

South Woodham Ferrers Town Council
Masterplan Site 10 – Land North of South Woodham Ferrers
Policy Board (14th January 2021) Submission

The Town Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on this Masterplan for this development, so far: -

- We are impressed with the layout and green focus of the development and the amount of open space that is being provided.
- We fully support and are pleased with the commitment from the developers to ensure the whole site is constructed to Essex Vernacular design standards, in keeping with the rest of the town.
- We have noted the changes to the public transport commitments, and we are pleased that a (5 year) expansion of the 36 service, including its through journey to Broomfield Hospital, as well as enhanced links to Basildon, are now part of the Masterplan submission.

We are a little disappointed that the proposals do not address the need for a more direct bus service to Maldon, especially as the submission appears to promote a bus stop at Eve's Corner in Danbury as some major Maldon-South Woodham Ferrers-Chelmsford interchange station.

The Town Council raises the following points that we believe require further clarity and understanding.

- We feel the pedestrian crossing of the Burnham Road for senior school pupils still remains unsafe and we would like to see more thought and consideration for safer crossings to be examined.
- We believe the new primary school should be constructed and brought into operational use as soon as possible as this will reduce crosstown car journeys, a problem already identified by the submission from Essex Highways. Trying to juggle existing capacity and catchment areas will increase journey distances for all our primary school pupils and create considerably more car journeys.
- We are not satisfied with the level of local consultation for the sports use of the new public open spaces being offered by the Masterplan. We believe the town should have more of a say as to which sports are supported and offered facilities at all the spaces that will be available within the whole town.
- We are supportive of the national policies being adopted in using electricity for heating and cooking and we would ask that this new development take the lead in demonstrating a commitment to these initiatives as well as ensuring the provision of adequate electric vehicle charging points
- The question of traffic on the Burnham road and through to the Rettendon Turnpike will always be an emotional one, and the Town Council has strived to remove all the emotion from our rationale. This has been compounded by the secrecy of 'surveys' that have been undertaken, but never published, or made available for public or committee scrutiny. The Town Council challenges the surveys that have been updated for this meeting, based on local knowledge, regarding the congestion points at the Turnpike and currently, The Town Council cannot form a reasoned opinion on any other potential traffic issues of the roadway due to the lack of comprehensive and verifiable surveys and/or accurate modelling. Essex Highways admit in their update to this committee, that the road system will not accommodate the expected traffic flows and is relying on mitigation approaches, which are currently unproven for use within a community of the size and geographical positioning of South Woodham Ferrers in relation to its dependencies on other towns and locations within the regional area.

- The Town Council also believes that the processes for obtaining accurate surveys and modelling have not been followed for Site 10 at the same level of detail and engagement as they were for the other Chelmsford Masterplan site locations. As such, there can be no conclusive or verifiable evidence that ensures a sustainable transport policy for this particular site can be delivered. In the opinion of the Town Council, this area or the Masterplan is still liable for a Judicial Review.
- We note that there are still significant drainage capacity issues to be addressed and whilst we acknowledge that talks are on-going with Anglian Water, we do have considerable concerns that issues, such as the current Burnham Road drainage not having the capacity to carry further run off and the issues of ensuring that the lowest point on the Masterplan site (which is almost at sea level at normal high tide) can handle the distribution of waste water which, based on the Masterplan, will be from around 75% of the whole site. We would like to see these issue fully resolved before approval is given to this Site 10 Masterplan.
- We note that on the east of the development, there is little provision for local retail, and we would like to see some form of 'convenience' retail put in place to service the eastern bloc of the development which appears a little isolated.
- Finally, we believe the proposed cycle path to the new open spaces sports area is an elongated route and does not follow the 'desire line'. We already know at weekends especially, a very large number of youngsters and sporting people choose to cycle to our current facilities, indeed it's part of the independent enjoyment of going to the sports club. We would like to see the cycle ways refocused within Site 10 to follow the direct desire lines between the new development open space sports area and interchange points with the existing town.

Our questions are therefore: -

1. When will there be further engagement and consultation carried out by Chelmsford City Council for determining the use of the extra sporting open spaces being made available?
2. May the Town Council have it confirmed whether there will be further consultation, in conjunction with Essex Highways, that full, independently verified, surveys and junction modelling will be shared / carried out, to ensure a true assessment that the proposed traffic scheme is integrated and sustainable, before this Masterplan is approved?
3. When will the planners will re-visit the 'safe crossing' points on the Burnham Road especially the two crossing points which will carry up to 70% of secondary school children to and from Site 10?
4. May the Town Council have it confirmed that the processes followed for determining the traffic surveys and modelling used for Site 10 were of the same depth, level of detail, integration and quality checking as they were for other sites in the Local Plan (that for example, assisted in determining the need for the new northern link road)?

The Town Council wishes to note for the record that level of engagement it has received from Countryside Properties and its Devcomms teams has been very professional, high quality and welcoming and indeed a very pleasant experience throughout this process and should be considered as a model for future development engagements of this type.