

Project number: 24013
Subject: Transport Assessment Scoping Note
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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 This Transport Sustainability Note has been prepared in support of a proposed development of approximately 125 residential dwellings, with a mix of private and affordable dwellings, at land south of Halstead Road. The purpose of this Technical Note is to review the emerging transport evidence base, summarise the Highways pre-application engagement, support the promotion of the site and provide recommendations for improvements to sustainable travel.

1.1.2 The site is located in the village of Eight Ash Green, adjacent to Seven Star Green, north of Colchester in Essex, as shown in **Figure 1.1** below.



Figure 1.1 Site location plan

1.1.3 The site is well located to access the range of facilities within the village on foot as well as the bus services passing the site and the National Cycle Network to the north of the village.

- 1.1.4 It also has easy access to the A12, within a 2-minute drive of junction 26 (Eight Ash Green junction). The A12 is a strategic route managed by National Highways, which runs between London and Lowestoft, providing access to North Colchester, Ipswich, Chelmsford and connecting to the A120 to Braintree and Stansted.

1.2 Development proposals and access

- 1.2.1 It is proposed to access the site via a simple priority junction on to Halstead Road. This will provide access for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. The majority of vehicles generated by the site are likely to head to and from the south and, therefore, it is considered that the provision of a right turn lane is not required. There is sufficient visibility within highway land and the site itself to accommodate the required visibility splays based on the posted speed of the road (30mph). The access street will conform to a Street Type E within the Essex Design Guide with a 5.5m carriageway and a 2m footway either side of the carriageway.
- 1.2.2 In addition, pedestrian links will be provided to Public Rights of Way 16 running along the south side of the site.

1.3 Pre-application advice

- 1.3.1 Essex Highways and National Highways have been engaged as part of the pre-application process. Lime Transport provided a Scoping Note and subsequently met with Essex Highways and National Highways on 20th November 2025. The Scoping Note set out the following:

- Structure of the Transport Assessment
- Supporting documentation
- Sustainability of the site's location
- Principles of the site's layout and access
- Travel characteristics including trip generation and distribution
- Extent of highway network capacity analysis
- Measures to improve the site's sustainability

- 1.3.2 It is predicted that the proposed development of 125 dwellings is likely to generate up to 74 vehicle trips (two-way) in the morning peak period and up to 71 vehicle trips (two-way) in the evening peak period.

- 1.3.3 Census travel to work data shows that trips in the area are distributed as follows:

- **Walking** – Colchester City Centre
- **Cycling** – Colchester City Centre
- **Bus** – Colchester City Centre
- **Train** - London
- **Car** – Colchester (City Centre, Stanway, Highwoods, Myland, Marks Tey, Wivenhoe), Ipswich, Chelmsford, Earls Colne, Halstead, Braintree and Stansted).

- 1.3.4 Commuters by car predominately stay within Colchester district (approximately 75%), with over 50% of all commuters by car heading to Colchester City or Wivenhoe.

- 1.3.5 Comments on the Scoping Note were provided by Essex Highways and National Highways as set out below:

Essex Highways

- Confirmed that the relevant parking standards are 2009 Essex Parking Standards
- Agreed approach for Transport Assessment methodology
- Additional reports required to support an application including Travel Plan and Road Safety Audit Stage 1
- Provided comments on the layout including the need to swap the verge along the principal street with the footway so that the footway is adjacent to the carriageway and eligible for adoption
- Agreed mitigation measures likely to include improved pedestrian crossing on Halstead Road (subject to the findings of a PV² calculation), footway fronting the site and bus stop improvements.

National Highways

- Agreed approach for Transport Assessment methodology
- Agreed that Junction 26 would be surveyed and depending on findings may require further analysis
- Acknowledged that scope for improvements at Junction 26 is limited
- Additional reports required to support the application include exemption report for the walking, cycling and horse-riding assessment at the junction and section within the Transport Assessment regarding safety risk assessment.

2 Sustainability of Eight Ash Green

- 2.1.1 Eight Ash Green has a number of small business premises and local services and facilities and fairly frequent bus services. It is located approximately 5km from Marks Tey and Colchester train stations. The Preferred Options Local Plan (2025) states that *'Eight Ash Green comprises three main areas of which two are considered sustainable and have a range of services and facilities: Eight Ash Green/Fordham Heath and Eight Ash Green/Choats Corner. Seven Star Green is not considered sustainable as it is located south of Halstead Road and is separated by this main road from the key facilities available in the village. Eight Ash Green is interspersed with open farmland and contains some small businesses premises. There are a number of local services including hairdressers, convenience store, petrol station, village hall, open spaces and primary school. Tollgate and Stane Park is located approximately 1.5km to the south-east.'* There are various large supermarkets, restaurants, shops, pharmacy and medical centre at the retail centre.

- 2.1.2 As set out in the Rural Community Profile for Eight Ash Green (Action with Communities in Rural England Rural Evidence Project October 2013), a sustainable community is well-connected with good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services. Specifically, sustainable communities have access to public transport, safe local walking and cycling, an appropriate level of parking and widely available telecommunications.

2.1.3 Eight Ash Green has a higher proportion of 2+ car households than the England average. Typically, a higher proportion work from home compared to the England average. The travel time to employment centres by car and cycle is the same as the England average and by public transport is shorter than the England average. The average travel time to local facilities by public transport or walking compared to the county average is as follows:

- Hospital - 25 mins (46 mins county average)
- Supermarket - 12 mins (9 mins county average)
- Town centre - 19 mins (20 mins county average)

2.1.4 The Settlement Evidence (Stage 1) provides more information on the high-level opportunities at Eight Ash Green including:

- Acknowledging that the village is reasonably well served by facilities (as set out above) as well as a farm shop, pub and gym.
- Opportunities to improve links to the primary school and between the western and eastern ends of the settlement.
- Opportunities to improve Spring Lane junction.
- Potential to enhance local and strategic infrastructure.

2.1.5 It considers that the main constraints are the lack of active travel access to a train station and the physical separation created by Halstead Road between the south and north sides of the carriageway.

3 Suitability of site

3.1.1 This section considers the suitability of the site as a location for residential development. The Strategic Land Availability Assessment (Stage 2) assessed the site and identified the transport related issues as set out below:

- Within close proximity of an existing settlement boundary
- Some constraints to highway access identified but not enough to affect site's deliverability.

3.1.2 There are no constraints identified to access the proposed site. It is considered that access can be achieved off Halstead Road in accordance with the Essex Design Guide and appropriate visibility splays can also be achieved for the design speed of Halstead Road. The access is able to connect directly to the existing pedestrian infrastructure, including the zebra crossing to the east and informal crossing (with pedestrian refuge island) to the west.

3.1.3 The proposed site (ref: 10760) is able to achieve safe and suitable access and connect within and through the site to existing footways (along Halstead Road) and PRow16 along the southern boundary of the site.

Table 3.1 Sustainability appraisal of Land south of Halstead

Criteria	Notes
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Sustainability (according to Essex Parking Standards)	Low
Nearest bus stop	Adjacent to site
Distance & service frequency	2/3 per hour
Railway station	Marks Tey (5km)
Distance, service frequency (all directions) and travel time	6 per hr (55 mins to London)
Neighbourhood/district retail	Convenience/PFS (650m)
	Stane Retail Park (2km)
City centre	Colchester (6.5km)
Primary School	1km
Secondary School	2.5km
GP	2km
Dentist	200m
Cycle route	NCN13 (750m)
Census Travel to Work data (2011)	As driver – 84%
	By sustainable modes - 15%

3.2 Pedestrian access for the proposed site

3.2.1 There is a good provision of footways within the vicinity of the site, with Halstead Road directly outside the proposed site having footways on both sides of the carriageway. Additionally, there are Public Rights of Way footpaths and bridleways surrounding the village including PRoW16 located directly south of the site. National Cycle Route 13 is located 850m north of the site on Heath Road, which can be accessed off Halstead Road.

3.2.2 There are two existing crossings along Halstead Road in the vicinity of the proposed site:

- Zebra crossing (with central pedestrian refuge island, dropped kerbs and tactile paving) 275m to the east
- Informal crossing (with central pedestrian refuge island, dropped kerbs and tactile paving) 100m to the west

3.2.3 Historic traffic flow data along Halstead Road shows that traffic flow is typically 500 vehicles per hour per direction. This equates to a vehicle every 7 seconds per direction. According to LTN 1/95 *'the majority of pedestrians will accept a gap of 4-6 seconds at normal urban vehicle speed to cross two lanes of traffic.'* This gap acceptance is for two lanes of traffic, Therefore, with the provision of a pedestrian refuge island in the centre of Halstead Road, an average headway of 7 seconds between vehicles during the peak hours gives suitable opportunity for pedestrians to cross a single lane as they only need to watch traffic in one direction.

3.2.4 There are, however, opportunities to upgrade the uncontrolled pedestrian crossing to the west to a zebra crossing, which would enhance ease and convenience for pedestrians crossing and travelling from the proposed site to the facilities within the village including the primary school. This improvement would also benefit future residents of Land north of Halstead Road and east of Wood Lane crossing to/from the westbound bus stop.

- 3.2.5 It is considered that the impact of severance of Halstead Road is low given that Halstead Road has a 30mph speed limit and existing pedestrian infrastructure is suitable for the traffic flow and speed along Halstead Road. There is potential for this to be reduced further with an upgrade to the existing pedestrian crossing to the west and the footway fronting the site.

4 Improving the sustainability of the site

- 4.1.1 The site is well located in the village and also approximately 2km away from the large retail parks to the south. There are regular bus connections to Colchester with routes passing the site.

- 4.1.2 Guidance by the Urban Transport Group sets out the four foundations to improve the sustainability of suburban developments. Developments on the edge of towns and cities tend to have an interdependent relationship with the city centre, are primarily residential, low density, low rise and favoured by families with children. Based on these characteristics, and in order to avoid development and the surrounding streets being dominated by traffic and parking, it is recommended that the following four factors are considered to improve the sustainability of the development by reducing the need to travel and providing access to more sustainable modes of travel.

- **Accessing more of what you need locally** – there are opportunities to improve the pedestrian connections further including upgrading the informal pedestrian crossing to the west of the site across Halstead Road to a zebra crossing (subject to the findings of a PV² calculation); improving the footway fronting the site; providing access to PRoW16 and a connection to Halstead Road on to the National Cycle Network to the north. Homes will be designed for work from home (with a study area and high-quality digital infrastructure).
- **Family friendly transport choices** – the development will be laid out to provide easy routes for pedestrians, incorporating low trafficked shared surface streets and generous, well located cycle parking.
- **Access to transport infrastructure** – all areas of the development will have easy access to the bus stops on Halstead Road and be within approximately 400m of the nearest bus stop (westbound) and 550m of the eastbound bus stop.
- **Reliable, convenient connections to Colchester** – large proportion of existing residents in the area commute to the centre of Colchester by car. There are opportunities to improve the bus infrastructure along Halstead Road, which could include upgrades to bus stops to include raised kerb, shelters, Real Time Information and/or increasing frequency of services or extending services at weekends or evenings.

5 Potential for strategic and local improvements

- 5.1.1 There is potential for wider transport improvements to the West Colchester area through an integrated package of measures, including extension of high-quality bus routes, extension of walking and cycling programmes, interchange improvements (mobility hubs and railway station improvements), travel planning and behaviour changes together with key strategic highway schemes and local highway improvements.

5.2 Active travel improvements

5.2.1 The Colchester Infrastructure Audit and Development Plan (October 2025) identifies the infrastructure which is required to meet the growth anticipated in Colchester over the Local Plan period to 2041. It sets out the active travel routes that are key to the Local Plan's growth mitigation package. In addition, it identifies the need for a network of mobility hubs across Colchester. This includes the following:

- Eight Ash Green mobility hub – cost £506,880 with funding not secured and anticipated that 25% will be secured from preferred allocations and 25% from reference case developments.
- Walking route Eight Ash Green to Stanway (connecting to the new Rapid Transit System) – cost £1,536,000 with funding not secured and 50% will be secured from preferred allocations.

5.2.2 The draft policy PC2: Active and Sustainable Travel requires that all new development should be planned around a network of safe and accessible active travel routes, creating places that maximise opportunities for active and sustainable travel for all and support healthy and active lifestyles.

5.3 Junction 26 A12 improvements

5.3.1 The Draft Local Plan Traffic Modelling identifies the A12 Junction 26 as being an over-capacity junction and considers that the junction experiences peak hour queueing. Development in the area will add pressure to the network and measures are likely required to help mitigate this impact. The Local Plan states in Policy WC5 that development in West Colchester will be expected to contribute to a package of sustainable transport measures (improvements to current bus services and routes and to the existing cycle and walking network) as well as improvements to the A12 J26 where it is demonstrated that proposals will impact the highway network.

5.3.2 There are agreed proposals for minor improvements to this junction although these are considered to be unlikely to provide significant capacity improvements. National Highways has indicated that there are constraints to providing further physical measures and opportunities to increase capacity are limited. Solutions to mitigate congestion at the A12 junctions will likely focus instead on modal shift away from the private car. The Further Transport Evidence (October 2025) states that the preferred strategy is to concentrate investment in traffic management solutions by:

- extending signalisation to the Essex Yeomanry Way/Western Approach to Junction 26 and Junction 27 Spring Lane roundabout; and,
- co-ordinating new and existing signals through urban traffic control systems to dynamically manage traffic, respond to incidents in real time and prioritise green time for public transport and pedestrian/cycle crossings, which will assist Junctions 25 through to 29.

- 5.3.3 There is potential for wider transport improvements to the West Colchester area through an integrated package of measures, including extension of high-quality bus routes, extension of walking and cycling programmes, interchange improvements (mobility hubs and railway station improvements), travel planning and behaviour changes together with key strategic highway schemes including the A12 (J19-25) widening and local highway improvements.
- 5.3.4 The Transport Evidence report of the Colchester Local Plan Review (February 2025) states that there will be a need to invest in key highway infrastructure in parallel with investing in walking, cycling and public transport, including the A12 (J19-25) widening and other measures, some of which will support access to Park & Ride, access to railway stations and reliability of buses.
- 5.3.5 The Transport Evidence reports that most sites in Eight Ash Green have access to high frequency bus routes and are close to the national cycle network. It is acknowledged that there is not a high propensity to travel by bike from the area, but it states that this could be improved. It states that there is good potential to improve the connection to the National Cycle Network and a need to check the quality of the route.
- 5.3.6 The Draft Local Plan Traffic Modelling identifies the A12 Junction 26 as being an over-capacity junction and considers that the junction experiences peak hour queueing. Development in the area will add pressure to the network and measures are likely required to help mitigate this impact. The Local Plan states in Policy WC5 that development in West Colchester will be expected to contribute to a package of sustainable transport measures (improvements to current bus services and routes and to the existing cycle and walking network) as well as improvements to the A12 J26 where it is demonstrated that proposals will impact the highway network.
- 5.3.7 There are agreed proposals for minor improvements to this junction although these are considered to be unlikely to provide significant capacity improvements. National Highways have indicated that there are constraints to providing further physical measures and opportunities to increase capacity are limited. Solutions to mitigate congestion at these junctions should focus instead on modal shift away from the private car.
- 5.3.8 The widening of the A12 (J25-29) is identified in the Government's Roads Investment Strategy for start of investment to be made by 2025.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1.1 Eight Ash Green is considered to be a sustainable settlement, given the range of local facilities, easy access to Stane Retail Park and frequent bus services along Halstead Road.
- 6.1.2 In sustainable terms, the existing pedestrian network and public transport in the area are good with convenient and relatively frequent bus services provided. Whilst commuting by car is relatively high across Eight Ash Green, the key car commuting journeys from the development are reasonably close and a large proportion of trips head into the centre of Colchester meaning that there is potential for mode shift to be achieved through improvements, particularly to the nearby bus infrastructure.

6.1.3 The proposed site South of Halstead Road is sustainably located and improvements to the pedestrian crossing facilities along Halstead Road will reduce the site's separation. It has good access to these local facilities on foot within Eight Ash Green as well as to the National Cycle Network running north of Eight Ash Green and bus routes running along Halstead Road. It is able to achieve safe and suitable access and connect within and through the site to existing footways (along Halstead Road) and PRow16 along the southern boundary of the site.

6.1.4 The development site is compliant with national, regional and local policies, as it:

- Is located sustainably;
- Provides access to facilities by active travel (walking and cycling);
- Provides access to frequent bus services;
- Has opportunity to improve pedestrian and cyclist facilities and bus infrastructure;
- Has potential to provide financial contributions towards wider highway capacity or sustainable travel measures;
- Will have a street design that reflects national and regional guidance and will promote walking and cycling through the design of the site and provision of cycle routes through the development;
- Will be supported by a Transport Assessment that will assess the impact of the development in transport terms and ensures that the development has a safe and suitable access;
- Will be supported by a Travel Plan that will identify measures to promote sustainable travel including providing comprehensive travel information and taster public transport tickets to each household.

6.1.5 There is strong potential to enhance the sustainability of the site by implementing the following:

- Walking – provision of links to surrounding area as well as improvements to the footway along the site frontage, upgrade of existing pedestrian crossing (from informal crossing to zebra crossing) and improvements to adjoining PRow.
- Public transport – provision of public transport voucher to households and improvements to bus stops and/or services.
- Reduced car dominance – provision of appropriate parking provision, EV charging, creation of streets for a healthy life through considered on-site layout design.