

Representation to A12ChelmsfordA120 Examination And a Request to Speak at Future OFH's Little Braxted Parish Council in principle understands and supports the proposed development. In doing so however it is on the basis that the following pre-requisites are delivered as part of the overall scheme:-

- a) The Witham North junction (junction 22) is constructed as per the submitted plans
- b) Permanent, physical width restrictions are put in place immediately either side of the weight-restricted bridge over the River Blackwater on Little Braxted Lane, Rivenhall (which becomes Witham Road, Little Braxted) to prevent unauthorised access by hgv's

Junction 22

The submitted plans for junction 22 include two key features important to Little Braxted and wider community:-

- a) An exit to Little Braxted Lane, Rivenhall; and
- b) A new footway and cycleway over the A12 linking Witham Road, Rivenhall with Colchester Road, Witham

Whilst Little Braxted Lane, Rivenhall (which I note the Inspectors have not viewed) may seem to be a minor country lane, it serves one of the largest employment sites in the north of the Maldon District, immediately across the river at Little Braxted Hall, and the important link to the A12 (and Witham) is important for the near 200 employees commuting to the international businesses on that site. The Lane also lead to the acclaimed Braxted Bakery and the village of Little Braxted itself. And, whilst we accept that there will be an increase in vehicular traffic arising from planned development in the Heybridge/Maldon area, we believe it is vitally important to keep the link to the A12 at junction 22.

Little Braxted Lane, Rivenhall (which becomes Witham Road, Little Braxted over the river) also forms part of the National Cycle Route 1, hence the need to ensure that the footbridge and cycleway over the A12 linking it with Colchester Road, Witham is constructed. The Braxted Bakery on Witham Road, Little Braxted is a key destination for cycle clubs and individual cyclists.

The 3-ton Weight Restricted Bridge over the River Blackwater

Whilst commuter and local traffic can safely use Little Braxted Lane and the weight-restricted bridge, there is a history of unauthorised use by hgv's, often resulting in physical damage to the bridge. These occur most frequently when there is disruption to the A12 as drivers attempt to find an alternative route, despite the County Highway's official signage warning of the weight restriction and the Parish Council's own (unofficial) signage reinforcing the lack of through access for hgv's. Often hgv's reach the bridge only then to find that they have to reverse some distance to be able to retrace their route, whether back to A12 or back to Kelvedon Road, Little Braxted.

Because of the need for ongoing hgv access to the (rerouted) gas main, the fisheries and the willow plantation on the Rivenhall side of the river any physical width restriction can only be placed immediately on the bridge approach. Similarly with the need to maintain access to the Mill House on the Little Braxted side of the bridge.

Already, as part of the works associated with the re-routing of the gas main, the bridge has been crossed by an over-weight hgv, despite the driver having passed three County Highway's warning signs and two Parish Council signs. Each time the bridge is damaged the road is closed for repairs to take place; the last such closure took six weeks before re-opening.