

APPENDIX 1:

Essex County Council response to the Technical Section 1 Local Plan Examination Consultation 2019 (North Essex Authorities - Braintree, Colchester and Tendring)

Essex County Council (ECC), notes and supports the North Essex Authorities (NEAs) undertaking a Section 1 Local Plan technical consultation on an Additional Sustainability Appraisal and other evidence base documents in order to address the Inspector's issues raised in this letter dated 8 June 2018.

ECC remains committed to supporting the NEAs in preparing a sound Local Plan and will be providing the appropriate support throughout the Examination in Public and at any examination hearings.

Following the examination hearings in 2018, ECC has worked collaboratively with the NEAs and inputted to the preparation of the additional technical evidence documents below and, through ECC's transport consultant Jacobs, have led on the Rapid Transit Scheme (RTS) work.

- North Essex Rapid Transit System: from Vision to Delivery (EB/079)
- Modal Share Strategy for the North Essex Garden Communities (EB/080)
- North Essex Authorities Section 1 Viability Assessment Update (EB/86 (1/2)) and Appendices (EB/086 (2/2))
- North Essex Authorities Infrastructure Order of Costs Estimate (EB/087)
- North Essex Garden Communities: Infrastructure Planning, Phasing and Delivery (EB/088)
- Suggested Amendments to the Publication Draft Braintree, Colchester and Tendring Local Plans: Section One - July 2019 (Modifications)

The NEAs have also worked with ECC to confirm a range of infrastructure costs and phasing requirements, particularly those related to transportation and education, and the NEAs have included this information in relevant technical evidence documents.

ECC provides the NEAs and the Planning Inspector with the following updates.

1. Housing and Infrastructure (HIF) Bids

In March 2019, ECC submitted two bids under the 'Forward Funding' element of the Government's HIF programme, which seeks to provide upfront early funding of strategic infrastructure to enable housing to come forward: The two bids are outlined below.

1A. A120/A133 Link Road and Rapid Transit System (£99.9m)

For the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community

What the bid proposed

Funding was sought to implement a rapid transit system that will prioritise public transport on key routes into Colchester for new and existing residents. The system will service a new Park and Ride and better connect the planned Garden Community on the borders of Colchester and Tendring with the rest of the urban area of Colchester (and beyond in due course). Funding would also allow a new strategic link road between the A120 and A133 that will improve connectivity locally and within the wider region and relieve traffic

congestion going to the University of Essex and its Knowledge Gateway technology and research park. The infrastructure proposed in the bid will unlock land to provide up to 7,500 new homes.

Update

In August 2019, the Government announced that ECC had been successful in securing the £99.9 million to deliver the HIF bid. Mindful that the HIF programme requires funding to be committed and works implemented by April 2024, ECC continued to evolve more detailed proposals and work on delivery of the infrastructure components in advance of the funding decision. ECC will be actively working with Government over the coming weeks and months to progress the scheme through further due diligence and into contract.

At this stage the timetable for delivery is as follows:

Public consultation on options for proposed link road and RTS routes	October/ November 2019
Preferred route announcement	Early 2020
Planning application	Autumn 2020
Construction start	2022
Project completion	2024

1B. Housing Growth in North Essex – A12 realignment (£229m)

For the Colchester Braintree Borders GC

What the bid proposed

The bid proposals include further widening and realignment of the A12 between Kelvedon and Marks Tey to compliment the already funded A12 widening project (funded through RIS1 and detailed below). The HIF scheme proposes to move the position of the A12 to the east of its existing alignment to facilitate and realise the growth potential of this part of North Essex. This would involve a completely new junction 25 which will provide direct access to the proposed Colchester Braintree Borders GC, signalling junction 23 at Kelvedon where the A12 meets a new A120 (the ECC favoured route) to facilitate traffic flow, and widening of the Kelvedon Bypass to four lanes in each direction to accommodate future traffic volumes. The route alignment of the A12 will be the subject of future public consultation.

Update

At present the Government is still assessing the bid and has yet to make an announcement, but discussions are on-going between ECC and Government to secure delivery.

1C. Chelmsford North East Bypass and Beaulieu Railway Station (£218m)

Although this HIF bid applies to Chelmsford, there are benefits for North Essex, particularly Braintree.

What the bid proposed

The Chelmsford North East Bypass will run between the A12 and A131, and will complement the funded Highways England's A12 Junction 19 to 25 improvements at Boreham Interchange. The bypass will enhance access to and increase the catchment area of a new railway station (Beaulieu – see below), and is therefore vital that these pieces of infrastructure are delivered at the same time. The bypass will relieve congested traffic on the local roads and provide a strategic link between Chelmsford, Braintree and London Stansted Airport.

The new Beaulieu railway station will provide access to the Great Eastern Main Line. Trains will be able to pass each other at the new station to make the whole line more reliable. It will relieve crowding at the busy Chelmsford railway station and act as a transport interchange to encourage sustainable travel by bus, cycle, electric vehicles and on foot.

Update

In August 2019, the Government announced that ECC had been successful in securing the £218 million to deliver the HIF bid. The HIF programme requires works and spend to be implemented by April 2024 and therefore ECC has continued to evolve more detailed proposals and work on delivery of the infrastructure components, along with the developers at North East Chelmsford, in advance of the funding decision. ECC is now actively working with Government over the coming weeks and months to progress the scheme through further due diligence and into contract.

At this stage the timetable for delivery is as follows:

Chelmsford North East Bypass

Preliminary design	Autumn 2019 – Winter 2020
Public engagement	Spring 2020
Planning application	Early 2021
Construction start	Late 2022
Project completion	2024

Beaulieu Railway Station

Governance for Railway Investment Programme (GRIP) Stage 3: Single option selection and development	May 2020
GRIP Stage 4: Obtain consents (Transport and Works Act Order and Network Change)	April 2021
GRIP Stage 5-8: Detailed design, construction, testing and commissioning. Handover to Network Rail	Complete by December 2025

2. A12 widening and junction improvements (as funded through RIS1)

As was the position at the examination hearings in 2018, this scheme is funded in Highway England's Road Investment Strategy 1. The proposed scheme is likely to affect the alignment of the A12 between junctions 24 and 25, and consequently any scheme will need to align with what has been proposed in the above HIF bid, as the two schemes are related (but the A12 widening scheme funded through RIS1 is not dependent on the

HIF funding for delivery). Highways England will consult with those affected on any potential route for the A12.

Highways England has set up a Member (3rd October) and two Community Forums (10th and 14th October respectively) to provide an update on the A12 Chelmsford to A120 scheme.

At this stage, it is anticipated that Highways England will make a preferred route announcement on the A12 widening project in Summer 2020. The A12 works will be permitted through a Development Consent Order and the current programme expects this to be submitted in 2022, with start of physical construction in Spring 2023 with works anticipated to be complete by 2027/28. Highways England, Department for Transport (DfT), ECC, Braintree District Council and Colchester Borough Council are continuing to progress the details of the scheme.

A120 Corridor schemes

3. A120 Dualling (Braintree to A12)

At the time of the examination hearing sessions in January and May 2018 and the Inspector's June 2018 letter, there had been no decision by ECC in respect of a proposed alignment for the dualled A120. ECC announced its favoured route in June 2018 (following a consultation that ended in March 2018 – Route D) and this was recommended to Highways England / DfT for inclusion in RIS2. The favoured route runs from Galleys Corner on the edge of Braintree to a new junction with the A12 to the south of Kelvedon (and aligns with proposals put forward in the A12 HIF bid).

Communications and lobbying activity by ECC continue to support the progression of the scheme. Highways England has provided a revised cost estimate for the scheme and cost reductions will assist the case for RIS2 funding.

Technical work on ECC's approach to determining its favoured A120 route option was signed off by Highways England through a Stage Gate Assessment Review of the options evaluated. This review is part of Highways England's Product Control Framework approach to major projects which ECC has been following in order to ensure that the project could be delivered by Highways England once funding has been secured.

If the A120 Braintree to A12 upgrade is included in RIS2, it is expected to be announced in 2019. If successful, this would likely be followed by a Preferred Route Announcement by Highways England. Provided that the scheme progresses as planned, and funding is made available, it is anticipated that the Development Consent Order would be submitted 2021/22, that construction could commence in 2023 and the road be open for use by 2026.

4. A120 Millennium Way Slips (Braintree)

For other works along the A120, funding has been secured for the A120 Millennium Way slips providing £4.95m from the DfT National Productivity Investment Fund for the Local Road Network, with additional funding secured from ECC (£3.5m), Braintree District Council (£2.5m), and Highways England (£3m), which has enabled the scheme to progress.

The scheme involves the construction of two new slip roads and associated works to provide access between the A120 and the B1018 Millennium Way (providing west facing slips to allow better access and help relieve congestion at this location). The scheme will ease congestion in the short term, thereby helping to improve air quality, support economic growth locally and along the A120 corridor, and assist in the delivery of new housing development in the Braintree area and the wider A120 corridor. A planning application (CC/BTE/34/19) was submitted to ECC on 24 May 2019 and is currently being assessed. The Advance Works for the proposed scheme are expected to begin in Autumn 2019 with the Main Works (construction) expected to start in Spring 2020 and a total construction period of around 15-18 months.

5. M11 Junction 8 Improvements (at junction with A120)

Following a successful bid in 2017 for the DfT National Productivity Investment Fund, work has progressed to improve Junction 8 of the M11 and A120 West. The scheme has the benefit of planning permission, and will seek to support future plans for housing and employment by improving access between the M11 and A120 with London Stansted Airport; and reduce congestion and improve capacity on the M11 Junction 8 exit slips and the A120. Statutory diversions have begun in preparation for full construction phase commencing in early 2020. Construction is expected to take up to two years, however the start date and duration of works may be subject to change.