

Chelmsford Local Plan Examination

Matter 6(a) Housing Provision in Growth Area 1 Central and Urban Chelmsford

Prepared by Sellwood Planning

on behalf of

Crest Strategic Projects Ltd

November 2018

1.0 **Introduction**

- 1.1 This statement relating to Matter 6(a) (Housing Provision in Growth Area 1 – Central and Urban Chelmsford) is prepared by Sellwood Planning on behalf of Crest Strategic Projects Ltd (Crest). Crest controls the site at West Chelmsford (Policy SGS2) which is proposed to be allocated for around 800 homes, a 2 Form Entry Primary School, Local Centre, 5 Travelling Showpersons plots and open space.
- 1.2 Crest is actively promoting this site and has prepared a master plan in accordance with the City Council’s masterplanning protocol. This has been the subject of public consultation which started in early November 2018 and an exhibition on the 13th November. The masterplan is likely to be adopted in early 2019. Crest is currently preparing a planning application to be submitted in late February 2019.

2.0 **(Q 62) “Are the housing site allocations within Location 1 : Chelmsford Urban Area, Location2 : West Chelmsford and Location 3 : East Chelmsford justified and deliverable? Are there soundness reasons why they should not be allocated?”**

- 2.1 In responding to Q62, the Crest responses solely relate to Location 2 : West Chelmsford.
- 2.2 **“(a) Is the scale of housing for each site allocation, particularly the large Strategic Growth Sites, justified having regard to any constraints, existing local infrastructure and the provision additional infrastructure?”**

The answer to this question is largely contained in the Statement of Common Ground between Crest and the City Council and the submitted master plan document which is appended to it. For ease of reference, the submitted plan is attached as **Appendix 1**. Whilst the initial Regulation 18 Local Plan consultation proposed between 2,250 and 3,000 homes at West Chelmsford, concerns were expressed by local people whether the local transport infrastructure could accommodate this level of growth. This led the City

Council to reappraise the size of the allocation in the context of more detailed transport modelling undertaken by Essex County Council. However, at all stages in the Local Plan process, the City Council has recognised that the West Chelmsford strategic allocation is the closest to the City Centre / Railway Station and has the potential to achieve relatively high usage of sustainable modes of transport.

2.3 The conclusion of further studies undertaken by the City Council and the ECC modelling was that around 800 homes could be accommodated at West Chelmsford as long as it was combined with improvements to the walking and cycling infrastructure plus enhanced bus services. It is for this reason that both the submitted master plan and the emerging planning application will include :

- an internal network of footpath / cycle links
- on site primary and nursery schools, a local centre and open space to ‘internalise’ many trips
- controlled crossing points over Roxwell Road (A1060) to connect the site with the wider footpath / cycle network, including NCN1 to the Town Centre and Writtle
- improvements of existing footpaths / cycleways into Writtle and Hylands School
- a new bus link east into the Chignal Estate and on to the Town Centre
- a new or enhanced bus route serving the site
- modest highway improvements such as increasing the capacity of the A1060 / Chignal Road junction and a package of safety improvements in Writtle Village.

2.4 **“(b) Is the trajectory realistic and are there any sites which might not be delivered in accordance with the timescale set?”**

The submitted trajectory anticipates that West Chelmsford will achieve 120 completions in 2021 / 22 and this rate will continue through to 2030 / 31. Crest is well advanced in the preparation of an outline planning application (all matters reserved other than external points of access) for submission in early 2019. The work includes:

- assembling a full consultant Team which has already completed all base line surveys and is undertaking the assessment stage as part of the EIA. These show no ‘showstoppers’

- meetings with local groups such as Writtle Parish Council, the Writtle Neighbourhood Plan Group and Writtle University College, NHS England and local Doctors surgeries
- two rounds of public consultation plus two workshops on the emerging masterplan
- completing a masterplan PPA with the City Council and the agreement of a masterplan for formal submission.

2.5 The intention is that the master plan will be considered by Members of the City Council in January or February 2019. Since the planning application will accord with the adopted master plan, it is anticipated that the application will be approved later in 2019. This will allow the submission of reserved matters and the discharge of conditions to occur in late 2019 and early 2020. The current Crest programme assumes a start of construction in the first half of 2020 with initial completions later in 2020. Since this is slightly in advance of the Council's trajectory, it allows for some slippage due to unforeseen issues.

2.6 Crest intend to have two outlets, so with affordable housing, a completion rate of 120 a year is realistic and achievable.

2.7 **“(c) Are the planning and masterplanning principles justified?”**

The only Crest objection to Policy SGS2 was in relation to the provision of 5 TSP plots. This has now been resolved through the agreed masterplanning process and 5 TSP plots will be provided.

2.8 In the course of discussions with ECC as Education Authority, Crest has been advised that ‘a stand-alone early years and childcare nursery’ is unlikely to be needed since the proposed facility co-located with the Primary School should accommodate most of the need arising from the site. The County Council has suggested that the wording is amended to refer to either a stand-alone on site facility or a proportionate contribution to an off site facility.

2.9 **“(d) Are the specific development and site infrastructure requirements clearly identified for each allocation, are they necessary and are they justified by robust evidence?”**

The joint masterplanning process with the City Council has confirmed that the development site and site infrastructure requirements are both necessary and justified. The only exception to this is the need for a stand-alone early years facility referred to in 2.8 above.

2.10 **“(e) Are the site boundaries justified?”**

Whilst not an issue bearing on the soundness of the plan, Crest feel that it would be more logical if the Policy SGS2 allocation included both the development area and the recreation / SuDS area to the west.

2.11 **“(f) Will the site allocations in these locations achieve sustainable development?”**

The West Chelmsford site is the closest strategic allocation to the Town Centre and Railway Station. It is also within easy cycling distance of these facilities along safe, segregated and lit footpath / cycle routes. Where necessary, connections will be made between West Chelmsford and these routes and appropriate improvements made. It is also proposed to provide a bus link from the eastern side of the site into the Chignal Estate and on to the Town Centre. This will allow services serving the Estate to enter the West Chelmsford site and connect with the local centre and the school. All of these factors mean that the future residents of West Chelmsford will have a real choice to use sustainable modes of travel rather than the private car.

2.12 In addition, the provision of an on site Primary School, an early years / child nursery, local centre, community and health buildings plus open space means that many trips can be satisfied within the site rather than off site. This will help reduce pressure on the local road network.

2.13 **“(g) Are any amendments necessary to the policies to ensure soundness?”**

The only amendment needed to Policy SGS2 is to clarify that a stand-alone early years and childcare nursery may not be needed in addition to the one co-located with the

Primary School. The policy should state that as an alternative a proportionate contribution should be made towards an off site facility.

2.14 The suggested amendments are :

- Third bullet of ‘supporting on site development’ to be changed to
“Provision of a new stand-alone early years and childcare nursery or a proportionate contribution to an off site facility”
- Second bullet of ‘site infrastructure requirements’ to be changed to
“Land (circa 0.13 hectares) for a stand-alone early years and childcare nursery (Use Class D1) and contribution towards the cost of physical provision with delivery through the LEA or a proportionate contribution to an off site facility”.

3.0 Conclusions

3.1 Work on delivering around 800 homes and the other elements of Policy SGS2 are well advanced. The master plan has been prepared in consultation with the City Council and local people and has now been formally submitted for consultation. It is anticipated this will be approved by City Council Members in early 2019. In parallel, an outline application and its accompanying EIA are at an advanced stage of preparation and will be submitted in early 2019. This should allow development to proceed in accordance with the Local Plan trajectory.

3.2 West Chelmsford has the potential to be developed as a high quality and sustainable location to meet the growing needs of Chelmsford City.

Appendix 1

Masterplan



- Key
- Allocation boundary
 - Application boundary
 - Indicative development parcels
 - Proposed planting
 - Foul water pumping
 - Primary School and Nursery
 - Neighbourhood Centre
 - Pedestrian and cyclist only
 - Green space/parkland
 - Ecology park
 - LAP/LEAP
 - Travelling Showpeople site
 - Existing and Proposed footpath and cycle links
 - Attenuation basin
 - Proposed bus link
 - Combined access track for travelling showpeople and existing farm buildings
 - Park and recreation ground with football and cricket pitches
 - Cricket pavilion/changing facilities

Illustrative Masterplan - Presentation Version Warren Farm, Chelmsford		
Drawing 15029_39b	Revision (Based on CAD dwg. 15029_29qq)	Revision detail
Drawn By CH	Date 10/18	Scale Linear at A3

Andrew Martin
Planning



Planning Design Development

Town Mill | Mill Lane | Stebbing | Dunmow | Essex | CM6 3SN

Telephone: 01371 855855 Fax: 01371 856201 Email: info@am-plan.com Website: www.am-plan.com