

Response to Inspector's Issues (ED009)

Representor Id: 215

Comment Id: 1342

M8 - Transport

Q2 *Do the proposals for new development in the CP comply with scenario DS7 in the evidence base to the JCS?*

The JCS transport 'solution' **DS7** has no remaining credibility for its proposals **concerning the western edge of Cheltenham**.

Highways England (HE) came to the JCS Examination discussions alongside GCC (as local Highway Authority) and assured the Inspector that some Transport solution for the Cheltenham UEs could/would be found. Yet since then, HE has continued to block the major planning application for the **NW Urban Extension** (Elms Park) by means of repeated 'Holds'.

The **West Cheltenham UE** (Cyber Business Park plus housing) is also stalled, allegedly waiting for the huge funding needed to convert a long section of M5 to a 'smart motorway' as precondition for **upgrading Junction-10 to all-ways**.

That sketchy 'entry route' to the CyberPark (meandering from M5-J10) is arguably an irrelevance, certainly for progressing the JCS-approved 1100 houses within the West Cheltenham UE. (The developer of the larger NorthWest UE is not seeking M5-Junction10 to become all-ways.)

Primarily access to West Cheltenham needs to be made viable from the **A40 and M5-Junction11**, entering via Telstar Way, which is West Cheltenham's most direct access route.

Yet only very recently has GCC outlined transport improvements centred upon Cheltenham's most critical roundabout, nearby on the **A40** at Arle Court.

The evidence and layouts for this claimed 'solution' still need to be offered to (or be requested by) Cheltenham's LP Examination.

Thus, it cannot honestly be assumed that the JCS has put to bed Cheltenham's strategic Transport infrastructure planning.

The JCS Inspector encountered a Housing 'mess' which required many months for her to identify a proper 'Apportionment' of housing targets between the different Districts, plus handling lengthy challenges by developers at (most profitable but most sensitive) SouthWest Cheltenham.

Thereafter, the urgency of getting this longest-running JCS to some finality meant that the accompanying Transport 'mess' (at roads-deficient Cheltenham) could not be allowed (probably by PINS) to consume further months for a thorough investigation, so the transparent/unconvincing "assurances" by HE and GCC (that some solutions were achievable) were accepted.

And so it has proved, with no delivery progress to date.

This LP for Cheltenham ought not to blinker itself to considering only the sub-strategic sites' addition to Cheltenham's ongoing Transport failure, (a constrained historic town which can sustainably do no more (than it is already struggling with)).

Certainly, the town's best environmental settings must not be squandered as 'replacement' land merely because developers are dilatory about pursuing the approved allocations.