

EXD/077

General

At the Examination in Public in January of this year, I was rebuked by the Inspector for publically laughing at the data being presented. I stand by my reaction to what was presented. If someone wants professional respect, they have to conduct themselves in a manor that commands that respect.

The table on page two of EXC 077 predicts that by 2071 information and communication will account for 30% of the jobs in the newly created garden community between Tendring and Colchester. This figure is explained by the notion that IT will form a large part of employment due to the close association between the University of Essex and the newly emerging garden community.

I submit this prediction is totally without any credibility. I further submit that the inclusion of such a figure indicates a gross lack of professional standards in the preparation of the work and calls into question everything produced by CEBR to the extend that they have devalued all their work and by implication they have undermined the entire rationale in favour of the Garden Community.

Detail

It must be accepted that the new garden community does not presently exist. However, if it is built it will be part of the sub regional economy. It will also be part of the regional economy that includes Cambridge. Colchester is also part of the London commuter catchment the new settlement will be in direct competition with London for job creation.

Cambridge University is ranked as the best in the UK.
Imperial College London is ranked fourth
University College London is ranked ninth
The University of Essex is ranked at 37th.

Cambridge Science Park was established by Trinity College nearly 50 years ago with a focus on medical and information technology

Essex is ranked as a world leading research centre for Social Sciences, not Information and communication.

Figures produced by the ONS for November last year show I&C employment accounts for 4.29% of jobs in the UK.

Cambridge Local Plan web page shows that C&I account for 19% of jobs in Cambs.

For the forecasts presented by CEBR to come to fruition, the new settlement will have to be built and populated with companies that are out performing both London and Cambridge. They will also have to be out performing the rest of the UK.

Whilst it is never possible to be accurate over forecasts, it is always possible to examine history for evidence of precedents that show similar characteristics. Again, these are scant relevant examples. The growth of Silicon Valley has been well researched. It took place against the backdrop of new technologies emerging from within the world leading research centre of Stanford University. Similarly the bio engineering development at Cambridge Science Park came on the back of world leading research at Cambridge. In effect Mr Birch is postulating that within 50 years people will eschew over 400 years of history associated with Cambridge and London universities and gravitate towards Colchester as a place to create new C&I industries.

I contend this is wildly fanciful and without reasonable foundation and has been submitted as no more than a sales brochure to justify the decision to propose the building of new settlements.

One needs then to examine the overall context of the employment forecasts. Is this just one an isolated error? Or is it symptomatic of the overall quality of the work behind the economic forecasts?

I draw the Inspectors attention to comments made by Mr Birch in reply to my verbal comments where I drew the Inspectors attention to the poor transport links characteristic of the Plan area. Mr Birch alluded to CrossRail allowing easier connection to Heathrow and the possible lower Thames Crossing improving access to Kent.

I contend he failed to address my comments. The value of Heathrow to the economy is not the simple passenger access to the airport, it is the myriad of services that exist to support the enterprise. These range from catering supplies that feed passengers, through car parking facilities for travellers to engineering services that service aircraft as well as the huge staff levels at the actual airport. With respect to the possible Lower Thames Crossing, again Mr Birch failed to address my comments insofar as the proposed crossing will still not provide direct access between northern Essex and Eastern Kent except by traveling all the way past the county town of Essex in order to get to Kent.

As such I contend the quality of the work presented by CEBR lacks rigour and is extremely suspect. I am mindful CEBR have been paid to produce a document. Members of the community have given up their time free of charge to contribute to preparing the Local Plan.

I leave it to the Inspector to judge the quality of the evidence presented

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