

To

Kate Barker  
Barker Review of Land Use Planning  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
HM Treasury  
1 Horse Guards  
LONDON  
SW1A 2HQ

By e-mail

From

Jim Middleton  
5 Crab Tree Close  
OLNEY  
Bucks  
MK46 5DU

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Phone 01234 712127

[jmr.middleton@btopenworld.com](mailto:jmr.middleton@btopenworld.com)

Dear Kate Barker

**Review of land Use Planning  
Lack of credible strategic plans – suggested case study  
Milton Keynes South Midlands and East of England**

Although it may appear at the fringe of your investigation to my mind the very core of the problem in land use planning is the lack of any sort of credible national strategy for infrastructure. I am sure that all the regions and local authorities you consult will all say that they cannot rely on any long term national plan or scenario against which to plan their developments. Business will say exactly the same – they cannot rely on Government either to plan or deliver at the strategic level. The Government always ensure that there is no linkage between the pace of development and the pace of infrastructure delivery. If there were then they would take infrastructure more seriously and make sure their part of the development bargain was taken forward.

So all the lower level plans come to nothing as there is no credible prospect of the required infrastructure becoming available. I hope you will take a careful look at what is happening with the planning process at the regional and strategic level now. I live at the very centre of the Milton Keynes South Midlands development area which is one of the core areas the Government is relying on to deliver the huge increase in housing and associated economic development. Attached is my summary of the process which has gone on for the last few years leading to the final plan and delivery agencies. You will see that there is complete disillusion with the Government's attempts to talk big and deliver little. The East of England Plan is now going through the same process and you have reached the farcical situation where the Regional Planning Body has disowned its own plan because of the Government's refusal to invest in transport infrastructure.

This is what creates all the trouble and unwillingness of people to plan and develop as the Government wants. If everyone says the existing transport situation is dire and will get worse and the Government says it will plan and do little and will not prepare any projects for the long term then everyone is working in an atmosphere of resentment. It is essential for the Government to take the lead in actually doing something and not just in hectoring everyone else. To plan and deliver successfully you have to look long term and commit to the various stages of project development. Developer, industry and locals are expected to do this against a background of Government dithering and refusal to act on the obvious.

The first thing you should do is get the Department for Transport and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to work together rather than as though they had never heard of one another. Joined Up Government, Integrated Transport, Environmentally Sustainable – it's all spin and little co-ordinated action. If you can get any sensible long term plan that will be delivered then many of the issues you are considering will fall into place.

At the strategic level only the Government can deliver. It is impossible for developers to build and finance strategic inter-regional infrastructure. They are willing and able to deal with local but it is impossible to say widen the M1 on developer funding. Developers will contribute to the local requirements but only national funding will deal with the strategic inter-regional and main inter-urban networks that are so important to the economy. Perhaps the Government could commit to spending some of its windfall stamp duty from all the new houses on strategic transport.

I have concentrated on the rail situation in the attached as it is the biggest farce. The Government has gone round in circles on railways. It is spending large sums of money on maintenance, signals and new trains to make up for the problems of decades of under investment. Passenger numbers and freight are growing faster than ever but there is a total refusal to look to expand the railway as required for the future.

The attached is my summary of the issue and how the Government has to lead rather than complain. If there was a positive attitude from Government then there would be far greater enthusiasm to get on with the job. Your review should look at this as the regional plans are the Government's initiative at the core of their development strategy. If only they would deal with strategic transport as they want everyone else to do with their planning.

Attached Barkerapp.doc summarising the regional planning process, Barkerrailprogramme.doc showing the sort of rail programme needed for the east of England and Barkerlinkprogress.doc showing how the pace of development and infrastructure can be linked at the strategic level to the benefit of all from business through to residents who will all know where they stand, how progress is measured and being able to monitor the development process systematically and understandably.

Yours sincerely

Jim Middleton

## **MILTON KEYNES – SOUTH MIDLANDS DEVELOPMENT AREA A LESSON IN PLANNING THE RAIL NETWORK?**

### **London South Midlands Multi Modal Study – February 2003**

This was a major Government transport study by top flight national consultants steered by regional offices, transport industry and local authorities and environmental groups. It looked at the full range of transport issues and how they could be solved over a long period. Study identified rail overcrowding as major problem on main lines which will get worse and complete lack of any East West routes in whole area.

The whole of the Milton Keynes South Midlands area was included within the study area although their development scenarios did not reach the very high growth now proposed. They forecast rail travel to grow by over 50% in the plan period. Preferred strategy was to promote slow modes for short trips and public transport for longer distance inter-urban movements. No single mode could solve all problems but public transport to be promoted for longer distance inter-urban. The plan required both road and rail development.

Strategic rail required within 20 years included further improvements to WCML, Thameslink 2000 extension from Bedford to Northampton, four tracks at ECML constrictions at Welwyn and Huntingdon to Peterborough, major improvements throughout West Anglia Line from London to Stansted and Cambridge and Ely and new East West Rail Route from Oxford to Cambridge. Extra train paths needed for freight.

It should be emphasised that this was a Government comprehensive study.

### **Strategic Rail Authority – Strategic Plan 2003 – Route descriptions**

This substantial review of the whole rail system identified key bottlenecks on the system that had to be tackled urgently. Problems include West Coast Mainline services for commuters, freight paths for port traffic, the same constrictions on ECML as above, no grade separation at Hitchin, MML constraints, cross London gauge issues and lack of freight paths, Major problems throughout the WAL from London to Cambridge and GEML Shenfield to Colchester. As above no east West routes between London and Melton Mowbray.

As you can see from the above there was a consensus about the problems that needed tackling and the need for urgency.

### **Milton Keynes South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy – July 2003**

Plan included rail as required by above. Projects for WCML further improvements to MK and Northampton, Thameslink 2000 and extension from Bedford to Northampton, MML upgrades, East West Rail from Oxford to Cambridge formed the core of the programme.

## **Public examination report published August 2004 following public examination in March/April 2004**

The panel reported that the over-arching issue raised in the context of transport was a general lack of confidence in the Government's long-term commitment to fund the necessary transport infrastructure in step with the housing and economic growth that it is intended to facilitate. It was a widespread view that the Sub-Region already suffers substantial "transport deficits" and as result of transport investment failing to keep pace with development in recent decades. Without this commitment many fear that current unsustainable travel patterns will simply worsen.

So the panel were clear what everyone thought the key problem was.

The SRA then said to the panel that there was no funding until at least 2021 so no rail projects should be planned for the next 20 years. The panel meekly accepted this as a suitable basis for long term transport planning and said the plan will just contain those schemes the SRA deigned to say may be possible. So many projects were deleted from the plan to the anger of those many bodies who had made the effort to be involved in the process and would be expected to deliver the plan. It could not have been a worse result.

## **MKSM – Alterations published by Secretary of State –October 2004**

Following the angry reaction to the panel's proposals the SoS totally ignored the response and published a strategic plan based solely on the SRA no funds scenario and just put in what the rail industry currently had in their plans. As they are currently obsessed with putting right the problems of the past this is nothing. Essential schemes were put into under consideration or not under active consideration. If schemes are so classed then nothing is done on the preliminary work so they recede further and further into the future. We have a strategic plan based on do nothing to the railways but go gung ho for housing and employment growth.

## **MKSM – Further alterations published by Secretary of State – March 2005**

In a classic Government response to the no doubt furious reaction of many local authorities and individuals the rail schemes not under active consideration were revised to for future consideration. From one do nothing to another do nothing, I am sure everyone was delighted.

**So we end up with a situation where even those delivery bodies do not agree with the plan they are charged with delivering. Is it any wonder there is resentment and a total lack of commitment. The Government needs to see that just talk about what is being invested in maintenance goes no way to dealing with the long term planning.**

## **Highways Agency**

It is interesting that the Highways Agency took a very relaxed approach to the MKSM growth telling the gullible panel that the whole development plan would only add two or three years normal background traffic growth. Since then in response to the

regional plans they have changed their tune to congestion will be worse and endemic and even worse if the required rail schemes do not go ahead. They are looking at road pricing to reduce demand and encourage a switch to public transport. The immediate reaction of train operators was the need for rail pricing to stop anyone transferring to the trains. Unbelievable.

### **The East of England Regional Spatial Strategy – Dec 2004**

This plan was published for comments leading to a similar examination in public. There is a substantial programme of transport proposals to both redress the current deficits and provide integrated, environmentally sound transport for the east of England. The plan contains the classic statement that “Rail schemes emerge as a high priority. However, given current problems in delivering rail improvements the rail investment is proposed for later in the plan period with the much more developed road programme is for earlier delivery”

Even with that Network Rail has made it clear that there is no chance of the necessary schemes in the programme going ahead. The regional authority has therefore removed their support from this part of the plan and there is currently an impasse. It is little wonder there is a lack of drive forward for development given the chaotic state of the planned rail projects.

### **East of England - Regional planning assessment for the Railway – February 2006**

The current overview is that the railway in the East of England is characterised by success and strong growth. 50% growth in rail trips originating in the region between 1995 and 2002 (7 years). They are looking at a much lower rate of growth of 15% for the period to 2016 (14 years) for some reason ignoring the huge developments. This seems a desperate attempt to try and keep a lid on the need for serious improvements. There is not a single mention in the whole document of sustainability and the role of the railway in taking growth and passengers diverted from road to reduce the increasing greenhouse gases. The whole approach is one of discouragement and demand restraint to price off travellers. This does not fit at all well with the public transport encouragement scenarios planned for the region.

Even the Mayor of London is quoted that a major increase in public transport capacity to and through London is essential. However the whole short, medium and long term plan is a series of management measures, although essential to keep things going, do little to look ahead to the sort of railway essential for the successful development of the whole London and South East and East of England area. Whenever the question of investment in the network is raised the document adopts a hand wringing will need money approach. With all this dithering the rail industry will never even get projects to the initial investigation stage.

Typical is the ECML – one of the most important routes in the country. If the Highways Agency were managing that route they would have a scheme ready to deal with the two track section at Welwyn to bring the southern part of the route up to a consistent four track standard. They would not be allowed to do what the rail industry are currently doing to talk of success while planning for failure.

## **What is needed!**

Attached as file Barkerrailprogramme is the sort of rail programme needed in the next 20 years based on all the work done by various bodies. The Government have no intention of developing the railway at all in the sort of way they do the road network. So there will be never ending friction between the regional planners, local authorities, business and developers about the whole development and infrastructure issue. There is no way the pace of development can be improved without serious Government action on this core issue.

## STRATEGIC RAIL TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT – RAIL PROGRAMME FOR IMPLEMENTATION BY 2021

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION
West Coast Mainline Upgrade	Complete works currently underway which give Virgin control of fast lines improving inter-city services but creating problems for regional services and freight.
Rugby remodelling and 4 tracks Rugby to Birmingham	Provides for range of services and for considerable increase in east west movements to E of E, Stansted and Luton. Crossrail and Thameslink 2000 could extend to Rugby or onto Birmingham.
Milton Keynes Station and Hanslope Flyover	Improve access to Northampton for regional services and Crossrail improvements and improve Milton Keynes services with extra platforms to help with problems noted above.
Midland Mainline	Implement general upgrades from utilisation strategy.
Thameslink 2000	Scheme to build on success of current Thameslink operation by extending to King's Lynn, Peterborough as well as Bedford with larger range on destinations south of Thames including Ashford, Guildford, Croydon, Brighton and Gatwick and Thames Gateway in Kent. Links many Regional Interchange Centres across E and SE England as well as access to Central London termini and key areas. Government currently dithering on St Pancras box fit out.
Thameslink 2000 Extension - Bedford – Northampton	Vital extension of Thameslink 2000 services to open connection to West Midlands and North and to serve Milton Keynes – South Midlands development. Access from West Midlands to Luton and Stansted improved. Opens new freight routes as alternatives to current limited options and creates regional connections between regional interchange centres.
Crossrail – regional development including Northampton and Ipswich	Essential project to create a regional Crossrail building on the Government's London only scheme. Provides a Thameslink 2000 style of operation including Northampton, Milton Keynes, Watford, Cambridge, Stansted, Southend, Ipswich, Colchester and Chelmsford with links to destinations across the South East. Essential project linking Regional Interchange Centres in East and South East of England and Central London termini and key areas. Current Government scheme very poor slow stopping service creating huge problems on GE and GW mainlines for regional services and freight. Much better private sector options tabled – London Regional Metro and Superlink. A regional Crossrail is vital to provide link between regional interchange centres across wider se of England.
Felixstowe – Nuneaton Freight – Phase 2	Gauge clearance for large containers, resignalling and passing loops at Ely and Peterborough and double track part of Felixstowe branch.

Felixstowe – Nuneaton Freight – Phase 3	Gauge clearance and additional capacity between Peterborough and Nuneaton.
Bury St Edmunds and Norwich to Peterborough and Cambridge	Implement A14 corridor study rail options – yet to be finalised. Improvements for passengers to build on freight improvements noted above. Should we done with freight scheme if possible.
East West Rail – Oxford – Bedford	Re-open and establish services between Oxford and Aylesbury and Bedford with access to Milton Keynes and Northampton as well. Adds flexibility and freight capability. Studied and planned to death – should go ahead quickly. Huge improvements in rail flexibility and link between regional interchange centres.
East West Rail – Bedford to Cambridge	Establish a route between Bedford and Cambridge to provide through route crossing the most major gap in the strategic rail network in the country. Highly significant improvement in accessibility in wide arc around London, to airports and for freight. Massive improvement in strategic links between regional interchange centres.
Great Eastern Mainline – Shenfield to Colchester	Double capacity between Shenfield and Colchester by four tracking entirely or in significant sections. Important support for Crossrail (see earlier).
West Anglia Capacity Increases	Schemes to serve Stansted and London – Stansted – Cambridge growth corridor. Significant improvements to 4 tracks equivalent to Stansted and add second track to Stansted north curve.
Stansted – second rail tunnel	Second tunnel more than doubles capacity onto airport spur lines for extra services from London and from a large range of other places across the country enabled by the strategic network development.
Cambridge Station extra platforms – possibly also Chesterton Station to north of the City.	Required for the significant increase in services with Thameslink 2000 and Crossrail at the core but with a much wider range of east west services and trains through to Stansted and some trains entering and leaving in same direction. It is a simple scheme to add island platform at Cambridge.
Ely Station	Additional platforms and tracks for passenger and freight operations and north junction improvements.
ECML – 4 tracks at Welwyn	Essential capacity increase to remove severe restriction
ECML – flyover at Hitchin	Takes Cambridge trains over to eliminate severe capacity constraint.
ECML – remodel at Peterborough - for freight and extra platforms	Essential scheme to cater for increased freight usage across the ECML and extra passenger trains as cross country service between E of E as rest of UK develop and extra Stansted services. Station already overloaded.

ECML– 4 tracks to Peterborough	Long term development for satisfactory operation of busiest section of ECML.
Leicester remodelling	Required for operation of mainline and cross country passenger trains and freight.
Northampton remodelling	Essential for Thameslink 2000, Crossrail and cross country service development and freight routing.
Bedford Station	Remodel for with major new role as regional interchange for many new services.
Croxley Rail Link – Watford	Vital local scheme to extend Underground through Watford Town Centre to interchange with all rail services at Watford Junction.
Watford Junction Station	Extra platforms to cater for additional services.
East Suffolk Line Capacity	Upgrades to allow hourly service.
<b>LONGER TERM PROJECTS</b>	<b>OUTLINE DESCRIPTION – PREPARATION WORK TO START BEFORE 2021</b>
WCML	Possible extra tracks south of Rugby to create balanced network and provide adequate capacity between London and Rugby and Rugby and Northampton. There will be 8 tracks north of Rigby and 4 to the south under current plans. Depends to some extent on the possible new high speed line project.
4 tracks Bedford to Leicester	Long term route development
WCML 6 tracks Watford to Berkhamstead	Long term requirement for successful operation of intercity, Crossrail, regional and local services.
Rail Chelmsford to London via Epping with Stansted Spur	New route through Essex with connections to Stansted. Gives some relief to GE line into London.
Essex north south rail	Create route from Thames with cords at Shenfield and Chelmsford for passengers and freight
High speed line to Scotland	Long term scheme which will relieve WCML and ECML through the E of England.

## LINKING DEVELOPMENT RATES TO INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRESS

1. A great deal is made of the infrastructure deficit throughout the RSS but the plan actually does nothing to make sure that the situation does not get worse. The only way to do this is to formally link progress on development to progress on transport. This is not merely a list of schemes with possible construction dates but a broad three stage approach to project development which ensures that the early scheme planning stages are going ahead successfully to enable construction at the appropriate time. If planning work is not done schemes automatically fall behind the programme. To illustrate how the system would work I have drawn typical tables featuring the priority infrastructure schemes and the key development phases over the 30 year period. Typical five year blocks are used for transport schemes at this stage namely:-

(i)	Development of alternatives through public consultation	<b>Phase A</b>
(ii)	Preferred scheme and through public inquiry	<b>Phase B</b>
(iii)	Tenders and construction complete.	<b>Phase C</b>

And similarly three blocks for housing development:-

(i)	Strategic planning towards outline permission	<b>House A</b>
(ii)	Detailed work through to full planning permission	<b>House B</b>
(iii)	Site development and construction	<b>House C</b>

2. By planning these phases in a logical manner the housing development and infrastructure can be kept in tandem. If there are problems development would then be halted or slowed for the infrastructure requirements catch up. The two tables attached show how the situation is at present and what would be need for the development proposals to go forward into the first phase. The method is clear and understandable and having such a transparent process built into the formal plan and monitoring process will give confidence.

3. In the table schemes with no shading are approved and work is going ahead eg on construction of WCML and getting Thameslink 2000 through public inquiry. On the development side the first 100,000 houses are assumed approved in principle but no work is going ahead as transport is not committed. As projects move forward then the various stages A, B and C are cleared allowing development stages below in the same column to commence. Before works gets underway on the housing development phases virtually all the transport phases identified in the column above should be underway. It is accepted that the plan would never run exactly as set out but the monitoring by the plan delivery teams would ensure satisfactory progress.

4. It is assumed that each phase last roughly 5 years and progress is according to plan. Obviously if the pace of transport delivery is very slow each phase could extend over more years and correspondingly housing construction is slowed down to a corresponding sensible pace. By monitoring and reporting regularly using the table those responsible for the strategic plan's progress will be able to demonstrate how the overall land use/transport strategy is being taken forward in a controlled manner that should lead to public confidence in the whole process.

5. The two full tables below show how the system could work and show clearly progress on both development and transport fronts. If the process needs to slow down the periods for each column can be widened to a longer number of years keeping the general relationship between infrastructure and development. The tables must be project and not money based. **It is clear from the present state table that there is no prospect of early progress on strategic infrastructure so development should go very slowly until infrastructure gets underway to avoid worsening deficit situations.** The second table shows the sort of commitment needed to infrastructure for the Government's development aspirations to move ahead. This is my first stab at these tables as there is much I am not sure of in the transport projects. Besides this approach at the regional level it is also possible to carry out at the local level so that one can move up and down the hierarchy.

**PHASING HOUSING WITH STRATEGIC TRANSPORT – present position**

<b>SCHEME OR DEVELOPMENT</b>	Phase1 2000/5	Phase2 2006/10	Phase3 2011/15	Phase4 2016/20	Phase5 2021/25	Phase6 2026/30
<b>URGENT RAIL SCHEMES</b>						
West Coast Mainline Upgrade	C	C				
Thameslink 2000	B	C				
Thameslink 2000 --- (Bedford – North'pton)		A	B	C		
Crossrail – incl Northampton and Ipswich	A	B	C			
Felixstowe – Nuneaton Freight	A/B	C				
East – West Rail --- Oxford - Bedford	A	B	C			
East – West Rail --- Bedford to Cambridge	A	B	C			
ECML 4 tracks at Welwyn	A	B	C			
Cambridge Station improvement	A	B	C			
Peterborough Station remodelling	A	B	C			
Stansted second rail tunnel and access imps	A	B	C			
MML route utilisation outputs	B	C				
<b>SECOND PHASE RAIL SCHEMES</b>						
Great Eastern Mainline Capacity		A	B	C		
West Anglia Route further improvements	A	B	C			
High speed line to Scotland	A	A	B	B	C	C
WCML 6 tracks to Berkhamsted		A	B	C	C	
Lower Thames Crossing			A	B	C	C
<b>URGENT ROAD SCHEMES</b>						
A11 complete dualling to Norwich	B	C				
M1 widening M25 to Luton	C	C				
M1 widening Luton to J13 at MK	A	B	C			
Dunstable/Luton Northern Bypass	A	B	C			
A1 widening J6-8 Stevenage	A	B	C			
M11 widening J8 – 9 Cambridge	A	B	C			
A12 dual 3 M25 to Chelmsford	A	B	C			
A421 Great Barford Bypass	C	C				
A421 Cambourne to Cambridge	B	C				
A421 M1 to Bedford	A	B	C			
A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton	A	B	C			
M25 widening	A	B	C			
<b>SECOND PHASE ROAD SCHEMES</b>						
M1 widening MK to M6		A	B	C		
A1 improvements		A	B	C		
A12 widening Chelmsford to Ardleigh		A	B	C		
<b>HOUSING DEVELOPMENT</b>						
Phase 1 – 100,000 houses	B	C				
Phase 2 – 100,000 houses	A	B	C			
Phase 3 – 100,000 houses		A	B	C		
Phase 4 – 100,000 houses			A	B	C	
Phase 5 – 100,000 houses				A	B	C
Phase 6 – 100,000 houses					A	B

**PHASING HOUSING WITH STRATEGIC TRANSPORT – 2005/6**

**Phase 1 development goes ahead as transport schemes make satisfactory progress**

<b>SCHEME OR DEVELOPMENT</b>	Phase1 2000/5	Phase2 2006/10	Phase3 2011/15	Phase4 2016/20	Phase5 2021/25	Phase6 2026/30
<b>URGENT RAIL SCHEMES</b>						
West Coast Mainline Upgrade	C	C				
Thameslink 2000	B	C				
Thameslink 2000 --- (Bedford – North'pton)		A	B	C		
Crossrail – incl Northampton and Ipswich	A	B	C			
Felixstowe – Nuneaton Freight	A/B	C				
East – West Rail --- Oxford - Bedford	A	B	C			
East – West Rail --- Bedford to Cambridge	A	B	C			
ECML 4 tracks at Welwyn	A	B	C			
Cambridge Station improvement	A	B	C			
Peterborough Station remodelling	A	B	C			
Stansted second rail tunnel and access imps	A	B	C			
MML route utilisation outputs	B	C				
<b>SECOND PHASE RAIL SCHEMES</b>						
Great Eastern Mainline Capacity		A	B	C		
West Anglia Route further improvements	A	B	C			
High speed line to Scotland	A	A	B	B	C	C
WCML 6 tracks to Berkhamsted		A	B	C	C	
Lower Thames Crossing			A	B	C	C
<b>URGENT ROAD SCHEMES</b>						
A11 complete dualling to Norwich	B	C				
M1 widening M25 to Luton	C	C				
M1 widening Luton to J13 at MK	A	B	C			
Dunstable/Luton Northern Bypass	A	B	C			
A1 widening J6-8 Stevenage	A	B	C			
M11 widening J8-9	A	B	C			
A12 dual 3 M25 to Chelmsford	A	B	C			
A421 Great Barford Bypass	C	C				
A421 Cambourne to Cambridge	B	C				
A421 M1 to Bedford	A	B	C			
A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton	A	B	C			
M25 widening	A	B	C			
<b>SECOND PHASE ROAD SCHEMES</b>						
M1 widening MK to M6		A	B	C		
A1 improvements		A	B	C		
A12 widening Chelmsford to Ardleigh		A	B	C		
<b>HOUSING DEVELOPMENT</b>						
Phase 1 – 100,000 houses	B	C				
Phase 2 – 100,000 houses	A	B	C			
Phase 3 – 100,000 houses		A	B	C		
Phase 4 – 100,000 houses			A	B	C	
Phase 5 – 100,000 houses				A	B	C
Phase 6 – 100,000 houses					A	B