

MINUTES
of the
CHELMSFORD POLICY BOARD
held on 19 December 2022 at 7:00pm

Present:

Councillor I Fuller (Chair)

Councillors D Clark, G H J Pooley, I C Roberts, A Sosin, N Walsh and T N Willis

Also present: Councillor M J Mackrory

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Gulliver, Knight, Thorpe Apps and Whitehead.

2. Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded that they must disclose any interests they knew they had in items of business on the meeting's agenda and that they must do so at this point on the agenda or as soon as they became aware of the interest. If the interest was a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest they were also obliged to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the meeting. Any declarations are recorded in the relevant minute below.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 29 September 2022 were confirmed as a correct record.

4. Public Questions

Five public questions and statements had been submitted to the meeting, three of which were asked in person. One related to the National Highways A12 widening scheme and the other four related to Item 5 on the agenda.

The first statement was from the Boreham Conservation Society, who appreciated the concerns recognised in the Council's Local Impact Report (LIR) regarding the adverse impact for Boreham should the current southbound access to the A12 between Hatfield Peverel be removed. The Board heard that concerns were widely shared amongst Boreham parishioners. The Board also heard that at least 25% of the responses sent to the Planning Inspectorate in respect of the A12 to A120 DCO had come from Boreham residents objecting to the adverse impact flowing from the proposed removal of the Southbound access. They asked if it was possible for the Council to amplify their shared concerns by adding to the LIR document.

In response, officers detailed that many of the highlighted concerns would be raised as part of the submission of the final LIR along with the technical aspects highlighted. Residents were

also reminded they would be able to submit comments as part of the A12 DCO examination, which would be running from January to July 2023. The Board noted that they still shared the concerns raised and would echo the points raised, making them clear in any final submissions.

The other four questions and statements related to Item 5 on the agenda. The following points were raised by members of the public and were responded to during the presentation of Item 5.

- Additional cycle routes, including one direct to Beaulieu School from Channels and from Beaulieu Station Northwest and Southwest would rectify current important missing links in the network.
- A cycle/pedestrian bridge should be provided between Beaulieu and Boreham when the rail line would be closed in 2023.
- Onsite and offsite cycle routes should be made available before the first occupation of the development.
- Domsey Lane should be blocked off to traffic due to its historic status and should be returned to its former status of a quiet and safe lane. This would allow the continued and safe use of it by pedestrians, cyclists and horses.
- Local residents supported the proposal to add a turning circle in place below Peverals Farm, this would stop the lane being used as a cut through.
- Domsey Lane was an unrestricted narrow single carriageway with room for a single vehicle travelling in one direction, with no footpath, cycleway or street lighting.
- The DFD lacked detailed analysis specifically on the impact the plans would have on Domsey Lane and its residents.
- The proposed crossing points would immediately change the character of the lane and also reduce it in length.
- The DFD also referenced future access points being made via newly acquired land in the future.
- The lane should not become an active travel route due to its unsuitability for pedestrian, cyclist or vehicular traffic, this would pose significant safety risks.
- The Channels employment hub was completely at odds with the aim to have journeys completed on public transport as non-residents would still need to drive there.
- The development would cause significant disruption for Domsey Lane residents for the next 15 to 20 years. Further plans should be provided to show how the historical character and its residents would be protected.
- The movement strategy within in the masterplan did not give sufficient consideration, or solutions to the protection of Little Waltham from increased traffic on Back Lane, Brook Hill and the Street.
- The village had already been affected by other nearby developments leading to it being used as a cut through to other parts of Chelmsford.
- Could a commitment be given as part of the masterplan to protect the village from rat run traffic and to ensure it kept its rural quiet character and safety for pedestrians.
- A consultation should be held with the local village population and the Parish Council on road changes, restrictions and other traffic control measures.
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5. Chelmsford Garden Community – Strategic Growth Site 6 Development Framework Document

The Board were asked to consider the Chelmsford Garden Community DFD, which formed part of the Stage 1 Masterplan Framework and sought their agreement to recommend it to Cabinet for approval. The Board were also asked to note progress on other elements of the Framework.

The Board were informed of the vast scale and complexity of the development and noted that it was the largest taken on by the Council and one of the most exciting to design. The Board heard that there had been significant partnership working with Essex County Council, Homes England, the developer consortium and many others. It was noted that the new development area essentially joined up with the existing developments at Beaulieu and Channels and was part of the overarching local plan strategy. The Board heard that the new rail station continued to be on track along with the new bypass road that would both compliment the new development. It was noted that approximately 5,500 new homes would be delivered as part of the Chelmsford Garden Community, alongside new roads, schools, healthcare facilities, neighbourhood facilities and 50% of the area would be green space. The Board heard how the area was split into three different zones, which would lead to separate planning applications, the DFD however would knit the three applications together, leading to one consistent space.

The Board were provided with a detailed presentation from officers, that summarised the key aspects of the three planning framework documents, the Development Framework Document, the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and the Planning Framework Agreement. The Board were informed of the below key areas;

- Site Location and Local Plan Policy
- Strategic Transport Infrastructure
- The three Outline Planning Application Zones
- Consultation Processes
- Key changes as a result of the consultation processes
- Site Constraints and Opportunities
- The Shared Vision and Ethos based on Garden City Principles
- The Key Deliverables, Targets and Metrics
- Guiding Framework Principles
- Illustrative Masterplan and Framework Parameter Plans
- Movement Strategy and Active Travel Network
- Green and Blue Infrastructure areas
- Waste, Utilities and Energy
- Health and Community Infrastructure
- Employment
- Community Stewardship
- Village Centre Hierarchy and Village Centre Accessibility Plan
- Density and Character
- Northern RDR
- Domsey Lane
- Phasing and Delivery

The Board also heard responses to the earlier public questions as detailed below;

- Existing cycle routes were already in place between the school and the Channels development, but improvements were being sought to the surfacing of the bridleway between Beaulieu and Channels, ensuring routes between the new and existing developments.
- Cycle routes were programmed in for the Beaulieu station opening

- A horse rider, cyclist and pedestrian bridge is proposed between Beaulieu and Boreham as part of the A12 proposals with completion planned for 2027/28 to align with station opening.
- Many active travel routes would be made available as soon as possible once the development started.
- Consultation had already been and would continue to take place around the issues regarding Domsey Lane. The comments made had been taken on board and no decision or final proposal would be made until all comments had been heard. It was noted that all options remained open and conversations would continue with residents and Essex County Council as the Highways Authority.
- The DFD sought to minimise extra traffic on Domsey Lane, with the design and layout of the Garden Community intended to minimise extraneous traffic to assist with protecting the lanes rural character.
- It was however unrealistic to believe there would be no impact but the Council were keen to mitigate and manage that impact on Domsey Lane.
- Detailed traffic modelling and management plans would be in the relevant planning applications and the Council would add conditions as appropriate to minimise impact.
- One of the key elements of the DFD was to remove as much strategic traffic as possible by utilising the benefits of the new North East Bypass and new train station.
- Traffic assessments would highlight any mitigations deemed necessary and consultations would be held through the usual channels.
- Parcels of land that came forward near Domsey Lane would in theory be possible development areas but ECC as Highways Authority would not sanction vehicular access from Domsey Lane.
- Domsey Lane did provide a critical core North to South link within the community, ideal for cycling and walking and would be seen as one of the primary active travel routes.
- Conditions could be used to ensure heavy plant crossing at Domsey Lane would be kept to a minimum, this would be considered as part of the outline planning applications.
- In summary, the Council continued to want residents to be at the heart of any consultations and looked forward to moving on cooperatively with local support.

The Board thanked officers for their detailed presentation and responses to the public questions or statements. The Board also thanked those involved in bringing the Chelmsford Garden Community to its current point and commended the hard work that had been involved. It was noted that the work undertaken had been groundbreaking, especially in a short space of time. The Board noted that the DFD detailed fundamental principles, including no gas connections and other excellent benefits for the local environment. It was also noted that the Garden Community as a whole along with the neighbouring new bypass and station would be the largest development considered by the Council and officers should be thanked for reaching this stage. It was also noted that the new Parish tier Council would encompass the Garden Community, along with Beaulieu and Channels, ensuring existing residents would benefit too.

The Board were asked for their views on four remaining key areas of the DFD that could then be passed onto Cabinet, to assist with their consideration of the DFD in January 2023. The Board discussed in detail, Stewardship, Active Travel, Site Wide Design Principles and Domsey Lane and agreed the following views to be considered by Cabinet;

Stewardship:

- In terms of stewardship, the Board were keen to emphasise that they did not want service charges to be payable in the Community, but that they should be kept to a minimum if required.
- The Board were in favour of Council ownership of the green and open spaces, whether it be the City or parish tier Council.
- The Board wanted the Community to be at the heart of decision making, including having assets in community ownership where appropriate. It was felt this would be important for the long-term success of the Garden Community.
- The Board did not want management companies involved who would be making profits from the Garden Community.
- The Board's preference was for adoption of open spaces by the Council and then non-profit entities taking on ownership.

Active Travel:

- The Board were very happy with the work already undertaken to ensure excellent active travel links across the Garden Community.
- The Board were keen to emphasise the importance already detailed in the DFD of the Garden Community having an active travel focus, of walking, cycling or bus use before vehicular use.
- The Board were also pleased that the DFD detailed how the active travel routes linked up to wider routes towards the City Centre and Broomfield Hospital.

Site wide design principles:

- The Board were happy with the significant work already undertaken on the design principles that would be used across the whole Garden Community.
- The Board emphasised the importance of a coherent and comprehensive approach across the three different planning application zones to be established at the Stage 1 masterplan stage.

Domsey Lane:

- The Board were happy to note the detailed consultation taking place regarding the proposals that could affect Domsey Lane.
- The Board also noted the importance of monitoring the impacts before significant interventions that may ultimately prove to be too extensive.

The Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development also echoed the views that had been put forward by the Board. They noted that there had been extensive and significant work taking place over the last few years for the plans to have reached the DFD approval stage. They informed the Board that large areas of partnership working had been crucial to deliver the DFD and it was an important milestone in the project. The Board heard that it would be an exemplar development for future large-scale developments and other Garden Communities. The Cabinet Member also thanked the developer consortium for their enthusiast approach in

working alongside the Council's green policies and that the Garden Community would easily exceed existing standards. The Board also heard of the net zero aspect of the project which had also been of great importance to the Council and had been acknowledged throughout. The Board heard from the Cabinet Member, that along with officers they would continue to ensure outstanding matters would be resolved as they had been up to this point so far and details could be further discussed by the Cabinet as required.

RESOLVED that;

1. That Policy Board recommend to Cabinet that the Development Framework Document (DFD) attached at Appendix 1 be approved subject to agreement of an amended active travel network; inclusion of an appropriate process to agree Site-wide Design Principles; Domsey Lane access arrangements and the principles of the community stewardship arrangements.
2. The Board strongly supports the provision of quality active travel links within and beyond the garden community to places such as the hospital, Beaulieu railway station and the city centre and that the DFD should clearly show how they might be provided.

The Board strongly endorses the use of consistent overarching design principles across all parcels of development and that this should be clear within the DFD to give a clear sense of place to the garden community.

The Board believes that public open spaces should be within the control of the councils, with appropriate commuted sums, but, if service charges are payable to maintain elements that are not adopted, they should be as low as possible and managed through a not-for-profit stewardship body.

The Board recognises the character of Domsey Lane within the development and that sensitive measures should be taken, in consultation with residents, to allow appropriate access.

3. That Policy Board delegate the Director of Sustainable Communities in consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development, to make any final changes to the Development Framework Document (DFD), including any arising from matters set out in recommendation 1, ahead of consideration by Cabinet.
4. That Policy Board note the Planning Framework Agreement (PFA) Summary attached at Appendix 2 and the commentary on the preparation and monitoring of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) set out at Section 10 of this report.

(7.02pm to 9.30pm)

6. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

Chair