

Mr J Hopkins
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**Strategic Planning and
Housing Strategy**

The Basildon Centre
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Tel: 01268 208045

Ask for: Carl Glossop
07 June 2018

Without Prejudice

Dear Mr Hopkins,

TRANSFORMING CITIES BID – Essex County Council and Southend Borough Council

I am pleased to confirm in-principle support for the Transforming Cities Bid as presented by Essex County Council and Southend Borough Council.

The transport modelling evidence that has been used to inform the emerging Basildon Borough Local Plan states that in certain areas of the Borough where junction capacities on the highway network would marginally exceed capacity, it is expected that effective sustainable access improvements will be necessary if the capacity of the local road network is to cope with the additional traffic caused by development in the Borough over the plan period. This approach adopts a more pragmatic approach, potentially avoiding the deployment of more costly physical highway improvements, which could also encourage further unconstrained car use.

It is therefore considered that the proposed capital investment in the bid will be a key enabler for growth, as without the potential new high quality public transport services becoming available through investments such as these, the Basildon Borough may not be able to deliver this sustainably, due to the severe impact it could cause to the local highway infrastructure, thereby preventing developments from being delivered, either through their inability to be found acceptable in planning terms, or due to viability constraining developers' ability to provide the required upgrades to infrastructure on their own.

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The Basildon Borough Local Plan must be supported by a package of sustainable transport mitigation improvements, to encourage modal shift, as well as a range of highway and local junction improvement schemes, to mitigate residual traffic impact as much as possible. In addition, a Sustainable Accessibility Appraisal has already been undertaken to support the highway improvements identified in the Highway Impact Assessment, and there have been several areas in the Basildon Borough where the potential to improve sustainable access have been identified. Access to sustainable modes of choice will be an extremely important measure to mitigate the impact of local development traffic. Therefore our Sustainable Transport Strategy can complement and inform the wider South Essex area strategy if developed.

The recommendations of the transport modelling evidence states that more ambitious sustainable transport and travel demand management interventions should be identified by development in order to demonstrate increased sustainable modal shift, and that this would need to capitalise and expand on the walking, cycling and bus improvements. The analysis demonstrates that the delivery of a combination of more ambitious sustainable transport and physical highway improvements could mitigate the most significant impacts of growth. However, some of the physical transport improvements are much more costly, with a potential total cost in excess of £200m for the Borough as a whole. Therefore, it is imperative that bids of this nature are successful in order to assist in the delivery of more ambitious sustainable transport improvements, unlocking the Borough's development potential and to keep up with the pace of housing delivery.

The aspiration for multi-modal hubs set out in the bid is compatible with the Council's health and well-being, planning and regeneration strategies. It wants to enable its residents greater, real travel option choices via bus, rail, cycling or walking. It should complement the existing Basildon Integrated Transport Package investment from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership of £13m currently being implemented as part of various scheme proposals including in Basildon Town Centre and to assist the delivery of the Endeavour Drive Bus Link, in the Enterprise Corridor.

As with the town centre, the Endeavour Drive Bus Link has been a long-term aspiration of the Council and it is pleased that it can finally become a reality via enabling development nearby. One of the challenges businesses in the A127 Enterprise Corridor frequently advise as affecting their employees and customers has been the lack of alternatives to access the corridor, other than by private car, and the burden this therefore places on the road network and surrounding areas in terms of vehicle parking. This is clearly not sustainable in the long term, with economic growth and regeneration projects being considered across this area. Schemes such as this are an enabler to wider growth and private sector investment and in the longer term, it is hoped they will help encourage greater modal shift amongst employees and visitors to the area and reducing the reliance on the car as the principal means of access.

Please accept this letter as a clear statement of support for the funding application as part of the Transforming Cities Bid. We wish you every success and my colleagues and I would be keen to continue to be engaged in the development of the bid should it be shortlisted for Stage 2 of the fund.

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Yours sincerely

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Matthew Winslow
Head of Regeneration and Economic Development