Examination of the North Essex Authorities’ Section 1 Plan

Andrewsfield New Settlement Consortium

Matter 7: The Spatial Strategy for North Essex

(policy SP2)

**Question 1:** Taking account of the Sustainability Appraisal and other relevant evidence, is the spatial strategy in policy SP2 justified as the most appropriate development strategy for North Essex, when considered against the reasonable alternatives?

**Answer 1:** The Spatial Strategy for North Essex set out in policy SP2 represents the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives.

The proposed garden communities will provide a sustainable approach to the delivery of new homes and employment at strategic locations between Harwich, Colchester, Braintree and Stansted, utilising the existing transport network of rail routes, the A120, A12 and the M11.

In the case of the West of Braintree Garden Community (WBGC), the proposed development will provide for a new settlement applying garden community development principles. The WBGC will be strategically located within proximity of employment opportunities and growth at Stansted, as well as benefiting from access to the full range of retail, and leisure uses at Braintree. The WBGC will be accessible from the A120 and B1256, and will also benefit from new public transport connections as well as enhancements to and links with the existing extensive network of cycle routes, bridleways and footpaths, including the Flitch Way. The WBGC will be designed to follow each of the nine principles of garden communities, with a particular focus on providing employment opportunities, retail, schools and health facilities all within walkable neighbourhoods and set within a strongly defined landscape setting providing sports and recreation uses. The WBGC will also be served by high speed broadband to facilitate agile working including working from home.
In the case of the WBGC there will inevitably be some environmental impacts arising from the scale of development identified in the Section 1 Plan. Nevertheless, the significance of the impacts will overall be low, particularly where mitigation measures are applied through the master planning process e.g. landscape buffers and development buffers to protect heritage assets. Furthermore, development of part of the WBGC site would represent sustainable development of previously developed land at the former WWII airfield.

**Question 2:** Why does the spatial strategy include provision, at the proposed garden communities, for substantial development beyond the Section 1 Plan period?

**Answer 2:** No comments.

**Question 3:** Does policy SP2 adequately and appropriately define the role of each tier in the settlement hierarchy?

**Answer A3:** No comments.

**Question 4:** Is the detail in paragraphs 3.3 to 3.5 relevant to Section 1 of the Plan? If it is, should it be included in policy SP2?

**Answer 4:** No comments.

**Question 5:** Should paragraph 2 of the policy refer to the need to avoid the coalescence of settlements?

**Answer 5:** No comments.

**Question 6:** Does the reference to “Garden City principles” in the last paragraph of the policy identify the principles that are intended with sufficient clarity? What is the relationship between these principles and the North Essex Garden Communities Charter (June 2016)?

**Answer 6:** No comments.

Word Count (Answers 1-6): 300

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