

## **North Essex Authorities**

### **Matter 5: Infrastructure and connectivity (policy SP5)**

Please note:

- (1) the Inspector intends to invite key infrastructure providers and planners to this session, including Highways England, Essex County Council (highways and education), Network Rail, relevant train operating companies, and NHS England;
- (2) this session will deal with general issues concerning infrastructure provision. Specific infrastructure requirements for the proposed garden communities will not be discussed here: they will be covered under Matter 6.

***Main issue: Does policy SP5 accurately identify the strategic infrastructure needs of North Essex over the Section 1 Plan period? Does it contain effective mechanisms to secure the provision of strategic infrastructure as and when it is needed?***

Questions:

- 1) **Does the list in policy SP5 of strategic priorities for infrastructure provision or improvements accurately reflect strategic infrastructure needs in North Essex over the Section 1 Plan period?**

5.1.1 Yes. Policy SP5 identifies the strategic infrastructure priorities that will assist in delivering sustainable development and the Vision in North Essex over the plan period.

5.1.2 The process followed to determine the strategic priorities and then accurately reflect strategic infrastructure needs in North Essex over the Section 1 Plan period was to:

- ensure the core planning principles contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) were reflected namely promoting sustainable transport, supporting high quality communications infrastructure and promoting healthy communities;
- reflect the objectives and priorities in national, regional and county plans and programmes;
- reflect national and county infrastructure projects for the plan period;
- ensure the Garden City principles as specified in the North Essex Garden Communities Charter (EB/007) are delivered; and
- reflect the infrastructure requirements arising from growth over the plan period as identified by infrastructure partners through the evidence base (eg Transport Modelling and Infrastructure Delivery Plans (CBC/0006; BDC/012, TDC/023).

#### **Transport**

5.1.3 The specific process by which transport infrastructure priorities were identified was as follows:

1. Reflect the NPPF i.e. to balance the transport system needs in favour of sustainable transport in order to provide a credible alternative to the private car.
2. Consistent wherever possible with nationally identified infrastructure priorities and programmes in a way that facilitates growth e.g. trunk road improvements for the A12 and A120, and the rail network with infrastructure investment and new rolling stock.
3. Support county priorities for infrastructure as detailed in the Local Transport Plan, 2011 (EB/040) and the Greater Essex Growth and Infrastructure Framework (EB/041). For example, improvements to infrastructure should be prioritised to encourage non car modes and this should be coupled with a package of smarter measures such as travel planning for schools and businesses to reduce the need to travel and promote and enable sustainable modes.
4. Reflect the North Essex Garden Communities Charter (EB/007) principles, particularly the principle to provide 'Integrated and Sustainable Transport'.
5. Reflect the key outcomes from the Local Plan Transport Modelling reports (BDC/035 - 1/3, 2/3, 3/3, BDC/0036, CBC/0051 and TDC/032).
6. Reflect the 'Ambition and Transport Objectives' identified within the North Essex Garden Communities Movement and Access Study (EB/014).

The specific transport infrastructure needs reflect the following.

#### Strategic highway network

5.1.4 The level of growth outlined in the Publication Draft Local Plans (Regulation 19) will impact the strategic highway network. There are currently ongoing strategic studies/projects by Highways England (HE) and Essex County Council (ECC) aimed at improving the existing transport network and alleviating known congestion issues across North Essex. Transport modelling shows that these projects are likely to have a significant positive effect on trip distribution in the latter stages of the plan period. The projects include A12 Chelmsford to A120 widening (Junction 19 –Boreham Interchange to Junction 25 - Marks Tey), and the A120 Braintree to A12 dualling.

#### *A12*

5.1.5 A number of studies and consultations have been conducted over the last decade on the A12 which is a trunk road managed by Highways England. These all recognised the need to improve the A12 noting that congestion, safety, resilience and reliability all held back economic growth. In March 2015 Central Government published its first Roads Investment Strategy (RIS1) (EB/042) and this included proposals to widen the A12. Since the strategy was published HE has been investigating suitable solutions to address identified issues on the A12 between Junction 19 (Boreham Interchange) and Junction 25 (Marks Tey Interchange). Highways England took forward four main options to consultation between January and March 2017 (EB/043):

1. Option 1: Widens the existing A12 corridor online
2. Option 2: Includes 2 new bypasses

3. Option 3: A variation on Option 2 and includes 1 new bypass (Rivenhall bypass)
4. Option 4: A variation on Option 2 and includes 1 new bypass (Marks Tey bypass)

5.1.6 Following the close of consultation Highways England have been continuing to analyse the results and reviewing its options, with a view to announcing a preferred route in Winter 2017/18. This will be followed by a statutory consultation in Spring 2018 and further technical work and engagement, and then submission of an application for a Development Consent Order in Autumn 2018. Highways England estimates construction can begin 2020-2021. The final boundaries and scale of the Colchester Braintree Borders Garden Community, which will be fixed in a future Development Plan Document (DPD), will have regard to the chosen Option. The garden community can accommodate whichever alignment is chosen.

#### *A120*

5.1.7 The A120 between Braintree and the A12 at Marks Tey is the last stretch of single carriageway road between the M11 and Colchester. It has long been a priority of ECC, as identified in the Local Transport Plan (EB/040), to see dualling of the A120 between Braintree and the A12. This will improve connectivity across north Essex and improve network resilience.

5.1.8 ECC has been leading a feasibility study to upgrade the A120 between Braintree and the A12 (EB/044). It has been agreed by ECC, the Department for Transport (DfT) and Highways England that ECC will lead on the review of options with the objective being for the scheme to be included in the Government's Roads Investment Strategy for the 2020/21 – 2024/25 Road Period (known as RIS2). The DfT requirements are that:

- The project's development follows all HE's processes to determine a preferred route.
- The scheme ultimately selected represents value for money.
- As wide a consensus as is possible is achieved through consultation and engagement processes

5.1.9 Public consultation on five options took place January to March 2017. On 23 November 2017, ECC Cabinet recommended that of the five options taken to consultation only two broad options will now be pursued in greater detail to determine the best overall performing route (EB/044). Technical studies will now continue throughout the winter and spring to help inform a favoured route option for the A120. ECC will look to recommend a favoured route to HE in Summer 2018 with a submission of the technical studies to HE and DfT in the Autumn 2018. A decision will then be made by DfT as to whether the A120 is included in RIS2. As with the final A12 alignment the preferred option will need to be taken into account in settling the detailed boundaries and scale of the proposed garden community.

#### Rail

5.1.10 The Anglia Route Study prepared by Network Rail (March 2016)

(EB/045) shows that while capacity varies along the Great Eastern Main Line, capacity to accommodate growth is limited and is particularly constrained in peak times from Chelmsford to London. Improvements are required along the Line to accommodate growth and provide a faster more competitive service across the region. The Study identifies a package of improvements necessary to respond to the need for increased capacity, which are seen as priorities to enable growth, improve services and journey reliability. These will be progressed by Network Rail governed by a new process outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding agreed with the Department for Transport (EB/047) (and weblink provided below).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-delivery-of-railway-investments-mou-between-dft-and-network-rail>

5.1.11 A new franchise has been awarded to Greater Anglia for passenger services in the region. The franchise includes a commitment to replace the entire train fleet during 2019 and 2020, which in combination with a new timetable, will significantly increase passenger capacity; typically increasing capacity by 55%. Further details are contained in EB/048.

5.1.12 A Statement of Common Ground is being prepared between the North Essex Authorities, ECC, HE and Network Rail.

#### Local Plan Transport Modelling outcomes

5.1.13 The North Essex Authorities each commissioned ECC to undertake highway modelling (undertaken by Jacobs - BDC/035 (1/3, 2/3, 3/3, BDC/0036, CBC/0051 and TDC/032) to inform their Draft Publication Local Plans (Regulation 19). The modelling identified the impact of each local authority's spatial strategy (or an option thereof) on the local and wider highway network, potential mitigation measures and costs.

5.1.14 The Local Plan transport modelling indicated that mitigation is not feasible at all key junctions across North Essex to enable them to operate 'within capacity' at 2033. Improvements to key junctions and strategic highway interventions will need to be supplemented by sustainable transport measures and a change in travel behaviour. This outcome has therefore been reflected in the strategic priorities in policy SP5 and accurately reflects infrastructure needs. To further encourage modal shift, Section 2 Local Plan policies require developers to actively discuss opportunities to expand or provide new sustainable travel services, and submit Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements when development proposals come forward.

5.1.15 For Garden Communities, the objective is to create a community where walking and cycling play a substantially more central role in urban transportation than they currently do in most communities and to maximise the desirability and use of public transport. This is reflected in the Garden Communities Charter (EB/007) and the Garden Communities Movement and Access Study (EB/014).

## **Education**

5.1.16 The NPPF (paragraph 72) attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities are required to take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. This has been reflected as a strategic priority contained in policy SP5 and reflects the infrastructure needs in North Essex over the Section 1 Plan period.

5.1.17 In preparing the Local Plans the North Essex Authorities have worked collaboratively with ECC, as Education Authority, to consider the need to provide new schools and/or expand or alter existing schools to accommodate the identified growth. Each Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) (CBC/0006, BDC/012, and TDC/023) shows where the expansion of existing schools is feasible (or will take place), where the construction of new schools is required, together with provision for early years and childcare places. Education requirements are based on a strong understanding of future pupil numbers, with co-operation between county, borough and district councils.

## **Health**

5.1.18 The health priorities and needs reflect the NPPF and the broad messages from the plans, policies and programmes of the various NHS health providers in collaboration with ECC as a key advisor on Public Health.

5.1.19 As highlighted in the IDPs, Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) are being prepared by the health sector for wider areas that incorporate several Clinical Commissioning Group areas. In addition Public health services are provided by ECC in partnership with the respective local authorities. These services are focused on prevention and early intervention, specifically developing measures that help to reduce illness and to tackle the causes of poor health at source. This includes initiatives to increase activity and healthy living, such as cycling and walking, as well as provision of green space within developments. The strategic overview of the STPs includes consideration of these issues.

5.1.20 Generally the NHS policy locally is to attempt to accommodate growth wherever possible within current premises envelope, though this is likely to require capital works to adapt facilities over time, and only to seek new premises where this is demonstrably necessary.

## **Broadband**

5.1.21 As stated in the NPPF (paragraph 42), high quality communications infrastructure is crucial for sustainable growth. The availability of high speed and reliable broadband, particularly in rural areas, is a key factor in unlocking new development opportunities and ensuring that people can access services online and work from home, thereby reducing the demand for travel.

5.1.22 Superfast Essex Broadband Programme is working to extend superfast and ultrafast broadband across Essex to more than 144,000 homes and businesses by December 2019, with further funding and programmes secured to extend coverage by this coverage by 2021. This reflects the Government's commitment to ensuring that every premise in the UK has access to broadband with a minimum download speed in line with the defined Universal Service Obligation (USO) by the end of 2015. The USO is currently 2Mbps however will shortly be amended to 10Mbps under the Government's planned Digital Economy Bill. In more remote locations where connection into BT Openreach / Virgin Media's broadband network to achieve these speeds is not possible, support and funding towards alternative connection technologies such as satellite broadband is offered. Connection to superfast and ultrafast broadband is also continuously undertaken via commercial roll-outs by BT Openreach, Virgin Media and Gigaclear with technology offering alternatives to the traditional fibre approach expanding rapidly.

**2) Has each item on the list of strategic priorities been costed, and how will it be funded?**

NB: See Matter 6, question 5 for commentary on infrastructure costs for the Garden Communities.

5.2.1 Costs have been assigned to the priorities listed in SP5 where they relate to a specific piece of infrastructure or form a broad package of measures to improve infrastructure provision. On-going work has provided indicative costs for some of the priorities, and costs will be refined and confirmed once schemes are sufficiently progressed to design stage and more detailed work takes place (such as the A12, A120, rapid transit or health infrastructure). Based on the costings to date there is no reason to believe that the identified priorities are not capable of being funded.

5.2.2 A Statement of Common Ground is currently being finalised on transport matters between the North Essex Authorities, ECC, HE and Network Rail. A Statement of Common Ground has also been prepared between the North Essex Authorities and North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group, Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group and Colchester Hospital University Trust.

### **Transport**

5.2.3 The IDPs contain details on future funding and delivery of transportation at the end of each transport chapter. It is also expected that the Garden Communities will need to contribute to the costs of the A12, A120 and rapid transit.

5.2.4 The A12 Chelmsford to A120 widening is a HE committed project in RIS1. A preferred route will be announced Winter 2017/18. As the scheme develops and HE gathers more information, the precise cost of the project will become available. HE has indicated works will commence 2020-2021.

5.2.5 Costs for the A120 (Braintree to the A12) will be refined as the options

are further developed by ECC and submitted to DfT in 2018. The consultation on the five route options provided estimated costs covering, construction, land preparation, supervision and risk as follows:

- Option A £605m
- Option B £725m
- Option C £825m
- Option D £475m
- Option E £570m

5.2.6 For other works along the A120, the A120 Millennium Way slips has successfully secured £4.95m from the National Productivity Investment Fund for the Local Road Network, with additional funding secured from BDC (£2.5m), ECC (£3.5m) and HE (£3m), which will enable the scheme to progress. Highway modelling identified existing and future congestion problems at Galleys Corner on the A120 without any intervention (BDC/035/1-3). Partnership working has also progressed with BDC, ECC and HE to identify options to alleviate issues on the A120 in the short term. This scheme will ease congestion in the short term supporting economic growth and the delivery of new housing development in the Braintree area and the wider A120 corridor. It is estimated that the scheme will be completed by mid-2020.

5.2.7 An East Colchester Rapid Transit Study (CBC/0047) has been prepared which included a strategic outline business case to show high level outline capital costs for the different scheme options. A similar study is currently being finalised for the Colchester Braintree Borders and West of Braintree Garden Communities together with refining costs outlined in the initial East Colchester study. Any provision of rapid transit will have wider benefits than simply the Garden Communities. The Study will be available to inform the examination hearings.

5.2.8 Network Rail and Greater Anglia are delivering a package of improvements necessary to respond to the need for increased capacity, which are seen as priorities to enable growth, improve services and journey reliability. Network Rail will deliver the projects in the Anglia Rail Study (EB/045) to support growth over the Plan period. Greater Anglia's franchise commitments are contained in EB/048.

5.2.9 Network Rail has commenced the development of its maintenance and renewals programmes for Control Period 6 (2019 to 2024). Projects for capital investment in enhancements to the local rail network will be progressed by Network Rail governed by a new process outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding agreed with the DfT and developed in line with the Governance for Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) process. Similarly to the strategic road network, sound strategic, outline and final business cases needs to be presented at key decision points for projects to receive further development funding and to progress to delivery. Network Rail has expressed a willingness to work with third parties to develop and fund enhancement projects.

5.2.10 In addition, a new franchise has been awarded to Greater Anglia for passenger services in the region. The franchise includes a commitment to

replace the entire train fleet during 2019 and 2020, which in combination with a new timetable, will significantly increase passenger capacity. Investment in the rolling stock will be made directly by the franchisee of the Greater Anglia franchise. They will also invest in stations as part of the franchise commitment.

5.2.11 ECC through Jacobs supported the North Essex Authorities with a Garden Communities Access and Movement Study (EB/014). The study provides a series of potential policy interventions that could be delivered at one or more of the Garden Communities. An estimated cost of each intervention has been provided. The choice of options will be refined as work progresses on DPDs for each Garden Community.

5.2.12 In progressing Local Plan allocations sustainable modes of transport will be facilitated through new developments to promote and enable accessibility and integration into the wider community and existing networks. An integrated approach will be progressed seeking to link these proposals with projects in specific Integrated Transport Packages, Route Based Studies, and Cycling Strategies. Much site specific infrastructure will be secured through potential S106 contributions for Local Plan allocations.

5.2.13 ECC has secured funding through the South East Local Economic Partnership (SELEP) (Round 1) Single Local Growth Fund for the route based strategies below which are committed within the overall SELEP programme.

- A133 Colchester to Clacton (£5.48, with £2.74m ECC contribution) to commence 2018.
- A131 Braintree to Sudbury (£3.68m, with £1.88m ECC contribution) to commence 2019.
- A131 Chelmsford to Braintree (£7.32m, with £3.72m ECC contribution) to commence 2019.

## **Education**

5.2.14 ECC has statutory duties to facilitate Early Years and Childcare (EYCC) provision and ensure sufficient primary and secondary school places are available. Infrastructure improvements can be in the form of new, co-located or expanded facilities.

5.2.15 As identified in the Duty to Co-operate Statements (SDBDC/005; SDCBC/005 and SDTDC/022), ECC, as education authority has undertaken an assessment of education requirements arising from Local Plan growth to support all emerging stages of plan preparation. This assessment considered the following:

- the number of additional primary and secondary school places, and EYCC generated from Local Plan growth;
- the location and number of any new school and EYCC;
- whether existing schools and EYCC need/can be expanded; and
- the locations where expansion is not feasible.

5.2.16 The education (early years, primary and secondary) requirements arising from local plan growth are identified in the relevant IDPs (BDC/012,



CBC/0006 and TDC/023). These identify what new infrastructure investment is required to support the Local Plan growth, when and funding sources. The North Essex Authorities will work with site promoters, developers and local landowners to bring forward the infrastructure required to facilitate the development set out in the IDP and Section 2 site specific policies. These are identified in each IDP under Table 13.1 (by infrastructure theme) and Table 13.2 (by settlement) for the periods 2016 – 2021, 2022 – 2027 and 2028-2033.

5.2.17 Funding will predominantly come from developer contributions. Where a development generates the demand for a new 'on-site' facility it will be provided and funded from s106 contribution and secured through planning conditions, along with the provision of serviced land. Each of the North Essex Authorities has a specific policy within section 2 of its Local Plan, which relates to the delivery of infrastructure and impact mitigation of growth. Working in conjunction with ECC as one of the key providers of infrastructure services, the policies reflect the same ethos and have much of the same wording (Policy LPP 82 - BDC; Policy SG7 - CBC; and Policy D11 - TDC).

5.2.18 ECC's Developer's Guide to Infrastructure Contributions, 2016 (EB/049) sets out ECC's standards for the receipt of relevant infrastructure funding and covers education. Some limited funding will also come from Central Government Basic Need funding. Although this funding is only expected to address population growth rather than new development, in many cases where existing schools are expanded a combination of needs will be met, and funding sources used, to achieve best value.

5.2.19 The provision of vocational training, apprenticeships and further education in North Essex is primarily provided by Colchester Institute on a range of campuses. There are plans to improve campus facilities and curriculum offers by the Institute. Identification of costs depends on a range of influences, including academic and vocational programmes provided and their setting; availability of apprenticeship levies; distance travelled by students for courses, and the dependency on Central Government and provider for funding. These issues are further detailed in the relevant IDPs (CBC/0006, BDC/012 and TDC/023)

5.2.20 ECC raised no objections to Section 1 of the Local Plans. The costings for education are understood and there is no reason to doubt that funding will be available.

## **Health**

5.2.21 As shown in the IDPs, generally the NHS policy locally is to attempt to accommodate growth wherever possible within current premises envelope, though this is likely to require capital works to adapt facilities over time, and only to seek new premises where this is demonstrably necessary.

5.2.22 It is not possible to accurately determine the build cost or size of new health facilities at this stage. The CCG acknowledge that the exact nature and scale of expenditure necessary will only be known in detail once schemes are

progressed, and will be considered against relevant local plan policies (Section 2 Policy LPP 82 - BDC; Policy SG7 - CBC; and Policy D11 - TDC). This will depend on a large number of complex and inter-related factors that can only be resolved at a more advanced stage in the planning process. It will not be the case that each new health facility would be a fixed size or would have a fixed range of services. Clinically there are circumstances where co-location of GP and other NHS or social care functions are desirable and would be considered or sought. Table 4.1 of the IDPs (CBC/0006, BDC/012, and TDC/023) show what is needed, what the cost is and when it will be delivered.

5.2.23 NHS capital funding is extremely limited and is mainly to facilitate small improvement works. For the provision of new healthcare facilities there are various non NHS capital funding options, for which the NHS would be responsible for the revenue consequences. Revenue consequences of any infrastructure works would need to be carefully considered and subject the NHS approval process. Shared facilities may necessitate the need for individually leased spaces and separate revenue funding streams. Delivery of, or contributions to, new health care facilities may be sought from developers as part of mitigation and is normally a prerequisite to delivery of sustainable development. The North Essex Authorities will monitor health provision carefully and make sure that new facilities are secured alongside new development.

## **Broadband**

5.2.24 Superfast Essex Programme has funding to expand superfast and ultrafast broadband connectivity to some 144,000 homes and businesses by 2021. The first phase of the programme has expanded connectivity to 87% of premises in Essex by 2016. Further investment is available for Phase 2 with the objective of reaching 95% coverage by 2019. Further phases are being implemented with a programme of planned works, and funding up to 2021.

5.2.25 BT Openreach and other providers also offer ultrafast broadband connection for all new developments, either free of charge or as part of a co-funded partnership. Openreach is implementing an initiative agreed with the UK Government and the Home Builders Federation to connect all new UK housing developments of 30 properties or more with ultrafast fibre broadband, with some 12 million homes and businesses to be connected by 2020. Any developments with two or more homes will have access to the company's existing or planned fibre infrastructure, either funded entirely by Openreach or, where necessary, with the help of co-funding from the developer. With housing supply increasing at unprecedented rates, and more people purchasing newly built homes, improving connectivity for new homes will help to accelerate the country's digital revolution.

5.2.26 Local Plan policies seek to ensure all new residential and commercial developments must be served by a fast and reliable broadband connection to the premises. Where new development is proposed in rural areas, investment in superfast reliable broadband will be required, subject to viability. This means that developers should explore all the options, and evidence of this

engagement should be submitted with a planning application.

**3) Do the relevant infrastructure providers consider that each item on the list of strategic priorities (and any other necessary infrastructure) is deliverable during the Section 1 Plan period?**

5.3.1 The North Essex Authorities have been in dialogue with all of the relevant infrastructure providers. Although some of the details, the costing and funding issues are not resolved there is no evidence to suggest that the priority infrastructure cannot be funded and delivered within the Plan period, on a programme to support the development proposed.

**Transport**

5.3.2 Deliverability will be planned on a phased basis to ensure that the right infrastructure is delivered at the right time and in the right location. ECC assisted the preparation of the Local Plans through joint meetings with HE to ensure deliverability and address phasing. The North Essex Authorities worked closely with ECC and HE to consider the impacts of growth, what mitigation measures were required, when they can come forward, costs, and potential funding sources of infrastructure including developer contributions. This information was then included within the respective IDPs (CBC/0006, BDC/012, and TDC/023).

5.3.3 ECC has, or is, in the process of delivering £180m of transport improvement schemes through Pinch Point funding, SELEP Local Growth Fund and the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF). There is a history of successfully bidding for funding and completing works to improve infrastructure and facilitate economic growth. This will continue with identified works across North Essex. The eastern Highways Alliance and SMARTe and the HE Framework have all been used extensively in previously delivered major projects.

5.3.4 The A12 is a committed RIS1 project. Following consultation on A12 options in 2017, HE have been continuing to analyse the results and reviewing its options, with a view to announcing a preferred route in Winter 2017/18. This will be followed by a statutory consultation in Spring 2018 and further technical work and engagement, and then submission of an application for a Development Consent Order in Autumn 2018. HE estimates construction can begin 2020-2021.

5.3.5 For the A120, ECC has been leading a feasibility study to upgrade the A120 between Braintree and the A12 and is following the DfT technical requirements. On 23 November 2017, ECC Cabinet recommended that of the five options taken to consultation only two broad options will now be pursued in greater detail to determine the best overall performing route. Technical studies will now continue throughout the winter and spring to help inform a favoured route option for the A120. ECC will look to recommend a favoured route to HE in Summer 2018 with a submission of the technical studies to HE and DfT in the Autumn 2018. A decision will then be made by DfT as to

whether the A120 is included in RIS2. By following the DfT requirements, the scheme will be ready to progress and works can commence within the early period of RIS2.

5.3.6 In terms of delivering rapid transit, this will need to be carried out on a phased basis and potentially beyond that of the Plan period given that it requires a critical mass to make the scheme viable. Rapid Transit studies will provide options on the type, route and cost to enable discussion with government on potential funding sources in combination with contributions from the Garden Communities. More detailed work can progress with the preparation of the DPDs when route selection can be analysed.

5.3.7 In terms of rail, paragraphs 5.2.8 – 5.2.10 outline commitments being delivered over the Plan period by Network Rail and Greater Anglia.

## **Education**

5.3.8 Yes. ECC, as local education authority, considers the necessary requirements are deliverable during the plan period. ECC comments on Local Plans to influence spatial strategies and ensure that the current availability of school places and the deliverability of new school provision is taken into account. ECC will generally take the lead but delivery of schools may be in partnership with an Academy and Early Years and Childcare with a private provider. Where new sites for education facilities are required, ECC requires that the necessary land is provided for free and is fit for purpose, i.e. is fully serviced and remediated. This requirement is identified in the ECC Developers' Guide (EB/049).

5.3.9 ECC regularly keeps under review the capacity of existing facilities, through the annual School Commissioning for Places and Childcare Sufficiency reports. The phasing of developments that are included in forecasts is closely monitored to ensure that forecasts are not artificially inflated by unrealistic build rates or an assumption that new residents will immediately wish to move their children to the local school. In addition, ECC provides responses to individual planning applications to ensure necessary contributions are collected in order to ensure places can be accommodated. ECC also takes account of the movement between Essex schools and neighbouring county council areas, and considers these flows are reasonably stable and predictable.

5.3.10 The provision of vocational training, apprenticeships and further education in North Essex is primarily provided by Colchester Institute, as indicated in the IDPs. It serves the populations of the towns of Colchester and Braintree and the wider area of North Essex, including Tendring. It has campuses in Colchester (Colchester Institute, Stanway Engineer Training Centre and Minorities Gallery), Braintree, Clacton and Harwich Energy Skills Centre. There are presently plans to make improvements to its Colchester and Braintree campuses to better focus on growth and priority areas and resources to support Engineering, Construction and Digital Media. In addition, it is proposed that there will be expansion of apprenticeship provision in a range of

subjects

## **Health**

5.3.11 The provision of appropriate primary healthcare facilities to support growth is a critical item. The necessary provision should be delivered as new growth comes forward to ensure that health care impacts are appropriately mitigated. Where any on-site provision is required this may need to be phased to reflect the time period over which growth is expected. The IDPs identifies a series of infrastructure requirements, either in the form of expansion or improvement of existing or new health care facilities. The exact quantum of space and the nature of the requirement will need to be discussed at the point of the development of specific proposals.

## **Broadband**

5.3.12 North Essex Authorities will continue to work with the telecommunications and broadband industry to maximise access to broadband, wireless hotspots and improved mobile signals for all residents and businesses, assisting them in delivering their investment plans and securing funding to address any infrastructure deficiencies or barriers. It is policy to ensure that all new residential and commercial developments must be served by a fast and reliable broadband connection to the premises. Connection should include the installation of appropriate cabling within the homes or business units as well as a fully enabled connection of the developed areas to the full main telecommunications network to provide the fastest available broadband access. In exceptional circumstances where fast broadband is not practical or economically viable an equivalent developer contribution towards off-site works, or contributions to other Next Generation Access complaint solutions will be sought.

5.3.13 Connection to ultrafast broadband throughout the Greater Essex area is continuously undertaken via commercial roll-outs by BT Openreach, Virgin Media and Gigaclear. In addition, the Superfast Essex programme is working to extend ultrafast broadband across Essex to more than 144,000 homes and businesses by December 2019 under Phase 2 and Phase 3 rollouts. Some funding has been provided by local authorities to progress Phases 2 and 4. Phase 4 is expected to be completed by 2021, and is being part funded by local authority contributions to address coverage gaps in their districts.

#### **4) What constraints are there on the delivery of the strategic priorities (and any other necessary infrastructure), and how can they be overcome?**

5.4.1 Whilst North Essex is well connected by road and rail through strategic transport networks, namely A12, A120 and the Great Eastern rail line, these are operating close to capacity at peak hours, and in meeting Government's ambition of providing a step change in housing provision will place these under additional pressure at peak times. Highway modelling to support Local Plans has indicated that a step change in forms of sustainable transport will need to

complement any strategic and local highway improvements.

5.4.2 Although funding for some of these priorities still needs to be secured, the North Essex Authorities have engaged pro-actively with and are working with providers to ensure that investment will be made at the appropriate time to support the proposed growth. The authorities are confident that all constraints can be overcome.

5.4.3 ECC and HE have not raised any concerns over the soundness of Section 1, but acknowledge the need to continue working collaboratively to evolve suitable solutions to both the local and strategic road hierarchy. Key strategic projects are the A12 widening and A120 realignment study, which seek to alleviate known congestion issues across North Essex and have a significant positive effect on trip distribution in the Plan period. A Statement of Common Ground will be submitted between the North Essex Authorities, ECC, HE and Network Rail.

#### A12

5.4.4 Improvement to the A12 has been identified as a requirement and subject to a number of studies. Each study recognised the need to improve congestion, safety, resilience and reliability in order to support economic growth. The inclusion of the widening of the A12 by Government in RIS1 was welcomed by all parties. Progress in delivering the A12 widening study is outlined in Question 1.

#### A120

5.4.5 The A120 plays an important role as an economic corridor and there is a need to improve highway capacity along this route between Colchester and Braintree. As the Local Plans propose new Garden Communities in the vicinity of the A120, the ability for the development to contribute to the improvement of the highway network in this area will be necessary.

5.4.6 In November 2017, ECC Cabinet recommended two broad options will be pursued in greater detail to determine the best overall performing route (EB/044). Once the appraisal of the options is finalised a recommendation will be made for the favoured route, which will be assessed by HE. HE is concurrently undertaking an internal process for identifying potential schemes to be included in RIS2 to cover the period 2020 - 2025. ECC is progressing a Business Case, which will promote the inclusion of the A120 scheme in RIS2. Between now and the announcement of the RIS2 programme, ECC will continue to promote the A120 scheme to gain public and political support for its inclusion in RIS2. It should be noted that a favoured route is not required for entry to RIS2.

5.4.7 In overcoming constraints the Local Authorities will ensure the following:

#### Collaborative working

5.4.8 The North Essex Authorities will continue to work closely with government departments, HE, ECC, Network Rail, rail operators and other partners (including developers) to better integrate all forms of transport and improve roads and public transport and to promote cycling and walking. This will be done through:

- Lobbying Government for the inclusion of the A120 in RIS2 and funding for rapid transit.
- Engagement and cooperative working through the North Essex Garden Communities project.
- Preparation of DPDs for the three Garden Communities.

5.4.9 In terms of health, the North Essex Authorities consulted a range of NHS providers to ensure the range of necessary healthcare infrastructure arising from Local Plan growth was identified. It was agreed that a working group would be established to ensure health and planning issues are coordinated in future. The group would include representatives of those agencies referred to above and in addition a representative from Public Health at ECC would be invited to join. A further meeting took place in November to provide health sector input to the DPDs for the garden communities. It was also agreed that the STP provides a way of looking at health at a strategic level and that the IDP is very much dependent on information received from health partners. As a result a joint response to the Health section of the IDPs has been provided and the updated IDPs added to the evidence base. The STP Directors of Finance Group and STP Estates Group were identified as the appropriate bodies to ensure co-ordination and a joint response to issues.

#### Joint Funding Bids

5.4.10 All parties submitted joint Bids to the Housing Infrastructure Fund (£2.3bn) in relation to strategic infrastructure for North Essex, and to assist the delivery of housing growth in the Local Plans, and in particular the new Garden Communities. The Bids provide a clear indication to Government of the need to provide a strategic approach to the delivery of highway infrastructure schemes to support significant areas of growth across North Essex. The forward fund would provide initial funding to give the market confidence to provide further investment and make more land available for development and provide future homes.

1. Realignment of the A12 to facilitate the Colchester Braintree Borders Garden Community (application for £100 million). The realignment would enable the maximisation of potential development consistent with Garden City principles, and enable the most effective masterplanning of the new community. Early intervention would provide multiple site access points, linked to the internal primary spine road enabling the early delivery of development. Any development would be made in conjunction with proposals for the A12 widening project. Grant funding would improve the viability position, community linkages and provide a strong message on providing upfront infrastructure delivery for Local Plans.
2. A link road from the A120 to the A133 and an application for development

funding for a rapid transit system at the Colchester Tendring Borders Garden Community (application for £65 million). The allocation of funding would support scheme viability and improving connectivity into the new community between the A120/A133. It would provide capacity and improved access to enable the early delivery of development. Improved access would be provided to the University of Essex and connection into a proposed new employment area. Funding would also assist in the early provision of a route from the new Garden Community via the University of Essex onwards into Colchester.

3. An application for funding for the A120 from Braintree to the A12 to supplement potential other sources of funding (application for £250 million).

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) is reviewing the submitted Bids and is expected to announce which expressions of interest will be progressed to a period of co-design in January 2018. Full business cases will be prepared for submission by May 2018. A final decision on successful Bids is expected in July 2018.

- 5.4.11 Other sources of funding will be actively pursued by partners as and when they are made available such as the DfT Pinch Point Fund, SELEP, and ECC Local Highway Panel.

#### Rapid Transit Studies

- 5.4.12 ECC through Jacobs supported the North Essex Authorities to prepare reports on rapid transit options for the three Garden Communities. While the exact delivery, phasing, cost and funding needs to be confirmed, ECC has included rapid transit as part of its bid to the Government's Housing and Infrastructure Fund (for the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community). A Government decision is expected to be made January 2018. Regardless of the outcome of that bid the North Essex Authorities are confident that funding will be secured and any other constraints overcome.

#### Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements

- 5.4.13 Transport Assessments or Transport Statements will be required for all developments likely to generate significant amounts of movement. Development should consider the ECC Development Management Policies which also provide further detail on the thresholds for Transport Assessments and Statements. Developers will need to demonstrate that the opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up, safe and suitable access for all can be achieved and the impacts can be effectively mitigated within the transport network.

#### Local Plan Monitoring

- 5.4.14 The Local Plans (Sections 1 and 2) will be monitored regularly in order to assess the effectiveness of policies and identify the need for review of any or all policies. Each Local Plan includes a table of Targets and Monitoring



Indicators that will be used to monitor delivery and progress on plan targets. The North Essex Authorities will measure progress on the implementation of policies and the delivery of new development and supporting and strategic infrastructure schemes using appropriate targets and indicators.

### Broadband

5.4.15 North Essex comprises a number of rural areas where at present fast, reliable broadband is not available as it is uneconomic or unviable given their isolated locations. Where new development is proposed in rural areas, investment in superfast reliable broadband is still required from developers, who are required to explore options and evidence as to its viability as part of any planning statement. ECC will pursue further funding streams to fund broadband provision including the recently announced Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) fund (Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Business Connectivity Fund (DEFRA - Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE)).

#### **5) Will policy SP5 ensure that the timing of infrastructure provision is aligned appropriately with the timing of proposed new development?**

5.5.1 The North Essex Authorities appreciate that the delivery of new homes and jobs needs to be supported by infrastructure. The priorities in SP5 are generally contained within, or reflect, a range of strategies and commitments already being pursued by the various infrastructure providers, which align with the timing of proposed development outlined in the Local Plans. This can be evidenced by the work for the A12 (a committed project in RIS1), on-going work by ECC and HE for the A120 (aiming for RIS2), rail infrastructure improvements by Network Rail and Greater Anglia and broadband roll out. The IDPs provide more detailed information.

5.5.2 In terms of the Garden Communities, more detail on delivery timescales will be supplemented through DPDs, and linked to Section 1 policies SP7, SP8, SP9 and SP10. The proposed delivery mechanism for the Garden Communities will see the North Essex Authorities and ECC playing a bigger and proactive role to facilitate delivery, which helps remove uncertainty.

5.5.3 Policy SP5 is supported by a Section 2 policy in each Local Plan where it must be demonstrated that there is sufficient appropriate infrastructure capacity to support the development or that such capacity will be delivered by the proposal. It must further be demonstrated that such capacity as is required will prove sustainable over time both in physical and financial terms.

5.5.4 The education requirements (early years, primary and secondary) arising from Local Plan growth are identified in the relevant IDP (BDC/012, CBC/0006 and TDC/023). These are identified in Table 13.1 (by infrastructure theme) and Table 13.2 (by settlement) for the periods 2016 – 2021, 2022 – 2027 and 2028-2033 of each IDP. As outlined in Question 4, ECC regularly keeps under review the capacity of existing facilities and forecasts are closely monitored to

ensure they are not artificially inflated by unrealistic build rates or an assumption that new residents will immediately wish to move their children to the local school. In addition, ECC provides responses to individual planning applications to ensure necessary contributions are collected in order to ensure places can be accommodated.

5.5.5 For health, the necessary provision should be delivered as new growth comes forward to ensure that health care impacts are appropriately mitigated. Where any on-site provision is required the exact quantum of space and the nature of the requirement will need to be discussed at the point of the development of specific proposals. The reason for this is that healthcare services and models of care are under review and are likely to change significantly. Over the plan period, health care provision will need investment. It is likely it will be in very different forms than the buildings that have traditionally been developed. It will be important that requirements are reviewed regularly as part of the IDP iterative process.

5.5.6 For broadband, development will need to allow for its provision in order to allow connection to that network as and when it is made available. As mentioned in earlier questions, there is a broadband programme across Essex during the Plan period.

**6) Are there effective mechanisms in place between the North Essex Authorities and the infrastructure providers, to co-ordinate the planning and provision of infrastructure?**

5.6.1 The North Essex Authorities have produced IDPs (CBC/006, BDC/012, TDC/023) and a number of other evidence base documents, which have been informed by infrastructure providers and reflect the requirements of the NPPF (paragraphs 156 and 162). The purpose of the IDP's is to create an infrastructure plan which will show the following:

- What infrastructure is required and how it will be provided.
- Who is to provide the infrastructure.
- How will the infrastructure would be funded.
- When the infrastructure could be provided.

5.6.2 Discussions have taken place with a variety of infrastructure providers in order to ensure a comprehensive understanding of what is needed, as outlined in the IDPs. The Duty to Co-operate Statements (SDCBC/005, SDBDC/005, SDTDC/022) highlight the joint working on the assessment and delivery options for infrastructure. These requirements are then reflected in the most appropriate policies within Sections 1 and 2 of the Local Plans. The Councils believe there are mechanisms in place to co-ordinate the planning and provision of infrastructure.

5.6.3 The three IDPs were prepared by the same consultant and are accordingly consistent.

**7) Should policy SP5 make specific reference to developer contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy as means of funding infrastructure?**

5.7.1 Policy SP5 Infrastructure and Connectivity of the North Essex Shared Strategic Plan is intended to reflect the key strategic projects with a particular focus on transport, education, healthcare and telecommunications (including broadband). It is not intended to set out the mechanism under which these pieces of infrastructure are to be delivered.

5.7.2 Each of the North Essex Authorities has a specific policy within section 2 of its Local Plan which relates to the delivery of infrastructure and impact mitigation of growth. Working in conjunction with ECC as one of the key providers of infrastructure services, the policies reflect the same ethos and have much of the same wording.

**8) Should facilities for leisure and sport, and for equestrians, be included in the list of strategic priorities?**

5.8.1 The North Essex Authorities notes the request set out in response S1177/49 by Sport England which proposes policy SP5 Infrastructure and Connectivity should include refer to leisure and recreation facilities and that the policy should set the principles of meeting this need. The North Essex Authorities do not consider it appropriate that facilities for leisure and equestrian uses should be listed in the key strategic priorities set out in policy SP5 Infrastructure and Connectivity.

5.8.2 The North Essex Authorities are committed to open space and leisure facilities as part of new developments, and each authority has its own detailed policies in section 2 which sets out these will be met in the local authority area, taking into account the particular constraints and opportunities which exist within each authority.

5.8.3 The principle of sufficient and good quality open space and leisure facilities can already be found in policy SP6 Place Shaping Principles, in which the 9<sup>th</sup> bullet point states; '*To provide an integrated network of multifunctional public open space and green and blue infrastructure that connects with existing green infrastructure where possible*'. Supporting texts in paragraph 7.2 also notes the importance of this.