

## **Note for Colchester Local Highways Panel**

### **Strategy to mitigate impact of traffic speed and volume on highway safety and amenity in Aldham Parish**

#### **Purpose:**

To seek the support of the Local Highways Panel for a series of measures that over time could assist in mitigating the impact of increased traffic volume and speeds on minor rural roads in the Parish of Aldham.

#### **Background:**

The village of Aldham comprises two distinct parts: the main village at the cross roads of Tey Road/Green Lane and Brook Road/New Road; and Ford Street, with properties fronting the A1124 from the boundary of Eight Ash Green down Ford St Hill to the River Colne and the boundary with Fordham.

No.88 Colchester to Halstead Bus service runs along the A1124 serving Ford St, but there is a more limited service via the main village (88A), which is subsidised to run on Sundays and Bank Holidays by ECC.

There is currently no footway between Ford Street and facilities in the main village ie. Church and Village Hall, nor between the main village and facilities at Marks Tey ie. rail station, bus services and shops/post office etc.

#### **Key Issues:**

- **Local Plan Review**

An overarching issue for Aldham is the emerging Review of the Local Plan. Whilst recognising the national priority to increase housing supply there is little evidence in the Preferred Options that transport infrastructure will match the rate of new development, or that planning policy will reduce the use of the car as the principal means of transport for most residents in north Essex. In Aldham and the five adjoining parishes, the Local Plan Review is proposing over 3500 new homes. That is more than the existing housing in all five parishes of Aldham, Chappel & Wakes Colne, Eight Ash Green, Gt Tey, Marks Tey and Copford. Effectively doubling the population of these five parishes will have a very significant adverse impact on both traffic movement and the amenity of all residents of these parishes.

- **Traffic Speed & Volume**

The village has experienced higher traffic volumes through the village, not only on the A1124 but also through the main village over the last ten years with the advent of SatNav and Google Maps. The west-east route (Tey Road/Green Lane) is now a recognised rat run to avoid congestion at the A120/A12 junction at Marks Tey and this has markedly increased since the A12 works between J25 and J26 over the last

two years. The verges are badly eroded and badly potholed because it is generally too narrow for vehicles to pass without pulling on to the verge. Furthermore, residents have had to resort to erecting posts along the narrow verges to reduce the risk of vehicles running into roadside ditches when passing oncoming vehicles. Inevitably as a rat run, traffic speeds have increased making the route less safe for other road users ie. cyclists, pedestrians/dog walkers, runners and horse riders. The entire length of Tey Road between the built up edge of Aldham and Gt Tey is subject only to the National Speed Limit.

**New Road and Brook Road** form part of a short cut from A12/A120/Marks Tey station around the north west side of Colchester to the B1508 through Fordham and Wormingford. Although the section through Aldham is not subject to the same problem of HGVs from CSH and Fairfield Farm as our neighbouring Parishes, the use of minor roads such as these as a short cut, particularly during peak hours means high volumes and higher speeds to the detriment of safety and amenity.

Residents fronting the **A1124**, particularly those fronting the Colchester bound carriageway at the top of Ford St Hill have lodged a petition with the Parish Council in response to the increased risks accessing the A1124 from their private drives on the inside of the bend, because of increased traffic volumes and speed over recent years. This follows an intensive campaign by residents over many years to secure a 40mph limit on this stretch of the A1124, which was eventually implemented in 2013.

- **Pedestrians and Cyclists**

National policy is seeking to encourage more walking and cycling and the use of public transport. The station at Marks Tey is only just over a mile from the centre of the main village and access to this and other facilities at Marks Tey should be accessible to both walkers and cyclists. However, from the edge of the village to North Lane where there is a footway and wider carriageway, there is no safe route for pedestrians on **Brook Road**. The narrow carriageway makes it unsafe for cyclists as there is not room for two vans or larger vehicles to pass safely on the stretch north of the Roman River, and raised verges make it impossible for vehicles to pull over.

SatNav and Google Maps is encouraging more traffic to short cut along **Rectory Road** which links Tey Road and Brook Road. This is very narrow with a number of blind bends. It is also subject only to the National Speed Limit. It serves just a farm, small market garden and 14 houses but is a popular local recreational route with walkers, cyclists, runners and horse riders. Unnecessary through traffic should be discouraged on the grounds of safety and amenity.

- **Public Transport**

The limited 88a service through the main village discourages more use by residents as an alternative to the car as a means of travel to the City Centre. The regular 88 travels up Ford St Hill with no additional stops, saving minimal journey time and losing the opportunity for additional passengers from Aldham village. The distance and absence of a convenient and safe pedestrian route from the village to Ford St rules out the chance of anyone making use of the better service.

**Proposed Strategy for Mitigating Impact of Traffic Speed and Volume on our Community:**

The Parish Council recognises that the general increase in traffic volumes, particularly on minor rural roads as a direct result of a lack of capacity on the Major Road Network is unlikely to diminish without changes to national policy on transport. However, the Local Plan Review is likely to exacerbate the existing problems and a number of measures need to be urgently adopted to improve safety and amenity for our residents.

- **Current Measures:**

The Council has co-funded a Speed Indicator Device (SID) with Wormingford and Fordham that has an ECC licence to be erected at two locations in Aldham; the bottom of Ford St Hill as you enter the current 30mph limit and at Brook Road at the northern end of the main village. However, this is only available for four months of the year. With support from our City Councillors' Local Fund we are putting aside funds from next year's Budget towards the cost of our own SID for use solely within the village, and one that has the ability to store data on vehicle flows and speed at a cost of approximately £5000.

In response to concerns expressed by local residents, especially following the impact of road works and major incidents on the A12, Parish Council have established a Highways & Traffic Working Group which includes co-opted residents and City and County Councillors. This Note has been prepared by the Group and was endorsed by the Parish Council on [4<sup>th</sup> February]

- **Community Speed Watch:**

The Parish Council is embarking on a campaign this spring to recruit sufficient volunteers to re-establish the Community Speed Watch team to support Essex Police in reducing traffic speeds through the village.

- **Additional Speed Limits on Minor Rural Roads:**

The Parish Council is aware of the recent consultation on a Draft Essex Transport Strategy that proposes a new road classification for the County to make it more relevant to current issues, such as those raised in this paper. However, the Parish Council has made representations on this draft to the effect that it does not address the problem of inadequate and inappropriate minor roads effectively becoming

surrogate relief routes for the congested County Road network, with consequential detrimental effect on road safety and amenity for residents along these rural routes. The two routes through the main village of Aldham fall into this category.

The Parish Council would advocate the imposition of 40mph speed limits on the following roads between existing 30mph limits - Tey Road, Green Lane, New Road and Brook Road North Lane, in the interest of traffic safety and local amenity.

- **A1124 Ford St Hill**

The Parish Council advocates the extension of the 30 mph limit at the bottom of Ford St Hill on the A1124 to a point east of the junction with Green Lane, beyond the last house on the north side, as a minimum and preferably to replace the entire 40mph limit between Ford St and Eight Ash Green with a 30mph limit.

- **Additional Traffic Calming Measures**

The Parish Council advocates the renewal and enhancement of the existing 'gateway' features at the entrance to the main village on Brook Road and New Road and introduction of new 'gateway' features on the entrance to the village on Tey Road and Green Lane, to further discourage traffic speed.

If data from the proposed SID demonstrates persistent speeding through the main village the Parish Council would advocate additional traffic calming measures, in the form of priority working at the New Road and Brook Road speed limits to reduce speed and discourage this route as a short cut.

- **Improvements for Pedestrians and Cyclists**

The Parish Council seeks support from the Local Highways Panel towards the cost of a feasibility study into the creation of a segregated cycle/pedestrian route from the Millennium Playing Field to North Lane to provide safe access to Marks Tey station and facilities at Marks Tey. Funding for implementation would be sought when opportunities to apply for capital funding initiatives are available or through s106 or similar contributions from new development or major infrastructure projects in the locality.

The Parish Council advocates the introduction of 'Quiet Lane' status to the entire length of Rectory Road to discourage through traffic and traffic speed and improve both safety and amenity for recreational users of the lane on foot, cycle or horse.

- **Bus Service**

The Parish Council seek support for an enhanced bus service through the main part of Aldham village (88a service) to increase patronage and reduce reliance on the car to access Tollgate and the City Centre

**Conclusion & Way Forward:**

1. The Parish Council wish to mitigate the impact on road safety and local amenity of increased traffic volumes and speed arising from the use of rural minor roads as short cuts and rat runs to avoid delay and congestion on the County Road Network.
2. The Parish Council seeks the support of the LHP in principle for this package of measures for our Parish and would request the opportunity is taken to implement these in a phased manner over time as funding becomes available.

**Aldham Parish Council**

**February 2025**