



North Essex Authorities Joint Strategic (Section 1) Plan

Examination in Public

Hearing Statement

by

Andrew Martin – Planning Limited

on behalf of

Crest Nicholson Operations Ltd, R.F. West Ltd,
Livelihoods and David G Sherwood

SECTION 1

Matter 1



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Matter 1: Legal and procedural requirements; Key Issues, Vision and Strategic Objectives (Chapter 1); Monitoring (paragraph 9.3 7 Table 1)

Q1 Is there clear evidence that, in the preparation of the Section 1 Plan, the North Essex Authorities have engaged constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis with neighbouring authorities and prescribed bodies on strategic matters and issues with cross-boundary impacts in accordance with section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended [the 2004 Act]?

It is clear from the emerging proposals in the form of a Development Plan Document (DPD) for the Colchester Braintree Borders Garden Community, namely the Colchester Braintree Border Garden Community – Concept Framework (EB0026), that the Councils have failed to demonstrate sufficient evidence that there has been effective and transparent intent with key infrastructure providers, in particular Network Rail, the relevant train operating companies and Highways England. Our doubts are founded upon the unrealistic and undeliverable Concept Framework shown on Figure 2.5 of the document.

The Concept Plan has been prepared with a significant number of unknowns and lack of evidence to justify the framework shown: for example the various options for improving the A12 and whether it will be largely on the existing alignment or on a new one, the various options for the new section of the A120 from Braintree and whether it will join the A12 between Rivenhall and Kelvedon, or between Kelvedon and Marks Tey. It is understood that there has been no detailed survey work or appraisal of the alignment indicated on the Concept Framework plan. It is also understood that there has been no detailed appraisal of the proposed new or relocation of the station as indicated.

Q7 Have the North Essex Authorities complied with all other relevant legislative requirements in the preparation and submission of the Section 1 Plan?

Having taken further legal advice since submission of our July representations, it is accepted that it is sufficient for a Local Plan “to indicate broad locations for strategic development on a key diagram and land-use designations on a proposals map” (NPPF paragraph 157, 4th bullet). Therefore, it is clear that the Section 1 Plan is intended only to indicate broad locations for the new Garden Communities and not proposed at this stage to allocate specific land user designations on a proposals map. The current Issues and Options Report, which is now the subject of consultation, is intended to perform the latter function. Therefore, the Section 1 Plan is in effect equivalent to a Core Strategy, as it sets out a broad strategy and principles to guide subsequent allocations in a further DPD and through more detailed masterplans.

Q8. Do paragraphs 1.25 to 1.29 appropriately identify the key issues and strategic priorities for the Section 1 plan?

These paragraphs are focused on the key issues and priorities related to the economic and social elements of growth and future development but do not give sufficient emphasis or weight to the need for the planning system to perform the third dimension to sustainable development, ie. the environmental role. It is submitted that issues of protecting and enhancing the natural environment, protection of the distinctive character of North Essex, heritage assets etc., as set out in Q10, should be highlighted as opportunities and challenges that will influence the spatial strategy for growth.



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- Q9. *Do the Vision for North Essex and the Strategic Objectives provide an appropriate framework for the policies of Section 1 of the Plan?*
- Q10. *Should they include reference to:-*
- (a) the protection and enhancement of the natural environment?*
 - (b) The protection of the distinctive character of North Essex, heritage assets and the character of existing settlements?*
 - (c) Creating healthier and active communities?*

For the reasons set out in the comment to Q8 above and expanded in response to Matter 6 Q4 below, it is not considered that the Vision provides an appropriate balanced framework for the policies in the Section 1 Plan. This comment is based on the subsequent concept framework in the Issues and Options Consultation that fails to indicate protection for the heritage assets of Marks Tey Hall and other environmental interests to the north of the area of search.



Introduction to Crest as Promoter of the Land in Question

(Hearing Statements 1-8, submitted on behalf of Crest Nicholson Operations Ltd,
R.F. West Ltd, Livelands and David G Sherwood)

Crest Nicholson is a FTSE-250 company which has acquired a top level reputation for developing high quality housing within well-conceived masterplans for over 50 years across the south of England. We create places where people genuinely want to live, work and play, underpinned by a “value-adding” strategy which responds well to the aspirations of local communities. Importantly, this approach delivers a positive legacy for local planning authorities. For example, Swindon Borough Council’s experience of Crest’s placemaking and delivery at the new community, Tadpole Garden Village, is such that they are prepared to positively advocate our approach.

Crest are in the vanguard of delivering Garden Villages and sustainable new communities. We have been recognised for our exemplar approach, having won numerous awards over recent years including:

- Best Community Initiative for Community Interest Company at Tadpole Garden Village (Housebuilder Awards)
- Sustainable Housebuilder of the Year (Housebuilder Awards)
- Large Housebuilder of the Year (Housebuilder Awards)
- First or Second in Next Generation Benchmark for the last four years (only independent sustainability benchmark of the 25 largest homebuilders in the UK)
- Winner, Outstanding Landscaping for Housing (The Sunday Times British Homes Awards)

We are pleased to align ourselves with the principles set out by the TCPA for Garden Communities and we work closely with other organisations such as Local Enterprise Partnerships and the HCA in order to enhance delivery rates in line with national government objectives.

Our teams are highly experienced in delivering the required infrastructure that sits alongside new housing. At East Marks Tey, Crest are proposing to deliver another high quality development which encapsulates 21st Century Garden Village Principles, and delivers appropriate infrastructure in a timely and efficient way to benefit the local area. This includes a primary school, local centre, re-instatement of Marks Tey hall and its associated listed buildings, new employment provision, and green infrastructure to include open space, allotments and sports pitches.

We look forward to engaging proactively with Colchester Borough Council to deliver on our shared objectives.