

Reducing Traffic in Broomfield: Chelmer Valley Park and Ride Expansion.



The Parish Council has campaigned for many years to reduce the amount of through traffic using Main Road. So, we have welcomed the proposal to expand the P&R. A huge amount of development is taking place north of Chelmsford and in Braintree and we don't want all the Chelmsford-bound traffic squeezing through Broomfield, making current problems even worse. Hopefully, expanding the P&R will draw traffic onto Essex Regiment Way instead and encourage more people out of their cars.

While strongly supporting the proposal, we have raised the need to move the bus stops and building to the centre of the P&R, to make it easier for people with mobility problems. We have also highlighted the need to build in spaces for Hospital parking, so that the Hospital shuttle bus can re-start.

We asked about how to reduce traffic in our Neighbourhood Plan residents survey. One of the most popular suggestions was 'Signpost hospital traffic along the A130 Essex Regiment Way' (89% support with only 3% objecting). So we believe our response to P&R consultation is very much in line with the feelings of the local community in Broomfield.

The Planning Committee responded to the consultation on the Parish Council's behalf.

Here are our comments in response to the recent Consultation in full:

'With increasing development in North Chelmsford and in Braintree, it is essential that measures are taken to reduce through traffic on the B1008. Infrastructure should be improved on the current A130 (Essex Regiment Way) and the new planned routes that will become the A130 in due course. At the same time, the status of the B1008 as a PR1 should be reduced and interventions made to reduce through traffic and encourage sustainable transport for the local communities.

The Council therefore strongly supports the expansion, as it is consistent with the approach outlined above.

The Council has 2 concerns about the proposal:

- the bus stops and waiting area should be moved so they are more central to the extended site. Otherwise, the longer walk from the extended areas to catch the bus will be a disincentive to using the facility for people with mobility problems

- has the need to include additional spaces for Hospital staff and visitors been considered? A shuttle service from the P&R to the Hospital used to operate until Covid. It needs to be re-instated to relieve pressure on the B1008. This may require additional parking spaces to be provided.

The Council has 2 other comments:

- as usage continues to recover after Covid, opening times should be reviewed to consider longer opening times, particularly when the Hospital shuttle bus is re-introduced
- with the expansion of the P&R and particularly park and peddle, the proposal for a direct cycle route from the P&R to Broomfield Hospital becomes even more strategically important.'