

Chelmsford LDF- Examination of the Core Strategy DPD

Session dealing with Transportation/Infrastructure/Delivery including Planning Contributions/"Chelmsford Tomorrow " Partnerships

From his reading of the SCG-Proposed Rail Station at NE Chelmsford, dated August 2007, between the Borough and County Councils, HA, DfT, Network Rail, One and Countryside Properties, the Inspector wishes to give notice of the following questions that he will raise at the above session. The questions should be posted on the Borough Council's website with, if time permits, the responses.

Viability/Feasibility of New Rail Station

1. Paragraph 2.5 of the "7 party SCG" states that the land required for the proposed rail station is "controlled" by Network Rail, the Borough Council and Countryside Properties. Since the prospective development value of the new neighbourhood will be crucial to the delivery of the new rail station and associated infrastructure the Inspector intends to explore the basis on which it is confidently anticipated that the new station and other infrastructure can be funded from the development.
2. The Inspector will ask whether Countryside Properties own the land required for the new neighbourhood to the NE of Chelmsford or merely hold an option. In other words, are the costs of the land known at this point in time or are they still to be negotiated depending on the amount of development and whether planning permission is granted?
3. While Appendix 1 of BD/CFD/075vi and Appendix 2 of Topic Paper 5 – Infrastructure gives the funding sources, phasing and priorities, the question remains as to how much will be expected from each source, particularly where 2 streams are anticipated and how much would fall on each party/source.
4. The Inspector will ask for a break down of the estimated costs. He expects this will already have been undertaken in order for the prospective developer to be confident that sufficient surplus will be available to meet the £50m estimated costs of the new station. He will seek to get an idea of the estimated cost of land, buildings and based on what number of dwellings. He will also wish to know whether the station would only be viable with the inclusion of a business park as well as a new neighbourhood. If yes, what area of land and floor space of buildings is envisaged?
5. Supplementary to that, what contributions would be expected from the development towards affordable housing and community infrastructure (schools, roads, leisure, sport, shops, health etc)? The Inspector realises that much of this may need to be negotiated, but he feels he needs to be given some basic information on these aspects in order to judge the scheme's viability and therefore the soundness of the plan.
6. Also, the Inspector wishes to be provided with a summary of the **key components and the criteria/assumptions** used by Mayer Brown in presenting the business case for the new station to the Department for Transport (letter of 1 August) with a copy for the Enquiry library?

Impact on Braintree Branch Line

7. The Inspector will wish to explore the view expressed in the 4th paragraph of the letter of 2 February 2007 from One, the Train Operating Company, concerning the impact of a new station on the above line. In particular, could a 1% loss of passengers on the Braintree line harm its viability? What does it mean in passenger number terms?
8. Does the Essex County Council have a view about the impact that a new station would have on the rail service to Braintree?

Arising from his reading of the SCG on Strategic Transport Matters the Inspector will:

1. ask what is meant by “virtual sign off” in paragraph 3.1(a)? Does it mean that more information is required to secure “a complete sign off”? If yes, what more remains to be provided?
2. wish to explore what would be involved in “access control” in paragraph 3.1(c).
3. ask what the inputs were to the modelling programme mentioned in paragraph f – Transport Modelling and to be informed of its outcome. He will expect the outcome to be summarised.

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