

Mr Will Bramhill  
Colchester Cycling Campaign  
Mile End Road  
Colchester  
CO4 5BY

2<sup>nd</sup> March 2018

**A133 Harwich Road and Ipswich Road, Colchester**

Dear Mr Bramhill

I am writing in response to your letter, dated 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018, addressed to Gavin Jones, as Essex County Council Chief Executive. Within which you raise a number of concerns in relation to SELEP's assessment of the A133 Harwich Road and Ipswich Road schemes.

The A133 Harwich Road and Ipswich Road schemes are two of four schemes included within the Colchester Integrated Transport Package (ITP). The total package of LGF funded measures includes Colne Bank Avenue widening, Cowdray Avenue Bridge replacement, Ipswich Road roundabout improvement and Harwich Road roundabout improvements. In March 2015, SELEP approved the award of £5m Local Growth Fund (LGF) to the package. This award of funding was based on the development of a business case by Essex County Council for the project.

The Colchester ITP Business Case was subject to independent scrutiny by SELEP's Independent Technical Evaluator (ITE) prior to the award of funding by the SELEP Strategic Board. Based on the ITE review of the Business Case, recommendations were made to the SELEP Strategic Board for the award of funding. Since the award of funding to the Colchester ITP in March 2015 no further decision has been sought from the SELEP Strategic or Accountability Board in relation to this Project.

The SELEP Assurance Framework requires the scheme promoters for each project being considered by SELEP for an LGF award, to develop a business case for the project. Once the project business case has completed the ITE process, recommendations are made to the SELEP Accountability Board to support their decision making in relation to the award of funding.

SELEP is continually seeking to improve its processes, ensuring that it operates in an open and transparent manner with good governance at the core of its decision making. Since the initial awards of LGF to projects in early 2015/16, such as to the Colchester ITP scheme, the SELEP Accountability Board has been established to take all SELEP funding decisions and there are now higher expectations for the quality of the business cases developed to enable the award of LGF to a project. A more comprehensive SELEP Assurance Framework is also in place, which sets out SELEP's governance arrangements for spend of public sector funding and reflects the National Assurance Framework for LEPs as set by Government.

Project business cases for transport projects are assessed based on their adherence to HM Treasury's Green Book and the Department for Transport's Web-Based Transport Appraisal Guidance (WebTAG). Further information about the SELEP processes for the award of LGF is available on the SELEP website (<http://www.southeastlep.com/growth-deal/how-we-award-funding>) and detailed within the SELEP Assurance Framework (<http://www.southeastlep.com/about-us/assurance-framework>).

In your letter you have raise two specific questions for SELEP, and make some general comments around the SELEP programme management. Responses to these questions are provided below.

*I am concerned about the apparent lack of policing by SELEP to ensure this project meets its aims of being 'an integrated package of improvements' and complies with the Essex Local Transport Plan and other policies.*

Essex County Council, as part of the business case, are required to ensure that all appropriate policies are considered as part of their project submission and draw the ITE and SELEP attention to any key issues or aspects which are relevant to the project. The project is then independently assessed by the SELEP ITE, who consider the projects Business Case adherence to HM Treasury's Green Book and WebTAG scheme assessment methodologies. The assessments are undertaken by a team of transport and economic professionals, who feedback on the strength of the business case, the value for money likely to be delivered by the scheme and the certainty of securing that value for money.

Thereafter the project is monitored by SELEP and updates on projects are reported to the Accountability Board by the Capital Programme Manager on a quarterly basis.

*We understand that other ECC/SELEP 'anti-congestion' schemes, notably the signalisation of the Brook Street/East Hill junction and the relocation of a puffin crossing on the Avenue of Remembrance have failed in their primary aim of reducing congestion.*

For each project completed with support from SELEP LGF there is a requirement for post scheme evaluation of the project to be undertaken. The impact of the project will be considered and assessed through the post scheme completion evaluation, which Essex County Council are intending to undertake during 2018/19, once all measures set out within the Colchester Town Centre project have been completed.

*Could I have documentation to support every instance where Selep has formally exercised its procedures for assurance, including on traffic modelling and the decision to go ahead with single roundabout junctions? Provide documentation.*

SELEP follows its assurance processes, as detailed in the SELEP Assurance Framework, for the independent scrutiny of all funding decisions prior to recommendations being made to SELEP Accountability Board. The report to the Accountability Board includes the recommendations of the ITE following their review of each Business Case. The Accountability Board reports are made publically available ([https://cmis.essexcc.gov.uk/Essexcmis5/Committees/tabid/94/ctl/ViewCMIS\\_CommitteeDetails/mid/483/id/149/Default.aspx](https://cmis.essexcc.gov.uk/Essexcmis5/Committees/tabid/94/ctl/ViewCMIS_CommitteeDetails/mid/483/id/149/Default.aspx)). Prior to the Accountability Board being established, such funding decisions were taken by the SELEP Board, subsequently referred to as the Strategic Board.

(<http://www.southeastlep.com/meeting/se-lep-strategic-board-meeting-march-2015>).

The business case for all projects which are considered and approved by the SELEP Accountability Board for an LGF award are also made publically available on the SELEP website.

(<http://www.southeastlep.com/growth-deal>).

*Were a variety of schemes put before Selep or did it simply accept a variation of ECC's pipeline scheme?*

SELEP is required to bid for LGF funding from Central Government. In doing so the SELEP is required to identify those priority projects which will be progressed, should funding be awarded to SELEP. The Colchester ITP was identified as an investment priority within SELEP's Strategic Economic Plan, which was approved by SELEP Strategic Board prior to submission as part of SELEP's funding bid to Central Government. The Colchester ITP project was put forward by Essex County Council, alongside a range of transport and non-transport projects across SELEP.

Through the submission of the Strategic Economic Plan and the award of the SELEP 'Growth Deal', the Colchester ITP was provisionally allocated £5m LGF by Central Government.

Following the provisional allocation of LGF by Central Government to the Colchester ITP scheme, the project Business Case was developed by ECC and subject to independent scrutiny by SELEP ITE, before final funding award by SELEP in March 2015. At the stage of the business case being subject to independent scrutiny, four schemes were identified for delivery using the £5m LGF allocation.

Within your correspondence with Essex County Council you have requested that your letter and supporting information be circulated to SELEP Board members. The SELEP Assurance Framework provides that all complaints shall be investigated by the SELEP Managing Director, with a response issued by the same in accordance with the timescales provided. The SELEP Board Members will be informed of your letter and details of this response at the next Strategic Board meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

Yours sincerely



Adam Bryan

SELEP Managing Director