

Maldon District Council response:**Land north of South Woodham Ferrers masterplan, Application Number: 20/00002/MAS**

Thank you for your consultation received on the 17th June 2020 and for the opportunity to comment on the Masterplan relating to Land North of South Woodham Ferrers.

1. The site is located where the Chelmsford City boundary meets the Maldon District boundary and therefore, there are likely to be a number of impacts relating to the Maldon District, such as:
 - Impacts on the rural character and appearance of the countryside.
 - Impacts on the infrastructure network
 - Impacts on European Designated Sites

Principle of Development

2. The site is allocated within the Chelmsford Local Plan (2013-2036). for the level of growth proposed and therefore, the principle of development has already been established.

Masterplan preparation process

3. The preparation of the masterplan has followed a logical process, by taking account of the site's constraints, which has informed the location of built development within the site.

Impact of a new nuclear power station at Bradwell

4. The proposed new nuclear power station at Bradwell B will require new 400kv electricity infrastructure. This will be a NSIP brought forward by the National Grid. The current pylons are likely to be replaced with larger pylons, and the increased voltage may result in wider no-build zones around the power lines. This will need to be taken into account by the masterplan. As the upgrade of the electricity infrastructure is likely to occur after the site has been completed, the site layout must enable these infrastructure works to take place.
5. The B1012 is the preferred HGV route for Bradwell B construction traffic. Accesses into and out of this site, for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists, and any associated traffic calming measures, should be compatible with HGV use. As an example, mini-roundabouts should be avoided.
6. The masterplan needs to consider the cumulative impacts of this development alongside other published development proposals (for example Bradwell B).

Impacts on the road network

7. It is noted that along Burnham Road there are several crossing points proposed, to enable residents to access the rest of the town and the train station, without the need for a car. Non-car access between the development and the town is vital.

8. The majority of these crossing points are proposed in conjunction with roundabouts. The development must ensure that these crossing points are safe and perceived to be safe to use. It should be ensured that these crossing points do not exacerbate congestion on Burnham Road, and that they are compatible with the existing HGV route. It should be noted that the B1012 is the preferred HGV route for the construction phase of Bradwell B.
9. The lowering of the speed limit is supported, as it will protect people's safety when using these crossings.
10. The mixed-use area on the eastern part of the site will be accessed by the existing roundabout. Using existing road infrastructure is sensible, but it must be ensured that this roundabout is capable of taking an additional junction and the resultant extra traffic this development will generate.
11. It is acknowledged that the siting of the development will have an impact on the highway infrastructure of the Maldon District, as an increased number of residents within South Woodham Ferrers will likely result in more people travelling into and out of the Maldon District for employment and recreational purposes. Therefore, any future applications at the site should be supported by the necessary Transport Assessments and if any key highway improvements are highlighted by Essex County Council relating to roads affecting the Maldon District, then they should be secured via the necessary S106 measures.

Impacts on the character and appearance of the countryside

12. The Maldon District Local Development Plan places a strong emphasis on protecting the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside (Policies, S1, S8 and D1). The proposed development adjoins the Maldon District boundary and the countryside that lies within Maldon District Council's (MDC) control. From the information submitted, areas of employment, residential accommodation, Travelling Showpeople's yard, early years education facilities and allotments are proposed adjacent to the boundary.
13. Currently, South Woodham Ferrers is contained within the inner part of Burnham Road and there is no substantial development to the east, adjacent to the shared boundary. The area between Stow Maries and the urban centre of South Woodham Ferrers is largely free from built form and forms a transition between the urban area and rural countryside beyond. Maldon District Council, therefore, have concerns that the development of the eastern side of Burnham Road, adjacent to the District boundary and at the gateway to the Maldon District would erode this rural character.
14. The masterplan has insufficient landscape buffers along the northern and eastern edge of the development where housing areas adjoin the open countryside. It is therefore not in compliance with the Chelmsford Local Plan allocation (strategic growth Site Policy 10 North of South Woodham Ferrers). The policy requires 'an appropriate landscaped setting for development consisting of sufficiently dense planting belts and natural buffers to development edges.' Further, para 7.329 requires that 'development should be located where excessive visibility can be mitigated, there will be appropriate buffer and strategic landscaping to the outer margins.'
15. The eastern edge of the site is recognised in the Masterplan Landscape Strategy as being a visually sensitive edge, and is particularly visible from Woodham Road as it

descends into the town. Yet, there is only minimal landscaping proposed between the northern and eastern most housing blocks and the countryside. This could result in an unacceptably abrupt urban edge abutting the countryside.

16. The development must ensure that the mixed use area on B1012/Woodham Road is adequately screened and provides an appropriate edge to the development where it adjoins open countryside.

Education

17. The development will provide a new primary school and two early years facilities within the development. The location of the primary school in the centre of the site is supported.
18. It is presumed that the development will make contributions to off-site secondary education as well.

Local Centre

19. It is logical to locate the Local Centre in the centre of the site, near to the existing Sainsbury's store and health facilities. Being closely located to the new primary school and existing retail and health facilities, will enable this to become the hub of the community.

Employment

20. It is logical to locate the new employment area near an existing one. However, the site must be adequately screened from the open countryside. The capacity of the roundabout to take the additional junction and traffic needs to be confirmed. (See earlier comments on transport and landscaping).
21. It is acknowledged that the proposed employment and retail spaces could bring benefits to Maldon residents in terms of future jobs and services.

Travelling Showpeople's yard

22. The provision of a Travelling Showpeople's yard within the development is supported. The justification for locating the Travelling Showpeople's yard in association with the employment area, in order to reduce the risk to residential amenity of the settled community, is inadequate. It does not take into account that the Travelling Showpeople's yard is a residential use in itself. Further, it is not clear if the Travelling Showpeople community has been consulted on whether this location would be suitable, both in terms of road network access and residential amenity. However, if this location is the community's preferred location, then the above concerns will be lessened. Overall, the Travelling Showpeople's yard could be better integrated into the development.

Impacts on European Designated Sites

23. As mentioned above, the development of the site, particularly the areas relating to residential uses, will likely increase the number of visitors using the Maldon District coastline for tourism and recreation. Whilst the District welcomes any growth in tourism, any impacts on the European Designated Sites should be offset by the RAMS mitigation contribution where necessary. The development should have a project level HRA to identify any further mitigation requirements.

Future consultations

24. As the adjoining Local Planning Authority, Maldon District Council would welcome the opportunity to comment on all future iterations of this masterplan, and any subsequent planning applications.