



# Local Development Framework Core Strategy

*Examination - 24 June to 11 July, 2008*

Hearing Statement in respect of Matter 6



## **MATTER 6**

### **TRANSPORT**

**Whether the strategy and policies provide a clear and robust framework, capable of delivering the travel and access elements necessary to achieve growth in a sustainable way**

**Tests: 4-9**

**Policies: TA1, TA2, TA3, TA4, TA5**

#### **ISSUES**

**6a) Is there consistency between the Core Strategy proposals and the Local Transport Plan?**

The Core Strategy is consistent with Essex County Council's second Local Transport Plan (CBC/ECC/OO6), including the five key objectives of:

- Tackling congestion;
- Delivering Accessibility;
- Creating safer roads;
- Promoting better air quality; and
- Enhancing maintenance.

**6b) Could some sections be deleted because they merely repeat regional aims?**

The Regional Spatial Strategy and Regional Transport Strategy (CBC/REG/014A) cover the whole East of England region. There are significant variations in the challenges faced across the region.

Colchester Borough Council feels it is therefore appropriate that the Core Strategy includes policies and supporting text which provides a local interpretation and emphasises the regional aims.

**6c) Should policy TA1 be deleted because it is not locally distinctive?**

The policy should not be deleted. Travel planning is a key part of sustainable transport policy and its inclusion in TA1 demonstrates a commitment by the Borough to this initiative.

Policy TA1 balances policies which set out the need for infrastructure improvements. The policy has the support of Colchester 2020 Local Strategic Partnership who have included the expansion of the Colchester Travel Plan Club as one means of achieving their priority objective of 'improving the transport system; providing more choice and less congestion.'

**6d) Are more 'sticks' needed to achieve a modal shift away from car travel?**

The Core Strategy Transport Topic paper (CBC/EB/060) outlines a comprehensive package of 'carrot' and 'stick' measures, which will positively influence modal shift away from the private car and encourage travel by more sustainable modes of transport.

The availability of parking in and around the town centre and at employment sites will be a key factor in encouraging modal shift. The implementation of Park and Ride along with the associated review of town centre car parking will see the redevelopment of car parks in the town centre, reducing the number of spaces available by approximately 200, a 5% reduction on the current supply. For new employment sites, developers will be encouraged to minimise the amount of car parking provided in favour of developing Travel Plans and investing in sustainable modes of transport.

Consideration will also be given to reallocating road space in favour of sustainable modes of transport. Where advantageous, bus priority measures will be implemented and pedestrian and cyclist facilities enhanced, including at-grade crossings and dedicated cycle lanes.

To complement the 'stick' measures of reduced parking and reallocation of road space a range of 'carrot' measures will also be implemented, which include improvements to public transport, cycling and walking infrastructure and services.

**6e) Is the choice of the N and E park and ride locations with linking transit corridors the most appropriate way to improve accessibility and promote sustainable travel behaviour?**

Park and Ride to the north and east along with public transport transit corridors form part of a wider package of measures to improve accessibility and promote sustainable travel behaviour. These measures are outlined in the Core Strategy Transport Topic Paper (CBC/EB/060).

The two public transport transit corridors outlined in the Transport Topic Paper will link key residential and employment Growth Areas in the north and east to the town centre, key services and transport interchanges. These transit corridors will improve accessibility and encourage sustainable travel by both new and

existing residents, by providing high quality, high frequency, reliable public transport services.

By removing cars from the highway network before they enter the town centre, Park and Ride will enable greater journey time reliability for buses and provide a clean and safe environment for cyclists and pedestrians. This will improve accessibility and promote sustainable travel behaviour by both local residents and visitors to the town.

**6f) Where is an explanation and justification of the decision to have only 2 park and ride sites in the submission Core Strategy when 3 were included in the Amended Preferred Options?**

Please see the paper prepared in response to the Inspectors request for further information (CBC/EB/084).

**6g) How will the park and ride sites be funded, who will provide them if not under the direct control of the Council? What is the timescale?**

Construction of the Park and Ride schemes identified in the Transport Topic Paper will be funded predominately through the Regional Funding Allocation. In addition to this further funding will be sought, where appropriate, through planning obligations and other funding sources.

In addition to the longer term aspirations for a Park and Ride to the North and East, Essex County Council and Colchester Borough Council have been working towards the delivery of an interim Park and Ride scheme to the North of Colchester. This will be delivered through a shared-use agreement with the recently constructed Community Stadium and will be funded and operated by Essex County Council in partnership with Colchester Borough Council.

It is anticipated that the interim Park and Ride scheme will open in 2009. The delivery of the permanent site to the North of Colchester is dependent on the new A12 junction, which is currently expected to be delivered in 2012. Park and Ride to the east is expected to be open later on in the LDF plan period, most likely post-2016. More detail on delivery timescale for Park and Ride is outlined in the infrastructure trajectory table and Matter 10.

The Park and Ride schemes identified in the Transport Topic Paper will be under the direct control of Essex County Council in partnership with Colchester Borough Council.

It remains unclear how independent Park and Ride schemes not supported by either Essex County Council or Colchester Borough Council will be funded and operated.

**6h) Should more detail be provided about the location of the E park and ride site? Should a park and ride site be shown on the W side of the town? Should there be a park and ride site to the S to serve Mersea and the rural area?**

The location of the east park and ride has yet to be identified. It is intended that a site will be identified as part the site allocations process.

Demand modelling has shown that a site to the north of Colchester offers the opportunity to capture the greatest number of potential users. A Park and Ride to the east is also being considered due to the large number of trips to and from the Tendring area.

Taking into consideration the number of potential park and ride users and operational costs, it is felt that additional dedicated sites to the west and south of Colchester are not viable.

Please see the paper prepared in response to the Inspectors request for further information (CBC/EB/084).

**6i) Should policy TA3 be re-worded to allow the flexibility of considering alternative park and ride schemes?**

The policy is considered to offer sufficient flexibility; it does not preclude other sites. Table TA3 lists the two areas which are the preferred broad locations for Park and Ride.

Please see the paper prepared in response to the Inspectors request for further information (CBC/EB/084).

**6j) Consideration of the two Regulation 32 park and ride sites (Langham and Spring Lane). What part of the Core Strategy is unsound? What tests does it fail? How can it be made sound? What is the precise change/wording that is sought?**

#### **Proposed Park and Ride site, Langham**

This representation seeks the allocation of a Park and Ride at Langham as part of a strategy of greater development in the village. The Park and Ride element of the scheme, however, received the greatest level of objection during the regulation 32 consultation, including an objection from Essex County Council,

based on technical criteria, that a Park and Ride at Langham would not be viable. The technical criteria includes:

- Access to the strategic road network
- Distance from a strategic junction
- Distance from the town centre
- In-scope trips and potential user market
- Potential bus route
- Financial implications
- Potential to cater for up to 1000 parking spaces.

All the responses are summarised in the Regulation 33 Statement.

The proposed Park and Ride site is located outside of the current Langham Settlement Boundary on greenfield land. The development of a Park and Ride at Langham would negatively impact upon the rural character of the village and the residential amenity of neighbouring residents.

### **Park and Ride site, Spring Lane, Colchester**

This proposed Park and Ride site at Spring Lane is located within an area of open land which forms a 'green' gateway to the town.

As stated by the Environment Agency during the alternative sites consultation, almost this entire site is located within flood zone 2. In addition to this a large area also falls within flood zone 3. This is likely to present a significant constraint on the development and operation of the site.

A number of other objections were raised during the alternative sites consultation, including an objection from Essex County Council, based on technical criteria, that a Park and Ride at Spring Lane would not be viable. The technical criteria includes:

- Access to the strategic road network
- Distance from a strategic junction
- Distance from the town centre
- In-scope trips and potential user market
- Potential bus route
- Financial implications
- Potential to cater for up to 1000 parking spaces

The responses are summarised in the Regulation 33 statement.

**6k) What are the prospects for providing a rail park and ride to the E?**

Park and Rail does have some merits but the potential to deliver a scheme to the East of Colchester is limited due to the low frequency of rail services into Colchester Town. Despite this, where possible, Park and Rail will be encouraged on an informal basis.

**6l) Will congestion around the North Station hinder the overall efficiency of the public transport service on the N – E transit corridor? What is being done to relieve congestion in the inner parts of Colchester?**

Some bus priority measures in the North Station area are already in place, including a southbound bus lane on North Station Road and bus priority at the Essex Hall Roundabout. In addition, a Section 106 Agreement is already in place to provide further bus priority measures at the North Station roundabout, ensuring buses using the North Transit Corridor are not unduly delayed.

As outlined in the Transport Topic Paper (CBC/EB/060), there are a number of planned schemes to relieve congestion in the inner areas of Colchester. These include highway capacity improvements to the A134 corridor and A133 corridor as well as traffic management measures to deter traffic from using the Historic Town Centre.

In addition to highway capacity improvements, sustainable travel behaviour will be encouraged through the delivery of improvements to public transport as well as cycling and walking facilities.

Funding has already been secured from a number of sources including Section 106 Agreements and Growth Area Funding. A bid has also been submitted and shortlisted for the Government Cycling Town initiative. Further funding will be sought from planning obligations where appropriate. Colchester North Station has been selected for the Governments Station Travel Plan pilot initiative. These initiatives will inform and be integrated with the master planning process for the North Station Regeneration Area.

**6m) Proposals for replacement of the bus station seem uncertain. What is the mechanism and timescale?**

Colchester Borough Council is working closely with the developers of the Cultural Quarter and Vineyard Gate, Essex County Council, and the bus operators to provide a high quality passenger transport interchange facility for the town. The replacement of the current temporary bus station is expected to be delivered between 2009 and 2013, in line with delivery of the development, and is to be funded by the developers.

## **6n) How will bus/rail interchange be provided?**

There are three major rail/bus interchanges in Colchester:

- **North Station**  
North Station is currently serviced by over 700 buses per day and is located on the North Transit corridor. The station already has interchange facilities, which include real time information, passenger shelters and raised kerbs for accessibility. It is planned for these to be reviewed as part of the future master planning exercise for the area. Any identified improvements will be funded through planning obligations resulting from the associated redevelopment of the area. A successful joint submission by Essex County Council, Colchester Borough Council and the Train Operating Company has also been made to the Government's Station Travel Plan Initiative, looking at ways to promote sustainable access to the station.
- **Town Station**  
The Town Centre station is situated within easy walking distance of a number of well served town centre bus stops. Nearby bus stops are of a high quality, with real time information and raised kerbs for accessibility. Funding has been secured through the Garrison Section 106 Agreement to further improve the rail station facilities, including the bus/rail interchange.
- **Hythe Station**  
The Hythe Station is situated in the East Colchester Growth Area and is served by a number of high frequency bus services. Funding has already been secured through a number of Section 106 Agreements and Growth Area Funding to lengthen the platforms, improve the public realm and enhance bus/rail interchange facilities. This work will be completed by 2009.

## **6o) How will the Council manage car parking in the Town Centre if it does not have control over the car parks?**

Colchester Borough Council will continue to directly manage and control a number of town centre car parks. Of 4200 public spaces in the town centre, 70% are owned and operated by CBC, with a further 25% on long term lease arrangements with private operators. The balance is not in the Councils control.

The Colchester Parking Services Development Plan (CBC/EB/075) outlines the mechanism by the Borough Council to manage parking. The plan includes the management of car parks and uses Decriminalised Parking Enforcement to manage on-street car parking.

**6p) Is the need for the South West Distributor Road (SWDR) supported by robust evidence? How will its delivery be ensured?**

Comprehensive Transport Assessments were undertaken as part of the planning applications for a number of proposed developments in the Stanway/Tollgate area. These Assessments provided robust evidence that the SWDR would be required to mitigate the impact of additional trips generated by the proposed developments.

These developments now have planning consent which includes a Section 106 Agreement for the delivery of the northern and southern sections of the SWDR. The northern section, linking the A1124 Essex Yeomanry Way with the B1408 London Road, was completed in 2007 using Section 106 funding secured through proposed employment development. It is likely the southern section, linking the northern section to Warren Lane, will be delivered in 2010 through the consented 800 residential units at the Lakelands development.

Completion of the southern section of the SWDR is required to deliver the outstanding 600 of the consented 800 units at Lakelands as well as support the delivery of the proposed greenfield allocation at Stanway and other developments in the area.

For the Warren Lane section, there will be the need to provide on-line and junction improvements. Any large-scale development would require the submission of a Transport Assessment, which would identify any such improvements, and these would be funded and delivered by the developer.

Please refer to the attached drawing and also see response to question 3/1k.

**6q) Are the road links to the Strategic Employment Zones funded and timetabled?**

The road links required to support the Strategic Employment Zones in Stanway, North Colchester and the University Research Park have been secured through a number of Section 106 Agreements.

The northern section of the SWDR was completed in 2007, which provides direct access to the Strategic Employment Zone at Stanway. This road link provides improved access to the A12 as well as the local highway network.

For North Colchester the East West Link Road (United Way) has already been constructed providing improved access to the A12 and local highway network. The realisation of further employment land to the North of Colchester will be supported by the new A12 junction at Cuckoo Farm and the final stage of the Northern Approaches Road. This is linked to a Section 106 Agreement for the Severalls development and is expected to be delivered by 2012.

The Section 106 Agreement requires that the University Research Park cannot be occupied until the new access directly onto the A133 has been completed. The additional funding to improve the local highway network and public transport services and infrastructure will be triggered by the incremental completion of floorspace.

Whilst ensuring that good road links are in place to serve the Strategic Employment Zones, sustainable transport will also be promoted where possible, with employers encouraged to deliver Travel Plans. Funding will be sought from developers to implement sustainable transport measures, including enhancement to local bus services and improvements to cycle and pedestrian links.

Please also see response to question 5/1e.

**6r) Does consideration need to be given to congestion around Feering and Kelvedon as a consequence of more new housing at Tiptree?**

Whilst the network in and around Feering and Kelvedon can be busy at times there are no significant highway capacity issues. It is unlikely the quantum of development planned for Tiptree (140 additional dwellings) will change this situation. However, if required, local inexpensive traffic management measures can be implemented by means of Planning Obligations.