

CHELMSFORD TOMORROW

Chelmsford Town Centre Area Action Plan

Topic Paper 6 Other Matters

March 2008

Chelmsford Town Centre Area Action Plan Examination Hearings 22.04.08 to 01.05.08

Topic Paper 6 – Other Matters

I Purpose and Scope of Topic Paper

- I.1 This Topic Paper is one of six produced by Chelmsford Borough Council to provide context and baseline information to assist the Council's evidence into the Independent Examination of the Chelmsford Town Centre Area Action Plan DPD (CTCAAP), which will commence on 22 April 2008.
- I.2 This Topic Paper anticipates the main issues that the Inspector is likely to examine and addresses representations that have been received at the submission stage. Evidence-related papers the Council will provide for the Examination will include:-
- the Council's *Self Assessment of Soundness* [CD/CFD/035] which sets out the reasons why it is the Council's belief that the submitted Chelmsford Town Centre Area Action Plan DPD is 'sound' in relation to each of the nine tests of soundness set out at Paragraph 4.24 of PPS12 [BD/NAT/017].
 - Six interrelated Topic Papers; *Topic Paper 1: The Strategy for Chelmsford Town Centre*, *Topic Paper 2: Delivering Infrastructure*, *Topic Paper 3 Transportation Strategy*, *Topic Paper 4 Retail Strategy*, *Topic Paper 5 Managing Flood Risk*, and *Topic Paper 6 Other Matters*.
- I.3 Each of the Topic Papers provides the context and broad basis for the Council's evidence in relation to the topics identified. They should be treated as an inter-related suite of papers, which should be read together to give a strategic overview. Throughout the Topic Papers, references are made in square brackets [XXXXXX] to documents referenced in the Related Documents List and held in the Independent Examination Public Library.
- I.4 In essence, the Topic Papers identify the relevant evidence base work, which has supported the evolution of the policy or issues, assess the main issues that arose from consultation responses and examine the information and guidance provided by the Strategic Environmental and Sustainability Assessments (SEA/SA). The Topic Papers, where appropriate, include succinct responses to the issues raised within representations made at the Submission stage. They also address the main issues that have been raised in the Inspector's Matters and Issues for Examination and provide the Borough Council's initial and general responses to those matters.

2 Other Matters

- 2.1 This Topic Paper (No. 6 – Other Matters) addresses a number of issues raised by respondents to the Submission AAP consultation that are not covered in the other Topic Papers including land allocations, public realm, waterways and the Proposals Map.

3 Small Scale Land Allocation and Uses

- 3.1 Much of the focus of the CTCAAP is on Opportunity Sites where there are opportunities for major change. A balanced town centre economy requires opportunities for small enterprise and premises for small and medium sized businesses will be encouraged by the Borough Council to support the broadening of the economic base. 85% of businesses in Chelmsford employ between 1 and 10 employees, and the Borough Council is conscious of the need to cater for this size of business.

Section 7 of the AAP states that knowledge-based businesses, voluntary sector and social enterprise, and craft and tourism enterprises will be particularly welcomed. Secondary shopping frontages are defined on the CTCAAP Proposals Map, in accordance with Development Control Policies. These frontages, especially in the West End and Moulsham Street areas of town, will help to secure the availability of smaller retail units in areas offering diversity and local character. The CTCAAP is informed by the Chelmsford Economic Development Strategy 2002-2012 [BD/CFD/017]. The Borough Council's flexible approach to mixed-use development will focus on the mix of leading and supporting uses for appropriate Opportunity Sites. The Borough Council considers that the wide variety of Opportunity Sites in the CTCAAP and the flexibility for a range of uses within them will provide the conditions and opportunities for small businesses to prosper in the town centre.

4 Land for Further and Higher Education

- 4.1 The town's Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) continues to expand on its own site in line with an approved Masterplan [BD/CBC/TC/040]. Adult education and lifelong learning will be supported by ARU and Chelmsford College. Educational needs, both primary and secondary, will be addressed through planning obligation agreements in line with the Planning Contributions SPD [BD/CFD/011]. Land is specifically allocated for further/higher education use in Site No 33 Rivermead Campus and Site No 37 Rivermead industrial Estate. Opportunities for education can be dealt with on a site basis when preparing planning guidance or in negotiation with developers. Many Opportunity sites suggest community uses, of which education can be one. The Borough Council is currently in direct dialogue with Chelmsford College about possible new locations for a modernised college.

5 Uses on River and Street Frontages

- 5.1 The CTCAAP's vision encourages creation of 'neighbourhoods of distinctive character' through achieving a number of objectives including enhanced public spaces, safety and appearance of streets, and mixed-use developments. The aim is to create active frontages with interest to contribute to character and economy, safety by natural surveillance. Specifying preferred uses for certain frontages will help to achieve these aims.

6 Built Heritage

- 6.1 The town's heritage is important to its attractiveness and economy, and merits a dedicated chapter in the CTCAAP. The objectives for existing buildings and conservation action are clearly set out in the Borough Council's strategy. Detailed references to historic features are not appropriate for this level of plan, but will appear in subsequent site guidance documents. Detail is also contained in conservation area appraisals for the West End and Central Areas [BD/CFD/080 and 081] and the Chelmsford Borough Historic Environment Characterisation Project [BD/CFD/051].

7 Waterways

- 7.1 The Borough Council has a long-held objective to enable a New Cut to be built between the River Chelmer and Springfield Basin, described in the Chelmer Waterside Strategy [BD/CFD/TC/027]. This would allow craft to navigate to the river confluence, provide an increase in moorings for visiting boats, provide a reliable water supply to Springfield Basin, create an opportunity for waterfront development and create some flood capacity benefit. Whilst this remains an aspiration, it is accepted that it has to work within a masterplan of routes, spaces and buildings. It is also accepted that developer funding will be essential to providing this link and the construction costs and development benefits are not certain. The profile given to the New Cut in the CTCAAP reflects this position.
- 7.2 One of Chelmsford's main assets is its rivers, and various measures are proposed in Sections 8, 11 19 and 23 of the CTCAAP, to enhance their character and use to exploit the town's local distinctiveness. Potential for increasing visitors to the town will be based on two main opportunities: firstly water borne recreational activity, visitor navigation and moorings; secondly use of the watersides for routes and development including a coherent network of riverside walking and cycling links, transformation of Central Park which is adjacent to the river, and high quality riverside spaces throughout the Town Centre. In addition implementation of other proposals in the CTCAAP would be sought, such as an interpretation centre for the watermeadows
- 7.3 In addition, there is a desire for private development to enhance and contribute to use of the town's waterways. This can be achieved through, for example, negotiating public open space that is water-based rather than green space. However, allocating sites specifically for water-based recreational use is premature at this stage, and can be dealt with on a site basis when preparing planning guidance and in negotiation with developers.

8 Biodiversity in the River Environment

- 8.1 Biodiversity issues will always be considered at the detailed stage of any proposal in the CTCAAP. The Borough Council's approach to biodiversity issues is outlined in depth in the Biodiversity Action Plan [BD/CFD/024], supported by the Essex Biodiversity Action Plan [BD/ESX/011], and PPS9 [BD/NAT/014]. The CTCAAP objective to ensure all buildings are set back from the riverbank will help to protect biodiversity around watercourses, acknowledged in the Sustainability Appraisal of the AAP [BD/CFD/026]. The Borough Council, in its Sustainable Development SPD [BC/CFD/TC/042], provides guidance on the protection and enhancement of wildlife habitats, together with the creation of new habitats. Development proposals presented to planning officers will be assessed against this guidance. The Borough Council does intend, however, to strengthen the reference to biodiversity at Section 11.4

9 Proposals Map

- 9.1 The Submission Proposals Map for the CTCAAP was produced alongside the Core Strategy Proposals Map and already contains all the proposals in the CTCAAP. Once adopted, the CTCAAP Proposals Map will become the Inset Map for the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD.

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2003-2004
Quality of the Built Environment

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