

## CHELMSFORD POLICY BOARD – 6 November 2025

### PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

#### Agenda Item 5 – Chelmsford Local Plan – Focused Consultation Additional Sites (Regulation 19) Documents

##### 1) Question from Mr E

##### **1. Overview of proposed site allocations for East Hanningfield**

Chelmsford City Council has proposed three residential allocations around East Hanningfield as part of its Local Plan Review:

- SGS17c – Land North of Old Church Road
- SGS17d – Land East of Old Church Road
- GS17e – Land South of Windmill Farm

While all three contribute toward housing delivery targets, sites SGS17c and SGS17d are demonstrably better placed to meet East Hanningfield's housing needs sustainably and with less adverse impact. This position is based on evidence relating to location, infrastructure accessibility, landscape impact, and heritage protection.

##### **2. Location and Relationship to the Existing Settlement**

SGS17c and SGS17d are located closer to the existing built form of East Hanningfield, forming a logical, compact extension adjacent to the village core. Both sites are within immediate walking distance of key community assets, including:

- East Hanningfield Primary School
- The village hall and recreation ground
- Existing bus routes serving the village
- The local shop and church

By contrast, GS17e (Land South of Windmill Farm) lies beyond the existing settlement edge, west of Back Lane, and is physically and visually detached from the village's established centre. Development here would elongate the village westwards and create a less cohesive settlement form, weakening the compact pattern that supports sustainable access to local services.

##### **3. Infrastructure and Access Advantages of SGS17c–SGS17d**

Both SGS17c and SGS17d are directly connected to Old Church Road, the main spine road through the village, and can integrate efficiently with planned early years and childcare facilities at SGS11c, ensuring shared infrastructure delivery.

Key comparative advantages include:

- Existing pedestrian and vehicular access points are suitable for upgrade, reducing the need for extensive new highway works.
- Proximity to planned infrastructure contributions (education, nursery, and sustainable travel improvements) associated with SGS11c, allowing infrastructure efficiencies and cumulative design coherence.
- Shorter walking and cycling distances to the primary school and bus stops, meeting national and local active travel objectives.
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GS17e, in contrast, requires new vehicular access via Old Church Road and Back Lane, both narrow and constrained rural lanes. The site's relative isolation would necessitate more off-site highway interventions, increasing cost, traffic

disruption, and environmental harm.

#### **4. Landscape and Visual Considerations**

Council evidence identifies the land south of Windmill Farm (GS17e) as being on the western rural edge of East Hanningfield — an area with medium-to-high landscape sensitivity. Development here would intrude into the open countryside and diminish the distinct transition between village and farmland.

SGS17c and SGS17d, conversely, lie within a less visually exposed landscape compartment, contained by existing hedgerows and nearby built form. These sites are therefore better able to assimilate development without altering the wider rural setting or key view corridors. Development at SGS17c–d would reinforce a rounded, inward-facing village form, consistent with sustainable settlement design principles.

#### **5. Heritage and Environmental Impacts**

GS17e sits in proximity to Huntingdons Farm (Grade II listed) and other heritage assets such as Windmill Farm and Shepherds Cottage. Any development on this site risks eroding the open setting that contributes to their significance. Safeguarding these assets would require restrictive buffers that limit developable area and design flexibility.

In contrast, SGS17c and SGS17d contain no designated heritage assets within or immediately adjacent to their boundaries, minimising risk to the historic environment and simplifying the design process. Their development would not compromise key views or the historic settlement pattern.

From an ecological perspective, SGS17c–d also avoid key hedgerow corridors and can more easily integrate biodiversity net gain and SuDS features in a coordinated landscape strategy linked to SGS11c

#### **6. Deliverability and Phasing**

SGS17c and SGS17d form part of the same strategic growth cluster as SGS11c, facilitating coordinated infrastructure delivery. Shared planning, design, and phasing across these linked sites enhances deliverability and ensures that housing growth proceeds alongside the provision of education, drainage, and sustainable travel infrastructure.

GS17e, being physically separate and reliant on off-site network upgrades (including wastewater treatment and drainage connections to South Woodham Ferrers WRC), poses greater deliverability risks and could delay housing delivery. Its allocation may therefore not contribute effectively to the five-year housing supply trajectory envisioned for 2027–2028.

#### **7. Summary of Comparative Merits**

<b>Evaluation Criterion SGS17c–SGS17d</b>		<b>GS17e</b>
Proximity to village centre and facilities	Excellent – direct access to school, recreation ground, and bus stops	Poor – peripheral and detached
Landscape impact	Contained and moderate	High – visible, rural edge location
Heritage setting	No direct impact	Adverse impact on Huntingdons Farm and non-designated assets

Access and transport	Existing infrastructure with potential upgrades	Requires new access via constrained roads
Infrastructure alignment	Integrated with SGS11c (nursery, education, active travel)	Standalone, limited synergy
Deliverability	High – shared services and coordinated phasing	Moderate to low – dependent on external upgrades
Settlement cohesion	Strengthens compact form	Extends village westwards, fragmenting pattern

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## 8. Conclusion

When assessed against the objectives of sustainable development and Local Plan soundness tests, SGS17c and SGS17d provide the most appropriate and deliverable options to meet East Hanningfield's housing needs. They:

- Support compact, walkable growth near community services.
- Pose lower environmental and heritage risks.
- Offer better integration with existing and planned infrastructure.
- Maintain the rural landscape character of the western village edge.

While recognising the need for sustainable housing delivery within Chelmsford's Local Plan Review, the proposed allocation of Land South of Windmill Farm raises significant concerns regarding the suitability, scale, and impact of development at this location

By contrast, GS17e – Land South of Windmill Farm is less sustainable, less cohesive, and more environmentally and infrastructurally constrained. It should therefore be deprioritised or omitted in favour of SGS17c–SGS17d as the preferred allocations for East Hanningfield's housing growth.

## 2) Question from Mr C

The agenda pack indicates that one of the expanded housing sites to be included in the local plan focused consultation is Site 11c – land west of Barbrook Way, Bicknacre in which the number of dwellings has increased from 20 to 250. This site is already the subject of an outline planning application (25/01158/OUT) that has a decision due date on the 11 November 2025. There is strong opposition to this application - more than 630 public comments relating to the outline planning application have been submitted to the planning portal.

Will the public comments relating to the outline planning application (25/01158/OUT) for site 11c be considered and carried over to the local plan focused consultation, or will everyone have to submit their comments again for them to be considered as part of the local plan focused consultation?

Many thanks in advance for responding to my question.

### **3) Question from Mrs B**

With regards to Growth Site 11b land at Kingsgate, Bicknacre.

Is this site still part of the emerging Local Plan and will it be consulted on again as part of the Focused Consultation?

### **4) Question from Mrs C**

Can you, please, tell me if the general public will be asked to comment on the 'expanded growth site 11c - land west of Barbrook Way' in this Local Plan Focused Consultation process?

A portion of the aforementioned site was included in the Regulation 19 consultation earlier this year (2025) and public comments were submitted on that occasion.

### **5) Question from Mr P**

Will the public comments sent in earlier this year for Growth Site 11c, land west of Barbrook Way will still be put forward to the Independent Inspector even though the site has now been expanded and included in this new Local Plan Focused Consultation?

### **6) Question from Mrs M**

If a member of the public sent in a comment on Growth Site 11c, land west of Barbrook Way earlier this year for the Regulation 19 consultation can they comment again on the expanded site?