

CHELMSFORD POLICY BOARD – 14 March 2024

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

Item 5 - Chelmsford Local Plan – Preferred Options Consultation Documents

1) Question from Mr P

Chatham Green has been rejected for development due to its relative isolation from existing services and facilities, which would lead to higher reliance on the use of the private car. This is in clear contradiction of this evidence-based document produced by Essex Highways, the Sustainable Accessibility Mapping Appraisal which scores Chatham Green at 1.79 for sustainability - higher than Great Leighs at 1.57 and higher than Bicknacre at 1.64 where a lot of new housing has been allocated. Why has the Council ignored this document?

My site Pondsides Nursery and Yard, that I have promoted in this local plan and two previous plans, has yet again been rejected for any allocation or more importantly to be included as part of the Defined Settlement Boundary for Chatham Green.

My site is not isolated from services and facilities, it's also an industrial Brownfield area situated next to the bus stops and therefore more sustainable than the current defined settlement boundary that is set back from the A131 and further away from the bus stops.

This boundary could easily be extended by including Baileys Cottage, the Windmill Pub and two more dwellings next to the village green, which would then include my site which would then be in the main built-up extent of the settlement. The advantage of this is that it would bring the current boundary closer to the bus stops. My site has not been mentioned in any of the latest documents and I feel it clearly hasn't been fully assessed and that the Council has overlooked a sustainable brownfield site that scores a very high 113 points on the SHELAA.

Indeed, a Councillor on this committee recognises my site at Chatham Green as sustainable in the discussions I have had with him, and also Mr. Potter said to me that he believes a place is sustainable if you can conduct your day-to-day needs without using a car. This is certainly the case here with the excellent bus service next to my site.

Can I ask that the Council reassess my site before this document goes forward to the next consultation stage.

2) Question from Mrs H

There is no indication that the report has addressed the fact that an application has been submitted for designation of this whole facility as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty- now known as a National Landscape. Has it, and if so, doesn't the Policy Board need to know of its findings?

3) Question from Mr I

In sustainability terms, why has the Hammonds Farm development been proposed as an option in preference to areas where there is existing infrastructure for the development, i.e., North East Chelmsford? The option is shifting growth beyond the A12 into rural settlements such as Little Baddow and Sandon where there are no existing facilities.

4) Question from Mrs R

The proposed site is partially in the flood plain of the Chelmer Valley with very limited routes in and out, one being Hammonds Road to the roundabout at the A414 and Junction 18 of the A12. The other is via a single track bridge to Church Road which has protected lane status. Church Road is regularly closed due to flooding in the wet months and is single lane in parts as it approaches Main Road, Boreham. Plantation Road, Boreham is often congested and traffic volumes are already predicted to increase substantially. Is the council aware of the considerable negative impact a development at Hammonds Farm will have in Boreham and the likely impact of flooding on the development itself?

5) Question from Mr S

Given that Chelmsford has delivered development ahead of the original schedule (as signalled by the reduction in the current Local Plan from 8,000 to 5,000 houses), can the Policy Board be sure that this additional capacity is needed ?

6) Question from Mrs G

Is it not strategically risky to concentrate 70-80% of the required additional development in a single area where infrastructure is currently wholly inadequate and where only a single land promoter is involved? The council being so reliant on a single entity would give them no leverage.