



**REPORT of
DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY AND RESOURCES**

to
**COUNCIL (EXTRAORDINARY)
14 NOVEMBER 2024**

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1. QUESTIONS OF WHICH NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

1.1 In accordance with the Council's public speaking protocol the following questions were received from members of the public.

2. QUESTION ONE

The following question was received from Edwina Mosuro on 7 November 2024:

“The lives and well being of the residents and children of the Sharpes Meadow estate are being risked and detrimentally impacted on a daily basis as a result of the complete lack of safe pedestrian access routes to schools and essential amenities within the wider Heybridge area.

The Local Development Plan details three pedestrian access routes via Westcombe Park. None of these have been completed, leaving Broad Street Green Road (with its fast, frequent, and heavy industrial traffic, 40mph speed limit, and extremely narrow roads and pavements) the only available (but wholly unsafe) pedestrian access route.

On behalf of the Sharpes Meadow residents I therefore ask;

What actions are Maldon District Council taking to;

- a) expedite the opening of the safe access routes via Westcombe Park, and,
- b) review and improve the safety of pedestrian access via Broad Street Green Road,

and when will these actions be delivered?”

Response from the Leader of the Council

I am aware of the strength of feeling in the local community of Sharpes Meadow to secure better access into Heybridge and the wider area than those that have been approved under different planning applications in North Heybridge and Great Totham over several years. The ‘Three pedestrian accesses’ stated in the question were not in the Local Development Plan (LDP) however, as the LDP does not deal with the specific details of planning applications for development sites. We are aware however that early masterplanning work to establish broad development principles for the wider geographic area, including land adjoining and near the application site, set ambitions for the North Heybridge Garden Suburb to achieve walkable

connections into the existing residential areas that would benefit both existing and new residents.

In respects of facilitating new connections into the neighbouring Westcombe Park development, the Council must determine the planning applications it receives in accordance with the planning law and any principles formally established by the Outline Planning Application, which was approved by the Planning Inspectorate at appeal in 2019. Officers have reviewed the planning history and clarified what pedestrian connections were approved in that appeal, and that does not include all of the aspirational connections considered in the earlier masterplan. For the connections that are approved, I agree that these should come forward as quickly as possible to address the isolation new residents are experiencing in terms of connections to services and safe and convenient access routes. I must stress however that the Council cannot legally compel developers to bring forward the relevant planning applications or highway consents that would allow those footpaths to be built any quicker than the developer intends to. However, the Council is engaging with the developer and Essex County Council who are the Highway Authority, as proactively as possible to determine if alternative solutions exist to the existing connectivity challenges faced by local residents, mindful that further applications will come forward in due course.

In respects of Broad Street Green Road, I know that Councillors in this Chamber are already working collaboratively to apply to Essex County Council as the Highway Authority to make the case for much needed investment in the road's parallel footpaths and improvements to pedestrian and road user safety through speed reduction measures.

3. QUESTION TWO

The following question was received from Mr David Sismey on 11 November 2024:

“Can the council update Maldon residents whether a breach has yet occurred in respect of the planning condition imposed on the North Heybridge planning development that the western end of the relief road be complete prior to 100 occupations at the site? As of today, how many occupations have occurred at this development including those used for marketing and has the council independently confirmed this?”

Response from the Leader of the Council

According to the Council's Building Control records there have been 115 completions on the site and the Council has been informed that 87 are currently occupied and registered for Council Tax. Therefore, as it stands at present, the developer has not reached 100 homes occupied which triggers the planning condition about the relief road.