

**MATTER 5/LDF8891/1339**

**STANDARD LIFE INVESTMENTS LTD AND  
THE CHELMSFORD MEADOWS LTD PARTNERSHIP**

**CORE STRATEGY**

**STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND**

**AUGUST 2007**

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TA Ref: STAL1020

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Date of Issue: 28 August 2007

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This statement sets out the areas of common ground between the Developers (Standard Life Investments Ltd and The Chelmsford Meadows Limited Partnership) and Chelmsford Borough Council (CBC) in relation to the Core Strategy representation submitted by the Developers to CBC in relation to Policy CP23 'Reinforcing the Regional Role of Chelmsford'
- 1.2 The Chelmsford Meadows Limited Partnership comprises Lend Lease and Liverpool Victoria.

## 2. Representation

- 2.1 The Developers' representation sought to revise Policy CP23 in order to consider the phasing of the quantum of retail development proposed. Soundness Test 8 requires plans to provide clear mechanisms for implementation and monitoring. Without reference to phasing, it is felt that there is no clear process for delivering and monitoring the retail requirements identified.
- 2.2 Based on the Developers' retail capacity and impact work it is proposed that the phasing should provide in the order of 50,000 sq m additional net sales comparison goods floorspace by 2011; in the order of 86,000 sq m by 2016; and in order of 100,000 sq m by 2021.

## 3. Areas of Agreement

### Retail Performance

- 3.1 It is agreed that Chelmsford is currently under performing as a retail destination relative to its catchment area and regional role. Its principal problems relate to the lack of suitable modern retail units to meet both current or future demand, and the limited opportunities for significant new retail development within the traditional retail core of the centre This is acknowledged in the Chelmsford Retail Study 2005 (paragraph 5.72), which continues:

*"In order to enable existing retailers to trade up, and to attract major new retailers to the centre, it will be necessary to identify significant new opportunities for creating additional retail space, in addition to the ongoing redevelopment and modernisation of current stock. This suggests options including the physical expansion of the centre will need to be considered"*

- 3.2 It is further agreed that there is a high level of expenditure 'leakage' to competing centres and that the situation will be exacerbated by the developments that are coming forward in

centres within and around Chelmsford's catchment, including Southend, Basildon, Harlow, Ipswich and Cambridge. Additional trading area is also emerging at Lakeside and a major proposal is being developed at Stratford City in east London.

- 3.3 It is agreed that in order to prevent greater leakage and preferably to reverse these trends, it is essential that a 'step change' in the Chelmsford's retail offer is secured through CBC's Core Strategy and Town Centre Area Action Plan. The Chelmsford Retail Study notes in paragraph 4.74 that it is critical for Chelmsford to improve its retail offer, even in order to maintain its market share, and to establish its position as a regional centre. It states:

*"Without investment in the town centre and improvements to its retail offer, Chelmsford will decline".*

- 3.4 It is agreed that in order to enable Chelmsford to fulfil its potential, it requires a major development which will offer the opportunity to attract at least one new department store, together with new major retailers to the town and provide substantially better sized units to meet modern retail requirements.
- 3.5 It is also important that new development integrates well with the existing shopping provision, and provides complementary retail facilities.

### **Planning Policy Objectives**

- 3.6 It is agreed that the starting point for the proposed expansion of Chelmsford town centre is first the government's policy in relation to '*Planning for Town Centres*' as set out in PPS6 May 2005; and secondly, the regional context provided by the emerging East of England Plan.

#### ***PPS6: Planning for Town Centres***

- 3.7 It is agreed that the Council's DPDs seek to promote the vitality and viability of Chelmsford town centre in line with PPS6 by:
- *'focusing development in, and planning for the expansion of, existing centres as appropriate; and*
  - *at the local level identifying appropriate sites in development plan documents'* (PPS6 Paragraph 1.6)
- 3.8 It is agreed that in line with national policy the LPA is actively promoting growth of the town centre by extending the centre; necessary because such '*growth cannot be accommodated within identified existing centres*' (paragraph 2.5). It is agreed that the existing town

centre's Primary Shopping Area (PSA) cannot accommodate the growth identified for the plan period.

- 3.9 It is agreed that the Chelmer Waterside proposal has been identified in accordance with PPS6 policy on land adjoining the existing PSA within the town centre and that the proposal will be fully integrated with the existing PSA.

### ***Draft East of England Plan***

- 3.10 In line with the draft East of England Plan and the Secretary of State published Proposed Changes in December 2006, it is agreed that Chelmsford is identified as a 'Key Centre for Development and Change' and a 'Regional Retail Centre'.

- 3.11 As such, it is agreed that Chelmsford is identified as an area where major new retail development should primarily be located. Higher order retail provision is supported in Chelmsford, where need is clearly established and where the development would:

- result in a more sustainable pattern of development and movement, including a reduction in the need to travel; and
- have no significant harmful impact on other centres or the transport network.

- 3.12 It is agreed that the proposed extension of the PSA into Chelmer Waterside is consistent with this emerging policy.

### **Chelmer Waterside**

- 3.13 It is agreed that Chelmer Waterside offers an important regeneration opportunity to create town centre uses in Chelmsford.

- 3.14 It is agreed that whilst other retail proposals would provide additional retail provision in Chelmsford town centre, they would not be able to provide the step change needed to attract sufficient numbers, sizes, types and quality of retail operators, or accommodate the shortage of large scale flexible retail space required, and stem the leakage of shopping catchment to alternative and competing destinations.

- 3.15 It is agreed that considerable progress has been made in bringing workable proposals forward, including:

- Permissions granted for the relocation of the operational gas equipment;
- The signing of the protocol between CBC and the Environment Agency on flooding matters, and the identification of a three barrier strategic flood protection scheme and

- funding proposals;
- Urban design concepts for layout and circulation taking account of site constraints;
- Progress with land assembly.

## Phasing

3.16 It is agreed that the principle of phased development is appropriate, as it will:

- provide a clear mechanism for implementation and monitoring of policy in accordance with Soundness Test 8;
- promote the delivery of town centre expansion development in Chelmer Waterside in order to ensure the strategic enhancement of Chelmsford town centre's role and to enable it to facilitate regeneration of major sites elsewhere within the town centre;
- align development with the growth in catchment and expenditure capacity over the 15 year strategic period and ensure that development is delivered in a manner that would not adversely impact on neighbouring town centres;
- ensure that development is structured in a manner that would not harm the vitality and viability of the town and risk losing market share as the principal retail centre in the sub-region;
- ensure that development is structured in a manner that reflects the programme for delivery of key infrastructure improvement works;
- provide certainty on the delivery of necessary development and to avoid dilution of interest that may prevent schemes from coming forward; and
- make developments individually and collectively sustainable and avoid unnecessary risks and impacts.

3.17 However, CBC consider that the phasing of development can be more appropriately dealt with through the Chelmsford Town Centre Area Action Plan and not the Core Strategy which aims to consider the overall strategic requirement.

3.18 It is agreed that the phased quantum of in order of 50,000 sq m of additional comparison goods retail space by 2011; 86,000 sq m by 2016; and 100,000 sq m by 2021 are appropriate based on the retail capacity and impact work, which is fully supported by CBC.

3.19 It is agreed that the Chelmer Waterside proposals must be prioritised as the primary retail development opportunity capable of stimulating growth and providing the step change in retail offer required to delivery Policy CP23.

## 4. Areas of Disagreement

4.1 CBC's view that the phasing of the development should be left to the Town Centre Area

Action Plan to prescribe is not agreed.