



## WRITTLE PARISH COUNCIL

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Matthew Perry  
Senior Planning Officer  
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Civic Centre  
Duke Street  
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Dear Mr Perry

### **Re: Masterplan Submission for Strategic Growth Site 2 (18/00001/MAS)**

The Masterplan Submission for Strategic Growth Site 2 (18/00001/MAS) was discussed at Writtle Parish Council's Planning & Development Committee Meeting on Monday, 17 December and the Committee had the following objections.

#### **The proposed development to the West of Chelmsford.**

Under section 1 – Executive Summary – this site is described as in the Plan's Growth Area 1 – Central and Urban Chelmsford. This site falls in the Parish of Writtle in an area which is neither central nor urban and is currently a greenfield agricultural site. The development is described as a 'Gateway into the City' moving away from the strategy of satellite developments and further encouraging the expansion and urbanisation of the areas surrounding Chelmsford likely to significantly erode the buffer between the village of Writtle and the City. Development in this area is wholly opposed by this Committee.

Page 32 of the Masterplan states that the document has been shaped by Crest Nicholson through a continuous and formal process with input from consultation with major stakeholders but the Masterplan is considered to under quote the extent of the proposed development by reference to around 800 homes as the recently published Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report states on page 6 approximately 900 dwellings and approximately 50 Bed Care Home which has not appeared in any of the documentation or submissions to date. The Masterplan document is clearly out of date and needs to be revised and reissued for further public consideration reflecting these significant changes.

In section 7, page 20 to 31, the proposals are summarised under Structuring Elements and Design Evolution – Access and Movement

The proposed development will result in significant adverse traffic and transport issues, impacting on the existing surrounding road network. The traffic modelling by Essex County Council does not reflect the true potential increase in traffic in the area generated by the proposed development. The upgrade of the A1060/Lordship Road junction and provision of two new roundabout accesses to the proposed development will not be sufficient to suitably mitigate the transport impact.

The extent of the proposed road infrastructure is not adequate to mitigate the transport impact in this area and the timing of its delivery is uncertain. There is no certainty that the modal shift required to achieve the level of car use anticipated by this Plan will or can be achieved. Insufficient detail is provided as to the extent and timing of other modes of transport infrastructure needed to support this development and the realistic lower reliance on car based movements.

Insufficient detail is provided in relation to the proposed pedestrian links necessary to facilitate the improved pedestrian access required to provide a more accessible development that will result in less reliance on private car usage.

The proposed development represents the considerable erosion of the rural/urban boundary of this area of the Writtle Parish which will not and cannot be mitigated adequately by the proposals in the Plan.

The development will not enhance the landscape character of this area and in fact be harmful.

The development will represent the commencement of coalescence between Chelmsford and Writtle, which will be exacerbated by the transport links required between Chelmsford and the proposed development area.

The proposed development site requires a significantly higher proportion of higher grade agricultural land than the 2.5/2.2% overall in the Local Plan. This is not appropriate nor has this been given adequate weight when considering alternative options for locations housing development.

The proposed development will have an unacceptable impact on landscape character, soil, water and flood risk.

There is risk that the extent of archaeological remains in this location will impact the nature and amount of development which can be delivered in this area and which should be recognised in the Plan.

The Parish Council retain strong concerns in terms of local infrastructure provision and the impact on this as a result of the proposed development.

It is unrealistic to expect significant changes in the living and working patterns of future residents in this area within this Plan period to the extent that they will achieve better health and wellbeing.

### **Site Infrastructure**

It was noted that the proposed development had been shifted westwards into an area of special landscape value. This area is planned to be occupied by 3 football pitches, a cricket pitch and pavilion and a site for show people area. The sports pitches and pavilion have recently been added to the development and the Parish Council had not been consulted on the type of sporting facilities that would be needed in the Parish. The Committee could not see any proposed car parking provision for the sports facility and the proposed facilities would increase traffic to the site. It would result in extra noise/disturbance for residents of the dwellings planned close to the pitches.

It was agreed that the formal and informal sports facilities were incompatible and should be separated. The Committee felt that financial contributions should be given to expand existing sports facilities off site and replace with more family friendly informal recreational facilities, as originally

proposed. There are a number of facilities off site already, including Old Chelmsfordians, Writtle College, Writtle Sports and Social Club and Chelmsford City FC.

The travelling show people site has been moved near the A1060 and this will make another traffic issue for the site.

The Committee noted that the within the site infrastructure requirements there should be appropriate improvements to the local and strategic road network. There are minimal improvements proposed to the roundabout on the A1060 at Lordship and a slight alteration at the junction of Chignal Road.

On page 12 reference is made to the distant views of the spire at St Mary's Church in Widford from the ridge in the centre of the site. The higher area of the site is going to accommodate the focal point of the scheme including the new neighbourhood centre which is classified as medium high density residential, predominately 2-3 storeys. The site will be urbanised by the higher buildings again eroding the rural nature of the surrounding settlements of both Writtle and Chignal.

### **Historic and Natural Environment**

The Committee supports the buffer to the south of the development fronting the Roxwell Road as long as there is appropriate landscaping. There has been considerable support for a buffer from parishioners within the Writtle Parish. It was noted that there should be a substantial belt of trees and shrubs planted along the whole of the northern perimeter of the site.

The Masterplan identified an area for allotments on Page 22 and on Page 34 this is now being referred to as informal parkland. There is a high demand for allotments in Writtle and surrounding areas and as allotment gardening is becoming ever increasingly popular and there is an emphasis on being self sufficient, the Committee felt that there should be a provision for allotments in the Masterplan.

### **Access and Movement**

It has been recognised that the secondary education facility for Warren Farm would be Hylands School. It has been stated that pupils would walk or cycle through Lawford Lane to the school. This is at present an unlit lane and then deteriorates further into an unmetalled footpath closer to the school. There is no direct vehicle access from the proposed development to the school. At the present time, there is significant pick up and drop off of pupils, by parents' cars at the Chelmsford Road entrance to the School causing traffic/pedestrian issues. Given current trends, it is more likely that pupils originating from the development will be driven to Hylands School, (especially in the Winter), and the most direct route to and from will be via the A1060, then through Lordship Road to the Prestons Junction, then along the Green to the Chelmsford Road Entrance. This traffic, especially in the morning peak, will join and cross the existing congested routes through Writtle Village.

The reliance on buses, as promoted within the plan is all well and good, but that they would have to use the same route as cars, potentially worsening congestion, as there was no provision or possibility to provide a bus lane on the A1060 and Chignal Road. It was felt that there would need to be enough incentive to get people to use them. It will always be a congested road and there needs to be some hard infrastructure to tackle journey speeds and congestion. The alternative route through Melbourne Avenue, will when joining the Broomfield Road, be congested, meaning that this is not a viable alternative to using the private car

The Masterplan indicates a new roundabout and featuring a pedestrian/cycle crossing on the A1060. This area of the Roxwell Road already has a garage, car wash and the Old Chelmsfordians sports facilities and it was felt that there would be significant conflict at the roundabout with the mix of pedestrians/cyclists/buses and cars. Furthermore, the current speed limit along this stretch of road is 60 miles per hour which again represents a significant risk to pedestrians and cyclists.

The Committee noted that there had been no consideration for likely increased traffic volumes generated as a result of the development through Writtle, not only after the development is complete but during the considerable length of the construction period. Lordship Road, The Green and Lodge/Margaretting Road is a route to the A12 and is a likely route to be used by future residents of Warren Farm. The Committee noted there is a weight limit on the bridge in Lordship Road and was concerned about how this can be enforced with heavy construction traffic entering the site, having passed through the Village.

On page 11 of the Plan, it states that Warren Farm is close to the City Centre, railway station and bus station and there would be significant potential for trips to be made by active modes such as walking and cycling. The site is 2.5km from the centre of the developments and this is not considered a realistic option for those with young families or those older residents of Warren Farm.

The Committee discussed the long term likelihood of how realistic it would be for the site to have new bus routes and when these improvements would be implemented. The Committee also did not feel that traffic management measures had been addressed through Writtle in this respect.

Although the Committee supports the principle of residential development and the expansion of the City of Chelmsford, the proposals detailed in this Masterplan for the site known as Warren Farm, in the Parish of Writtle, will result in significant further congestion in an area, where roads are already at 100% capacity during peak times. This will detract from the rural and semi rural nature of the area and its immediate surroundings, will erode the buffer between the Village of Writtle and the City of Chelmsford and also reject the validity of the plan as there are significant omissions, which must be included if the Masterplan is to be considered fully.

Yours sincerely



Sue Bell  
Vice Chair  
Planning & Development Committee

Cc: Mr Jeremy Potter, Chelmsford City Council  
Cllr Tim Roper  
Cllr Tony Sach