

Protected Lanes

1. Church Road, Boreham is, because of its historic interest and landscape value, designated from Shottesbrook to the river Chelmer Bridge (known locally as “Black Bridge)”, as a Protected Lane. This section of Church Road had a high score in the assessment criteria adopted. Chelmsford City Council Policy DC15 refers and we quote:

“2.3 Protected Lanes Policy in Chelmsford Borough The Chelmsford Borough Local Development Framework 2001 – 2021, Core Strategy and Development Control Policies was adopted in February 2008 and contains the following development policy (DC15) and supporting text for Protected Lanes: Planning permission will be refused for development that would have an adverse environmental impact upon Protected Lanes as defined on the Proposals Map. Any proposals which would give rise to a material increase in the amount of traffic using Protected Lanes will not be permitted. Within the Borough there are a number of country lanes and byways which are of historic and landscape value and which make an important contribution to the rural character of certain areas. The Borough Council intends to protect these lanes and byways by preserving, as far as possible, the trees and hedgerows, banks, ditches and verges which contribute to their character, and by resisting development proposals which have a detrimental effect upon them.”

In Nov 2017 - Chelmsford City (Additional Lanes) Report - Appendix 13 - PLACE SERVICES EDB 088, Essex County Council’s Place Services Historic Environment Team were commissioned by Chelmsford City Council to assess 6 Lanes of which 3 were original part of Protected Lanes Report 2009. The Protected Lanes scoring system used for Additional Lanes survey For Chelmsford City Council in November 2017 uses a consistent scoring approach as detailed in Appendix 13 Places Services Report EDB 088 and therefore alignment with original Protected Lane Survey Report September 2009 and as such Church Road was originally scored highly at 17 as a collective score across 3 stages of 7 assessment criteria of which Church Road met Protected Lane status and as such recognised and listed for protection under Protected Lanes Policy DC15

Appendix 1 is a map taken from Protected Lanes Study Report Sept.2009, which clearly shows Church Road’s Protected Lane status from Shottesbrook to Black Bridge. It also shows the network of connecting lanes, including Little Baddow’s Protected Lanes, referred to in 5.h) below.

2. BCS notes from REP1-002 / RR-074-006, that the Applicant states:

“With the proposed scheme in place, some traffic is still predicted to travel from junction 18 to Boreham via Hammonds Road. Traffic on Hammonds Road is predicted to increase as a result of the proposed scheme by around one vehicle per minute. One reason for this is because, due to a slight

increase in the amount of traffic on the A12 south of Boreham Interchange, journey times on the A12 between junction 15 and junction 19 are predicted to increase by around one minute overall in the proposed scheme opening year of 2027.”

3. BCS also notes from REP1-002 / RR 158 -01 that the Applicant states:

“The protected lane status and the weight restrictions on Church Road and the River Chelmer bridge are proposed to remain to discourage traffic from using this route to bypass junction 19 and join the A12 at junction 18.”

4. BCS would record that:

- a) Both Church Road and Hammonds Road are roads in name only. Both Roads are more accurately described and would be recognised as rural, country lanes. Church Road is narrow, with high embankments to the side and blind bends both of which obscure sight of vehicles and WCH users. Hammonds Road has blind bends and narrow sections in which passing motor cars need care to avoid collisions.
- b) The rat-running, commuter traffic referred to in RR-074-006 is heading east on Hammonds Road onto Church Road whereas the rat-running, commuter traffic referred to in RR158-01 is heading west on Church Road onto Hammonds Road. These rat-running traffic streams meet, head-on, at the single lane, west bound priority, River Chelmer Bridge known locally as Black Bridge.
- c) **Appendix 2** attached, clearly illustrates in pictures the issues contained in this paper.

5. BCS have the following objections:

- a) The traffic increases predicted by the Applicant are in clear contravention of Policy DC15.
- b) The weight restriction of 7.5 tonnes is intended to deter HGV's and has no effect upon motorists' decisions to rat-run along Church Road and Hammonds Road.
- c) REP1 -002 / RR158-01 implies that Church Road's Protected Lane classification deters commuters from using it as a rat-run. This is untenable. Commuters will be unaware of this planning classification. BCS contend that even if commuters were aware, a planning classification is no deterrent to rat-runners. Planning policy, not commuters, has the responsibility for measures to safeguard Protected Lanes.
- d) The Applicant must think again as it is simply unacceptable that the outcomes from an expenditure of £1.3bn of public money includes an increase in rat-running traffic on local roads and Protected Lanes. BCS would reiterate that such traffic was described by Mr P Davie, National Highways Project Director for the scheme as “dangerous” and Mr Davie has yet to explain why the Applicant believes it is acceptable for Boreham (but not elsewhere) that the

known adverse impacts of the scheme design is to increase danger for motorists and WCH users on Boreham's local roads and Protected Lane.

- e) Church Road and Hammonds Road are both prone to flooding that causes road closures. This flooding hazard necessitates a permanent Flood Warning sign and water level indicator board at the approach to Black Bridge on Church Road from Boreham. Flooding is especially prevalent in the area including the junction of Church Road and Hammonds Road. Both roads have multiple locations where deep and extensive puddles quickly form that slow traffic / force them over to the other traffic lane. This is not satisfactory for light, non- commuting traffic; it is dangerous for rush hour traffic.
- f) The Chelmer waterway in Boreham Parish, has always been popular with anglers and has many long -established stands along the river. The river and pathways have become increasingly popular with water-sports enthusiasts and walkers. Parking is very limited and restricted to east side of Church Road at its approach to Black Bridge and this necessitates pedestrians crossing the road from between parked vehicles and avoiding traffic. The increased leisure use (including that generated by the Tri-farm triathlon facility that is accessed from Church Road) has recently necessitated the introduction of parking restrictions with double yellow lines now in place. This is not a location where extra traffic should be accepted.
- g) At Black Bridge west bound traffic has priority. The sight lines for east bound traffic are poor, the bridge construction impedes the view and foliage all but completely obscures the view in spring and summer. This combination creates dangers with east bound traffic, believing the bridge is clear, unexpectedly meets west bound traffic on/ for the bridge. Parked vehicles and leisure users (see above) compound the problems and the dangers. This location already has the probability to become an accident black spot, increased traffic increases that probability.
- h) There are two clearly related issues that the Applicant has, so far, ignored. The provision of WCH access over Paynes Lane Bridge directly to Beaulieu Railway Station and beyond that restores the Public Right of Way, severed for some 50 years or so by the current A12 Boreham bypass, is welcomed by BCS. However, there is an obvious downside for Boreham that needs to be addressed. When compared with the distance and time to access the Railway Station through Junction 19 and then pay for parking, pedestrian access to Beaulieu Railway Station combined with the availability of free and generally unrestricted parking within Boreham / on the B1137 has obvious attractions for commuters from the east of Boreham i.e. along the B1137 from Hatfield Peverel / Maldon areas together with those from the south, (i.e. again from Maldon together with Danbury and Bickenacre areas). Those from the south will use the network of country lanes, from Little Baddow and Danbury, to reach and remain on Church Road to Boreham and /or the B1137 by remaining on Church Road (or diverting up Plantation Road). The natural route for these commuters will be to remain on Church Road through the

village, passing several Grade 2 listed Buildings including the Church. On this route the road in front of the Church narrows to a single lane with priority to oncoming traffic, followed by a very sharp challenging bend before widening out to a section where on-road parking is the norm and which necessitates give way to oncoming traffic. Church Road has a very narrow pavement in front of the Church that continues round the very sharp turn. This necessitates crossing the road and re-crossing the road to reach the Church, GP surgery / pharmacy, village shops and school. The increased danger from rat-running traffic is clear for all to see. It is therefore reasonable to expect the Applicant, with the expertise available to it, to be aware of these issues. The Applicant is aware, see 5.d) above, of the dangers from increased traffic on roads as described but has not proposed any new mitigation to safeguard Boreham residents of all ages or for the obvious parking problems that can be anticipated. BCS contend that the Applicant must now do so.

6. BCS have the following requests:
 - a) The Applicant publish the risk assessment regarding the impact of increased commuter traffic from east and west meeting head-on at Black Bridge and from the increased risks for pedestrians from such traffic and unsatisfactory parking provision.
 - b) The Applicant publish the standard traffic assessments for flows without /with the scheme for Church Road (Boreham to Hammonds Road) and Hammonds Road.
 - c) The Applicant advises if the traffic modelling for Church Road takes account of the additional, rat running traffic, detailed in 5.h) above, that can be expected for Beaulieu Railway Station. This rat-run is an obvious alternative from, sat=navs / maps, to accessing the station through Junctions 18 or 19.
 - d) The Applicant agrees to make before and after scheme photographic records and accepts responsibility for any necessary “make good” restoration works that may be necessary on Church Road or Hammonds Road.
7. Conclusions
 - a) Rat-running traffic is dangerous on Church Road and Hammonds Road. These routes simply do not have the capacity to safely carry current volumes, far less increased volumes, of rat-running commuters.
 - b) It is an unacceptable outcome from an expenditure of £1.3bn of public funds should be to increase the dangers from rat-running traffic on local Roads and Protected Lane. It is the responsibility of the Planning / Road authorities to protect the “Protected Lane”. The Applicant has a responsibility to find solutions without destroying the character of local roads and Protected Lane. The Applicant has accepted that the closure of the Junction 20a on-slip will divert traffic from the A12 and onto the B1137. The Applicant predicts increases in west bound traffic on Plantation Road and so on to Church Road and Hammonds Road to Junction 18, some of which will be as a direct consequence of closing the Junction 20a on-slip. BCS contend that retention of the Junction 20a on-slip would mitigate the increase in west bound traffic over Black Bridge. As for east

bound traffic, BCS recognises the difficulties with mitigation but proposes that appropriate signage could, at least, be erected at the entrance from Junction 18 to Hammonds Road.

- c) The River Chelmer Bridge warrants a visit by the Examining Authority.

Boreham Conservation Society March 2023

Appendix 1 - Protected Lanes DC15 Policy

