



MATTER 6 RESPONSES

NEAs SECTION 1 LOCAL PLAN

MATTER 6 – Transport and Infrastructure

RESPONSES ON BEHALF OF GALLIARD HOMES

Question 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

Question 3(a) to (c) concerns funding and deliverability of the planned A12 Chelmsford to A120 widening scheme (Junction 19 to 25).

Primary routes to and from the West of Braintree Garden Community (WoBGC) will comprise A120 (west) towards Stansted and the M11, the A120 (east) between WoBGC and Braintree and the A131. Analysis of census data for travel to work indicates that the level of traffic from WoBGC that is likely to use the A12 between Chelmsford and the A120 will be very limited given that this does not form a key primary or secondary route for movement to and from the site.

Consequently, the delivery of the A12 (Chelmsford) to A120 widening scheme is unlikely to have a material effect on the feasibility of the WoBGC and vice-versa.

It is also noted that in relation to Q1, which concerns the A120 improvement scheme between Braintree and the A12, the level of traffic forecast to travel east of Braintree and use this section of road is limited at 10% of all external vehicle journeys to or from the WoBGC. The forecast is based on Census travel to work data. Subsequently based on traffic alone, the feasibility and deliverability of WoBGC is unlikely to be reliant on the delivery of the A120 improvement scheme.

Question 14

Are the capital costs for the proposed RTS set out in section 5.1 of the Vision to Plan document [EB/079] realistic?

Assuming a bus led RTS solution, and in consideration of the comparator examples presented, the costs proposed would appear to provide a reasonable range of estimates for this stage of appraisal. The upper range includes a 44% optimism bias which is typical for this stage of feasibility work.

Furthermore, as noted in EXD/049, engineering led costs were developed for the HIF bid for the A120/A133 link road and rapid transit system. The estimates fall within the distance based estimates developed for Route 1. This comparison provides a useful sense check on the estimates provided by ECC in the “Rapid Transit System for North Essex” report.

Question 15

Have sources for all the necessary capital funding for the RTS been identified?

The “Rapid Transit System for North Essex” report identifies that funding for the RTS will primarily be through Housing Infrastructure Funding (HIF); Section 106 developer contributions; and other potential funding sources or financing which are yet to be identified. No specific detail is provided in the document as to how this will be broken down at this stage and this is reasonable given the stage of development of the RTS, which would follow business case procedures for major transport infrastructure.

Galliard Homes is committed to making proportionate and appropriate contributions as part of the delivery of Boxted Wood to support the RTS.

Question 16

Do sections 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4 of the Vision to Plan document provide reliable estimates of revenue, operating costs and commercial viability for the RTS?

The approach adopted to revenue forecasting and operational costs follows industry standard practice, with the operational costs based on typical costs per km for the UK bus industry. It is noted that the costs appear to be based on guided busways and would therefore need to be reviewed if trackless trams were determined to be a viable solution to the delivery of RTS.

Question 18

How would connecting public transport services within the proposed garden communities be funded?

Connection of public transport services within the Garden Communities (GC) will be dependent on the masterplan and internal strategy proposed. However, landowners and developers have it within their gift to provide the land required for this process and to deliver the necessary priority to make public transport an attractive option for users through the design of the GC.

Subject to the delivery vehicle selected (e.g. S106) it is expected that land owners / developers will either be able to deliver the infrastructure themselves or contribute an agreed amount to facilitate the connection of these services. Some form of pump priming of new or diverted bus services may also be required for early phases of development, in advance of break-even patronage levels.

Question 19

Is the proposed phasing of the introduction of the RTS system:

(a) realistic?

(b) consistent with the proposed timing of development at the garden communities?

Delivery of the public transport system early in the stages of WoBGC should be prioritised over other offsite highway infrastructure, to ensure that the principle of sustainable travel is embedded from the

outset. This will ensure that the travel behaviour of residents and site users are being engrained from the outset of development.

Details of the level of infrastructure to be delivered in each phase is not provided in the RTS; although “EXD053_Summary_of_RTS_Route_Costs_and_Phasing” gives an indication of the level of capital and therefore infrastructure to be delivered. Given that 40% of capital is programmed between 2024 and 2028 for Route 3, with a further 23% between 2028 and 2033, this suggests that a significant proportion of the infrastructure is being delivered early in the process and in advance of the majority of housing coming forward at WoBGC. This is consistent with the transport needs and therefore timing for the WoBGC.

Question 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?

Three alternative routes are presented for Route 3 between WoBGC and Braintree, providing options for the transit system which range from fully segregated infrastructure to the transit running in traffic. Areas within WoBGC and other developments e.g. Easton Park will be able to integrate the requirements of the RTS into the masterplan for the sites. Offsite highway works will be more challenging but the alternatives selected towards Braintree for example give the opportunity to use minor less trafficked links or to amend existing routes to provide priority measures at junctions or segregated running.

The delivery of this mix of measures should ensure that an attractive service is delivered for users of the WoBGC and other locations, which provides good connections to key attractors e.g. Braintree and which consequently promotes the use of sustainable transport by site users.

The decision by the government to support, and award funding from the Housing Infrastructure Fund to, the delivery of Route 1 provides further reassurance that delivery of the RTS would be feasible.

Overall, given the stage of planning and the proposals put forward, Galliard Homes are reassured that an RTS system could be delivered that supports and meets the objectives for the WoBGC.

Question 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?

The primary attractors for the WoBGC are Braintree, Stansted and Chelmsford, with all three locations offering the opportunity to connect with rail, bus and coach or air links to travel further afield, as well as to retain employment, retail and leisure trips within the local area. As such there is strong potential for public transport uptake, and the delivery of Route 3 should therefore form the primary focus of the public transport strategy for WoBGC, together with likely subsidised early complimentary local bus services, will help deliver the target public transport mode share.

A connection to Colchester would be beneficial in promoting longer distance journeys by public transport to and from the WoBGC; however the inability to deliver Route 4 is considered unlikely to have a detrimental effect on the sustainable transport strategy for WoBGC and the ability to promote travel by public transport, to, from and within the site if not delivered.

Question 22

The Vision to Plan document proposes a bus rapid transit system initially, potentially to be replaced beyond the Section 1 Plan period by trackless trams. Are these proposals justified and consistent with the Plan's aspirations for high-quality rapid transit networks and connections?

At this point in time and with limited UK based evidence or trials available it is difficult to comment on the feasibility of trackless trams as a rapid transit system, especially given the multi-faceted road conditions (e.g. segregated, running in traffic on A-roads, B-roads, minor roads, junctions) that a system of this nature will face. However, it is important given the scale of the garden communities and the opportunities afforded by a critical mass of housing in one location, that the norm of car reliance is challenged and that innovation is sought wherever feasible in order to deliver a high quality public transport system which supports travel to, from and within the site by public transport rather than the car.

A tram based system will have greater appeal for users than a bus and with technology evolving at pace the potential to deploy this technology should be fully explored; however it is important that the fall-back position in the event that trackless trams are not delivered is specified to ensure that this is fit for purpose and delivers a high quality rapid transit network. It is important to clarify that the delivery of modal share travel targets for WBGC is not considered to be dependent on the delivery of trackless trams which forms the later upgrade of the RTS.

Galliard Homes

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