

**SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS TOWN COUNCIL  
PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES** of an online Meeting held on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2020  
at 7.30p.m.

**Present:**

Councillor I Roberts as Chairman  
Councillor A John as Vice Chairman

Councillor P Ferry  
Councillor M O Brien  
Councillor J Birch

Councillor M Sismey  
Councillor D Eley

In attendance: Town Clerk and Councillor Shearring

**P192 Apologies for Absence**

No apologies for absence were **RECEIVED**.

**P193 Dispensation Considerations**

None received.

**P194 Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest received.

**P195 Confirmation of Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2020 will be considered at the meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

**P196 Public Questions**

No members of the public were present.

**P197 20/01363/SCOPE 350 Homes Dwellings Environmental Impact Assessment**

Members submitted comments to Councillor I Roberts prior to the meeting, these were collated and considered in conjunction with the environmental assessment report.

**Proposal:** Councillor comments to be included within the report were agreed. Town Clerk to circulate finalised report to those present at the meeting to ensure that all points are included. Finalised report attached.

**Proposed:** Councillor I Roberts

**Seconded:** Councillor A John

**Vote:** All in favour

KH

**P198 Report to Council**

No items to report.

**P199 Media Coverage**

No items to report.

**P200 Next Meeting**

The next meeting agreed as 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.19pm.

Signed .....

Chairman of the Meeting

Date: 30th September 2020

# **South Woodham Ferrers Town Council**

## **Willow Grove Meadow** **Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report** **20/01363/SCOPE**

This area of land is part of the Strategic Growth Site 10, and an area earmarked for development in the City Council's Local Plan. This parcel of land was originally S.G.S.3, it then changed to S.G.S.7 (as mentioned in this document), it then changed again and is now S.G.S. 10.

Strategic Growth Sites are those that are intended to have more than 100 homes, and Growth Sites, those with less than 100. Strategic Growth Sites must have a Masterplan, and one was examined by the Masterplan Committee, and a Report submitted in July 2020.

The Masterplan was produced by Broadway Malyan and David Lock Associates on behalf of Countryside Properties, Bellway and Essex County Council, and was based on the Local Plan requirements. It seemed strange that although it was a joint operation, only the Application Site for Countryside Homes was covered in any detail.

The Willow Grove Meadow proposed development Scoping Report was written in April 2020 as detailed within the footer yet the title page is dated August 2020, it is clear from the information submitted within the report that the information is out of date and does not reflect other proposed developments in the nearby area which will have an impact on South Woodham Ferrers and its infrastructure. There is also no reference to the RAMS Supplementary Planning Document and how this development would meet those requirements. The covering letter from the Case Officer at the City Council is dated 7<sup>th</sup> September with a consultation closing date of 28<sup>th</sup> September less than 3 weeks from when the document was published, which during a Covid pandemic is an extremely short time frame.

The Town Council has concerns about the validity of this Strategic Site on several points. Firstly, the Local Plan was examined by a Government Inspector to check that it was sound in which case factual information was provided for their decision to be made on the soundness of the plan. The Local Plan called for approximately 1,000 homes and also detailed what would be provided in - to ensure the development was sustainable. The development area is now stating 1,250 homes for Countryside and 350 (originally quoted as 250 an increase of 100) for Bellway bringing the total to 1,600 homes – an increase of 60%. The infrastructure needed for 1,000 homes which the Town Council have already stated would not make the development sustainable and would need to be greatly increased for the now proposed 1,600 homes.

The E.I.A. Scoping Report that was produced for Countryside by Bidwells in February 2020 20/00335SCOPE, stated:

*"3.2 (page 6) The number of residential units referred to in the Local Plan allocation is not fixed or capped (the language used in the Draft Local Plan is "around 1,000 new homes of mixed size and type). In order to ensure the assessment undertaken in this E.I.A. is "worse case" environmentally (i.e. the largest likely scale), the assumed scale of the residential has been increased to 1,500 for the whole of the Allocation Site and 1,250 for the Application Site. This calculation is based on ongoing Masterplan work for the Allocation Area, and rounded up for "worse case". The specific number of dwellings to be applied for will be decided as the application evolves through the parallel planning process."*

Their assessment and stress test were therefore based on 1,500 homes as a maximum.

## **Areas of Concern:**

### **Access**

There are concerns that the proposed development will be an isolated site and not incorporated within the existing town. The Masterplan does not identify any access entry to the Bellway site, and there is no safe pedestrian or cycle access or crossings which is vital to ensure safety of residents.

3.7 P8 states *"there is also potential of a secondary access to be provided onto Willow Grove"*

This is not practical due to existing highway constraints, the road is extremely narrow in places, ditches on either side of the road and sharp bends which would not be safe for motorists or cyclists. The Neighbourhood Plan Vision 2036 (para 3.2) details that the Town should be a complete community and this development is clearly not incorporated within the existing town:

*"3.2 The vision for South Woodham Ferrers is presented below: Our vision for South Woodham Ferrers is that, by 2036, it will have become a 'Complete Community'. The strong sense of community and identity that the town experiences will have been strengthened. South Woodham Ferrers will be a safe, friendly, green, accessible and welcoming place for all, with a range of housing choices, leisure and employment opportunities, all in easy walk and cycle of the home, and with a strong and vibrant centre at the heart of the town. Through future growth and change, South Woodham Ferrers will become the 'riverside country town', with greenery integrated into the heart of the town. New development will reflect the best of the local 'Essex vernacular' and be an exemplar for new design and place making."*

### **Types of Home**

3.5 *In terms of scale it is envisaged that the majority of the residential buildings range in height between two and 3 storeys. Buildings at a few selected focal points may be higher. But heights for the purpose of the assessment do not include point features such as chimneys, and will be defined from existing ground level, subject to vertical tolerance, to be advised.*

The Town Council would not be supportive of any residential properties which exceed 3 floors plus a roof. The Town Council Neighbourhood Plan Objective 8 p45 and the Vision, also states that properties must reflect the Essex Vernacular in line with the Essex Design Guide, reference below

*"Objective 05: To reflect the legacy of the Essex Design Guide in any new development, delivering high quality design in the built form and surrounding landscape.*

8.5 *Now more than forty years later the Essex Design Guide is in its fourth iteration, having been updated in 2018. This presents new guidance and good practice case studies that should be drawn upon to inform new development, whilst reflecting the 'Essex vernacular'. Equally, new development in South Woodham Ferrers, particularly that to the north, represent a new chapter in the growth and evolution of the town. As with the original planning and development of South Woodham Ferrers, so new growth and development should be of the highest quality, embedding best practice in design."*

House design and heights should not distract from views of the Escarpment to the north of the site.

## **Flooding and Water Works**

This is an area of concern for the Town Council, whilst the evidence provided in the scoping reports and provided by drainage experts states there is not an issue from local knowledge of the Town it is apparent there are areas which flood on regular occasions and as the impacts of Climate Change are increasing the flooding episodes are becoming a regular occurrence.

### **Fluvial Flood Risk**

8.14 (page 33) *The latest E.A. published Flood Zone map shows the majority of the site lies in Flood Zone 1, representing a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of flooding from fluvial or tidal sources.*

The Town Council has concerns that the 1 in 1000years should be reduced due to climate change implications and the increased flooding episodes which have been experienced within the Town. In addition to this, members are concerned that whilst the developments are detailing mitigation measures within their site, the masterplan site and the existing town is not be considered as a whole and members have concerns with future flooding at Fenn Creek and Old Wickford Road.

As detailed throughout the report references areas south of the development site are within a flood zone 2 & 3 and there are concerns that these have not be considered within the development and that the SUDS planned for mitigating the flooding are not based on both developments as a whole.

### **Flooding References within the document:**

#### **Fluvial Flood Risk**

10.13 (page 52) The E.A. Flood Map for Planning indicates that the majority of the Application Site lies within Flood Zone 1. The parts of the Application Site associated with the main rivers to the west lie in Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3. The flood risk associated with the ordinary watercourses present within the Application Site is unknown as there is no modelled outline.

10.14 (page 52) Historic records of fluvial and tidal flooding for the Application Site are unknown, however records of tidal flooding are recorded within the Chelmsford SFRA (JBA Consulting 2018) within South Woodham Ferrers.

#### **Surface Water Flood Risk**

10.15 (page 52) The E.A.'s Long Term Flood Risk information surface water flood map (Environment Agency 2019) indicates that the risk of surface water flooding at the at the Application Site range from very low to high.

10.16 (page 52) Areas around the ordinary watercourses that flow through the Application Site are at **high risk** of surface water flooding.

In the Willow Grove Meadow E.I.A. Scoping Report (20/1363/SCOPE – August 2020) -

8.15 (page 33) Small areas of land within and immediately adjacent to the watercourse channels crossing the site are located in Flood Zone 2 (land having between a 1 in 100 year and 1 in 1,000 year probability annual probability of river flooding, or land having between a 1 in 200 year and 1 in a 1,000 year annual probability of sea flooding) and Flood Zone 3 ( land having a 1 in 100 year or greater annual probability of river flooding,

or land having a 1 in 200 year or greater annual probability of sea flooding.)  
8.16 (page 33) Parts of the site to the west of the watercourses channel are shown to be within the flood extent for the historical 1953 flood event outline.

8.18 (page 33) The risk of flooding across the site ranges from very low to **high**, with the majority of the high risks areas are in the vicinity of watercourse channels crossing the site and in the southern area of the site. Surface Water Flood Risk has always been an area of main concern for the Town Council but since the production of the document there is a KFC fast food store being built on the Shaw Farm roundabout next to the BP garage which is one of the main junctions to leave, enter or drive through the town from those travelling from the Dengie. This area floods during times of heavy rainfall without the added development which is currently being built and proposed.

It is noted that the sewer system and pipe works which service South Woodham Ferrers is very old and there are concerns how the network would cope with the additional demand. Whilst it is noted that Anglian Water are being liaised with, the second authority which services the area Essex and Suffolk Water must also be involved in the planning stage.

## **Potential Impacts**

### **Health**

Committee are concerned regarding the health implications for those living within close proximity of overhead power cables.

As detailed within the document, reference below. It clearly states that there will be an impact on health as a result of the development. It is vital that if this development is passed that a plan is detailed in how these can be mitigated to reduce the health implications for the residents, school children and those attending the medical centre within close proximity of the development site. In addition to this there is the added health risk of small dust particulates travelling over a wide area, being drawn into the lungs and being a risk to health, particularly as the developments will take 6-9 years to complete

6.11 (page27) *"The Air Quality Assessment will cover an evaluation of the temporary effects from fugitive construction dust and construction vehicle exhaust emissions. During the site clearance and construction phase, activities undertaken on site may cause dust and particulate matter to be emitted to the atmosphere. Dust defined as the larger particles, fall out of suspension quickly after release and therefore tend to be deposited close to the source. If uncontrolled, dust deposition may cause nuisance to surrounding residents and businesses."*

### **Wildlife**

Section 9 of the Environment Assessment details Biodiversity the development area is located within an Impact Zone of a SSSI and within close proximity of a designated local wildlife site Bushy Hill Ch150. As detailed earlier in the report there is no reference to the newly adopted Chelmsford RAMS Supplementary Planning Document and the mitigation that would be provided to protect the wildlife of the Essex Coast.

### **Proposed Development Sites**

The document states that areas which are could cause implications on the development are listed in table 4.2 p41, this list is not representative of all developments agreed and planned within the local area which will have an impact on the site, the document omits and developments in Maldon District Council's area.

## **Transport, Access and Movement**

The development will have difficulty travelling anywhere other than by car which is not sustainable, 5.3 details South Woodham Ferrers Station is located within 850km, this cannot be reached safely by foot as a result residents would require a motor vehicle to drive to South Woodham Ferrers or Wickford station putting additional strain on the Burnham Road Roundabout. The information which has been submitted about bus stops is incorrect and inaccurate. With schools, station and other community facilities being located on the Southern side of the Burnham Road there is no safe pedestrian walkways or crossing points.

## **Landscape and Visual Impact**

10.5 Tabrums Farm has been omitted from the list of listed buildings. House design and heights should not distract from views of the Escarpment to the north of the site.

## **Summary**

The Town Council has detailed their objections as above but it should be noted that this is based upon the Environmental Assessment as provided, it is noted that the information in the report is outdated and visually appears to be cut and pasted from the Countryside Environmental Assessment, since this time there has been other developments within the area which have not been incorporated. In addition to this the major concern is that the overall size of the development is now **1600 homes** plus to industrial and showman site, which is not what the number consulted on as part of the Local Plan and Masterplan. The surveys prepared for the Local Plan consultation identified that the junctions were at maximum capacity and that junction improvements could not be made at all junctions. The Town Council is now in a position of considering a report based upon surveys carried out for a site of a smaller size and advised that the current traffic survey results cannot be shared until the planning application stage which is then too late to make changes to the surrounding infrastructure.

**END**