

Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD



Independent Examination

Infrastructure and Standard Charges

Published 23 August 2007

HD/CFD/SRS2

Subject Response Statement 4

Infrastructure and Standard Charges

I Introduction

- 1.1 This Subject Response Statement has been prepared as part of a series of statements to provide additional information on a range of themes that have been raised by objectors in their Amplified Statements, specifically in relation to Week 1 of the Independent Examination. They serve to provide additional information on a specific subject area and are cross-referenced to within the Council's individual responses to amplified statements.
- 1.2 A series of Subject Response Statements have been prepared which includes the following subjects:
1. The Green Belt
 2. Housing Trajectory
 3. Sustainability Appraisal
 4. Infrastructure Delivery/Standard Charges
 5. Conformity with Regional Spatial Strategy
- 1.3 This Subject Response Statement addresses the issues relating to infrastructure delivery and Standard Charges.

2 Summary of Main Issues

- 2.1 The main issues that the Council has identified from the Amplified Statement with regard to Infrastructure Delivery and Standard Charges are as follows:
- a) The Council's strategy is high risk as it is over-reliant on the delivery of infrastructure.
 - b) There are no clear mechanisms to deliver the proposed infrastructure.
 - c) The Council's strategy is inflexible and does not make provision for the non-delivery of infrastructure.
 - d) The proposed Standard Charges approach will not be able to fund the proposed infrastructure.

3 Council's Responses to Main Issues

a) **The Council's strategy is high risk as it is over-reliant on the delivery of infrastructure**

- 3.1 As set out in Topic Paper 5 [BD/CFD/093] a fundamental objective of the Borough Council's Spatial Strategy is to accommodate growth in the Borough of Chelmsford up to 2021 in a manner which directs growth in the most sustainable locations, and which manages growth in accordance with level of supporting infrastructure. This means focusing development within and around existing built-up areas to ensure the benefit of new infrastructure is provided to existing as well as new inhabitants of the Borough. The Council wants to direct growth in a positive manner to address existing deficiencies and weaknesses in existing neighbourhoods see Explanatory Note for Inspector – Infrastructure Deficiencies North Chelmsford [BD/CFD/084].

- 3.2 At the earliest stages of preparing the Core Strategy, the Borough Council with partners such as Essex County Council identified the need for an innovative approach incorporating both public and private sectors to provide a framework for infrastructure delivery. Much of the strategic infrastructure identified for the Council's Spatial Strategy are schemes that have already been identified and planned within other service providers plans and strategies. These include the Local Transport Plan [CS/ESX/004] proposals for the Chelmsford North East By-pass and Cross Valley Link, Chelmsford Park and Ride, Chelmsford North East Railway Station, A12 Widening, Beaulieu Area Rapid Transit (BART), Army and Navy Roundabout Junction Alterations and Chelmsford Railway Station improvements. In addition, the proposals for flood protection, being formulated in partnership with the Environment Agency, have reinforced the need to provide adequate protection for Chelmsford Town Centre from flooding. The transportation elements of infrastructure have been programmed within a trajectory that has been produced jointly by Chelmsford Borough Council and Essex County Council [BD/CFD/075vi], which identify risks and alternative strategies for infrastructure provision
- 3.3 It is the Council's assertion that it has sought to integrate proposed development growth with existing proposals for infrastructure to ensure that they are available to serve existing and new communities in the most sustainable manner whilst maximising the potential for delivering of infrastructure. As fully demonstrated and in accordance with Soundness Test 4, the Council has had full regard to existing and proposed infrastructure within other key plans and strategies, which have underpinned the preparation of the Council's Spatial Strategy.
- 3.4 The Council refutes the assertion that its strategy is high risk. The Council's strategy is predicated on existing planned infrastructure and development growth being brought forward together in a strategic and planned fashion rather than in a piecemeal and uncoordinated manner, which the Council believes would certainly result in a high-risk strategy. By integrating infrastructure and development growth strategies, the Council believes it is increasing certainty for infrastructure delivery.
- b) There are no clear mechanisms to deliver the proposed infrastructure.**
- 3.5 In accordance with Paragraphs B3 to B5 of Annex B of PPS12 [BD/NAT/017] and Paragraph 27 (iv) of PPS1 [BD/NAT/005] the Borough Council has clearly developed a strategic approach to infrastructure provision. This has involved formulating a Standard Charges approach to ensure that new development growth contribute towards necessary infrastructure. The proposed Standard Charges approach is set out in detail within Section 2 of Topic Paper 5 [BD/CFD/093]. The Council is currently consulting under Regulation 17 on a Supplementary Planning Document on Planning Contributions [BD/CFD/011]. The Council's Standard Charges approach has been encouraged by GO-East and the Council identified early on the process the need to establish a Local Delivery Vehicle/Mechanism.
- 3.6 As previously stated the majority of the infrastructure is already identified within other Plans and strategies. The Borough Council has sought to coordinate the delivery of infrastructure in partnership with key service providers through its Local Delivery Mechanism with Essex County Council, Environment Agency, Mid-Essex Primary Care Trust and the involvement of the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) and the Government Office for the East of England (GO-East). Further details of this approach are set out in Section 4 of the Consultation Draft Planning Contributions SPD [BD/CFD/011]. A Local Delivery Mechanism Business Plan to co-ordinate infrastructure delivery is also currently under preparation.

- 3.7 The Council refutes the representations stating that there are no clear mechanisms for infrastructure delivery. The Borough Council has been working with its partners and has recently published a Supplementary Planning Document to ensure that there are clear and coherent mechanisms for the delivery of infrastructure. In accordance with national policy, the Council is introducing a strategic approach to co-ordinate housing and infrastructure delivery. This process in turn has opened further opportunities for the Council such as piloting a co-decision/co-funding mechanism for infrastructure, having its Growth Area status recognised by Government and invited to make bids for Growth Area Funding (GAF) in respect of infrastructure provision by October 2007.
- c) The Council's strategy is inflexible and does not make provision for the non-delivery of infrastructure.**
- 3.8 The Borough Council Strategy seeks to maximise flexibility by providing a Spatial Strategy that optimises the use of previously developed land and identifies locations for future greenfield development growth. As set out in Section 5 of Topic Paper 5 [BD/CFD/093] the Council has published a categorised list of infrastructure identifying pre-requisite, complementary and desirable infrastructure. Section 5 of Topic Paper 5 also provides dwelling trigger points and scenarios for infrastructure in particular geographic locations. Chelmsford Borough Council and Essex County Council jointly published an Infrastructure Trajectory at Appendix I of their joint Preliminary Meeting Statement [BD/CFD/075vi]. This sets out in detail the trigger points for elements of infrastructure and also sets out alternative proposals. Essex County Council, as Highways and Transportation Authority, is actively seeking to reprioritise the regionally identified strategic infrastructure for Chelmsford in light of its Growth Area status.
- 3.9 The Council refutes these representations as the infrastructure trajectory formulated with Essex County Council [BD/CFD/075vi] beings inherent flexibility to the Council's strategy. In addition, the Council has identified that there is capacity for a certain quantum of housing to be delivered ahead of strategic infrastructure in North East Chelmsford, the detail of which is set out in Section 5 of Topic Paper 5 [BD/CFD/093].
- d) The proposed Standard Charges approach will be unable to fund the proposed infrastructure.**
- 3.10 As previously stated, the Borough Council identified the need to provide a more certain, transparent and equitable means for development to contribute towards necessary infrastructure whilst maximising the necessary contributions. The Council believes that it has chosen the most effective means to help secure infrastructure. Chelmsford proposed approach is set out in Section 2 of Topic Paper [BD/CFD/093]. Standard Charges have always been considered by the Council as part of the solution for funding infrastructure and not the sole component.
- 3.11 The Borough Council refutes this assertion and is taking the lead to work with key service providers to ensure that an effective funding mechanism including the use of standard charges is implemented. Chelmsford Borough Council is working with Essex County Council to align capital programmes and are currently preparing a joint bid for growth area funding (GAF) for infrastructure. Chelmsford's eligibility to apply for this funding route was confirmed in a letter from the DCLG dated 10 August 2007 at attached at Appendix I of this Subject Response Paper.



10 August 2007

Steve Packham
Chief Executive
Chelmsford Borough Council
Civic Centre
Duke Street
Chelmsford CM1 1JE

Dear Chief Executive,

GROWTH AREAS SUPPORT IN THE EAST OF ENGLAND

As you will recall, Meg Munn's letter to Cllr Sida-Lockett accompanying publication of the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the East of England Plan, said:

"The panel recommended a broader approach to housing growth with a greater role for areas close to London. Subject to this being reflected in the final east of England Plan, we will consider what support may be necessary, to additional towns where high rates of growth will require significant investment and co-ordination. We will aim to ensure they can benefit from the infrastructure and delivery support from growth area funding and related measures."

Government Office colleagues are already working with existing growth locations on what growth areas support they may need over the next CSR Period. To allow us to properly plan for any additional growth areas support that may need to be provided to support places with high growth resulting from the final RSS, Government Office colleagues are also in contact with officers in your authority to discuss your particular circumstances, and what support your authority may require, subject to the final RSS.

I should like to make clear that these discussions are on the basis of the housing targets set out in the Proposed Changes to the East of England Plan. Those targets are still only proposals, with final decisions on the RSS still to be made by the Secretary of State, taking account of the consultation which closed in March. Final decisions on growth areas support are subject to the housing targets set in the final RSS. Discussions with authorities are restricted to what growth areas support might be available; we cannot enter into any discussion on policies in the Proposed Changes.

Subject to the final RSS, we propose extending the growth areas programme to your authority. The criteria we have used in considering this are as follows:

- Places (which are not already a growth point or in a growth area) which the final RSS identifies for major growth which meet the following criteria:
 - an annual growth rate above or close to 500 a year; *and either*
 - at least a 20% increase in growth rates compared with a 2003 baseline; *or*
 - continuation of a previously established high growth rate of at least 700 a year.
- Where a significant element of new growth is taking place across boundary areas linking 2 LAs the growth figures for the 2 authorities can be considered together.

As you will be aware, the Government has recently published its proposals for housing growth to meet the increasing challenge of affordability. This is set out in the Housing Green Paper, *Homes for the Future: more affordable, more sustainable*, growth area funding will be continued and increased with funding for the Growth Areas, New Growth Points and eco-towns at least doubling the end of the Comprehensive Spending Review period, with final figures to be announced in the autumn. In addition, the Green Paper announced a further £300m would be made available for transport infrastructure to support the delivery of housing through the Community Infrastructure Fund.

The Green Paper also sets out proposals to support growth through a wide range of policies including speedier delivery, planning reviews and a Housing and Planning delivery grant for local authorities (Chapter 2), improved mechanisms to release public sector land (Chapter 3), greater recycling of land and buildings (Chapter 4) and a range of measures on infrastructure (Chapter 5). Also important to growth are measures on design, greener housing, more affordable homes, skills and local delivery. The Green Paper and supporting documents on eco-towns, greener buildings and land availability assessment can be downloaded from the department's website.

I am copying this to Alex Plant at GO-East, and to John Lewis at EP and Steve Cox at EEDA, for information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JHCleary'.

HENRY CLEARY
Deputy Director

Do you need an interpreting or translation service?

আপনার কি দোভাষী সার্ভিসের প্রয়োজন আছে?

需要傳譯員為你提供服務？

کیا آپ کو ترجمان (انٹرپریٹر) کی ضرورت ہے؟

需要传译员为你提供服务？

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