

Response to Q 7

Is it reasonable to assume north Essex increases its employment to population ratio to comparator regions in a mere 17 years?

Simple answer, No. It is grossly unreasonable to make such an assumption

Principal

Chefs, bakers and housewives know a simple truth; that if you follow the recipe for baking bread, you do not get cake or biscuits or pastry. You get bread. Yet it seems the authors of this plan know better. They know that if you do what you have done before somehow you will get a different result.

Argument

The assumption of increased employment provision in the Plan area is set out in document EXD052 on page 8.

These areas all presently enjoy higher GVA per capita than North Essex. Nevertheless, on the basis of the foregoing discussion, we believe they represent a level of economic success to which the North Essex sub-region can reasonably aspire, given its location and potential linkages

I submit this is a false and misleading assessment which completely undermines and devalues the rationale behind this local plan to the extent that it continues to not be fit for purpose as set out in the inspectors letter of June last year.

Justification

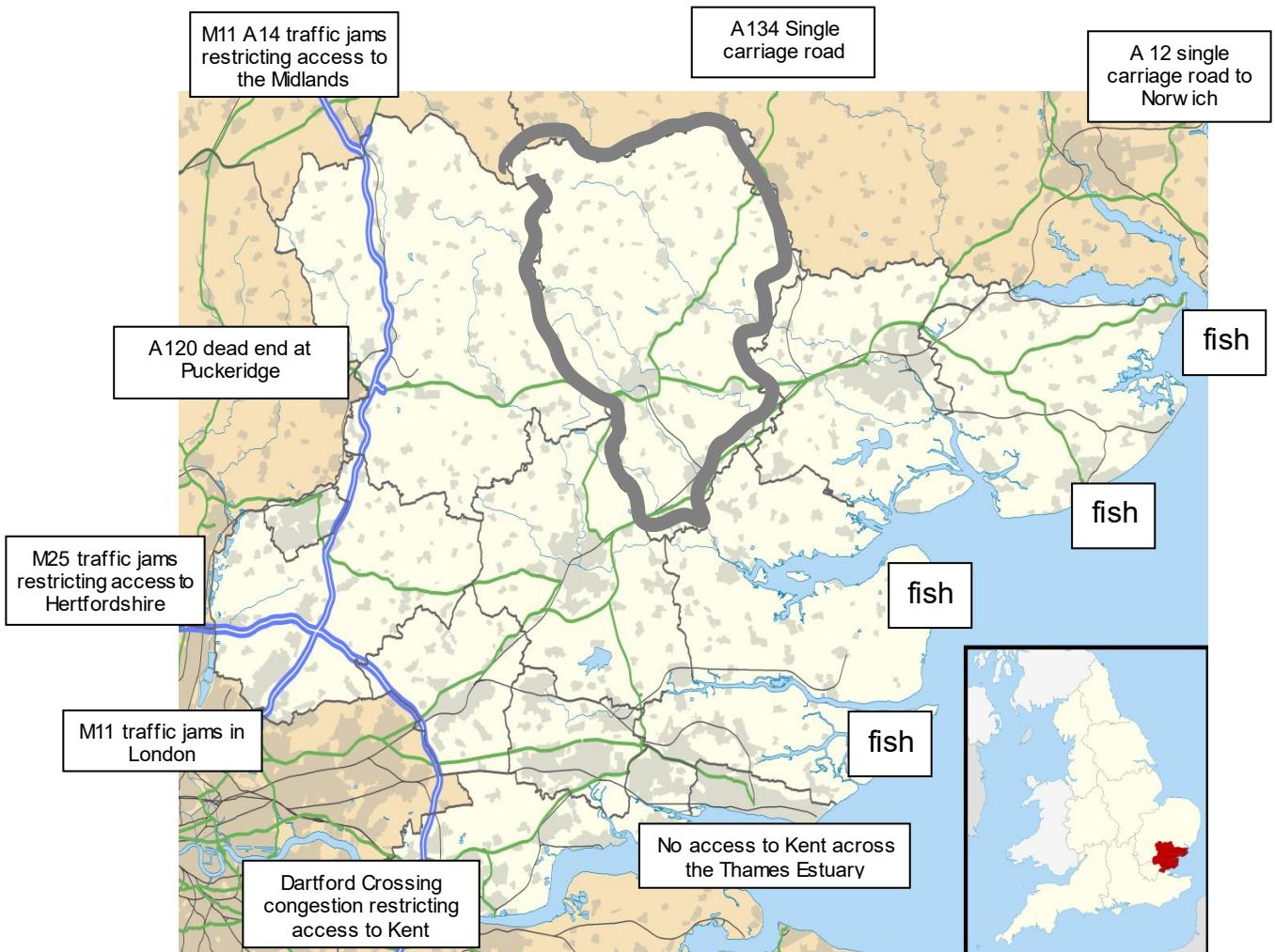
At the national and macro economic level job formation and a job loss is governed by a combination of technology and regulation. Thus gramophone manufacturing jobs were lost to the invention of the CD, which in turn are now being lost to the MP3 download. In terms of regulation local environmental safety and social regulations impose costs on local manufacturing, which are not born by competitors from Asia. In the absence of compensating tariff charges on imports these have lead to job losses in the UK.

In a post-industrial service based economy there are no locational advantages associated with proximity to primary sector commodities such as iron ore or coal such as was the cases in the late Victorian period. Job formation and loss at the regional and sub regional level is now most heavily influenced by accessibility to markets by way of transport infrastructure. This was researched and explained in the report by the Social Exclusion Unit or the office of Deputy Prime Minister, "Making the Connections" February 2003. That reports identified that poor accessibility leads to comparative deprivation.

It showed that poor accessibility causes problems with regard to access to education which in turn curtails employment opportunity.

The diagram on page 8 of EXT052 clearly illustrates the disparity between the arc of prosperity to west and north of London Swindon having a high GVA and the North Essex plan area having a low GVA

Whilst document EXT052 seeks to portray the Plan Area has comparatively well connected and easily accessible, I submit the reality is very different. I further submit the following drawing shows a more accurate picture than that presented by EXD052. (This was presented to the local authority during the early stages of consultation).



Poor transport infrastructure surrounding the district limits access to most parts of the UK outside the immediate area such that the plan area is one of many places offer that inadequate access to economic opportunities. All the

major roads connecting the district to the wider economy are subject to considerable congestion. Average speed on the A12 during the peak travel to work period is somewhere in the region of 25 mph. Allowing for a two hour travel to job time this only allows businesses in Colchester Braintree to trade with other businesses within a 45 mile distance. That is the equivalent of a journey from Colchester to Romford. A delivery from Braintree to W London is uncompetitive due to the congestion around the M25. Similarly access to the midlands is constrained by congestion on the A14. Even though straight-line distance from Colchester to Ashford in Kent is only 45 miles, the road distance is 90 miles with congestion at the Dartford Crossing making trade with the Ashford uneconomic.

I submit the comparative low levels of Gross Value Added identified by the CTB are report is the product of the existing transport network as described in the drawing above. This cannot change without a change in the layout of the transport infrastructure network.

History demonstrates, economic activity is driven and controlled by transport. That trade is not possible without transport links and that when new transport links develop trade begins. Notable examples being the Stockton Darlington railway, the Manchester ship canal, and the failure of London Docklands until the opening of the DLR and Thames Clipper river boat services.

The evidence base includes a document published in 2005, Economic Futures prepared by UWE. I commissioned that report as part of my employment at Malden District Council. That report found corroborates the evidence in EXD052 that employment levels skills and wages in Braintree and North Essex area are lower than the rest of the country. The 2005 report also identified that the economy of the NEA comparatively self-contained. I submit this to be expected given the location of the Plan area as described above.

I submit the reason behind this disparity is because of the physical location of the North Essex area between London and the north Essex coast. There are three principle transport links into the NEA. The A12 between London and Ipswich, (after which the A12 becomes a single carriageway road and is severely constrained by congestion) and the A120, which runs between Harwich and Bishop Stortford. Again after Bishop Stortford the A120 becomes a single carriageway road terminating at Puckerige with alternate traffic signals at the village of Little Haddam. Finally there is the railway. These transport links are all operating over capacity leading to unpredictable journey times and severe economic harm to commerce.

The Cebr document talks in terms of mitigating any residual locational disadvantages, for example by providing improved transport links both within the sub-region and between the sub-region and other locations. However, the transport infrastructure that underpinned the economy as described in 2005 has not changed. Nor will it change under the provisions in this draft Local Plan as there is no provision for any new infrastructure that does not presently

exist. I submit that whilst much is made of upgrading A120 between Braintree and Marks Tey as well as the A12 it is little more addressing an existing traffic jam which will not alter the fundamental accessibility beyond that which was the case back in 2005.

In order to change the circumstances of the north Essex area and allow for increased employment levels, it is necessary to learn the lessons of history and implement construction of new transport infrastructure that presently does not exist. Principle opportunities are an extension of the A120 west from Bishop Stortford through Stevenage to Luton and a further Thames crossing between Essex and Kent's close enough to the north Essex area to allow for trade between Colchester and Ashford.

I suggest that if the proposals for a third London airport on the aisle of grain had been adopted and were delivered with a crossing between Kent and Canvey Island it would be different. Such a crossing will give access between Essex and Kent to allow for trade that presently cannot take place thereby creating opportunities for new employment. However as is always the case the plan has been rejected in favour of repeating the behaviour of the past.

Therefore the only conclusion is that we are continuing to follow the recipe for baking bread we will get bread yet the authors of this plan seem to think bread will become cake

