

13 June 2017

Planning and Licensing Committee

Response to Chelmsford City Council Draft Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation

Report of: *Phil Drane – Planning Policy Team Leader*

Wards Affected: *All Wards*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks Members approval on a formal response to Chelmsford City Council's Draft Local Plan Preferred Options consultation (March 2017). A response has been submitted to comply with the consultation deadline, subject to the approval of the Council's Planning and Licensing Committee.
- 1.2 The Council's response sets out general support for the Draft Local Plan's commitment to meeting Chelmsford's identified development needs in full, and to continued collaboration through the duty to cooperate on strategic issues that affect our two areas.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 To approve the response to Chelmsford City Council's Draft Local Plan Preferred Options (March 2017), as set out in Appendix A.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 Chelmsford City Council held a public consultation on a Draft Local Plan Preferred Options for the statutory minimum of six weeks from Thursday 30 March to Thursday 11 May 2017. The Local Plan is at an early stage of the plan-making process (Regulation 18), which details strategic overview of development; site specific proposals for housing, employment and Travellers; as well as draft policies that manage development within the wider Chelmsford area (borough). In time, this will replace policies in the City Council's current Local Development Framework.

3.2 Brentwood Borough Council is duty bound to undergo the duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities on preparation of their Local Plans. The Council's response has been limited to comments on high-level strategic issues that impact directly on Brentwood Borough.

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires each local planning authority to produce a local plan. This should set out strategic priorities for the area and plan positively for development and infrastructure needs, in line with national policy and guidance.

4.2 Local plans should include strategic policies to deliver:

- a) Homes and jobs needed in the area;
- b) Provision of retail, leisure, and other commercial development;
- c) Provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, water supply, waste water, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
- d) Provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities; and
- e) Climate change mitigation and adaption, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape.

4.3 The Chelmsford Draft Local Plan Preferred Options seeks to apply the following spatial principles to deliver the City Council's strategic priority and vision:

- a) Maximise the use of brownfield land for development;
- b) Continue the renewal of Chelmsford City Centre and urban area;
- c) Locate development at well-connected sustainable locations;
- d) Utilise garden community principles for strategic development allocations;
- e) Protect the Green Belt;
- f) Protect the character of valued landscapes, heritage and biodiversity;
- g) Respect the pattern and hierarchy of settlements;
- h) Ensure development is deliverable;
- i) Ensure development is served by necessary infrastructure;
- j) Use development to secure new infrastructure; and
- k) Plan for the longer-term.

4.4 Chelmsford City Council shares a housing market area (HMA) with three other districts (Braintree, Colchester and Tending), together they have assessed the future housing and job needs across the HMA.

- 4.5 Braintree, Colchester and Tendring Councils are preparing a shared strategic plan for the period to 2033. Due to a mismatch in timetables Chelmsford is not covered by this shared strategic plan. However, all authorities are collaborating on strategic cross-boundary issues and the alignment of strategic investment priorities in support of sustainable growth.
- 4.6 To meet the full development needs for the plan period (2013-2036) Chelmsford City Council have made provision for;
- a) **Housing:** a minimum of 18,515 net new homes at an average annual rate of 805 net new homes per-year (provision for the objectively assessed need). In addition, to ensure flexibility of supply and to help significantly boost housing supply, as required by the NPPF, the Draft Local Plan seeks to allocate sites to provide capacity for a further 20% over the plan period.
In order to meet Chelmsford City Council's identified requirements of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) in full, provision is made for 10 Traveller pitches and 24 Traveling Showpeople plots.
 - b) **Employment & Retail:** a minimum of 55,00 sqm of business employment floorspace and 13,400 sqm of convenience retail floorspace over the plan period.
- 4.7 To accommodate this growth the Draft Local Plan directs new development to sustainable locations within three "Growth Areas":
- a) **Central and Urban Chelmsford:** This growth area will accommodate around 3,200 new homes, 9,000 sqm of office and business, and 11,500 sqm of convenience retail over the plan period. New development will be focused on previously developed land within Chelmsford. Provision is also made for five Travelling Showpeople plots.
 - b) **North Chelmsford:** This growth area will accommodate the most significant amount of new housing and employment growth in the form of attractive well-designed communities, centred around open space/leisure facilities and a new business/science park. In addition to existing commitments at Beaulieu and Channels, this includes around 5,000 new homes and 45,000 sqm of office/business floorspace over the plan period. Provision is also made for 10 Traveller pitches and 14 Travelling Showpeople plots.

- c) **South and East Chelmsford:** This growth area will accommodate over 1,000 new homes, 1,000 sqm of flexible business floorspace and 1,900 sqm of convenience retail, by concentrating development on greenfield land around the existing town of South Woodham Ferrers and at two sustainable Key Service Settlements of Danbury and Bicknacre, which are both outside the Green Belt. Provision is also made for five Travelling Showpeople plots.

4.8 The City Council's spatial strategy seeks to focus growth in the most suitable locations outside the Green Belt and as a result growth is directed to east Chelmsford, away from the shared authority boundary with Brentwood Borough. Therefore, whilst it is acknowledged the Draft Local Plan Preferred Options sets out significant growth for Chelmsford, it is considered that any direct impact on Brentwood Borough is likely to be minimal. Nevertheless, it is recognised that growth will add additional burden to major infrastructure, such as the A12. Therefore, the Council's response continues to stress the importance of this strategic cross-boundary issue for Essex and the south-east of England as a whole. Working in partnership to secure investment that will improve capacity is a priority for both authorities.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

5.1 It is considered appropriate that Brentwood Borough Council express general support for the way in which the Chelmsford City Council Draft Local Plan Preferred Options looks to meet its identified development needs in full, and commit to continued collaboration through the duty to cooperate on strategic issues that affect our two areas.

6. Consultation

6.1 The Chelmsford City Council Draft Local Plan Preferred Options was available for public consultation between 30 March and 11 May 2017.

6.2 Officers have responded to the consultation in order to meet the deadline. This response was submitted subject to the approval of Members at the next available Planning & Licensing Committee.

7. References to Vision for Brentwood 2016-19

7.1 The Chelmsford City Council Local Plan will have a close relationship with the emerging Brentwood Local Development Plan, the production of which is a key priority in the Council's Corporate Plan.

8. Implications

Financial Implications

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8.1 None directly arising from this report.

Legal Implications

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8.2 The Localism Act 2011 places a legal duty on local planning authorities and other defined local bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters. It is not a duty to agree, but local planning authorities must make every effort to secure the necessary cooperation before they submit their Local Plan for examination. The cooperation should produce effective and deliverable policies on strategic cross boundary issues.

9. Background Papers

- a) Chelmsford City Council Draft Local Plan Preferred Options (March 2017)

10. Appendices to this report

Appendix A: Brentwood Borough Council response to the Chelmsford City Council Draft Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation (May 2017)

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