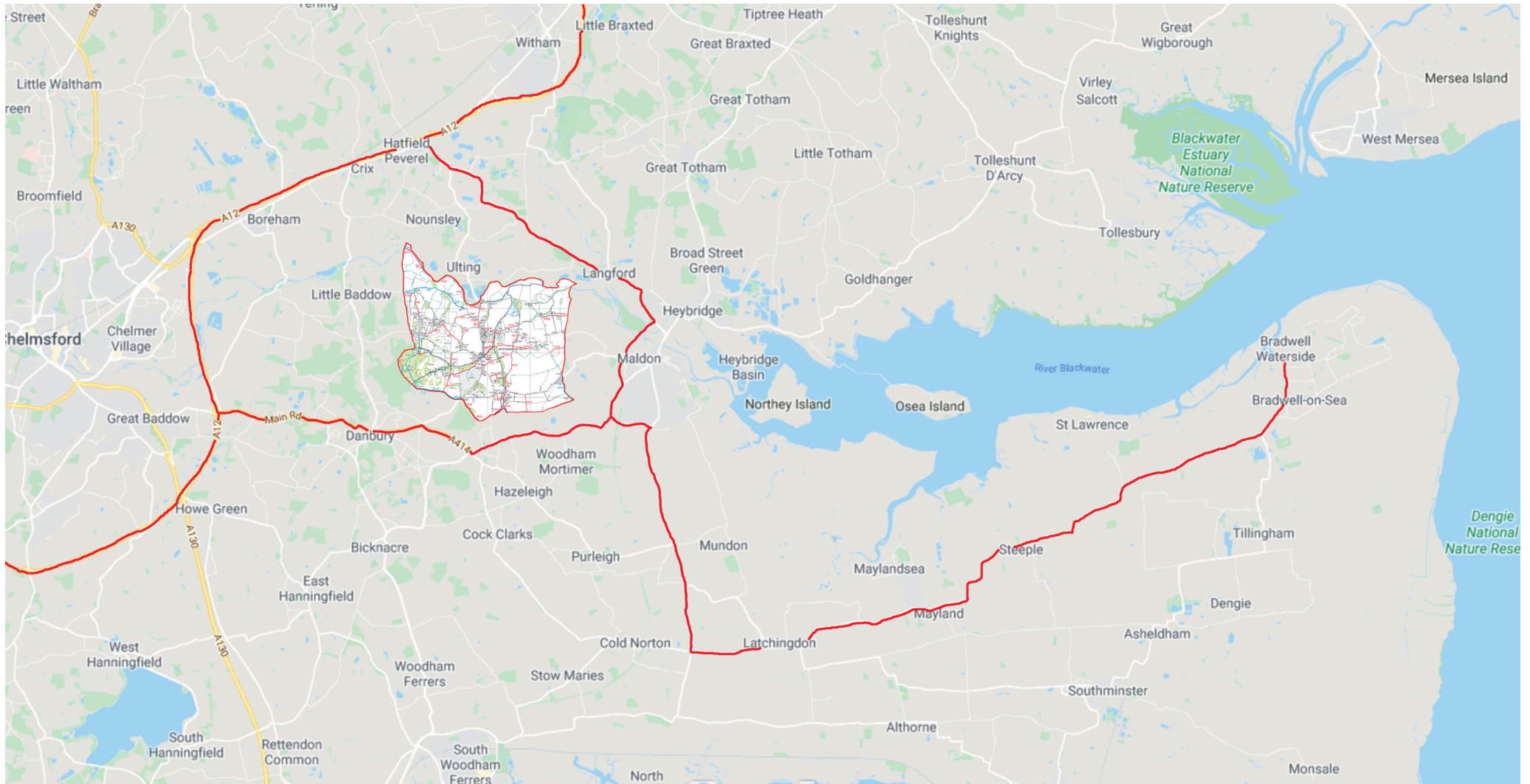




Stuart Koenig-Roach

The Woodham Walter Parish Council Bradwell B Stage One Consutation Response

Parish Location



Executive Summary

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. Whilst the Parish Council of Woodham Walter recognises that the proposed development of the Bradwell B Nuclear Power Station is considered to be of strategic national importance, it is also acutely aware of the impact that a development of this type, scale and disposition will have on the Parish, the area and the region.
- 1.2. There is concern that the project is being hastened through the planning and consultation phases without benefit of sufficient detail.
 - 1.3. Parish Council concern focuses on the following Parish, area and region-wide issues discussed in greater detail elsewhere in this document:
 - 1.3.1. The safety and the avoidance of a nuclear incident occasioned by flooding.
 - 1.3.2. The visual impact of development design steps taken in mitigation of flooding on the picturesque Chelmer and Blackwater valley and estuary.
 - 1.3.3. The effect of the influx of a substantially large project workforce having a dynamic effect on the fragile demographic of the area and the already overstretched services.
 - 1.3.4. Early stage transport proposals taking little cognisance of existing road patterns and capability.
 - 1.3.5. The overall road transport proposals adversely transforming the landscape character, the countryside, population usage and area villages.
 - 1.3.6. The imposition of a significant number of vehicle movements on narrow country lanes to and from park and ride facilities.
 - 1.3.7. Location of park and ride facilities within a high value agriculture and landscape area accessed via country lanes divorced from local and regional distributor roads.
 - 1.4. The comments are made in conjunction with the current consultation document.

Parish Location

2. Location

- 2.1. Woodham Walter is a rural parish lying by road approximately 5km west of Maldon and 29km west of the proposed Bradwell B Nuclear Development site. The village is located within 1.6km of the A414 as it passes to the south and east through Danbury and the B1019 linking Hatfield Peverel with Maldon.
- 2.2. Woodham Walter as a village is referred to in the Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Character Assessment document as being an Arcadian settlement; a dispersed rural settlement set in prime agricultural land, a typical English Village with a centre and outlying groups of settlement.
- 2.3. It is a place of tranquillity and although a small community it has twenty-nine listed buildings, two at Grade II*, two ancient monuments and two Conservation Areas one of which is the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation and the other the village centre. The Village has a primary school, a pre-school and three public houses. In addition there is a Site of Scientific Interest as part of the Warren Estate and a Site of Special Scientific Interest, Woodham Walter Common. There are also two golf courses and an extensive network of public rights of way and a Travelers' accommodation site.
- 2.4. The road pattern is one of narrow country lanes, some of which carry protection status, some are designate bicycle routes whilst others have width restrictions and a weight limit to the river bridge. The river bridge, which apart from the weight restriction has in addition a width restriction, is the last vehicular crossing of the Chelmer before Maldon.
- 2.5. Although not suitable for large volumes of traffic, during normal times, traffic peaks during rush hours as the routes through the village by-pass the major bottleneck (A414) leading to the regional distributor A12. This situation has been exacerbated in recent years since the exponential growth of housing to the south and west of Maldon (1,710 units in the Wycke Hill Garden Suburb [MDC LDP]). TruCam patrols regularly capture speeding drivers at a rate of one every four/five minutes during attendance periods.
- 2.6. The 2011 census indicated a population of 532 living in 256 dwellings. The demographic has a significant number of elderly and retired residents with others either working from home or commuting to Chelmsford, Maldon and in some cases, London.
- 2.7. The Village has the benefit of a Village Design Statement that defines the settlement area, quantifies the quality open spaces and seeks to provide a good planning and landscaping ethos.

Detailed Comments

3. Heterogeneous Comment

- 3.1. It is apparent from the published data now available that the project as a whole will have a significant impact on not just the wider community but on the region as a whole. There is a level of feeling amongst local residents against this project and that the planning aspect is being rushed through without a proper hearing when it is yet to be sanctioned at national level. This has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 regulations.
- 3.2. Notwithstanding the above, this Council is concerned about the nuclear safety of the development and the potential affect of an incident on the region. There is particular concern over the impact of the issues arising from the sinking east coast land mass combined with climate change and the raising of sea levels in what is already a high flood risk estuary. The mitigation of the raising of the construction platform and the sea wall based on anticipated potential climate change is noted and reassurances are sought in this respect.
- 3.3. Given the necessity to elevate the structure significantly above the normal ground level for flood protection purposes as above, the effect of this elevation on the skyline will be dramatic, impacting from as far away as the Danbury Ridge and along the Chelmer and Blackwater Valley Conservation Area valley sides. This Council recommends that if the project is to proceed then a design solution is developed to limit visual and distant visual impact beyond that which is shown in the consultation document.

4. Employment

- 4.1. The employment opportunities for local people afforded by the development are to be applauded.
- 4.2. It is hoped that local labour will be prioritised over others both during the construction phase and as permanent staff.
- 4.3. The influx of a large workforce will intensify the requirement for local services that are logistically under pressure with demand arising from the exponential growth of domestic housing in and around Maldon with the associated demands.

5. Housing

- 5.1. The rapid housing growth within the Maldon District Council area has given rise to a shortfall of health, welfare and educational facilities that are being experienced throughout the area including Woodham Walter and are unlikely to be able to cope with a long-term influx of population over the projected programme period and beyond.
- 5.2. To relieve pressure on housing in the area as a whole and to avoid overload of narrow country lanes through commuting, an on-site accommodation campus would be entirely appropriate with a long-term solution for permanent staff. This Council recommends that such a campus is complete with all the necessary health and welfare facilities to avoid potential overload of existing facilities.

Detailed Comments

6. Transport

- 6.1. The biggest impact of the scale and size of the proposed development will be from transport and this will significantly affect the wider region. This Council supports the use of marine transport and considers that the short-term disruption during the construction of jetties will outweigh the long-term congestion, disruption and pollution of a road transport option.
- 6.2. Option 3 is preferred as it will limit to a greater extent the necessity to transport goods and materials by road along carriage-ways that are under designed and inadequate thereby avoiding large-scale improvement works with the associated environmental and time implications.

7. Road Transport

- 7.1. The Parish and tranquil Arcadian village of Woodham Walter is situated approximately one mile from the A414, the main link with Maldon, Chelmsford and the A12. The village is served by a number of narrow, twisting, rural lanes including designated National Bicycle routes.
- 7.2. The developments of the Maldon Garden Suburbs and the Maldon, Heybridge, Fullbridge and Causeway areas have increased the amount of vehicular traffic into and out of these areas to a significant extent with a consequential impact on all local roads by substantially increasing movement levels.

- 7.3. Main road traffic flow to and from the A12 is restricted on the A414 by the Danbury mini-roundabout intersection and on the B1019 by the mini roundabout junction with The Street in Hatfield Peverel. These give rise to elongated traffic queues at both pinch points at most times of the day but particularly during the rush hour periods. A November 2018 traffic survey was taken in Danbury and the average daily volumes were 8615.7 East Bound and 9086.3 West Bound [*Danbury Parish Council*].
- 7.4. The early years construction period will have a significant impact in these areas especially with HGV's despite utilising a one-way system. Local residents and those from outlying villages will have difficulty in accessing the major distributor roads for even routine trips. The absence of meaningful public transport will intensify the necessity the A414 via the under-designed junctions that exist.
- 7.5. In consequence the country lanes are used as 'rat runs' to bypass the extensive holdups on the main roads whilst in transit to the A12, Chelmsford or beyond. This has resulted in the lanes through Woodham Walter becoming road safety hazards, particularly a problem with the presence of the Woodham Walter Primary School and the Tadpoles Pre-School.
- 7.6. The Woodham Walter Parish Council considers focussing on more strategic routes, either proposal one or two, at an earlier stage would resolve the environmental and safety issues arising from utilising already over capacity and under-designed highways through existing built up areas of domestic housing.

Detailed Comments

- 7.7. For the reasons stated at Section 1 of this document, the introduction of a park and ride facility within or adjacent to the parish of Woodham Walter would use high value agricultural land, be alien to the landscape character of the area and with the substantial vehicle movements entailed, will exacerbate the highway use, particularly the river crossing, and compound the road safety dangers.
- 7.8. It is the opinion of this Parish Council that a park and ride facility would be better positioned adjacent to a local distributor road with easy access to and from the A12 north such as the B1019 Maldon Road that leads to the Maldon Bypass with a substantial river crossing and a more straightforward access to the Dengie Peninsular avoiding built up and 'green belt' areas. This approach would relieve the excess traffic flow on the A414 as well as the pressure on local lanes and the distressed river crossing.

8. Stage One Consultation

- 8.1. The Woodham Walter Parish Council is content to engage with this and future consultation but is intent on endeavouring to retain the character and Arcadian nature of this picturesque village.

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