

Amec Foster Wheeler on behalf of the Crown Estate - ID: 178269

Matter 7: The Spatial Strategy for North Essex – Policy SP2

Does the spatial strategy set out in SP2 represent the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives?

Does Policy SP2 adequately and appropriately define the role of each tier in the settlement hierarchy?

Response to relevant questions:

3) Does Policy SP2 adequately and appropriately define the role of each tier in the settlement hierarchy?

No.

The Spatial Strategy for North Essex requires some re-wording to be sound and consistent with other policies in the Plan. The first paragraph of the policy that applies to Braintree, Colchester and Tendring is inconsistent with the specific spatial strategies for each district. It refers to existing settlements being the principal focus for growth, and development being accommodated according to the scale of settlement and its existing role.

This should be more positive and forward looking rather than being focused on the existing role of settlements. In Braintree the focus of growth is Braintree, the A12 corridor, Witham, the expanded service villages of Hatfield Peverel, Kelvedon and Feering and a new garden community. Whilst this is set out in the supporting text at paragraph 3.3, it is not entirely consistent with the policy itself.

The generic first paragraph in Policy SP2 does not align with the Braintree specific strategy and therefore should be either deleted or re-worded. It either needs to be replaced with locally distinctive text setting out the spatial strategy for each district (as set out in the supporting text 3.3), or it should cross reference to the spatial strategy for each district as set out in para. 3.3 of the Part 1 Plan.

4) Is the detail in paragraphs 3.3-3.5 relevant to section 1 of the Plan? If it is, should it be included in the text of Policy SP2?

Yes.

SP2 attempts to set the strategic context for the joint plan area to facilitate a coordinated approach. It makes it clear that Braintree and the A12 corridor will be the focus for growth. It appropriately then leaves the actual scale of growth, other than for the new garden cities, to the Part 2 Plans. The problem is as set out above, in that the text of the policy fails to effectively articulate the strategy, is too generic and does not align with the Part 2 Plans. It should be amended as suggested above.

Neil Hall, Technical Director, Amec Foster Wheeler, 4th December 2017