

Employment Provision for the proposed Garden Communities

389 words Inspector; 783 Great Bardfield Parish Council

While this Hearing Statement is formally being submitted by Malcolm Alsop on behalf of Great Bardfield Parish Council, it should please be noted that the Parish Councils in the area have been working closely together (including fund raising for experts) and fully support the submissions of the others. It has, therefore, been requested that Malcolm Alsop refers to issues raised in the various Parish Councils' submissions here. The Parish Councils continue to work closely with CAUSE and to examine its submissions. They concur with CAUSE on its approach and continue to endorse its considered, well-researched and soundly justified views. Hence, the same or similar comments are not made in this Hearing Statement, which is kept short.

Issue

Are the employment land requirements for the three proposed GCs, set out in the NEAs' suggested amendments to policies SP7, SP8, SP9 & SP10, supported by robust evidence, and are they consistent with the requirements of policy SP4?

Our view informed by CAUSE's extensive work is 'No'.

Parker Strategic Town Planning (1017139 / AM196) in its detailed response on Policy SP7 considers that:

- ❖ *Results are based on some (five identified) very basic assumptions in modelling, which it is suggested can be viewed as further undermining the robustness of the justification for the employment land requirements listed within the amendment to Policy SP7.*
- ❖ *The evidence and resulting employment land requirements for the Garden Communities are also deficient in their consideration of critically important matters including the relationship with the wider evidence base connecting job forecasts, housing need and forecasts underpinning employment land requirements set out in Policy SP4.*
- ❖ *..., the long term requirements established for the Garden Communities should be clearly described as indicative and it is important to note have only limited justification in the context of an understanding of market demand and the qualitative needs of business.*

Questions for the North Essex Authorities

1. What criteria were used to select the comparator locations identified on p55 of Cebr's Economic Vision and Strategy for the North Essex Sub-Region [EXD/052]?
2. (a) Were the employment figures for each GC shown in Table 4 of Employment Provision for the North Essex Garden Communities (August 2019) [EB/081] calculated in the following way:

Reference case: The employment figure was assumed to be the same as the number of dwellings at each GC;

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Investment-led scenario: (i) The population of each GC was calculated by multiplying the number of dwellings by the ONS household size figure (as per para 2.6 of EB/081); (ii) The population figure resulting from (i) was multiplied by 43.5/100 (para 2.4 of EB/081) to produce the employment figure?

(b) If not, what calculation method(s) were used?

3. (a) Are the employment figures for the West of Braintree GC shown in Table 4 of EB/081 based on a cross-boundary GC, including an area within Uttlesford District?

(b) What would the figures be if they were based on the West of Braintree GC as proposed in the Section 1 Plan, with a maximum of 10,000 dwellings?

4. How do the employment figures for the GCs shown in Table 4 of EB/081 relate to the annual jobs forecasts for the three NEAs set out in policy SP4, having regard to any differences in the methods by which they were arrived at?

5. Are the employment land requirements of policies SP7, SP8, SP9 & SP10 part of, or additional to, the employment land requirements of policy SP4?

Questions for all participants, including the NEAs

6. Is there clear justification for selecting the comparator locations identified on p55 of EXD/052, rather than other comparator locations?

No.

This section of EXD/052 (2) is 'Defining the Economic Geography'. It starts from the premise:

North Essex sits within a prosperous wider region centred on London, containing multiple successful economic centres. Choices in construction of the Garden Communities and wider economic strategy need to be considered in this context.

We have some doubts about the helpfulness of the first eleven words – this wider region also contains multiple unsuccessful and failing centres. Proximity does not always confer similar outcomes. Continued globalisation increases the gulf between successful places and the rest. This article attests to this:

<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2019/nov/10/how-europes-cities-stole-continents-wealth>

The average journey time by train between Milan and Melzo is 29 minutes, with around 90 trains per day.

Never has the mantra 'location, location, location' been of such importance: this will increase over time, not decrease.

This seems depressing, and reporting it might appear negative, but wishing for something to happen is not enough. Accepting this reality, but trying to address it with various positive strategies for existing places is essential: new places must be planned in the best possible locations with infrastructure either in place or capable of being provided adequately very quickly, and not on a piecemeal basis, and with the certainty of ample funding.

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Cebr's footnote on page 44 to EXD/052 highlights the importance of effective transport infrastructure (quality, quantity and density of links) as a precursor to investment in the provision of employment activity:

*Transport infrastructure allows people to take advantage of activities that take place in different locations and is itself an important locational factor since its quality (i.e. frequency) is generally determined by the size of population that will use it, i.e. **it is subject to very significant economies of scale**. In other words as a place grows it will be able to support better transport services, which will in turn make it a more attractive location.*

There is no justification or explanation for selecting the so-called comparator locations, all of which are part of the 'arc of prosperity'. North of London, the 'arc of prosperity' is defined eastwards by the M11 corridor. Virtually all of the District of Uttlesford separates that from 'North Essex.' Regrettably, our view is that it is tendentious to believe that North Essex will be subsumed within the arc of prosperity unless and until there is guaranteed state funding for widespread and disproportionate investment in infrastructure (transport, education and other elements of social infrastructure) of a level without parallel. Currently there is little or no evidence that this will be the case.

7. Is it reasonable to assume that, in the inward investment-led scenario, North Essex increases its employment-to-population ratio to that of the comparator regions by 2036 (para 2.4 of EB/081, p116 of EXD/052)?

No. See the above and CAUSE submissions.

8. Is the percentage mix of employment sectors shown in Table 2 of EB/081 justified, having regard to the sectoral GVA shares identified in EXD/052, pp125-127?

The following are essential to the creation and maintenance of successful places¹:

1. Very high levels of education because all jobs essentially are skill based;
2. Creativity and places with strong creative backgrounds;
3. People living in a sustainable fashion very close to work

These *sine quibus non* will not be realised by the Section 1 Plan for the reasons detailed above and by CAUSE.

¹ Douglas McWilliams of Cebr in the new NEGC promotional video <https://www.negc.co.uk/engagement/>