

Statements on behalf of The Fairfield Partnership

Matter 4 – Infrastructure Delivery (the JCS generally and Policy 20 & Appendices 7 & 8 in particular)

Summary

In responding to these questions, we have focussed on the role to be played by the Local Investment Plan and Programme (LIPP), which the GNDP intend will provide the means for ongoing monitoring and management of the delivery of infrastructure throughout the plan period. We also consider the draft LIPP (Document EIP85), and particularly Appendix 3, which is intended as a replacement for Implementation Framework (Appendix 7) of the JCS.

We believe that the LIPP has the potential to fulfil the role of a delivery strategy, as a supplement to an updated and enhanced Appendix 7, helping to identify infrastructure priorities and the way in which they can be delivered, prioritising development and spending on infrastructure throughout the plan period as appropriate. However, as currently drafted, we believe that both Appendix 7 and the draft LIPP fail to properly identify the truly critical infrastructure, or provide the level of detail required to make informed decisions about the funding and delivery of infrastructure projects.

We suggest that the list of Priority 1 items of infrastructure should be revised to contain only those which are absolute constraints to development occurring. We also suggest additional detail is included regarding project planning and critical thresholds for these items, to set out clearly key requirements and the date by which funding must be available in order to ensure delivery, and the limitations they impose on the JCS growth strategy.

A Is the JCS effective in what it conveys about the infrastructure necessary for its successful implementation and when and by which agencies this will be delivered? Does the Implementation Framework at Appendix 7 adequately identify the fundamentally essential infrastructure items without which its major component elements (eg the major growth locations) cannot progress? Are all 80 items in Appendix 7 equally 'critical', or would some be more appropriately styled 'desirable' or 'aspirational'? If so, which?

1. We are uncertain of the role that the LIPP will play in the ongoing monitoring and delivery of the JCS. Paragraph 4.1 of PPS12 notes that Core Strategies must include a **'delivery strategy'**, which **'should set out how much development is intended to happen where, when, and by what means it will be delivered'**. It also notes that they must set out **'clear arrangements for managing and monitoring the delivery of the strategy'**. It seems that the LIPP can fulfil the role of a delivery strategy, so long as it meets these requirements.
2. Section 6 of the draft LIPP considers issues relating to the delivery of infrastructure, and notes that **'spending will be prioritised through the LIPP.'** The LIPP currently sets out approximate timescales for the delivery of development, and broad categories denoting the importance of different items of infrastructure. In this sense, it can be seen as setting out a timescale and priorities for delivery. However, we are concerned that the level of detail

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within the LIPP is currently insufficient to be truly useful in managing the delivery of development, particularly in the short-term, or understanding the true knock-on consequences of, say, delays in the availability of funding.

3. The Planning Inspectorate's guidance on 'Examining Development Plan Documents: Learning from Experience (September 2009) notes at paragraph 22 that **'for at least the first 5 years of the plan it should be clear what infrastructure is required, who is going to fund and provide it and how it is to relate to the rate of development.'**
4. Taking the Priority 1 transport infrastructure listed in the first part (2008-2016, or effectively the next 6 years) of Appendix 3 of the LIPP as an example, the projected timescales outlined are very broad-brush. The NDR is the first item listed, with an estimated delivery date of 'by 2016', but there is no explanation of what is required in order to meet this deadline. While this table is clear that the remainder of the required funding must be identified, it does not mention that the identified DFT funding is not yet (and may not ever be) available, or comment on where the other funding may come from. Similarly, it does not indicate when funding for the design of the road must be made available in order for this work to be completed in time, or when funding must be in place for construction to begin.
5. A further unexplained issue is that of the role of developer funding. Chapter 6 of the LIPP notes that developer funding will be required towards infrastructure projects which will 'serve' that development¹. This raises the question of whether contributions from growth in a particular location will always be used simply to fund infrastructure projects which will 'serve' them. For instance, no source of funding has yet been identified for the Long Stratton bypass, which is identified as a Priority 1 item of infrastructure. Its priority is clear, as it is a prerequisite for the delivery of development in Long Stratton. What is not clear is its likely funding source, stated simply as 'developer contributions' in Appendix 3 of the LIPP. It would, however, be prohibitively expensive to fund the bypass in advance of any development in this area, and this appears to imply that accrued developer funding may be taken from another area to finance the design and construction of the bypass. As we have set out in our statements on Matter 3A, we are concerned that this approach would be contrary to the current CIL regulations, and it would also appear that it would be contrary to the principle expressed in the LIPP.
6. One clear implication inherent in the LIPP is that there is a need for development to be delivered early in the plan period, in order to fund some of the critical items of infrastructure which rely entirely or largely on developer funding. It would be useful if the LIPP could set out further detail with regard to these items of infrastructure.
7. Furthermore, what appears to be missing from both the LIPP and JCS Appendix 7 is any assessment of infrastructure thresholds, by which we mean the scale of development that can be delivered in advance of critical items of infrastructure being required. There are very few instances where this is explored. For example, the Long Stratton by-pass appears to be a pre-

¹ LIPP, paragraph 6.1.1

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requisite for any development over and above 20-50 residential units (see Policy 7 of the Regulation 25 Technical Consultation, Document STA4), but this is not referenced either in the LIPP or Appendix 7. There are clearly other parts of the GNDP area where there is spare capacity within existing infrastructure to deliver growth in advance of major infrastructure improvements (see for example our comments on Wymondham under Matter 3), and where new development can take place in tandem with the future delivery of critical infrastructure - indeed, where the delivery of that infrastructure is actually dependent upon new development coming forward first, to deliver additional funding. As well as rationalising the 'priority' list, the JCS (whether through the LIPP or directly via Appendix 7) needs to identify what these key thresholds are.

8. We also note that there are also some items of 'critical' infrastructure that are only relevant in relation to the overall scale of development proposed in the Plan, but which do not provide any immediate practical limitation on new development. These should be distinguished and identified separately to 'showstopper' infrastructure.
9. Finally, paragraph 6.2 of the draft LIPP notes that it only sets out 'key projects'. This raises the question of whether there are additional items of infrastructure which may also be required. There appear to be items of infrastructure included within Appendix 7 of the JCS which are absent from Appendix 3 of the LIPP, such as potable water and gas. This implies that there are likely to be additional costs not identified in the LIPP.
10. We have also noted that the anticipated cost of some items of infrastructure varies significantly between the estimate in the JCS and the LIPP. For instance, the Long Stratton bypass reduces in cost from £35 million to £20 million, while the cost of the improvements to the Thickthorn junction have increased in cost from £40 million to £45 million. It is of concern that the estimated cost of these works can vary quite so much between two estimates produced within around a year. It is necessary to establish greater certainty on these points in order to be sure that the JCS meets the requirements of PPS12.
11. These are matters of concern, if these items of infrastructure are to require funding from developer contributions gathered through a CIL or similar mechanism, given the role which the LIPP is to play in prioritising spending from this source. The LIPP must be clear that it contains all such items of infrastructure, and a detailed assessment of their likely cost.

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B Do any infrastructure items represent 'showstoppers' which, if not completed by a certain date, would prevent implementation of particular key aspects of the JCS? Does the JCS appropriately identify them, and the consequences of their non-delivery?

12. Paragraph 6.4 of the draft LIPP notes that Priority 1 infrastructure is 'fundamental to the strategy or must happen to enable physical growth', and it adds that 'failure to deliver infrastructure that is fundamental to the strategy would have such an impact that it would require the strategy to be reviewed.' The implication seems to be that if any of the infrastructure listed as being Priority 1 is not delivered, the JCS must be reviewed.
13. However, the number of Priority 1 items of infrastructure identified in the LIPP implies that they are not all truly critical. We note that the Inspectors criticised the JCS for containing around 80-90 apparently critical items of infrastructure in its Appendix 7. Unfortunately, the LIPP does little better, and contains 49 items of critical infrastructure.
14. This suggests that the LIPP's approach to categorising infrastructure is not entirely consistent with the definition noted above. An overly simplistic approach is demonstrated by applying Priority 1 status to all transport improvements. For instance, whilst undoubtedly of importance, it is difficult to argue that the failure to deliver bus improvements to individual roads within Norwich would undermine the delivery of the whole strategy, and trigger the need for a review of the JCS. On the other hand, the GNDP have repeatedly highlighted the importance of the NDR to a large part of the spatial strategy, and this would appear to be a more genuine contender for classification as critical infrastructure.
15. It is important to identify and prioritise genuinely critical items of infrastructure in the LIPP, so that it can ensure they are funded before other projects, in order to make growth happen.
16. Whilst we disagree with some of the items described as critical in Appendix 3 of the LIPP, we agree with the general principles used to categorise Priority 1 infrastructure. Truly critical items of transport infrastructure, such as the NDR and the Thickthorn junction improvements, and foul water infrastructure such as upgrades to Waste Water Treatment Works, must be implemented in order to allow development to take place, as these items overcome limitations imposed by the Highways Agency and Anglian Water on the amount of development which can otherwise take place. Items such as these must therefore be prioritised above all others.

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D Is the JCS flexible? Does it indicate any actions that may need to be triggered by contingencies, such as failure to achieve timely provision of necessary infrastructure?

17. Our representations on Matter 3 have already indicated that we believe the JCS does have elements of flexibility in terms of housing supply. In addition to allocating development to a variety of locations, the JCS allows for additional development to be allocated through subsequent DPDs / AAPs, through further allocations / smaller sites in Broadland and South Norfolk, within the NPA. This approach will allow development to be prioritised in the areas which can deliver it first, and will allow time and advance funding for critical infrastructure, to enable further development to come forward.
18. Our representations on Matter 2 also suggest alterations to the housing trajectory in the JCS, which will allow development to be phased throughout the plan period. These alterations would reduce the housing requirement for the first years of the plan period, while subsequent DPDs / AAPs bring forward additional development sites, and critical infrastructure can be put in place. The requirement would then increase throughout the plan period, in accordance with the ability of identified sites and new infrastructure to deliver new development. The net effect would be a similar amount of growth within the plan period, but with the benefit of always ensuring a realistic 5 year land supply, in accordance with PPS3, as well as providing sufficient time to deliver critical infrastructure.
19. As set out above, we would recommend that the phasing of critical infrastructure is explored in further detail through the LIPP. The phasing of the housing requirement should also be coordinated with the likely delivery of critical infrastructure, so as to effectively plan a suitable rate of development, particularly in the first five years of the plan period.

11 October 2010