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CHELMSFORD CITY COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION – MATTER 6
REMAINING GROWTH AREA 3 SITES – LOCATION 17 – EAST HANNINGFIELD
RESPONSE ON BEHALF STONEBOND PROPERTIES (CHELMSFORD) LIMITED
(RESPONDENT REF: 1096451)

Introduction

Stonebond Properties (Chelmsford) Limited welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Chelmsford City Council (CCC) Local Plan Matters, Issues and Questions identified by the Inspectors.

These Matter Statements have been prepared on the basis that the Publication Local Plan, comprising of the Pre-submission Regulation 19 Local Plan (SD001) and the Focused Consultation Additional Sites Regulation 19 (SD002), is being Examined under the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) as confirmed in the Examination Guidance Note.

Representations were submitted on behalf of the Landowner (Mr Eugene Kinsella) in response to the CCC Local Plan Regulation 19 Additional Sites Consultation in respect of the proposal for residential development at 'Land South of Windmill Farm, Back Lane, East Hanningfield' (the Site).

The Site, comprising 2.59Ha of land used for horse grazing at 'Land South of Windmill Farm, Back Lane, East Hanningfield', is identified for allocation at 'GROWTH SITE POLICY 17e'. The proposed allocation site is owned entirely by a single Landowner. Stonebond, an award winning developer, has an interest in the Site and intends to prepare a full planning application for submission in 2027. The Site is promoted for residential development with associated public open space, landscaping, highways and drainage infrastructure and access from Old Church Road.

Whilst support is given to the allocation made at Policy 17e, it is our position that:

- There should be no obligation upon the Council to prepare a planning brief in advance of residential development being brought forward at the Site; and
- Delivery timescales should be updated to reflect current expectations.

The Site has been subject to initial evidence gathering in support of the allocation and initial site feasibility layout testing. Through this process, the Site's capacity has been tested, demonstrating that the Site can suitably accommodate a minimum of 40 dwellings, which can assist the Council to meet its local housing need, whilst providing affordable housing.

There are no known overriding constraints to the development. The proposed site allocation represents an important 'medium' scale development within the Local Plan, which can be

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delivered quickly by an award winning Developer, Stonebond, as a result of collaborative working with the Council and other relevant stakeholders.

It is therefore confirmed that 'Land South of Windmill Farm, Back Lane, East Hanningfield' is suitable, available, deliverable, and has the capacity to provide a minimum of 40 homes which will be brought forward in the first five-years of the new local plan period.

MATTER 6 – SITE SLECTION

Site assessment and selection

6.1 What was the Council's approach to site assessment and selection? What was the process and what factors were taken into account? What evidence is the Council relying on?

Issue 1 – Site allocations
General site allocation matters

6.2 Is the approach of requiring masterplans/planning briefs an effective mechanism to secure sustainable development across the plan area?

Table 3 of the Publication Local Plan identifies that:

- Sites of 100 dwellings or more are 'Strategic Growth Sites'.
- Growth sites are sites of less than 100 dwellings

Policy S7 states that "*Strategic Growth Sites will be delivered in accordance with masterplans to be approved by the Council"*.

Paragraph 6.36 of the Publication Local Plan states:

> "*6.36 Where identified under the relevant Strategic Growth Site Policies, the Council will expect a masterplan for each site to be submitted for approval. The masterplans will cover the details of how sites will satisfy the requirements of the respective Site Policies. The Council will consider the use of Planning Briefs and Design Codes on other site allocations. Some of the sites have existing masterplans/design briefs. The Council will review and consider whether they are relevant and/or still up-to-date to determine whether further masterplanning is required and whether the masterplan process can be adapted to take account of them.*"

In respect of East Hanningfield, GROWTH SITE POLICY 17e states "*Development proposals will accord with a Planning Brief produced by the Council to provide around 40 new homes including affordable housing. The final amount of new homes will be confirmed through the planning application process."*

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The Site is of a medium scale and does not have any constraints which could not satisfactorily be addressed through a clearly worded site allocation policy.

In the interest of the Local Plan being effective and facilitating the delivery of homes to meet local housing need, particularly where there is a reported housing land supply shortfall, it is questioned what the justification is for a Planning Brief at the Site. Concern is raised about the potential for the preparation of the Planning Brief to delay delivery at the Site.

6.3 What is the current planning status of the site (eg masterplans, permissions, completions)? Have there been any changes since the Plan was submitted for examination and if so, are any modifications needed?
There has been no change in the formal planning status of the Site, however Stonebond, an award winning Essex based SME House Builder, now has an interest in the Site. It is Stonebond's intention to prepare a full planning application for submission in 2028.

6.4 For the housing sites, what is the basis for the proposed capacity?
CCC has produced a 'Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) Spring 2026' dated April 2026. The 'Site Performance Summary' for the Site (Ref: 17SLAA7) identifies that the Site has a 'Developable Area of 2.087Ha, with the offset acknowledged for the existing gas pipe and the requisite easement (0.583Ha). The potential yield is stated to be 41 dwellings, which equates to a density of c.20 dwellings per hectare.

CCC has also produced the 'Additional Housing Site Studies' dated October 2025 to demonstrate how residential sites could be developed to suitably achieve the proposed number of homes whilst supporting on-site land-uses such as open space and sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). As part of this document a concept layout plan has been prepared by CCC for the Site which is illustrative.

Stonebond has commissioned a concept layout by Boyer Urban Design (available upon request), which demonstrates a capacity of a minimum of 40 dwellings. This layout reflects the key principles of the Council's Additional Housing Site Studies as well as the requirements of the site allocation wording at Growth Site 17e.

Stonebond will work collaboratively with CCC to bring forward development at the Site in accordance with the requirements of the Local Plan.

6.5 For the sites which include non-residential uses, what is the basis for the scale and type/mix of employment and other uses proposed? Is it justified?
No comment.

6.6 Are the development requirements clear, and are any further safeguards or mitigation measures necessary to achieve an acceptable form of development?

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Growth Policy 17e as proposed sets out the requirements for development at the Site and it is noted that development proposals will be brought forward in accordance with the requirements of the Local Plan as a whole. Consideration is given to the policy wording below.
'Site development principles:
Movement and Access

- *Vehicular access to the site will be from Old Church Road*
- *Provide safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle connections.'*

The initial concept layout demonstrates that vehicular access will be taken from Old Church Road which reflects the principle established in the 'Additional Housing Site Studies' October 2025.

The access has been designed to meet the requisite technical safety requirements for vehicles and pedestrians. There is an existing footway along Old Church Road which connects the Site to the centre of East Hanningfield. The concept layout incorporates pedestrian routes within the Site.

'Historic and Natural Environment

- *Preserve and where appropriate enhance the setting of the nearby listed building Huntingdons Farm and the non-designated assets of Windmill Farm and Shepherds Cottage.*
- *Retain and enhance existing natural landscaping, trees and hedgerows in and on the boundary of the site Provide suitable multifunctional green infrastructure Provide suitable flood risk management and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)*
- *Ensure appropriate habitat mitigation and creation is provided.'*

The initial concept layout demonstrates the historic and natural environment requirements can be accommodated at the Site. Initial technical work has informed the SuDS strategy.

'Design and layout

- *Character, scale and layout to have regard and respond to the site's surrounding context, including limiting development height to two-storeys*
- *Development to create frontage to Old Church Road*
- *Layout to provide a strategy for responding to a high pressure gas pipeline present within the site.'*

The initial concept layout demonstrates that design and layout requirements can be accommodated at the Site, responding to both existing and planned development.

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The necessary easement for the gas pipeline is integrated successfully as part of the green infrastructure. In addition, there is frontage onto Old Church Road, albeit set back in order to retain existing landscaping.

'Site infrastructure requirements:

- *Provide appropriate improvements, as necessary to the local and strategic road network as required by the Local Highways and Transportation Authority*
- *Appropriate measures to promote and enhance active and sustainable modes of transport*
- *Financial contributions to new or enhanced sport, leisure and recreation facilities*
- *Financial contributions to primary, secondary, early years education and childcare, as required by the Local Education Authority'*

It is noted that Chelmsford City Council operates a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The Development would be CIL liable and therefore CIL receipts would be used to deliver strategic infrastructure matters with regard to the Chelmsford Local Plan Planning Obligations SPD 2026.

Consideration has been given to the accompanying Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), this incorporates a table of expected financial contributions for Land South of Windmill Farm, Back Lane, East Hanningfield at A.29. The table identifies contributions towards: waste management, ambulance services, primary health care, police services, cemeteries, strategic flood and water management, early years, primary and secondary education, green infrastructure, sports, recreation, leisure and public art.

In respect of anticipated funding streams a number of matters are listed as S106/CIL. It would be useful to clarify which infrastructure items would be covered by CIL to avoid concern regarding any double counting. Further, the IDP does not include any specific contribution towards local or strategic road network. Stonebond intends to engage with the Essex County Council as Highways Authority in pre-application discussions.

6.7 What is the expected timescale and rate of development for the housing sites and is this realistic?

It is noted that the housing trajectory within the Five Year Housing Land Supply Site Schedule (April 2026) anticipates 40 dwellings would be delivered at Land South of Windmill Farm, Back Lane, East Hanningfield during 2027/28.

Stonebond welcomes the identification of the Site for early delivery, however, it is advised that delivery in 2029/30 is considered to be more realistic, based on the following indicative programme:

- End 2026/ 2027 – Local Plan Examination
- 2027 – Pre-application discussion / local engagement

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- 2027 / 2028 - Full planning application preparation and submission
- 2028 – Full planning application determination
- 2028 / 2029 – Discharge of relevant pre-commencement conditions
- 2029 / 2030 – Start on site

It is agreed that delivery of a miminmum of 40 dwellings can be completed within 1 year (i.e. 2029/30).

6.8 Are any modifications to the site policy needed for soundness?
For the reasons set out in response to question 6.2, it is recommended that the requirement for a planning brief is removed from Policy 17e to make it more effective by facilitating the prompt delivery of housing.

Location 17 – East Hanningfield – Growth Site Policies 17a, 17b and 17e, Strategic Growth Site Policies 17c and 17d
s. Does the quantum of development proposed in sites 17a-17e, both individually and cumulatively, accord with the Spatial Principles and Spatial Strategy set out in Strategic Policies S1 and S7?

Stonebond's comments relate specifically to the proposed Site Allocation at Site 17e.

Policy S1 sets out the proposed 'Spatial Principles' for development over the plan period, which includes: a) locating development at well-connected and sustainable locations; and b) focus development at the higher order settlements outside the Green Belt and respect the development pattern and hierarchy of other settlements.

Policy S7 identifies the proposed settlement hierarchy and classifies East Hanningfield as a tier 3 'Service Settlement Outside the Green Belt'. In terms of the spatial strategy the Site forms part of Growth Area 3 'South and East Chelmsford'.

East Hanningfield benefits from existing services and facilities including:

- East Hanningfield Church of England Primary School
- East Hanningfield Post Office and Village Store
- Local Employment including East Hanningfield Industrial Estate
- Pub/ Restaurant
- East Hanningfield Village Hall
- Mobile Library Service
- Catherine Close Playground, and Hanna's Field Playground and Playing Field.
- Places of Worship (All Saints Church and Bethel Church)
- High Speed Internet

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East Hanningfield is served by bus route 3 providing connections to Chelmsford and Southend; and bus route 513 providing connections to Witham. It is possible to travel using public transport into the centre of Chelmsford in c. 30 minutes. East Hanningfield is a sustainable location which can accommodate additional development.

The Site is located immediately to the west of land which benefits from planning permission for residential development, and immediately to the east and south of existing development at Back Lane. As such, development at the Site would be integrated with the existing settlement and planned development.

The Site, 'Land South of Windmill Farm, Back Lane, East Hanningfield', has a capacity of minimum of 40 dwellings and is considered to be of an appropriate scale relative to the existing settlement of East Hanningfield. The proposed site allocation therefore represents 'medium scale' development at a sustainable location.

Paragraph 70 of the NPPF (2023) recognises the benefits of a good mix of sites and that small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution towards meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built-out relatively quickly.

The Integrated Impact Assessment Focused Additional Sites Addendum concludes that no significant effects have been identified for any of the objectives but minor positive effects have been identified for Objective 2 (Housing) and Objective 3 (Economy, Skills and Employment), due to the provision of 40 dwellings proximity to an employment site.

The cumulative effects of all the allocations have been considered as part of the Council's evidence base as part of assessment of the 'preferred approach'.

t. What is the likely impact of the proposed allocations, including the cumulative impact, on the following factors:
• *The strategic and local highway network including public transport and active travel*
• *Agricultural land quality, landscape character, biodiversity and heritage assets*
• *Flood risk, air quality, noise and light pollution*
• *Other infrastructure, including education, health, recreation and utilities*
How were the above impacts assessed, and what evidence is the Council relying on?

The Council has given consideration to the likely impact of the proposed allocation at the Site, as well as other allocations, as part of the evidence base. Consideration has also been given to necessary mitigation. Key technical documents include the SHELAA and the Integrated Impact Assessment (SD008 and SD009), Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Transport Impact Assessment and Junction Modelling and relevant Topic Papers.

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The cumulative effects of all the allocations have been considered as part of the Council's evidence base as part of assessment of the 'preferred approach'.

u. Are the essential site specific requirements and mitigation measures justified, and will they, along with other policies in the plan, be effective in achieving sustainable development on the sites?

Yes, the site specific requirements, as set out in Growth Site Policy 17e are justified with reference to consideration of existing designations in proximity to the Site.

Stonebond notes these requirements and will work proactively with the Council and relevant consultees and stakeholders to deliver the development.

v. Can required capacity increases in wastewater treatment and disposal be provided to support development in East Hanningfield within the timescales set out?

As part of the Water Industry Act 1991, sewage undertakers are obligated to receive foul water connections into the public sewerage system from residential development.

Stonebond has undertaken engagement with Anglian Water and has obtained a 'Tier 1 Pre-Planning Assessment Report - Domestic Foul Water Drainage Feasibility Study' in respect of the Site which has tested the capacity of up to 55 dwellings as dated 6th October 2026 (available upon request). This confirms that the Site is "*within the catchment of South Woodham Ferrers Water Recycling Centre (WRC), which currently can accommodate the additional flows generated by the proposed development.*"

Further it is stated that "*South Woodham Ferrers WRC is included within our Business Plan as a named growth scheme with investment delivery planned between 2025-2030.*"

It is demonstrated that there is existing capacity to accommodate the Site. As this assessment was undertaken on the basis of 55 dwellings, which exceeds the capacity of c.40 dwellings proposed at the Site, it therefore represents a robust test of headroom. It is further confirmed that there are planned upgrades to the wastewater treatment centre.

Due to procedure, it is not possible to reserve capacity within the network. As a safeguard, in the interest of ensuring no pollution or deterioration in the receiving watercourse, a Grampian condition is suggested by Anglian Water to restrict occupation, until written confirmation is received from Anglian Water regarding sufficient headroom in the water recycling centre. Such a condition would only be applied in the situation where capacity falls away during the determination of the application and the Site becomes reliant upon upgrades to South Woodham Ferrers WRC to be completed. Should this occur, and if Anglian Water's timescales for delivery are overly protracted, then there would be opportunity to explore a temporary on site package plant solution.

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