

Mr Paul Griffiths
c/o: Andrea Copsey
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Department Planning Policy & Implementation
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By email only

Basildon Borough Revised Publication Local Plan 2014-2034: Air Quality

Dear Mr Griffiths,

Further to my letter of the 8 November 2019, I am writing to you regarding the progress the Council has made in addressing the requirements of the Air Quality Direction issued by Defra, and to advise you as to how the transport evidence for the Local Plan has been updated in light of the air quality challenge, and other matters arising. This letter has been endorsed by Essex County Council.

As advised in my previous letter, Basildon Borough Council and Essex County Council have fully complied with the requirements of the Direction, and Essex County Council, with the support of the Borough Council, has commenced implementation of the speed limit reduction on the A127. This will be fully operational from March 2020. However, at the time of writing this letter Defra has still **not** issued a decision in respect of the further information submitted regarding the exceedances to the south of the A127. It therefore remains unclear at this time what Defra's decision will be in respect of a charging Clean Air Zone (CAZ), which is preventing significant additional work in that regard.

Whilst not in receipt of decisions from Defra, Basildon Borough Council, working in conjunction with Essex County Council and Essex Highways, has taken the opportunity to ensure that the transport evidence for the Local Plan addresses air quality matters and other queries arising through the regulation 19 consultation. The enclosed briefing note provides a short explanatory note and chronology of the additional transport evidence. In summary this comprises of:

- A package of deliverable smaller-scale junction mitigations, as an alternative to a grade-separated junction on the A127, which demonstrates that development growth can be accommodated within the Plan period.
- An assessment of mode-shift to sustainable alternatives (walking, cycling, passenger transport) to assess its potential impact on local network capacity.
- A review of Local Plan development and forecast traffic growth assumptions used across both transport and air quality modelling studies to understand the differences between growth assumptions used (Local Plan development projections for transport modelling and National Trip End Model for air quality modelling). This will evaluate their impact on study conclusions and on the

evidence presented at examination and ensure that the Local Plan policies are sufficiently robust in respect to air quality aspects.

- Design and engineering studies which expand on the work undertaken to date in identifying measures necessary to accommodate Local Plan growth.

The additional transport evidence is nearing completion and will be provided to you by the end of February 2020.

In addition, addendums to the Sustainability Assessment including Strategic Environmental Assessment / and Habitat Regulations Assessment are being prepared to address air quality matters. To provide resilience to the examination process, this work will test the implications of both a charging CAZ, and also a non-charging CAZ, so that there are no further delays to the examination process arising from any decision that Defra may issue. Again, these will be provided to you by the end of February 2020.

On the basis of the progress that has been made, and in agreement with those at Essex County Council and Essex Highways working on the Air Quality Direction, I would therefore ask that we proceed towards establishing a programme for examination of the Basildon Borough Revised Publication Local Plan, in the anticipation that the above evidence will be provided shortly.

Yours Sincerely,

Christine Lyons
Head of Planning