

Rosemary Wilkins Cycling Officer

From: [REDACTED] on behalf of [REDACTED]
Sent: 18 June 2012 20:14
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Cycling: Fwd: University scheme approved

Hi Chris

By no means do I expect everybody to cycle. As I always point out: I am a driver, too, and the car has a big part to play in the transport system. Private transport becomes a sensible option for journeys of more than five miles when the person is able bodied and there is no public transport: it is even better when journeys can be shared.

I believe there are large holes in the uni travel plan. Has your friend from Ardleigh been given information on car-sharing? Has the person from Clacton considered taking the train (is there a shuttle bus from Hythe station? If not, why not?). Are they employing people from the locality, encouraging them to move nearer to work - or are they giving jobs to people from Earls Colne, who have little option but to drive?

Such are the solutions offered in academic institutions that have strong travel plans.

As was pointed out (and ignored) in the planning report, the uni already has a sufficient number of car parking spaces, but is failing to manage them properly. It has hugely increased the number of passes, with the effect that there is greater demand and therefore greater dissatisfaction with the current level of car parking (being cynical, it could be argued that this was a deliberate ploy). It is following a policy of predict and provide rather than good management.

How many of the parkers come from Colchester? Why aren't they using buses? Is it a case that fares are higher than parking fees, or are the routes too contorted? Has the university tried to negotiate changes to routes - or even considered running its own bus services, as US universities do?

The fact is that the university makes it too easy for people to drive - with the result that people do not even try alternative transport. It has made driving even easier over the last 18 months and the car park will make it easier again.

How about the university spending £4m on high quality cycle routes? Why spend that huge amount on drivers? Spending the money on cyclists would allow those who live in Colchester - and are put off cycling by fast and busy traffic - to have dedicated facilities (You and I use the road, but the fact is that people don't feel safe doing likewise, despite the health benefits).

There are holes in CBC's report which, despite Karen's response, I intend

to highlight. I'll be raising the issue at Bike Drinks tonight and will keep everybody in touch with what I'm doing. The Uni scored lowly for transport in a recent national green survey, and we can see why.

If CCCers are unhappy with me doing this under a CCC banner, I am happy to pursue this as an individual. On a personal point, I am unhappy that this much money is being spent on non-academic building in a time of austerity.

All the best

Will

>

> Dear Will

> I think Karen Syrett's letter is a fair response and I think perhaps the
> criticism of the Planning Committee is not really wholly justified in that
> they have to take all matters into account (and they must act within the
> law). I think really the Cycling Campaign have achieved a lot in high-
> lighting the situation and that the final planning report I think can be
> considered balanced in its conclusion - although we didn't agree with it!.
> Do we want a University to succeed, to attract students from far and wide
> in Essex and Suffolk or further afield in which case we will need first
> class facilities which includes good parking and access as the present
> situation is quite unacceptable with cars parked more or less
> indiscriminately to the detriment of the environment .
> I am just finishing my second year as an undergraduate. In my class there
> is a mature student from Clacton who would have to take 2 buses to get to
> the University an almost impossible journey she says , and another mature
> student from Ardleigh who says it would be impossible for him to get there
> at all . Can we really expect everyone to cycle? I cycle from
> Maldon Road a distance of 3.5 miles which takes about 24 mins and is not
> very pleasant in the dark and wet along Southway Barrack street and the
> Hythe as there is no reasonable alternative route. It is possible to take
> the No1 bus but this takes 50 mins and often fails to turn up. In the
> snow I walked !
> For an out of town campus university such as Essex it would seem only
> safe and reasonable for students to be able to commute for say up to 2 to
> 3 miles and we must concentrate on making those 3 miles safe and
> user-friendly/not just "safe routes for schools " but "safe routes for
> Uni"!
> and this would include Greenstead up to St Johns and New Town Old Heath
> and Riverside Estates but I don't think it reasonable to expect students to
> come further. The access road to Wivenhoe will prove a great
> bonus though.

> Keep up the good work !

> Chris [REDACTED]

> From: [REDACTED]

> Date: Mon, 18 Jun 2012 09:50:09 +0100

> Subject: Cycling: Fwd: University scheme approved

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[illegible]

> environmental considerations with economic and social ones.
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> It is easy to lift sections of a document to suit a particular argument
> whilst ignoring others. For example, the NPPF also says there is a
> presumption in favour of sustainable development and that 'Development
> should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the
> residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.' Essex County
> Council did not consider that the provision of a car park created severe
> impact and did not recommend refusal. Lengthy comments from Spatial Policy
> were included in the Planning Committee report which discussed both the
> overall sustainability of the proposal as well as providing detailed
> comments on how the University could enhance its existing travel planning
> measures and accessibility to alternative modes of transport.
>
> Clearly the decision to approve the scheme was a complicated one given
> that officers originally recommended refusal but the report was withdrawn
> just ahead of the Planning Committee, on the 26th April, and following
> changes a revised report was sent to the 24th May Committee. The report,
> however, made clear that refusal was based on design and mitigation
> concerns rather than the principle of development. The report noted that
> in spite of the University's efforts to manage car parking demand,
> pressure from student and staff demand continued to cause problems with
> unauthorised parking both within the University and in adjacent areas.
> The report, however then went on to note that 'as part of a holistic
> approach to the issue of sustainable transportation the provision of this
> type of facility on campus should be off-set by additional elements to
> encourage alternative travel modes parking on the campus' along with
> improvements to the cycle and pedestrian links between the campus and
> Wivenhoe. Members' decision to approve the scheme reflected the
> University's eventual agreement to contribute planning obligations to
> address these sustainable travel improvements.
>
> Decisions on planning applications can be controversial but I assure you
> all relevant information is made available and taken into account. In this
> instance I know the outcome was not one that you supported but the
> Committee made a decision after full consideration of all the material
> factors.
>
> Regards, Karen
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>
> Karen Syrett
> Spatial Policy Manager
> Strategic Policy & Regeneration
> Colchester Borough Council
>
> Tel. 01206 506477
> Textphone users dial 18001 followed by the full number.
>
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> From: William [REDACTED]
> Sent: 28 May 2012 21:33

> To: Anne Turrell
> Cc: Martin Goss - Cllr - own email; [REDACTED]; Scott Greenhill - Cllr -
> own email; Theresa Higgins - Cllr - own email; [REDACTED]
> [REDACTED] Undisclosed-recipients:
> Subject: Re: University scheme approved
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> Dear Anne
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> Further to my previous email, I have looked at what were classed "relevant
> policies" in the report to the planning committee. Again, I would stress
> the need for you to call for a review of this decision to decide whether
> the committee has been poorly advised.
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> In the excerpts below, please do not confuse accessibility [by all forms
> of transport] with mobility [by car].
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> I have looked at national and council policies, below, which the committee
> report judged to be relevant. These would have supported a case for
> refusal.
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> Regards
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> Will
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> The Local Development Framework (successor to the Local Plan)
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> Note that the LDF is the primary source when deciding on an application.
> The National Planning Policy Framework does not change the statutory
> status of the development plan as the starting point for decision-making.
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> The following excerpts are from CBC's LDF:
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> The key aims of the transport strategy and policies are to improve
> accessibility and promote sustainable travel behaviour.

- > Support development at accessible locations to reduce the need to travel
- > Improve the strategic road network and manage car traffic and parking in urban areas.
- > Create people-friendly streets and encourage walking and cycling
- > Future growth in Colchester hinges on the expansion of alternatives to the car, including improved pedestrian and cycle links...the implementation of travel management schemes
- > Provision of adequate transport, utilities and social infrastructure to meet existing deficits and to support growth
- > Legacy of previous dispersed growth patterns has resulted in high levels of car dependency for travel
- > Development of sustainable land use patterns that maximise accessibility between jobs, homes, services and facilities
- > Manage car traffic in urban areas using alternatives and technology to minimise adverse impacts on the streetscape and local environment
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- > The National Planning Policy Framework
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- > Para 6: The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
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- > Para 7: This defines the three strands of sustainability: economic, social and environmental. If you accept that the car park will increase the number of cars using the university, this will lead to further jams in a town already famed for its car congestion. This will adversely affect the town's economy, for no gain, especially when you consider that the university already has far more than sufficient car parking (CBC report 9:7). The NPPF defines the social role as supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities. Creating extra traffic does the opposite of this. The environmental role talks of adapting to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy. !
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- > Para 9: Making it easier for jobs to be created in cities, towns and villages - this could have been achieved by sticking to the car parking levels in the LDF and ensuring the university improves compliance with its travel plan. Improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel... - by increasing car congestion you have reduced the attractiveness of other forms of transport
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- > Para 14: ...the golden thread is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The university scheme is not sustainable by the definitions above.
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- > Para 17: Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet
- > the housing, business and other development needs of an area - the
- > university already has more than sufficient car parking (CBC report 9:7)
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- > Para 17: Actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible
- > use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant
- > development in locations which are or can be made sustainable; and take
- > account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and
- > cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural
- > facilities and services to meet local needs. The approval goes against
- > this policy in its entirety.
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- > Para 19 Significant weight should be placed on the need to
- > support economic growth through the planning system: Creating further car
- > congestion is not the way to support economic growth.
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- > Para 21: Plan positively for the location, promotion and expansion of
- > clusters or networks of knowledge driven, creative or high technology
- > industries: Knowledge Gateway has the correct amount of car parking built
- > into its scheme, and is a separate issue. Even allowing for the relocation
- > of the university business school, this would not increase the required
- > parking provision above current levels.
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- > Para 23: Ensuring the vitality of town centres. Given that university
- > traffic exists throughout the day, adding extra parking will reinforce the
- > perception that Colchester is a congested town, putting off shoppers and
- > tourists.
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- > Para 29: Wider sustainability and health objectives/smarter use of
- > technologies to reduce the need to travel/giving people a real choice
- > about how they travel Were these even considered by CBC?
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- > Para 30: Encouragement should be given to solutions which support
- > reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion Ditto - the
- > Wivenhoe path does not offset the pollution and congestion that the car
- > park will introduce
- >
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- > Para 32: All developments that generate significant amounts of movement
- > should be supported by a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment.

- > Plans and decisions should take account of whether the opportunities for
- > sustainable transport modes have been taken up depending on the nature and
- > location of the site, to reduce the need for major transport
- > infrastructure; safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for
- > all people; and improvements can be undertaken within the transport
- > network that cost effectively limit the significant impacts of the
- > development. Development should only be prevented or refused on transport
- > grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.
- > Where was the transport statement? Many of the objectors are with CCC in
- > warning of increased congestion and the effect on bus-users, cyclists and
- > pedestrians. The CBC report mentions glibly that there is no effect on
- > AQMAs in Colchester: how does the author know that no cars going to the
- > university use Brook Street or High Street? Looking at the reasons given
- > by objectors, the residual cumulative effects of development will be
- > severe.

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- > Para 34: ...use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised... There
- > is proof that the university has drummed up demand for car parking by
- > issuing too many passes, while its support for cyclist and bus users has
- > been negligible. We now have £3.8m being spent on its car commuters
- > compared with £? on its commuters who use sustainable transport.

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- > Chapter 8: Promoting healthy communities As noted in the response to Para
- > 32, CBC appears to have no idea which roads people use to get to the
- > university. How many cut through Greenstead estate, Greenstead Road or
- > Hythe Hill? All this affects how parents decide the way their children
- > will get to school. There are knock-on effects on obesity, fitness and
- > mental health.

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- > Para 94: Local planning authorities should adopt proactive strategies to
- > mitigate and adapt to climate change

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- > CBC transport policies

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- > TA1 To maximise accessibility/to ensure new development is sustainably
- > located

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- > As a car park there is no way that this development is sustainably
- > located. It will create more car traffic which will have an adverse effect

> on bus services and put off people from walking and cycling.

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> TA3 To provide the infrastructure needed and in the correct place to

> support sustainable modes of travel

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> See my response to TA1

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> TA4 Will work with partners to accommodate necessary car travel, manage

> demand in urban areas,

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> The key words are 'necessary' and 'manage'. As pointed out by CBC

> transport planning, the university is not complying with its own travel

> plan

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> TA5 To produce a balanced realistic parking strategy integrated with other

> demand management and public transport improvement measures/will work with

> partners to ensure that car parking is managed to support the economy

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> This mainly applies to town centre car parking. The university car

> parking, however, is not charged at a sufficiently high rate to encourage

> use of public transport and/or cycling.

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> Policy SA EC7 University of Essex expansion

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> This states that it this is expressly for academic expansion. The car park

> cannot be considered academic expansion. To quote from the policy:

> "Permission will be granted for academic expansion within the area denoted

> by UniversityPurposes on the Proposals Map provided that it relates

> satisfactorily to its setting on the edge of the built up area of

> Colchester."

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> On 28 May 2012, at 15:57, Anne Turrell wrote:

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> Hi Will
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> Its not as simple as you think. Planning is based on Laws of the land and
> Planning Policy which means that Planning Applications can only be refused
> if they do not follow the law and policy. If a planning committee refuses
> an application that follows all the rules it will be overturned on appeal
> and the applications will go ahead with extra costs to the Colchester Tax
> payers.
>
> The problem is not the Cllrs it's the law and policy that needs changing
> so you need to lobby for change to law and policy.
>
> If planning applications could be refused because we don't like something
> or we feel it's the wrong direction eg being green or sustainable travel
> then many of the applications in Mile End would have been refused – but we
> didn't have a leg to stand on.
>
> Hope that helps
>
> Anne
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> From: William [REDACTED]
> Sent: 24 May 2012 22:42
> To: Yahoo Group CCC
> Cc: [REDACTED] Theresa Higgins ecc; [REDACTED] Sir Bob Russell;
> [REDACTED] Anne Turrell;
> xxxx.xxxxxxx.xxxxx@xxxxx.xx; [REDACTED]
> Subject: University scheme approved
>
> To CCC email group
>
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>
> In the light of tonight's approval of the huge new car park at Essex
> university, this can't come too soon:
> <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/public/cyclesafety/article3425333.ece>
>
>
>
> We do, at least, get £250,000 towards the Wivenhoe to University cycle
> path, and the uni's travel plan "will be scrutinised", though it is small
> comfort that the cycle path funding will mean that the University Quays
> cycle bridge cannot be straightened.
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>
> Never again do I want to hear any of the councillors ** who voted for **
> this scheme whinging about congestion, or why children cannot walk or

> cycle to school. They've made their bed: they can lie in it.

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> Will

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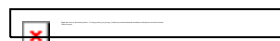
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