

# QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC TO THE CABINET on 16 NOVEMBER 2021

## Item 7.3 – East Chelmsford Masterplan

### 1. Mary Cordeiro (not attending the meeting)

I am a recently-elected Great Baddow Parish Councillor but I am speaking tonight as an individual representing the East of Chelmsford Development group of concerned residents. Since May 2020 residents have been commenting on a designated Facebook page, of which I am an administrator.

I believe we can all agree on a few things

1. the land under discussion slopes downward from Maldon Road, in the south, towards the river, broadly in the north.
2. In both the immediate vicinity, and Baddow area in general, housing is predominantly comprised of 2 storey buildings. Where loft extensions exist, creating 2.5 storeys, they are commonly to the rear, and not visible from the public highway.
3. Blocks of 3 or 4 storey flats are rare in Baddow, non-existent in Sandon.

The developer provides pages and pages of text describing their aim to develop sensitively, in keeping with the surrounding area, preserving views etc.

Residents are therefore puzzled as to why the developer proposes that the taller buildings are closest to Maldon Rd, the highest point in the land parcel. In fact, the density i.e. height, seems totally the reverse of what it should be, given the topography of the area.

The height (3 storey) and density defined for parcels 2 E,F,G,H, and I in Townhouse Circus, at the western corner of the development on Maldon Rd is not appropriate. Neither is the density in parcels 3 E H and I which is to the east along Maldon Road. Development for the '3' parcels should be limited to 2 storey.

The whole development should be in keeping with its surroundings and be landscape-led, taking the slope towards the river into consideration. Highest density homes should be in the central band, i.e. 2D, 3B, 3C, and 3E, 3H, 3I be allocated the lower density homes, to create a gentler transition from existing low density 1930s homes to the new housing.

Residents note that on page 91 of the masterplan a photo shows a development area of 11.18 hectares, yet point 180 in the Developers Responses states “ the area proposed for residential development would represent an overall density of only around 17 dph.” [dwellings per hectare] I'm informed that that equates to 190 homes! However

Masterplan Section 6 Quantum of Development states

*The Masterplan Document does not determine a specific number of new homes to be provided on the site. However, on the basis of the principles that have been established within it (which seek to ensure a high quality, landscaped development, accounting for constraints and opportunities),*

*When viewed in the context of the area allocated for residential development through the Chelmsford Local Plan, 340 homes would represent a low gross density of around 17 dwellings per hectare (dph).*

Residents find these statements to be contradictory. Can we have a plain language explanation?

## 2. James May (not attending the meeting)

I have only just become aware of the development proposal on Manor Farm, despite living within 200 yards from the edge of the site. As a dog owner I regularly cross the river and walk in that area.

1. Why was I not notified of this proposed development in close proximity to my property?
2. Why were there no notices of the development posted in the immediate area to my property?

Within the plan, I eventually found reference to my road in relation to the Cycle route options 2 and 3. These two routes are planned to follow the river tow path and then turn up my road which is a narrow single track road with a blind bend. This road is also used by many walkers to access the river walks. It is not suitable to be also designated as a cycle route!

3. Has there been any consultation with residents or monitoring of pedestrian use?

In the proposal there is also Cycle route option 4. This route though not planned to follow the river runs very close to option 2&3 before being redirected towards the local area cycle route. As the proposal states on P.62 'Cycling is not permitted along the towpath'. Cyclist (those with mountain bikes) who know the area, I am certain will decide to take the scenic route along the river tow path.

4. If option 4 was adopted, are there any plans to keep cyclist on the cycle route and deter them from diverting along the river tow path?

On P.92 there is reference to the Water Conservation and Management. It states that there will be a 'Drainage system that is integrated into the landscape using natural features wherever possible'.

From walking into the city centre by the river, after lock down, I discovered that the Wharf road development were discharging surface water from that site directly into the river which runs through the Green wedge/flood plain. Essex Waterways are currently dredging the area from the meadows down to Barnes lock to protect the area and Chelmsford centre. Any further increase in surface water discharge down river will increase water levels.

5. Where and how are the Manor Farm developers proposing to channel their sites drainage system?

I hope the committee will give consideration to my comments and concerns.