits or otherwise of the proposed bypass on the B1008 Broomfield Road.

One element designed to increase the benefits associated with the new bypass is the provision of a new Park & Ride on the periphery of the urban area and adjacent to the new bypass. This will reduce the need for vehicles to enter Chelmsford town centre and strengthen the role of the new A130 as a strategic route. Following the success of the Sandon Park & Ride adjacent to the A414 there is pressure to implement further such schemes at an early opportunity. However it is not clear whether the Park and Ride for north east Chelmsford will form part of the Major Schemes Business Case (MSBC) for the North East Bypass or whether it will be brought forward earlier on the basis of need.

8.4 Park & Ride

A general need has been identified for a Park & Ride site to the north east of Chelmsford and within the broad A130 corridor. It is proposed that it should be within the range of 600 – 1000 spaces.

No specific location has been identified at the current time nor has any demand analysis been carried out so its likely impact cannot be quantified. Work is scheduled for early 2007 to assess the demand for this facility and to identify potential locations

7

Passenger Transport Proposals

A sustainable Future for Transport in Chelmsford

Essex County Council are committed to creating a sustainable transport network in and around Chelmsford. Substantial improvements to public transport have a key role in reducing congestion along the A130 corridor by reducing the need to use cars to access central Chelmsford.

Braintree to Chelmsford.

A range of measures is being considered to improve the frequency and reliability of passenger transport along this key corridor.



- Developing service quality and reliability through the "Quality Bus Partnership" programme, including real time passenger information and improved stop infrastructure.
- Improved interurban services

Park And Ride

A proposed 600 to 1000 space P&R Site in the North East of Chelmsford is under investigation.



Bus Priority Routes

Improving bus access to central Chelmsford by dedicated bus lanes and priority measures.



Rail

Essex County Council are in the early stages of examining the concept of a second Chelmsford railway station and will continue to lobby for improvements to the Braintree branch line to provide a reliable and frequent service.



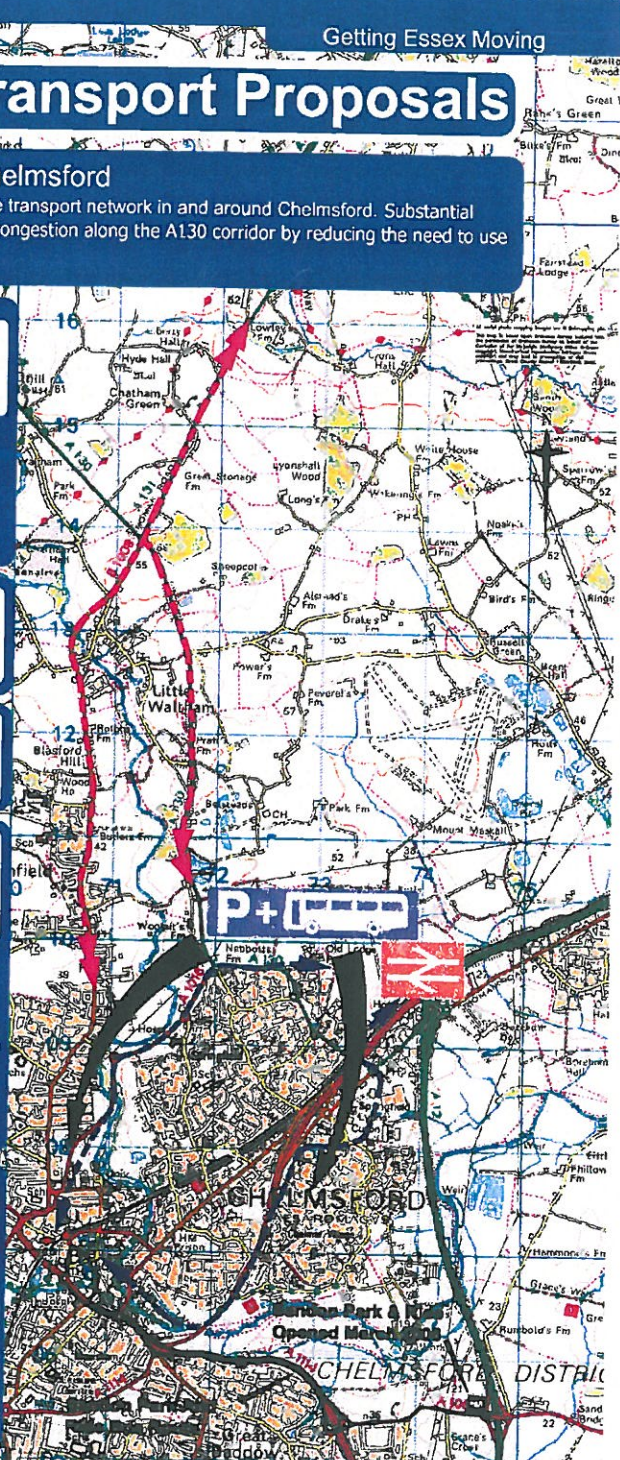
- A new station in the Boreham area could reduce short distance rail commuter traffic to Chelmsford Railway Station.
- Upgrading rail access and services at Witham could reduce the need for longer distance rail commuter journeys to Chelmsford.

Area Rapid Transport

A feasibility study is being undertaken for a rapid transit system between Beaulieu Park and Chelmsford centre. An innovative transportation system would offer an alternative to driving for the existing and future residents of Beaulieu Park.



- A scheme to make full use of the improved infrastructure with high frequency
- High quality services based on the latest bus technology.



Essex County Council

for its construction. A decision will be made on the basis of that work as to whether the programming of this facility should be de-coupled from the MSBC for the North East Bypass and advanced within the transport infrastructure programmes as part of the Local Transport Plan. However it is likely that this facility if constructed will be located close to a key junction of the North East Bypass, if constructed, in order to provide maximum accessibility and to maximise the likely catchment.

A key consideration for any Park & Ride scheme is to ensure sufficient of an advantage to users in terms of convenience and travel time to offset the perceived penalty of changing mode from car to bus at an out of town location. This generally involves some form of bus priority to minimise the bus journey time element of the trip. For this reason, part of the proposals for Park & Ride involve consideration of a high quality public transport serving not only the Park & Ride but also the Beaulieu and Springfield areas of north Chelmsford.

8.5 Beaulieu Park Rapid Transit Study (BART)

This initiative known as the Beaulieu Park Rapid Transit Study was investigated in early 2006. A number of routes were reviewed both in conjunction with the proposed Park & Ride and as a standalone system. The viable option was identified as being a conventional bus system running primarily on-street but with areas of bus priority to bypass key congestion points. The roads over which the system runs would be designated 'Red Routes' in order to facilitate the free flow of traffic and prevent obstruction.

Three broad routes were reviewed. The most westerly ran along the A130 down the Chelmer river valley and then via White Hart Lane; the central route ran down Springfield Road and the eastern route ran through Chelmer Village. All routes were considered to be viable but the achievement of a 10 min headway was dependent upon the completion of additional housing at Beaulieu Park. The provision of any Park & Ride service was felt to be beneficial to the overall the viability of the service.

In overall terms the routes for BART are too far to the west to directly impact in the B1008 Broomfield Road corridor. However its major benefit could be towards the success of the Park & Ride system which is more likely to have beneficial effect of the radial routes in north Chelmsford including the B1008 Broomfield Road.

8.6 Demand Responsive Public Transport.

This was an initiative investigated by Chelmsford Borough Council in conjunction with the Mid Essex Health Trust. It was envisaged as a hybrid between a taxi and a scheduled bus service with vehicles following nominal fixed routes but having flexibility in terms of frequency and route deviation in order to respond to demand.

The service would have focussed on Broomfield Hospital providing effectively a 'one to many' service. A service desk would have been provided at the Hospital which would have been linked to a controller who would have been in charge of scheduling the vehicles.

Expressions of interest were sought from operators interested in running this service and a number of responses were received. However the initiative is currently stalled over the unwillingness of the promoting authorities to provide on-going revenue support in addition to the initial capital start-up costs.

9 Transportation Proposals

9.1 Objectives

The preceding analysis has indicated how the role of the B1008 Broomfield Road has changed throughout time from being a primarily rural road connecting settlements together to becoming a through route as the A130 and then being relieved by the construction of the new A130 Essex Regiment Way. Clear dangers have also been demonstrated of the B1008 once again becoming a major through route is the travel time differential between it and the A130 is not maintained.

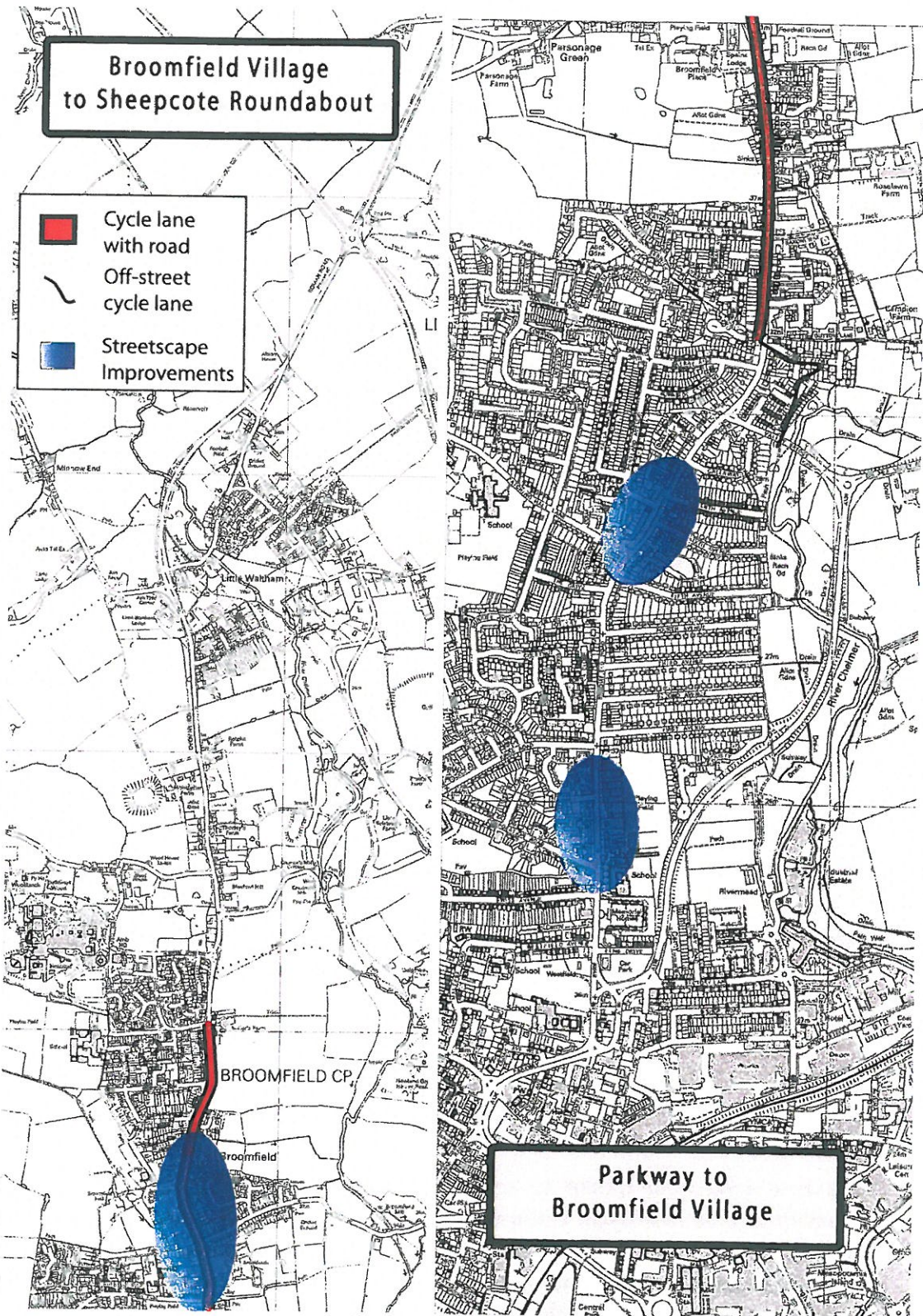
Any such increase in through traffic would be to the detriment of the community which fronts Broomfield Road and which relies upon it for its daily commercial, leisure and educational needs. The objectives from this study should therefore be to preserve, and enhance where possible, the character of the B1008 Broomfield Road through measures ensure that its role as a primarily local road is protected and that community focus is enhanced and severance is minimised.

9.2 Through Traffic and Signposting

In order to prevent over-use of the B1008 corridor as a through route it is important that through traffic continues to be signposted away from Broomfield Road. This means that unfamiliar traffic will not find its way into the corridor. However more local traffic will be aware that the B1008 offers a potential alternative route to the congested A130 and is likely to switch routes if Broomfield Road alters a quicker alternative. The analysis in Chapter 4 has shown this is very close to being the case. If this is to be prevented then it is likely that traffic management measures will have to be introduced to ensure that traffic does not switch.

9.3 Community Focal Areas

The B1008 was originally a rural road connecting settlements. As Chelmsford grew and traffic levels increased it became dominated by high levels of traffic to the detriment of the local communities. The high traffic volumes severed the communities they passed through. The relief afforded by the construction of the A130 Essex Regiment Way has steadily been eroded and the communities along the B1008 are in danger again of being dominated by high volumes of through traffic.



Two identifiable community focal points exist at Broomfield Village and the local shops at Patching Hall Lane. There are also mixed use and commercial activities around the junction with Corporation Street and the two Grammar Schools at the bottom end near Elms Drive give a unique character to that area. These are the

areas and activities which would suffer the most if through traffic levels were allowed to grow. At the same time they are land uses that rely upon convenient access and in the case of commercial premises, often upon high levels of passing trade. Hence the protection of these areas will depend upon a careful balance between the competing requirements of an improved environment and good levels of accessibility.

It is therefore proposed that these communal focal points should receive treatment in a way that allocates roadspace equitably and enhances the facilities and amenities of non-vehicular users. These improvements could take a variety of forms but would be designed to achieve the effects of traffic calming without resorting to traditional on-street humps and chicanes etc. The desired effects will be achieved through careful design aimed at shifting the perception of users away from being a through route for traffic towards the concept of the highway being a space to be shared by all users.

The kind of measures to be considered could include:

- Speed reductions
- Wider footways
- Narrower carriageways
- Surfacing materials
- On-street parking laybys
- Environmental enhancements through urban landscaping

In essence the focus should be on creating a high quality public realm with a clear hierarchy of uses which must be inclusive and attractive to all users.

9.4 Cycling

There is a long held desire to extend cycling facilities to Broomfield Hospital. Currently the on-street cycle lanes on Broomfield Road extend northwards only as far as Valley Bridge and the off-street Riverside Cycleway terminates at its northern end at Greenways, just south of Valley Bridge. The cycleway could only be extended northwards across Valley Bridge to Petersfield, a distance of approximately 150m on public rights of way. Beyond there the cycle route could be continued northwards to Broomfield Hospital via on-street cycle lanes. However the preferred solution would clearly be to continue the route off-street along the riverbank and it is recommended that this possibility be investigated.

10 Conclusions and Recommendations

10.1 The ever changing role of the B1008 Broomfield Road

This study has identified the role of the B1008 over time from its origins as a rural road connecting together communities to its role as a major thoroughfare, before being relieved by the new A130 Chelmer Valley Route.

While the focus of the Study has therefore been on the B1008 itself it is not possible to divorce it from the nearby A130 Chelmer Valley Route. This is particularly important when looking at flow trends and patterns of usage of each route.

A review of historic traffic patterns has revealed negligible growth along the B1008 while traffic along the A130 has been growing consistently. The important upshot of this is that congestion on the A130 due to increasing volumes could force traffic to start switching routes and begin to use the B1008 Broomfield Road corridor as a through route alternative to the signed A130 route. Journey time measurements undertaken as part of this Study have in fact identified that while the A130 remains the preferred route with a clear journey time advantage in freeflow conditions, the differential in the peak hour is much smaller and may infrequently favour the B1008 Broomfield Road.

In addition surveys of movement patterns have shown that already there is evidence of traffic switching between the two alternative corridors for at least part of their journey, presumably in order to bypass localised congestion.

This body of evidence suggests that all other things remaining the same, there are clear dangers that through traffic could begin switching back to the B1008 Broomfield Road corridor to the detriment of those who live and work along it.

10.2 Proposed transport changes within north Chelmsford

However the Study has also identified a number of strategic initiatives and proposals which could have an effect on the whole transport regime within all of north Chelmsford. The major issues concern the proposals for an A130 North East Bypass of Chelmsford and the potential provision of 1000 new dwellings to the north-west of Melbourne and/or 3000 dwellings to the north of Springfield. Although these two initiatives are effectively separate it is inevitable that they will become inter-related in terms of both demand and funding.

At the current time it is not possible to predict whether the individual or combined effects of these three proposals would be beneficial within the B1008 Broomfield Road corridor.

However it is anticipated that the complementary proposals for provision of a Park & Ride facility in north Chelmsford would have a beneficial effect on radial route traffic to and from Chelmsford town centre. The potential for such a scheme is shortly to be investigated and its impact should therefore become clearer when its feasibility has been fully evaluated. The associated proposals for a Beaulieu Park Transit system are likely to make the Park & Ride service more attractive and to improve public transport into the Chelmsford from the Springfield area but otherwise will not directly impact upon the B1008 Broomfield Road corridor.

10.3 Measures to protect the B1008 Broomfield Road from additional traffic

Notwithstanding the various bigger and longer term initiatives being considered the study has identified a danger in the short term that continuing growth and increasing congestion along the A130 could cause radial traffic to begin switching to the B1008 Broomfield Road corridor. Unless measures are taken to cap the capacity of Broomfield Road then increasing traffic levels could have a detrimental effect on the communities which front it.

It is proposed to identify the three local community focal points at Broomfield Village, Patching Hall Lane junction and Corporation Road junction and to enhance their character by improvements to the public realm using high quality urban design to achieve a measure of traffic calming. In this way it is intended to reinforce the identity of the local communities, enhancing the character of the B1008 as a local route and make the route less attractive to through vehicles.

10.4 Accessibility to Broomfield Hospital

The Study has also considered the question of accessibility to Broomfield Hospital and has demonstrated a mechanism for identifying and comparing accessibility across the motorised modes of transport. This has demonstrated the deficiencies in access to the Hospital by public transport. Furthermore by indexing the accessibility according to patient demand it is possible to identify pockets where the most impact could be made by improving public transport services.

10.5 Recommendations

It is recommended that consideration be given to taking steps to ensure that the capacity of the B1008 Broomfield Road corridor is capped at an environmental level appropriate to the communities that live along it and depend upon it. This is to be achieved through urban design and public realm improvements designed to enhance the attractiveness of local community focal points and to achieve a sharing of roadspace which gives a higher priority to non-motorised users.

It is proposed that such measures be considered for the following locations:

- Broomfield Village centre
- Patching Hall Lane junction with Broomfield Road
- Corporation Road junction with Broomfield Road

In addition it is recommended that steps be taken to extend the existing cycle facilities at least as far as Broomfield Hospital either as on-street cycle lanes or as an offroad cycleway along the Chelmer river valley.

It is suggested that in order to gain local acceptance for any such measures it would be useful to put any such proposals out to public consultation at an early stage in order to allow local residents and businesses to take a stake in the ownership of any proposals which may emerge.

