

Will/John,

Thank you for the excellent presentation this morning. Apart from the comments I made regarding the extension of Crossrail to Ebbsfleet in order to open up the swathes of development land beyond Abbey Wood and the conundrum of airport expansion (what ever is agreed no one will be happy, it'll either be a compromise and/or a sub-optimum option), I would like to offer a couple of other thoughts:

You rightly pin-pointed the important links between housing, employment and transport (I don't think "no-growth" is a realistic option, it was tried in the 1950s and almost destroyed the prosperity of London). But the loss of employment space to housing is becoming a real issue, especially in my "leafy-suburb". Some former factory units probably don't have a viable future as employment space but I recently heard of a local small business employer who had to surrender his lease as the landlord was forcing him out by unreasonably increasing the rent in order to convert the building to flats, and he is not alone.

Also don't dismiss entirely the densification of "Acacia Avenue". While most house building will remain focussed on major sites, windfall sites are likely to make an important contribution as well. They certainly made a significant contribution to house building in Docklands during the 1970s and 80s. Also here in suburbia approximately 80% of planning applications locally are from householders wishing to extend their properties with converted attics and garages and garden extensions. Another up to 5% seek to demolish single houses to be replaced by two or more dwellings.

You have already identified sites in and around the stations on London's new rail lines as prime targets for new housing. The sale of over-station development and rail construction sites as they become available could help subsidise the necessary infrastructure and also put the public sector in the driving seat to force early redevelopment (through building agreements). Additionally opportunities should be considered for the Mayor to acquire potential development sites in the vicinity of the new stations (beyond the "limits of deviation") for subsequent sale to house builders at a profit to further cross-subsidise railway construction and the necessary social infrastructure.

Best wishes and good luck, Howard.

PS: the comments are mine, and not offered on behalf of CWG

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