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Dear Sir / Madam

Please find below my response to the Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation paper ("LPIOC") which is submitted on an individual basis. I am also a participant in the CAUSE submission. While there is much that I agree with in the paper, I have shortened the comments below to the major points with which I do not agree and where I believe further attention is needed as follows:

1. The LPIOC concentrates on the provision of housing above other vital matters such as infrastructure and the only options specifically addressed in the paper relate to housing.
2. Each of the options set out includes at least one of the cross border separate sustainable settlements, the reasons given being 'duty to co-operate' considerations and because there are "significant constraints" to further development around Colchester itself.
3. There is argument in the paper that one or both of the cross border settlements must be approved or else the plan as a whole may well not be approved.
4. Due to the above factors and others set out in the paper, the consultation document appears to favour the development of the west ("West Tey") cross boundary separate settlement (the timescale "2032 and beyond" is based on this as explained in the paper).

I am surprised that at this consultation stage it would appear that decisions are already being formed and I am concerned that there is not an option based on urban extension around existing settlements in the Colchester area without separate cross border developments. I appreciate that identification of such an option would probably negate arguments available under the legislation and indicated by planning practice guidance to compel neighbouring areas to co-operate in the plans for the "east" and/or the "west" cross border settlements, but feel that such an option should be set out not least because both cross border settlements may be ruled out under detailed review.

A completely new town of comparable size to Braintree, as is being proposed at West Tey, must be subject to national planning considerations and capabilities, as they must surely be beyond the resources of a local council to plan, administer and control. Presumably the West Tey proposal is being addressed so prominently at this stage because landowners have put forward an enormous block of land so that they can (understandably) enjoy an enormous windfall of development land value (of the order of up to £3 billion calculated on the areas under consideration). This could of course by chance be the right place to develop, but personally I do not believe so given, inter alia, the infrastructure problems that exist and its proximity to Colchester itself, aside from current

debate which questions the benefit of new town / garden city developments as being the right path to take at all.

In practical terms, the A120 is running at capacity and at peak times long queues build up so that frequently traffic is at a virtual standstill between Coggeshall and Marks Tey. It is inconceivable that major development along this very stretch of road could commence until the A120 has been dualled or another major infrastructure improvement implemented.

I cannot accept that the Localism Act should lead to enforced acceptance of unsuitable development plans simply because they are cross border and as indicated above I do not believe the Act supports this interpretation in the current circumstances. It is the case however that infrastructure is singled out as a strategic matter of particular importance in the Act and is a key requirement in the test of local plan soundness.

In relation to acceptance of the eventual plan I would draw your attention to the Planning Practice Guidance notes, 156, in relation to strategic priorities which should be set out in the plan but which are not covered in the LPIOC to the same extent as housing, including commercial development, infrastructure of all types, health, security, community and other local facilities.

Finally as a matter of personal interest I would like to see the plan containing a vision for the future of Colchester's heritage in relation to both existing buildings and its unique archaeological discoveries, which could be better used to promote the general attractiveness and hence the prosperity of the area.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on the paper.

Yours faithfully

Andrew French

c.c. Priti Patel, MP

Bob Russell, MP

Bernard Jenkin, MP

Joanna Killian, Chief Executive, Essex County Council

James Cleverley – Parliamentary Candidate for Braintree