

Afternoon Session -Transportation – Matter 13

1. Appearance at M25 inquiry and outcome

Bell Common interchange deleted

M11 /M25 interchange Land take 88 hectares reduced to 22 hectares

M11 north facing slip roads at Debden. Inspector requirement not fulfilled. Land at LOU.E2 Langston Road should not be released pending full investigation as Inspector 1976 requirement. Potential for major transport interchange at Debden rather than Epping.

Impact of local knowledge and experiences

2. Current local traffic in Epping

Already many junctions operating at capacity

Traffic likely to increase by 17% due to housing proposals.

Mitigation by introduction of sustainable transport.

Particular areas of concern

3 Station Approach, Bower Hill , Kendal Avenue, Station Road. Increase in traffic getting to and from LTE station and rapid growth from current surrounding developments. Solution to redevelop Station unlikely to be possible without development of a major transportation interchange scale . Bus movements and rail heading traffic very considerable and access very restricted. Note that Junction not modelled on EB503.

Other junctions in Epping which are identifies in EB 503 but have no figures are J16 and J17.(Plan page 59). The Hemnel Street/High Road junction (J17) is an accident spot, the Stonards Hill / High Road junction(J16) is very busy. There has been much talk of development becoming identified as East Epping. The impact which this development would have on traffic at J16 and J17, and the cut through at Theydon Grove , should not be underestimated. The District Council has twice refused development at 1-5 Stonards Hill, as has an Inspector Report on Appeal , cited increase in traffic as reasons for rejection.

4 Traffic levels on the High Road are greatly influenced by vehicles diverting on to the local network when there is congestion on the adjacent motorway and trunk road network. The model has not identified this connectivity but local experience indicates wide variability in traffic levels due to through traffic .

5. Air quality levels . Monitoring has concentrated on the Bell Common areas where high levels of particle pollution are identified . Local experience indicated that particularly heavy

levels are experienced outside the civic offices and at the Plain when congestion due to traffic diverting from the adjacent motorway/trunk road network occurs. The combination of gradient and stop start contribute to this. Monitoring should be introduced at both of these locations in the town.

6. Parking problem generally acknowledged . Exacerbated by lack of parking at LTE station .

7. Key to introduction of sustainable transport is walking and cycling. No positive proposals as to how measure will be introduced. Scope is very limited for links between North Weald, Thornwood, Coopersale, Ongar, Theydon due to constraints of Forest and narrow roads. Advance arrival notices for bus routes would be helpful, but dedicated lanes unlikely to be possible due to constraints.

8. The statement that some junctions may be subject to 50% to 80% growth particularly in Epping is alarming when the current and predicted levels of traffic are considered (Report page 64). As is “parts of the existing highway network would struggle to accommodate all the LPSV growth” (page 65). This is beyond an acceptable loading and a level where drivers simply accept delays.

9. It is not acceptable in civil engineering concepts for such major housing proposals as the LPSV to be implemented without significant transportation and other infrastructure provision. Major schemes which have been discussed in the past and have fallen by the wayside include

Ongar Bypass linking A414,A113 and A128

A major transportation interchange at Epping LTE station.

Improvements to B172 and A113 at Abridge

Realignment of A414 at Bobbingworth and approaches to Ongar.

M11 North Facing slips at Junction 5, and hence an effective by pass for Epping

A futuristic transportation link from Epping to Ongar and on to Chelmsford, i.e the old LTE line!

A planned cycle network with designs for interfacing with traffic .

Morning Session – Matter 13 –Infrastructure and Delivery

1. Sub regional context . The LEP objectives , 23000 houses in period 2015-2021 . Is it being met ?
2. Para 2.2 states “ 3900 homes within Epping Forest District “ A much more palatable target than in LPSV.
3. Quantum development – Figure 3 showing only 6 units on allocated sites in Epping whereas 1305 units in Fyfield and 590 in Ongar, 122 in North Weald . significance of figures and effect which total of 9816 units has on LPSV proposals needs explaining. Current development underway and there is a current need for infrastructure to support this.
4. Forecast modelling – Significance of numbers of people rather than units as impact on infrastructure requirements. Why is Settlement Hierarchy Technical Paper not a Submitted Paper ?. Based on 2011 census of population. Unlikely to be same pattern for new housing units – effect on schools, medical provision, car ownership, travel patterns and parking. Particularly on town centre facilities.
5. Linkage between North Weald, Thornwood, Epping for travel patterns not catered for . Impact on M11 Junction 7 will be significant, as will travel on B1393 and A414.
6. Access to and parking at Epping LTE station a real problem only solvable by total remodelling . Consideration should be given into the linking of M11 Junction 5 upgrade, provision of large parking areas and linking to LTE Debden Station as a future relief for Epping .
7. Bus use particularly when associated with Tube travel is well utilised. Longer journeys and as a substitute for car use is less evident in spite of the aged population of Epping who are entitled to concessionary fares . Better publicity of routes and advance electronic timetabling would help
8. The low number for trips made by cycle use when compared with other Districts in Essex is entirely due to the lack of provision of safe tracks between centres of habitation. There is no real plan for improvement of this and restrictions of Forest land and heavy traffic growth will make safe routing and the development of a useable infrastructure between North Weald, Thornwood, Coopersale and Ongar a pipe dream. Improvements to pavements for walking alongside traffic routes is much in need as may be seen from driving around the areas. Until better utilisation of Forest land for communication purposes by other than cars is resolved, there is no likelihood of improvement.
9. Local residents in Epping continually complain that getting appointments with local GP practices is a nightmare. The LPSV proposals will add to what most people would regards as an unacceptable NHS service.
10. Recreational facilities require parking and access. Parking at Stonards Hill recreation ground is difficult and the provision regularly fully used.

11. There has been much emphasis and discussion on Developer Funding for infrastructure. The scale of this and uncertainty due to many factors, viz. Reliance on changes to legislation, estimated cost of schemes, availability of contributions from developers, planning and preconstruction design, land take and availability, conflict with public utilities and national provision, cost of housing and provision of affordable housing. Not the least being the funding gap and programming to meet the proposed housing provision.
I have referred to this as fairy gold if only to reflect the difficulties which many major civil engineering schemes are now experiencing. I have heard figures of tens of millions of pounds for infrastructure proposals which, in my view, have little chance of materialising. This is no basis for a realistic business plan.
12. There is genuine local concern that Epping could become a sprawling metropolis of redbrick boxes. There is nothing which I have heard which stimulates architectural debate and vision. As regards construction, there is a rapid swing towards offsite construction and prefabrication. This requires significant preplanning of sites and architectural concepts. The sites which the LPSV has identified around Epping and Ongar are unlikely to be sufficiently large and stand alone to justify development on a major civil engineering scale justifying innovation. The need for housing is recognised and my comments are not NIMBY based. On a sub regional basis the development of Garden Towns with major civil engineering infrastructure makes more sense than the dumping of houses next to Epping forest and in Greenbelt areas. There is no reference in the submitted documents to the National Infrastructure Commission and the first ever National Infrastructure Assessment. It is hoped that the recommendations from this assessment will be implemented in the LPSV and that the additional funds earmarked for delivery will be sought in preference to Developer Contributions. It should be noted that one of the recommendations of the Commission is that 1.2% of GDP a year is invested in infrastructure. The sub regional statement makes no reference to the proposed M25 link at A127 and Lower Thames Crossing where large sites next to motorways in cutting will become available. The planning of these with the motorway design, and rail access for commuters to London, would meet the aspirations of the LEP more effectively than small scale site development next to Epping Forest.