

MINUTES
of the
PLANNING COMMITTEE
held on 15 December 2025 at 7pm

Present:

Councillor R. Lee (Chair)
Councillor S. Dobson (Vice Chair)

Councillors, H. Clark, J. Frascona, S. Hall, R. Hyland, J. Lardge, E. Sampson, A. Thorpe-
Apps, N. Walsh and P. Wilson

1. Chair's Announcements

For the benefit of the public, the Chair explained the arrangements for the meeting. The Chair noted that extra officers were in attendance at the meeting from Essex County Council including, the Head of Network Development, Head of Housing and Garden Communities, Garden Communities Manager, Head of Planning, Principal Transportation and Infrastructure Planner City Council officers were also supported by an external legal advisor.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Armstrong, Pappa and Tron. Cllr Walsh substituted for Cllr Tron.

3. Declarations of Interest

All Members were reminded that they must disclose any interests they knew they had in items of business on the meeting's agenda and that they must do so at this point on the agenda or as soon as they became aware of the interest. If the interest was a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest they were also obliged to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the meeting. Any declarations are recorded in the relevant minute below.

4. Public Question Time

Public questions had been submitted in advance for Items 5-9, which are summarised under the relevant item. [The questions and statements submitted in advance can be viewed via this link.](#)

5. 23-00114-FUL - Radial Distributor Route 2, South of Wheelers Hill Little Waltham, Chelmsford, Essex

The Committee considered a detailed planning application to provide the Northern Radial Distributor Road from Wheelers Hill to the North East Chelmsford Bypass, respectively East to West as part of the Chelmsford Garden Community. The Committee heard that the development would include carriageways, footways, cycleways, crossings and the diversion of Wheelers Hill, in addition to landscaping and drainage for the NRDR with all associated engineering works including strategic ground re-profiling. The Committee were informed that the NRDR formed an essential component of the CGC and that it was integral to the future provision of large scale investment within the North-East Chelmsford area, unlocking the future use of Section 1a of the Chelmsford North-East bypass and providing a strategic transport link to it from Wheelers Hill. The Committee also heard that delivery of the NRDR would improve existing connections on the strategic road network and provide traffic relief. The Committee heard that the scheme before them was well designed, with considerable care and attention given to landscaping and connections to a comprehensive network of active travel routes. It was noted that the development complied with the vision set out in the Development Framework Document, delivering on key guiding principles and ensuring infrastructure ahead of any further residential development. [The Committee noted the green sheet of amendments which related to this item, detailing additional conditions and consultation responses.](#) It was noted that the additional conditions suggested by Essex Highways, were already covered by Condition 4 and that consultation comments about the A12 were not relevant as the NRDR was specifically for this corridor of land. The Committee were informed that the application complied with the Chelmsford Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework and was recommended for approval subject to conditions.

The Committee heard from a member of the public who spoke in support of the application, detailing the importance of the road to unlock the potential to deliver homes across the Chelmsford Garden Community, and the potential for the road to serve residents of the wider Essex region by offering vital relief to Junction 19 of the A12 and Essex Regiment Way. The Committee also heard from a member of the public who queried why a specific obligation had not been placed on the developer to give a specific timeline as to when Domsey Lane would be closed as previously stated and that they held concerns that the closure would not go ahead at the right time or at all, they asked for a binding obligation to be placed on the developer by the Committee. The Committee also heard from a Local Ward Member who echoed the concern of residents regarding the closure of Domsey Lane and the route being pursued by officers to ensure the closure of the lane at the appropriate time.

In response to the points raised, officers confirmed that through consultations it had been clear that residents supported the closure of the lane to through traffic to avoid rat running and that solutions had been explored by officers. It was noted that the Planning Framework Agreement detailed that a mitigation scheme had to be in place by completion of the NRDR and the closure of the lane to through traffic was the mitigation that would be used. It was noted that officers were currently looking to use a Section 249 order to achieve this, but that if this was rejected by the Department for Transport then a Traffic Regulation Order would be pursued instead.

In response to questions and comments from the Committee, Chelmsford City Council and Essex County Council officers noted that;

- Various trigger points had been looked at concerning the delivery of the NRDR and housing on site and that the road was set to be completed by Summer 2027 and that the build out of homes would coincide with the relief from the new road, otherwise asking for the road to be completed prior to any housing would in effect delay the housing.

- A comprehensive improvement package had been planned and included to mitigate traffic from the development, which was detailed in the specific applications for Zones 1 and 3, including junction capacity improvements on Essex Regiment Way and on Wheelers Hill.
- National Highways had requested that only buses use section 1a of the North-East Chelmsford bypass to allow the Junction 19 A12 works to be completed.
- A full pedestrian/cycle segregation had not been required for the North of the route as the demand for that element of the route would not be as high as elsewhere.
- It was hoped that the road would be adopted by the Highways Authority and landscaping elements such as verges could be looked after by a stewardship body, an upfront sum would be required from the developer for the maintenance of the road, which could go to the stewardship body.
- Only moderate levels of less than substantial harm were expected to heritage assets near to the NRDR and most of the mitigations were detailed in the application for Zone 3, rather than the NRDR application.
- Various monitoring methods would be used by the Highways Authority, to monitor the target of 60% of trips originating within the development being by sustainable transport methods.

RESOLVED that the application be approved subject to the conditions detailed in the report and on the green sheet and an additional condition that the Director of Sustainable Communities use their existing delegated powers to liaise with and confirm final requirements of National Highways relating to the final form of planning conditions.

(7.03pm to 8.17pm)

Items 6-9 - 22-01950-OUT&FUL - Zone 1 Chelmsford Garden Community, Pratts Farm Lane, Little Waltham, Chelmsford, Essex and 23-00124-OUT&FUL - Zone 3 Chelmsford Garden Community, Beaulieu Parkway, Chelmsford

The Committee received a joint presentation for the outline and full applications for Zones 1 and 3 of the Chelmsford Garden Community, before voting separately on each of the four applications.

The Committee heard that the applications formed part of Strategic Growth Site 6 in the Council's Local Plan and that the CGC had been awarded Garden Community status in 2019, where it had been merged with the Channels and Beaulieu developments. It was noted that the site had been through the Council's Masterplanning process, where it had been endorsed by the Chelmsford Policy Board and Cabinet. It was noted that the local plan policy states that the site would deliver 5500 new homes, with 3000 by 2036 and would be delivered over a 20 year period. The Committee noted that Zones 1 and 3 were being considered and that a future planning application for Zone 2 would follow in the future. The Committee were reminded of the importance of the key documents that had allowed the Garden Community to be planned, with multiple landowners, including the Development Framework Document, Infrastructure Delivery Plan and the Planning Framework Agreement.

The Committee heard that viability concerns had arisen during the planning of the site, but that these had been resolved meaning that a policy compliant level of affordable housing could be achieved for Zones 1 and 3. The Committee were informed that over a decade of work had led to the detailed plans before them and that the Garden Community would deliver 40% of the Council's housing needs up to 2041, with significant numbers of affordable rent homes and over 60% of the area's employment needs up to 2041. It was noted that the scheme was

full of innovative ideas and was a leading example of a net-zero scheme with large areas of green and blue open space and a significant bio-diversity net gain. The Committee also heard that since the Government's removal of funding for the widening of the A12, alternative solutions had been looked at leading to a positive funding resolution following work with Essex County Council and Government agencies, that would provide works needed at the station roundabout and Junction 19.

[The Committee noted the green sheet of amendments to the items, which detailed additional conditions and consultation responses.](#) The Committee were provided with significant details of the applications covering, stewardship arrangements, affordable housing, design and character elements, sustainable transport solutions including the use of mobility hubs, off site infrastructure, mitigation schemes, heritage and ecological matters, employment areas and healthcare provisions. The Committee heard that all four schemes were well considered, the result of extensive and detailed negotiation and would deliver significant infrastructure and public benefit, including notable economic, social and environmental benefits. The Committee were informed that all four applications had been recommended for approval, subject to detailed conditions within the reports, and the finalising of other agreements, such as the Planning Framework agreement and Section 106 agreements.

The Committee heard from members of the public who spoke in support of the applications, detailing the strong partnership working that had taken place and that approving the applications, would enable the delivery of significant housing, employment space, community facilities and infrastructure as detailed in the masterplan for the site. The Committee also heard concerns from a member of the public about building heights adjacent to Domsey Lane and a view that communications continue with residents about conditions raised by National Highways regarding the A12 widening.

In response to the points raised officers stated that there were height limits to buildings near Domsey Lane and that the design coding for these would come at a later reserved matters stage where final approvals to designs would be sought in line with the Council's Local Plan policies. It was also noted that officers would continue to engage with Domsey Lane residents going forward.

In response to questions and comments from the Committee, Chelmsford City Council and Essex County Council officers noted that;

- School place numbers had been adequately calculated via the Essex Education model and officers were content with them. It was noted that Beaulieu School had proved to be very popular, with students traveling some distance to attend it.
- The Garden Community was a sustainable development, built on walkable neighbourhood principles so it would be easy for students to attend without the use of a private car and that the Garden Community would include a strong network of local schools near neighbourhood centres. It was also noted that it was important for the timing of school delivery to coincide with housing delivery as otherwise schools would look to fill spaces with students from elsewhere.
- The proposed footbridge to Broomfield had been tested in terms of land provision and a future application would provide specific details of the bridge, but officers were content there would not be land ownership issues regarding it.
- There was a proposal to extend the Chelmer Valley Park and Ride Site, with some land already safeguarded for it by ECC as part of the Army and Navy sustainable transport package as detailed by planning conditions.
- Income generating assets on the site for a stewardship body, included mobility hubs, sports concessions and transfers of buildings amongst other options.

- All applications were accompanied by environmental statements and conditions such as those used at Beaulieu would ensure that parts of the site that were historic landfills would be treated correctly with mitigation measures.
- The detail of layouts to the school sites would be considered at reserved matters stages, but admission policies were not within the City Council's control. It was noted that a suggested solution to school parking issues, via a drop off or pick up zone was not preferred as it would encourage driving to the schools and that this would not be supported by the County Council.
- Water efficiency levels across the Garden Community would be secured by conditions, which would also be future proofed if requirements were higher at reserved matters stages.
- Both schemes in Zones 1 and 3 were affordable housing policy compliant, but zone 3 had a lower than the expected 35% level, instead at 29% due to the build to rent element but overall both schemes met the requirements set out in the masterplan concerning affordable housing provision.
- The response from the Integrated Care Board had not requested a specific contribution for acute hospital care, instead just for local healthcare provisions. It was noted that it was not easy to directly gauge the impact of a development upon hospitals and funding for acute hospital care went through different routes.
- A stewardship statement had been agreed with four different options which would be decided upon at a later stage.
- The CGC Progress Delivery Group was an ongoing group including Local Councils and developers and would be able to report back to the Council both informally and formally.
- If any land parcels were sold to other housing builders by developers, all of the planning conditions and agreements before the Committee would remain in place.
- Officers would be able to influence the delivery of affordable housing on the development, via the Section 106 agreement and it would be tracked and monitored via triggers within the Section 106 agreement and officers were acutely aware of the urgent need for affordable housing.
- The Development Framework Document detailed the different densities of housings closer and further away from village centres and there would be 18 wheelchair accessible properties within zone 3 and 27 in zone 1.
- A landscape buffer was included within designs for properties that would be built near to Domsey Lane along with other mitigations, including distances set within the Local Plan for distances between properties that would be utilised at later planning stages.
- Conditions were included to gather noise reports for properties that would be built near to the main roads and mitigations would be used where required.

The Head of Planning at ECC left the meeting at 22:00.

Members expressed their strong concerns about the dropping off and picking up of students at the proposed schools and highlighted issues with this at the recent Beaulieu development, that they did not want to see repeated at the Garden Community. Members noted that parents often had to drop off children on their way to jobs, which may well be further afield and that it was not always realistic to expect sustainable transport methods to be used in the way that the schemes envisioned. Members also commented on parking provisions within the schemes and highlighted that families often relied on other family members such as grandparents, who may live elsewhere to look after young children and that it was important that they would be able to park within the development.

Members thanked officers for their hard work in preparing the applications and for the detailed presentations.

RESOLVED that applications 22-01950-OUT, 22-01950-FUL, 23-00124-OUT and 23-00124 FUL be approved in accordance with the terms and conditions set out in the reports and on the green sheet.

(8.17pm to 11.06pm)

The meeting closed at 11.06pm.

Chair