



Matter 6: Transport and other infrastructure

North Essex Joint Strategic (Section 1) Plan

for Williams Group

Emery Planning project number: 14-007 / 17-334

Project : 14-007
Participant : Williams Group
Client : Williams Group

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This hearing statement is submitted on behalf of the Williams Group in relation to Matter 6: Transport and other infrastructure. The hearing session for this matter is scheduled to take place on Thursday 16 January 2020.
- 1.2 The Inspector will be aware of our original representations to the publication draft section 1 plan dated 28th July 2017 and more recently our representations to the suggested amendments to the publication draft dated 30th September 2019.
- 1.3 This Hearing statement responds specifically to questions the Inspector has raised in his Matters Issues and Questions document, however we are unable to answer or respond in detail at this stage to a large part of the Inspector's questions for participants because the response is dependent upon a prior response to the questions the Inspector has set out for the NEA.

2. Matter 6

Transport and other Infrastructure

Questions for all participants, including the NEAs

6 – What are the consequences of the answers to 3 (a), (b) & (c) for the feasibility of the West of Braintree and Colchester Braintree Borders GCs?

7 – What are the consequences of the answers to 4 (a) & (b) for the feasibility of the Colchester Braintree Borders GCs?

8 – What are the consequences of the answers to 5 (a) & (b) for the feasibility of the West of Braintree and Colchester Braintree Borders GCs?

- 2.1 The road infrastructure proposals required to deliver the Colchester Braintree Borders GCs are significantly more advanced than the infrastructure proposals for West of Braintree. These improvements are critical to the delivery of the West of Braintree GC as identified in the Infrastructure Planning, Phasing and Delivery Evidence Base document by AECOM.
- 2.2 The A120 upgrade works to allow direct westerly access from the West of Braintree GC towards Dunmow and Stanstead are substantially behind the A120 improvement scheme in terms of planning, funding and programming and we have been unable to ascertain even a provisional target date for delivery. In the absence of this information there remains substantial doubt around its delivery and consequently the delivery of the West of Braintree GC in the plan period.
- 2.3 Without these works, the main route for the West of Braintree GC travelling west would be the B1256 which could not accommodate the substantial increase in trips and the consequential impact on the existing junctions on the A120 serving Dunmow and Braintree.
- 2.4 The lack of progress with the A120 upgrade works associated with the West of Braintree GC has serious implications for the delivery of this proposed allocation in the timescales envisaged. We remain strongly of the view that reasonable alternatives should be included which also have the ability to assist with the delivery of the committed A120 improvements to the East of Braintree.

Rapid Transit System for North Essex

Questions for all participants, including the NEAs

19 - Is the proposed phasing of the introduction of the RTS system a) realistic b) consistent with the proposed timing of the garden communities?

- 2.5 The Rapid Transport System for North Essex Evidence Base document states that routes 1,2 and 3 are expected to be in place by the end of 2033.
- 2.6 The RTS is fundamental to the GC strategy to ensure that the proposed GCs are accessible and sustainable. However, the level of uncertainty around all aspects of phasing and delivery of the RTS means that it cannot be relied upon at this stage, putting into question the robustness of the GC approach which envisages CG delivery significantly ahead of the required RTS.

20 - Does the Vision to Plan document provide sufficient reassurance at this strategic stage of planning that it would be feasible in physical terms to construct the proposed RTS system?

- 2.7 It is likely that the compulsory purchase of land would be required to deliver the RTS routes. This element of the physical delivery of the RTS in terms of time and cost has not been accounted for at all in the Vision to Plan document. The route of the RTS to the West of Braintree will need to address significant constraints in terms of protected landscapes and there is no indication these constraints have been accounted for or can be mitigated.
- 2.8 On this basis there is little reassurance that the RTS would be feasible in physical terms.

21 - What are the implications for the GCs of the proposal not to build Route 4, linking the Colchester and West of Braintree sub-systems, until after 2033?

- 2.9 The West of Braintree GC is the least robust location of the three proposed GCs. There are already significant issues around the delivery of the road improvement scheme and the fact that the Route 4 element of the RTS is not proposed until after 2033 compounds the issue of this location in terms of accessibility and sustainability.