

Great Waltham Parish Council – Response to Chelmsford City Council's Local Plan Consultation

1. Great Waltham Parish Council (“GWPC”) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the two documents made available for consultation in relation to Chelmsford City Council’s Review:
 - Chelmsford Local Plan Focused Consultation – Additional Sites (Regulation 19) Document, and
 - Integrated Impact Assessment: Focused Consultation Additional Sites (Regulation 19) Addendum
2. The primary focus of this response is in relation to Growth Site Policy 14b – Land South of Ford End Primary School (“the site”), and in particular refers to the information provided at pp.38-40 inclusive of the Focused Consultation Additional Sites (Regulation 19) Addendum.
3. Previously GWPC made comments in relation to the site as part of its responses to these previous consultations:
 - Local Plan Review Preferred Options 2024, and
 - Local Plan Review (Regulation 19) 2025.
4. The City Council will recall that in its submission for the Local Plan Review (Regulation 19) 2025 consultation GWPC said it was “supportive of a new development at Growth Site Policy 14b (Land South of Ford End Primary School) and would consider a higher number than 20 dwellings, which would be determined by any such increased amount delivering the traffic calming measures [which were then cited in detail]”.
5. GWPC is surprised and concerned that the revisions proposed for the site include increasing the number of new homes to ‘around 75’. While it maintains the position of being supportive of the new site and potentially for the number of dwellings to be greater than the original 20, GWPC believes that 75 is too many when the current number of dwellings in Ford End is considered. An additional 75 homes would, in effect, increase the total number by approximately 50%, and that such a change would fundamentally alter the character of the village. Residents in Ford End are rightly proud of their tightly knit community and are concerned that its character and cohesion would be irreparably harmed by a development of the scale now being proposed.
6. GWPC is therefore of the view that the number of new homes should be less than 75. However, it is mindful that with a lower number its priority list of community benefits may not be completely fulfilled, so it would wish to fully understand the dynamics involved in there being fewer new dwellings than is now being proposed and any consequent reduction of community benefits.
7. GWPC notes that the development would be one ‘*including affordable housing*’ and that ‘*the final amount will be confirmed through the planning application process*’. However, GWPC would have preferred to have seen a more definite (number or percentage) offered in the documentation. Its view is that in the absence of a sufficient affordable housing provision in the area (exacerbated by a lack of social housing), the proportion of affordable homes at the development should be as high as possible, but without impacting the ability to deliver the community benefits cited elsewhere in this response. GWPC remains keen to understand whether (and if so, on what basis) preference will be given to members of the local (parish) community when opportunities to purchase or rent such properties become available.

8. On a more general point, GWPC would expect the City Council to be taking advantage of its powers in relation to ensuring that, as far as possible, empty residential homes in its area are brought into occupation, thereby reducing the need for new build developments.
9. Before detailing the specific community benefits it would expect to see from such a development, GWPC has a comment about the site which becomes much more relevant with any increased number of dwellings. This relates to the hydrological impact of the development.
 - 9.1. Specifically, the site (which we believe remains unaltered in size despite the proposed increase in dwellings) is situated on land which is higher than the majority of existing homes in the village, and like them forms part of the drainage catchment area of the River Chelmer. See map in Appendix.
 - 9.2. In particular, surface water from higher ground at the southern end of Ford End (including the site) drains into the Chelmer via the drainage system in and around Church Lane (the site itself is approximately 6 metres higher than the point in Church Lane that water leaves the highway). There are currently significant issues in relation to the capacity of the drainage system to cope with existing levels of water run-off, leading to flooding of the road and properties along part of Church Lane.
 - 9.3. The introduction of more hard surfaces on the site will exacerbate the existing drainage problem, and therefore GWPC believes one of the outcomes from the development must be the implementation of adequate surface water run-off drainage provision from the site, which as a minimum should take the form of a repair of the current system, together with any necessary upgrades to take account of the extra water likely to enter the system that much faster because of the speedier run-off which will be created by the conversion from agricultural land to a site of domestic dwellings.
 - 9.4. GWPC believes such improvements should be carried out in addition of any sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) introduced on, and for the benefit of, the site itself.
10. In relation to new community benefits, GWPC maintains the view that any development with increased numbers must be accompanied by the delivery of traffic management measures.
 - 10.1. The Chelmsford Local Plan Focused Consultation – Additional Sites (Regulation 19) Document itself states: '*Speeding by vehicles on Main Road (B1008) is an issue, therefore traffic calming should be provided as part of the development including speed reduction measures such as average speed cameras*'. GWPC agrees with this assessment and therefore maintains its position that as a minimum and as a first and highest priority, an average speed camera scheme through the 1km stretch of the B1008 through Ford End village should be installed and operationally funded before any properties on the site are occupied.
 - 10.2. GWPC continues to believe that in addition to the average speed camera scheme, full consideration should be given to the introduction of additional traffic management measures to further reduce the speed of vehicles on the B1008 as they approach or are driving through the village, for example, by:
 - Extending the existing 30mph limit to the south in order to coincide with the start of work at the development;

- Retaining the length of the existing 40mph buffer zone to the south such that it will start earlier because of the extension of the 30mph zone, and to consider implementing such extensions earlier to raise drivers' familiarity with all changes.
- Making the B1008 between Ford End and Barnston a 40mph zone.
- Reducing the current speed limit through Ford End village and adjacent roads from 30mph to 20mph.

always provided such changes do not compromise the installation of the average speed camera system.

10.3. In addition, GWPC requests that the design specifications for the configuration of the new junction between the B1008 and the development's access road (and which, depending on its design, could be of itself a traffic management feature) take into full account both the need for regular vehicular and pedestrian movement from the site and the acknowledged existing issue of speeding on the B1008.

11. An issue which has been highlighted to GWPC by residents and especially parents whose children attend the school is the hazards associated with crossing the B1008 because of the volume of (often speeding) traffic. Therefore, while GWPC understands the reason such an innovation has not been introduced previously (because, when an 85%-ile speed measurement was taken at the school, it was decided that there would be insufficient lines-of-sight throughout the village for a pedestrian crossing), it now believes the development of the site will provide a new opportunity to create a crossing point close to the school. GWPC believes that because such a feature has previously been ruled out because of line-of-sight distance requirements, the introduction of an average speed camera system would reduce the distance required and make it a viable innovation.
12. In supporting a development, GWPC requests that the detailed design and specifications of any future planning application recognise and complies with any relevant sections of the Great Waltham Parish Plan and Village Design Statement. In addition, GWPC asks that consideration is given to the intelligence gathered from Ford End residents during traffic consultations in recent years.
13. In addition, GWPC owns and operates a recreation ground at Pleshey Road, Ford End. Any new development in the village will increase its usage, which is of course welcomed. However, any rise in use will require increased maintenance and upgrade of equipment. The site is already scheduled for improvement works (based on current usage) when GWPC's finances allow. Therefore, GWPC requests that, in accordance with the statement '*Financial contributions to new or enhanced sport, leisure and recreation facilities*', the development also funds work at the existing recreation ground to both complete outstanding upgrades and to provide new or improved items of equipment to reflect the anticipated increased use. GWPC can provide details of the improvements it believes would be required. GWPC believes that, given its location adjacent to both the site and the school rear entrance, the existing recreation ground should be prioritised when considering enhanced sport, leisure, and recreation amenities.
14. Furthermore, GWPC recognises that other interested parties in the village may seek access to benefits which may be available from any expanded development. In particular, GWPC is supportive of applications made by Ford End Village Hall (Charity number: 226854) and/or Ford End C.E.V.C. Primary School.

14.1. In relation to Ford End Village Hall, the Document states:

- *'Consideration should be given to the provision of a new village hall on site. [...] The site provides the opportunity to consider the replacement of the existing village hall. The precise specification will be considered as part of the site planning brief process'.*

GWPC supports any application made by Ford End Village Hall (Charity number: 226854) ("Village Hall") in relation to a new village hall or improvements to the existing hall as part of part of the development. In considering its support GWPC recognises that a new or renovated village hall will be a significant benefit for the community. Given its more favourable location closer to the centre of the village, we understand the Village Hall would welcome the opportunity to consider either a new or renovated hall on the existing site, but we are also aware that if that is not possible or practical, they would welcome the alternative of a new hall on the development site. GWPC supports this approach. No doubt the Village Hall will make its own representations as part of the consultation process.

14.2. In relation to Ford End C.E.V.C. Primary School, the Chelmsford Local Plan Focused Consultation – Additional Sites (Regulation 19) Document states:

- *'Development should avoid harm to its setting by limiting height to one and half storeys near the school'.*
- *'[...] an area of land for parking should be made available for the primary school's use adjacent to the site allocation. This should be funded by the development and used for staff parking only'.*

GWPC agrees with the first point and supports the inclusion in the scheme of the use of land for new parking spaces exclusively for the school

15. In conclusion, GWPC lists below its priority order for community benefits accruing from the development.

- 15.1. An average speed camera scheme through the 1km stretch of the B1008 through Ford End village is installed and operationally funded before any properties on the site are occupied.
- 15.2. The introduction of the other traffic management measures detailed in this response to complement the introduction of the average speed camera scheme.
- 15.3. The funding of new and improved facilities at its Pleshey Road, Ford End Recreation Ground.
- 15.4. The implementation of changes agreed between the developers and Ford End Village Hall (Charity number: 226854) trustees in relation to a new or improved village hall facility.
- 15.5. The implementation of changes agreed between the developers and Ford End C.E.V.C. Primary School.

Appendix

The map below shows the topography of Ford End. (See <https://en-gb.topographic-map.com/map-p49tdn/Ford-End/>).

