

LIGHTWOOD STRATEGIC: MATTER 6 SUPPLEMENTARY HEARING STATEMENT

NORTH ESSEX AUTHORITIES

Shared Strategic (Section 1) Plan

FURTHER HEARING SESSIONS

Matter 6 (Transport and Other Infrastructure)

Thursday January 16th 2020

Issues

- a) Is there sufficient certainty over the provision of necessary infrastructure to demonstrate that the garden community proposals in the Section 1 Plan are deliverable?**
- b) Has sufficient evidence been provided to demonstrate the viability and feasibility of the proposed Rapid Transit System [RTS]?**
- c) Does the Section 1 Plan make sufficiently clear requirements about the provision, timing and phasing of necessary infrastructure, and are those requirements justified?**

ROAD FUNDING AND PROGRAMMING

Q1 - Has funding been secured for the A120 improvement scheme between Braintree and the A12 through the Department for Transport's RIS2 programme?

We have no issue with the answer to Q1 setting the context /scene, but the reluctance to simply say 'no, not at this stage' is disrespectful to the Inspector and to examination participants. Straight answers should be provided where possible. It not becoming of professional (RTPI accredited) officers to offer the sort of answer a politician might deliver to basic questions set by the Inspector.

Q2b - If not, what are the consequences for the feasibility of the West of Braintree and Colchester Braintree Borders GCs?

We reject the position of the NEA's that the plan can be modified to be found sound in the absence of this funding. The Inspector's June 8th letter of 2018 presents the key test.

6.1b.2 states that some capacity exists at WoBGC without the A120. Some explanation is given but there is no actual evidence before the examination of transport modelling impacts at different levels development. Moreover, a new settlement cannot be begun until there is confidence that that it can be concluded. WOBGC cannot be left 'hanging' at say 2,000 houses. That would be a planning disaster. Route D of the A120 requires £552m to deliver it.

This is an exceptional infrastructure requirement. We suggest that WOBGC cannot begin until it is known that it can be finished.

Q4 - Is there still a possibility that funding will be secured through the Housing Investment Fund [HIF] for a more southerly realignment of the A12 in the Marks Tey area?

No announcement is made from Government that a HIF bid has been rejected. Announcements are only made when bids have been successful. Regarding paragraph 6.4.a2 can the NEAS's offer the Inspector any correspondence from Home England that the bid is even still being considered. Local MPs (including the Home Secretary) do not support CBBGC and one might therefore suppose that the chances of success are slim. Also of note is that the funding would not deliver any housing in the current parliament, a factor which likely acts against the chances of success.

RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM

The general tone of the NEA's statement suggests that 'the system' will be basic to 2033, and in our view nothing more than a 10-min frequency, minimally segregated bus services that cannot be termed rapid. It is important the SA (at Stage 2) evaluates the options against what is actually being proposed to 2033. There seems to be less commitment to the NEA's being held to the type of phasing arrangement that has been previously extolled. We sense a push for wriggle room to enable development to commence in line with housing trajectories.

Q15 Have sources for all the necessary capital funding for the RTS been identified?

The focus of the answer seems to be Route 1 (TCBGC) where the answer is yet to 2033, but 'not quite' post-2033.

We can only infer from 6.5.18 that there is no forward funding in place for the other sections of the RTS to 2033.

Q21. 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?

We note that the NEA's have not raised any 'implications', but rather that growth at CBBGC is said not be not dependent on the Route 4 connection to Braintree itself (and then further west being made). Given that delivery within CBBGC is to partially be ascribed to Braintree District (to 2033 and beyond) we suggest that it does need to be sustainably connected to Braintree town, and beyond. The implication that this location, without Route 4, is suitable only for Colchester's needs, and that the area of search should contract to within Colchester's borders only. That will affect capacity, and given that all 21,000 houses are needed to keep the HIF bid as low as £229m, further funding will be needed (unless CBBGC contracts to 6,000 homes within Colchester itself). We are advised by the NEAs that 6,000 homes at GBBGC are viable without external forwarded funding, although the Committee Report that reported back on the technical consultation said that is 'Garden' credentials would be

affected at this scale. In the absence of Route 4 we suggest that there must be other more sustainable locations for growth within Braintree district.