

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**CABINET
MONDAY 13 OCTOBER 2003 AT 2.00 P.M.**

Agenda Item No

8

**SUB REGIONAL PLANNING: THE STANSTED M11 CORRIDOR
DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS STUDY: draft final report**

Report of the Director of Environment

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1. Purpose of the report

To inform Cabinet of the publication of the draft final report on the Stansted M11 Corridor Development Options Study and of the subsequent sub regional planning process and obtain their views for a response.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The Stansted M11 Development Options Study is one of three studies on the London Stansted Cambridge Growth Area. It provides an assessment of the urbanisation implications of potential further runways at Stansted and advice on a development strategy for the sub regional strategy which will form part of the draft Regional Planning Guidance (RPG 14).
- 2.2 The study recommends a development strategy based on the transport corridors of the M11 and the A120. For the RPG planning period to 2021 growth is concentrated on the north-south corridor particularly around Harlow (to help realise the town's regeneration) with development along the A120 post 2021 when it could be linked to development at Stansted if that were to go ahead.
- 2.3 The draft report proposes additional development in Hertfordshire to 2021 including the Bishop's Stortford Areas of Special Restraint. Land east, west and south of Harlow is preferred to that in Hertfordshire north of the town and those areas would be served by a south west Harlow bypass.

- 2.4 However the dwelling growth numbers to 2021 and therefore the areas suggested for development may not be sufficient to meet the additional demands being made by the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan. There may be pressure therefore for the total number of dwellings to be accommodated in the sub regional strategy to be in excess of that on which the M11 Study is presently consulting.
- 2.5 The consultation period on the Study ends on October 31 and a final report including a report on the consultation will be published in mid November. The draft sub regional strategy will be prepared during the same period for the Regional Planning Panel (November 21) and both the study and the strategy should be considered at a further stakeholder meeting at the end of November.
- 2.6 The Cabinet's comments on the Study will therefore be considered as part of the consultation process while the Executive Member for Environment will have the opportunity to input into the sub regional strategy through the member group steering the study and strategy.
- 2.7 This report will be considered by the Structure Plan and Regional Issues Panel and their views will be reported to Cabinet.

3. Conclusions

- 3.1 A number of suggested comments that Cabinet may wish to make on the M11 Study are discussed in section 7 of this report. The main points which may be included in the County Council's response could be:
- Welcome the study's overall finding that there are relatively few environmentally suitable areas for development in the Hertfordshire part of the core area.
 - Express concern that the sub regional strategy may be required to seek to accommodate additional increased housing growth to 2021 beyond that indicated in this study. If this is the case additional areas beyond the study's development options should be considered and there should be further consultation.
 - Recognise the merits of the proposed southern bypass to Harlow but require further work on the suggested transport solutions, particularly on the implications for traffic in the Sawbridgeworth area and of the north-south bus link, and on the viability and practicality of the proposals.
 - Welcome the fact the study contains no proposals for new road development of the A120 west of the A10.
 - Require infrastructure investment to be made available before the proposed growth is realised rather than after it.
 - Express concern over the lack of detail on the availability and cost of water and sewerage facilities to serve the proposed new developments.

- Express concern over the apparent lack of consideration of the regeneration needs of Broxbourne and of any proposals to help meet those needs.
- Repeat the points made previously (Cabinet 21 July) on delivery vehicles regarding the need for democratic control.
- Request that the regional process allows the preparation and eventual adoption of the draft sub regional strategy to be subject to public scrutiny such that those commenting on the M11 Study have the opportunity to comment on the emerging strategy.

Cabinet may wish to respond to the Stansted M11 Study consultation on the lines outlined above.

4. Background

- 4.1 The Stansted M11 Corridor Development Options Study is the third of three studies on the London Stansted Cambridge Growth Area. The first, the London Stansted Cambridge (LSC) Study, looked at the feasibility of significant growth in the area, including London. Following its publication in July 2002 the Government announced (February 2003) in its Communities Plan that the area was to be one of 4 growth areas in the South East and East with a combined aspirational target of an additional 200,000 dwellings to meet the perceived shortfall of housing.
- 4.2 The LSC Study highlighted the importance of Harlow as a major town and regeneration area within the growth area. The Harlow Options Study published in June considered the role additional development could play in the regeneration of Harlow and surrounding areas, including Broxbourne, and the capacity of the area, including parts of East Hertfordshire, to accommodate such development.
- 4.3 The Draft Final Report of the Harlow Options Study was reported to Cabinet on 21 July 2003 and comments submitted as part of the public consultation process. The draft report of that public consultation process suggests some changes to the original's proposed site options with increased concentration on Harlow East and North Weald Airfield (south east of Harlow) though it does not rule out sites in the Lea Valley or north of Harlow in Hertfordshire. (Note: These conclusions may not now be published.)
- 4.4 The Harlow Study findings have been considered as part of this study, the Stansted M11 Corridor Development Options Study, which looks at the wider growth area within the East Region and whose commissioners include the East of England Regional Assembly and Essex and Hertfordshire CCs. The draft final report of the study has now been published and is in the process of public consultation to be completed by the end of October. The final report including a report on the consultation will be published in mid November.

5. The Planning Process

- 5.1 The Stansted M11 Study has two main elements, firstly to provide advice for the draft sub regional strategy for the growth area which will form part of the draft regional plan (RPG 14) to be published in February 2004. The draft study will be reported to Regional Planning Panel in October and the final report will be presented to the Panel on November 21 together with (it is understood) a draft sub regional strategy.
- 5.2 The timescale means that work on the sub regional strategy must be carried out in parallel to the consultation process on the study. This work will be done by officers (mainly of Essex CC) and the

commissioning member steering group and will need to take account of the Stansted M11 and the Harlow Options Studies and the results of the public consultation as they emerge. A technical stakeholders meeting on the emerging draft sub regional strategy will be held on November 27 (provisional date).

- 5.3 The second element of the Stansted M11 Study is to assess the urbanisation implications of potential new runway growth at Stansted, to 2021 and 2036. A decision on future airport development may be made by Government in December (an Airports White Paper following the SERAS, South East Regional Airport Study – The Future Development of Air Transport in the UK February 2003, consultation earlier this year).
- 5.4 For the present the regional plan and the sub regional strategy are being prepared assuming only one runway at Stansted by 2021 and passenger throughput of 25-40 million passengers per year (mppa). If the Government determines that an additional runway(s) should be built at Stansted it would have serious implications for the plan which would then need to be reviewed.

6. The Stansted M11 Corridor Development Options Study – content

- 6.1 The Study provides an assessment of the urbanisation implications of new runway development at Stansted (potentially 4 runways by 2036) and advice on a development strategy for the area up to 2021 but which could if necessary be continued to accommodate the implications of airport growth. It therefore provides forecasts of job and dwelling growth with one runway at 2021 and 2036 and considers the nature of the area, the towns, services, transport, etc. and the capacity of areas to accommodate growth.
- 6.2 The wider study area extends from the Lea Valley outside London to north of Cambridge and from North Herts to Colchester. However the area concentrated on is that approximating to the 30 minutes drive time from Stansted Airport (the ‘core area’). This is the area most affected by growth at the airport and it includes the regeneration area of Harlow with that of Broxbourne immediately beyond it.
- 6.3 The area encompassed by the 30 minute drive time isochrone, the core area, is shown in Fig. 1 and the projected growth in jobs and dwellings to 2021 and 2036 without further runway development (baseline growth) in Table 1. These forecasts have been made from the consultant’s model using the Regional Economic Strategy ‘Business as Usual’ 2003 Information.
- 6.4 Some of the required dwellings will have already been allocated in Local Plans etc. or are assumed within Urban Capacity Strategies. The consultants assess this figure at about 28,000, leaving a further 20,000 dwellings to be accommodated in the core area by 2021.

Table 1 Core Area: Dwelling and Job Growth 2021 & 2036

(Stansted at 40 mppa with no additional runways)

	2001 Stock	2001 – 2021	2021 – 2036
Total Dwellings	200,000	48,000	24,000
Additional Dwellings		20,000	24,000
Jobs	230,000	35,000	5,000

Additional dwellings are those not already allocated/planned for.

6.5 The Study also projects the additional jobs and dwellings in the core area as a result of Stansted related growth (Table 2). The consultants consider that direct airport employment will be less than that assumed in SERAS as a result of labour productivity but that indirect employment, particularly jobs attracted to the area by the presence of the airport, will be greater. The impact on dwelling demand in the core area is lower than might be expected as a result of assumed changes in commuting flows, as workers over a wide area gravitate towards the new jobs, and of some existing and potential firms deciding not to develop in the area to avoid the competition for labour.

Table 2 Core Area: Additional Jobs and Dwellings resulting from new Runways at Stansted 2036.

	2 Runways	3 Runways	4 Runways
Passengers	82 mppa	102 mppa	129 mppa
Dwellings	4,000	13,000	18,000
Jobs (inc. Stansted)	24,000	40,000	64,000

6.6 The consultants have assessed the environmental capacity of potential development land around the major settlements and along the major transport routes in the area, the M11 and the A120. From a series of options the study arrives at a preferred development strategy with the defining features of:

- The expansion of Harlow.
- The development of settlements along the transport corridors, the M11 and rail line, and the A120 east to Braintree and west beyond Bishop's Stortford.
- The need to introduce high capacity public transport (high quality bus links) along growth corridors.
- The supportive role of major settlements within and outside the core area which will continue to experience large scale growth, Chelmsford, Cambridge and Colchester.

- 6.7 The transport strategy for the area would be integrated with that for the airport passengers. The study's proposals include 2 high quality bus links (one from Epping to Harlow and on to Bishop's Stortford and the airport and one along the old A120 using capacity freed by the new road), a new public transport system for Harlow (the one suggested is Ultra, a track system using small driver-less cars), a south west bypass for Harlow and improvements to the A120 between the A10 and Bishop's Stortford. Not all would be required to meet needs up to 2021 and further work is required on the viability and timing of these proposals.
- 6.8 The general areas proposed for the additional dwellings and job growth to 2021 and to 2036 (with additional runways) are shown in Table 3. The study was not required to show precise locations of development which will be a matter for local plans but it has assessed the areas in detail. Its findings as regards potential development around Harlow are different to those of the Harlow Options Study but, like that study, the area north of Harlow (in Hertfordshire) is not suggested for development at the initial stage.

Table 3: Core Area Proposed distribution of Additional Dwellings

	2021		2036 (nos. runways)			
		1	2	3	4	
Harlow	11,800	14,600	14,600	18,600	24,800	
Loughton	500	500	500	500	500	
Waltham Abbey	500	500	500	500	500	
Bishop's Stortford	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	
Braintree	500	1,000	2,900	6,200	6,200	
Great Dunmow	800	4,300	5,800	5,800	5,800	
Stansted Mountfitchet	4,200	7,300	7,300	7,300	7,300	
New Settlements	0	13,700	14,200	16,600	14,700	
Total	20,300	43,900	47,800	57,600	61,800	

- 6.9 The study also contains a section on the implementation of the strategy and the potential delivery vehicles such as an urban development corporation, which might be used. It notes that a delivery vehicle for development in Harlow may not be suitable for new settlements on the A120 nearer Stansted or for growth of existing settlements.

7. Comment on the Stansted M11 Study Draft Report

- 7.1 The study has collected a large amount of information with the draft final report just one of its outputs. Comments might be divided into 3 sections:

- The level of development forecast
- The development strategy and proposed development areas.
- Transport proposals.

Level of Development

- 7.2 The forecasts of dwelling growth are made in relation to job growth which itself is constrained by the level of assumed population/employee growth. The result for the core area is dwelling growth to 2021 in line with old Regional Planning Guidance (RPG 9) levels extended to 2021. The projection is internally consistent in terms of population and jobs growth with the baseline development being planned for in the study's core area having twice as many new dwellings compared to the number of new jobs.
- 7.3 The study's projections do not take account of any further increase in dwelling growth that may be desired in the new RPG14 to take account of the Sustainable Communities Plan and the Government's desire for a 'step change' in housing development. This issue has not been clearly put before the public who are commenting on the study and the proposed development strategy has not been designed to accommodate such a higher level of baseline dwelling demand or any corresponding job growth. The study's advice to the RPG process for a sub regional strategy for the London Stansted Cambridge growth area may therefore be applied to a greater growth scenario on which there will be little public knowledge or consultation.
- 7.4 Separately it has been suggested that any increase in growth levels at 2021 could be overcome by bringing forward developments proposed in the study for the 2021 – 2036 period. The location of the majority of these developments however is along the A120 where they are intended to be related to new runways at Stansted. If additional dwellings are required by 2021 a wider array of development options than are included in the M11 Study must be considered.
- 7.5 The second aspect is the number of additional dwellings projected to be required to meet the needs of additional runways at Stansted. The study forecasts that a developing Stansted will generate significantly more additional dwellings than suggested by SERAS, 39,000 dwellings with 4 runways compared to SERAS's 18,000. The study's estimates are though less than those estimated by Hertfordshire and Essex in responding to SERAS. A 2 runway Stansted handling over 80 million passengers a year in 2036 and generating over 70,000 jobs is forecast by the study to generate an additional 11,000 dwellings in the whole of the study area.
- 7.6 For the core area the development of a 2 runway airport 2021 to 2036 would mean an increase in passengers of over 40 million and an increase in direct jobs at the airport of nearly 20,000. The additional housing required for the area is estimated by the study at 4,000 dwellings.

- 7.7 It is recognised that even in an area with a tight labour market such as around Stansted not every extra job is filled by an in-migrant employee requiring a house. However there could be serious implications for the local housing and labour markets if 20,000 new airport jobs are to be provided for with just 4,000 new houses in the 30 minute drive time area. The study envisages major changes in commuter flows will mitigate help these impacts. These need to be further investigated, particularly in the light of the 2001 Census commuting information and the 2002 Stansted employee survey both of which should be available shortly.
- 7.8 It may be that if the suggested number of additional houses were provided the airport could find the 20,000 extra direct employees through changed commuting patterns and the displacement of existing firms. However it seems unlikely such a constrained scenario would occur if a Growth Area policy of increased growth to 2021 to meet the needs of the Communities Plan has been followed.

Development Strategy and Proposed Areas of Development

- 7.9 The draft development strategy concentrates development on Harlow, as a town needing regeneration, and on Stansted the major growth generator in the core area. As a strategy this appears sensible but it ignores Broxbourne Borough where regeneration needs are not being addressed.
- 7.10 Post 2021 the study concentrates development around Stansted regardless of whether the airport is expanding. The development implications for areas beyond the core area are not considered in the report.
- 7.11 Major development is proposed at Bishop's Stortford on the Areas of Special Restraint north of the town (within the bypass) and to the north east by Stansted Mountfitchett. This could be over 6,000 dwellings by 2021 in addition to those already allocated and the implications of the combined developments for Bishop's Stortford could be severe. These implications, particularly in terms of traffic, town centre facilities and the provision of secondary education, need much further investigation.
- 7.12 The evidence regarding the environmental suitability (capacity) of the proposed areas for growth requires more detailed assessment. At Harlow the study finds the area north of Harlow to be environmentally unsuited for development and recommends east, south or west Harlow for development. The Harlow Options study consultation summary found in favour of east Harlow and North Weald though it did not discount other areas.
- 7.13 Without favouring any one of the Harlow area options the study's recognition of the environmental quality of areas in Hertfordshire, north of Harlow and elsewhere, can be welcomed.

- 7.14 In concentrating all development (beyond that already allocated) that is required in the core area in the proposed areas for growth, housing development in some areas may be less than might otherwise be the case. In particular it appears some of the natural growth to 2021 at Chelmsford is to be met by development in Harlow and to a lesser extent this may apply to other areas.
- 7.15 For the longer term strategy with 2 additional runways at Stansted a new settlement west of Stortford on the A120 is suggested. The implications of this for landscape and aircraft noise in particular would need much further investigation but such development is not being proposed for the 2001 – 2021 period and so should not feature in the sub regional strategy in RPG14.
- 7.16 No detail is provided as to potential problems regarding the availability and cost of supplying water (and sewerage) to these development areas. The study notes that water supply will be a regional issue and solutions will have to encompass the Milton Keynes Growth Area but this will not satisfy local people who understand there to be a local problem which will be exacerbated by the expansion of Stansted.

Transport Proposals

- 7.17 The study proposes for the 2001-2021 period a southwest bypass for Harlow rejecting the alternative northern A414 – M11 link road as it would lead to more car journeys to Stansted. The northern link might also open up environmentally sensitive land for development in Hertfordshire. In the past this County Council has supported the latter link together with a bypass for Sawbridgeworth but it is not in the present Local Transport Plan.
- 7.18 A new southern road would need to meet the strategic transport needs of attracting A414 traffic away from the centre of Harlow to Junction 7 on the M11 and provide access to the proposed areas of new development west and south of Harlow. The implications for traffic on the A1184 corridor in Sawbridgeworth and Bishops Stortford, which will still be a favoured route from Harlow to Stortford and Stansted, will have to be assessed and there will also be traffic implications in Stanstead Abbots and Roydon arising from the proposed bypass's new junction onto the A414.
- 7.19 All these implications and the environmental and landscape issues need further assessment. The southern bypass as recommended by both this study and the Harlow Options Study may then prove to be an adequate solution to the area's traffic problems.
- 7.20 While the Harlow bypass would need to be in place by 2021 if 12,000 additional dwellings are to be accommodated around the town the study suggests improvements to the A120 west could be after 2021. A

bypass for Little Hadham on the A120 is being considered as a major scheme for inclusion in this county's next Local Transport Plan and while this is not county policy at present the congestion problems at the traffic lights there may need to be addressed before 2021. There is however no suggestion of road development beyond the A10 which is to be welcomed.

- 7.21 As regards public transport the study does consider the role of the west Anglia rail line but finds that while it has spare capacity for commuting northwards from the Lea Valley and Harlow to Stansted this mode of travel is unlikely to be very popular, certainly from the Harlow area. This may underestimate the role Stansted Airport and the new rail franchise operator will play in encouraging rail commuting to the airport but alternative modes will be essential.
- 7.22 Additional rail passenger numbers to London are however inevitable. There will be increased pressure for commuting southwards from the new housing developments in the area but the greater pressure will come from the additional airport passengers. This suggests a worsening situation on the rail line unless there is major investment similar to that envisaged in the SERAS report.
- 7.23 The study's major public transport proposals are for high quality fast bus routes to Stansted. Using road space on the old A120 from Braintree for such a route is understandable though it would probably need to be developed immediately after completion of the new road while the space is available.
- 7.24 However the practicality of a similar route from Epping to Harlow and on to Bishop's Stortford is less clear. There is no spare road capacity on this route, certainly not between Harlow and Stortford through Sawbridgeworth, and the costs of constructing a workable link need further investigation.
- 7.25 The study unlike the Harlow Options Study does not suggest the new bus link should benefit from major development at North Weald though a park and ride facility is proposed there. It seems unlikely though that airport passengers would be attracted to the park and ride with a bus link to Stansted via Harlow and Bishop's Stortford.
- 7.26 There is to be a detailed Transport Study of the issues in the Harlow/ Stansted area funded by the ODPM but this will not report until mid 2004 at the earliest. If the proposed north-south bus link is to form a spine of the sub regional strategy it must be shown to be practical, viable and achievable.
- 7.27 The study's proposal for a new public transport system for Harlow while welcome as an innovative idea also needs to be shown to be practical.

- 7.28 There remains the clear danger that dwelling growth will proceed according to an agreed strategy but that the intended transport improvements to serve them and existing development will not be delivered. It is essential that infrastructure investment is made available before the developments occur if there are not to be severe and unacceptable impacts on the local area's traffic and environment.

Delivery Vehicles

- 7.29 The study has briefly considered the delivery vehicles which might achieve the proposed developments and supporting transport and other facilities. The issues relating to organisations to act in partnership or to replace local authorities to achieve delivery, in particular the potential lack of democratic control, were considered by Cabinet in July. It is welcome that the study recognises that while a development corporation may be suitable for Harlow a less prescriptive solution would be appropriate for the new settlements elsewhere.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report beyond existing budget provision but the County Council as a co-commissioner of the study is committed to further expenditure on the consultation process and potential further work.

Background Information

Stansted M11 Study Draft Final Report 21.09.03 and Key Issues Report August 03

Harlow Options Study Draft Final Report June 03 and Report of Consultation September 03

Figure 1 Core Area 30 minute drive time from Stansted

