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North Essex Garden Communities (NEGC)

Dear Sean,

I understand you have been engaging with my team regarding the aspirations of both Essex County Council and the three North Essex Local Planning Authorities (Tendring, Colchester, Braintree) for a series of proposed garden communities. Given these new communities present strategic cross-boundary issues, of which rail is a notable example, it is good to see that these are considered in the Local Plan and Development Plan Document preparation process.

In 2016 Network Rail published the Anglia Route Study which outlined a series of options for funders across the Anglia Route geography. The options identified are to support forecast changes in capability and capacity necessary to support the markets, including Essex, served by the Route until 2043. The publication of the study, however, pre-dates specific engagements with yourselves to understand the impacts and aspirations of the NEGC on the rail network.

Currently Network Rail is developing its maintenance and renewals programme for Control Period 6 (2019 - 2024). As you are aware, however, enhancements to the rail network are now progressed through a process outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Department for Transport. For each enhancement, funding for development will need to be acquired and jointly agreed for discrete stages of maturity aligned to strategic, outline and final business cases. Network Rail welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with yourselves and other third parties to understand and review capacity on the rail network and to discuss funding opportunities for the development of enhancements.

To this end, I understand we are already in discussion regarding a potential timetable study spurred from planning aspirations for the 'Colchester Braintree Borders Community'. We look forward to working with yourselves and the Local Planning Authorities to further any aspirations and queries you may have.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Taylor