

February 2020

Post-hearing comments, EXD/082

Link road costs

CAUSE has analysed the NEA proposed link road costs set out in EXD/082 against Spons Civil Engineering and Highways Works Price Book 2020.

Our view is that the cost should be closer to £100 million than the figure of £65 million proposed.

Key discrepancies include:

- **Contingency.** EXD/082 shows a contingency of only £13.9 million, when at 40% it would be £29.04 million. We remind the Inspector that Highways England applied a 44% contingency for the A120 dualling and that this should be standard practice;
- **Infrastructure.** Since we submitted representations in summer 2019, Essex Highways has consulted on the East Colchester link road¹ and we now understand a little more about what is proposed.

The submitted figure of £28.3 million for infrastructure will have to cover 2.1km – 2.45km of dual carriageway, a dumbbell junction and one (maybe two, depending on route choice) roundabout.

Previous CAUSE research (in discussion with Highways England and Jacobs) points to a grade separated junction costing £30 million and a roundabout c£7.5 million;

- **Crossings, bridges.** The costings do not appear to include bridges or crossings for cyclists/pedestrians/horses. Given that the link road will either cut through the heart of TCBGC, or create an impermeable barrier between the garden community and communities to the east of it, this seems like a significant omission. The link road also cuts across a number of existing local roads, Public Rights of Way, Bridleways and private accesses.

Note that costs of additional bridges and subways will be significant. Spons 2020 indicates that underpass would cost between £6400 per metre and £73000 per metre.

Severance, inconsistency. It is worth reminding the Inspector that consistency should be applied across the Section 1 plan. At CBBGC, severance of the garden community has been considered unacceptable, such that a HIF bid was submitted to move the A12. Meanwhile, at TCBGC, the link road consultation indicates that it is considered acceptable for a dual carriageway to sever the garden community, without crossings!

¹ All routes set out in Essex Highways consultation 2019 <https://www.essexhighways.org/highway-schemes-and-developments/highway-schemes/a120-a133-link-and-rapid-transit.aspx>

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- **Cycle & pedestrian routes.** Given ambitious Section 1 modal shift goals and the application garden city principles, it seems a missed opportunity not to include cycle & pedestrian routes in the construction of this link road from the outset.

Congestion impact of link road

In the modelling, we particularly draw the Inspector's attention to Colchester's Local Plan modelling² which makes it clear that the East Colchester link road will increase congestion on the A12:

"The local impacts identified include: • The A12 between Junctions 28 and 29 in both directions in the forecast year in both scenarios – the impacts are exacerbated by the presence of local plan development and the proposed A120/A133 link road, which reroutes high volumes of traffic to the A12."

and that the mitigation required is the widening of the A12 junctions 25-29:

"Widening the A12 between junctions 25 and 29 – this provided additional capacity to relieve the overcapacity problems identified above for the A12, and resulted in some rerouting in the model"

Therefore, we have stated in our comments on the Amendments to the Plan that the link road should not be constructed until the A12 is widened junctions 25-29.

Rapid Transit System extra information

We refer to the extra submission by Steve Johnston of Walker Engineering/Matthew O'Connell which addresses the latest evidence submitted by the NEA.

² CBC0051