

RESPONSE TO LDF CONSULTATION FROM STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council generally supports the thrust of the Development Management Policies. It is difficult to disagree with most of the targets or policies – as always the judgement will come once members and officers are implementing these policies and reading decisions.

Existing Policies

- The maintenance of a separation between communities.
- The continued support for the Metropolitan Green Belt (one possible exception discussed below).
- Car parking for Stansted Airport will only be allowed within the Airport boundary.
- New development should respect the character of the towns and villages within the district including layout, built form, open space and views.
- Community facilities will be permitted on a site outside settlements if necessary.

New Amended Policies

- *Key employment areas will be safeguarded* from redevelopment or change of use. Sites located outside of identified employment areas but within settlement limits should be retained for employment use subject to viability. Strongly agree.
- *No change of use for retail premises* on ground floor unless unit is demonstrated not to be viable. Strongly agree.
- *Development will be permitted on land within development limits* subject to impact on neighbouring properties and being compatible with the character of the settlement. The sub-division of dwellings will be permitted subject to sufficient car parking, amenity space and no detrimental effect on the character of the area.
- *Targets for affordable housing to be extended* – 40% on sites of 15 or more dwellings, 20% on sites of 5-14 dwellings and a financial contribution from sites of 1-4 dwellings to help deliver off-site affordable housing. May be permitted outside development limits. Affordable housing on separate sites or in segregated areas is strongly opposed. The design of such housing should not differ from the private equivalents.
- *Energy and water efficiency standards* – require all dwelling units in developments over five units to comply with the current standards for affordable housing. Proportionate improvements required with permissions for residential extensions. Strongly agree.
- *Sites for gypsies, travellers and travelling show-people* will be identified and will provide amenity blocks, play areas, access roads and structural landscaping.
- *Design of a new development should respect the character of the towns and villages.* The density, scale, form, massing and height of a development must be appropriate to the local context of the site and to the character of the surrounding streetscape/landscape. Strongly agree.
New buildings must be fit for purpose, well-designed and appropriate to their location and setting.
- *Vehicle parking standards* – development will be permitted where the number, design and layout of spaces is proposed is appropriate for the use and location as laid down in ECC's document "Parking Standards, Design & Good Practice". (January 2012). In real life these standards are inadequate.

- *The protection of playing fields, open spaces, allotments and sports facilities* which already exist and making sure sufficient amenities and facilities are provided in future is policy (see Uttlesford Open Space; Sport Facility and Playing Pitch Strategy 2012). Strongly agree.

Development will only be permitted if it would not involve the loss of open space for recreation, including allotments, playing pitches or sports facilities.

Allotments – all developments over ten dwellings capable of accommodating four standard allotment plots. This provision is excessive. This parish has a waiting list of approximately 30 people. If the take-up is low, who will maintain the sites? In addition a standard allotment is for most people too large.

ISSUES IN RELATION TO FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

- *The population is in the process of rapid growth.* By the time Foresthall Park is complete about 700 dwellings will have been built thus increasing the population of Stansted Mountfitchet by about 30%. The completion of this development will take another two to three years while making this development wholly a part of this community will take at least ten years.
- *Stansted Mountfitchet should remain a community with well-defended development limits* including the protection of established green belt boundaries. This is essential to maintain separation from Bishop's Stortford, Birchanger and Ugley and to sustain agricultural land which may be a valuable resource in the future as well as providing an attractive backcloth to this community.
- *The local road traffic network is already under pressure* even before the impact of current projects at Foresthall Park and Lower Street (including a major health centre) have been felt. Of equal importance is the potential impact of any residential developments approved in Elsenham (where sites for 789 dwellings are under consideration as well as 3000 dwellings proposed by Fairfield Partnership. Even if a new road was constructed a 10-20% flow through this village either on the B1051 or B1383 would pose a serious problem.
- *The protection of views for this settlement is a key issue* in order to protect the setting of the village within the rural landscape. In this village views across Stansted Park and vistas looking west from Bentfield Green, north towards Ugley on the B1383 and across High Lane are much valued.
- *Water and sewage issues raise questions* over any substantial development while the River Stort (UK Biodiversity Action Plan habitat) fails to comply with the Water Framework Directive.

Given these issues Stansted Mountfitchet opposes any substantial new development although modest additions will be considered within the existing village limits.

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED SITES IN LDF CONSULTATION

- **STA1 - Braefield Engineering High Lane** – proposals under consideration. The Council supports proposals to construct a sixty-bed care home on this site, not least because of its potential for local employment.
- **STA2 - Land east of High Lane** (north of Croft House) - oppose very strongly any development which would urbanise the area which includes substantial maturing woodland and which would destroy a significant setting within the rural landscape.
- **STA4 - Land at Mont House, High Lane** - has planning approval.
- **STA5 - Water Lane** – has planning approval.
- **STA6 - Elms Farm** – SMPC would consider supporting limited development on this green belt site on the existing footprint in return for substantial community gains including public access to Stansted Park. However, any development must be of a scale and design to fit on this sensitive site, must provide safe access onto a narrow, busy road and must not under any circumstances infringe the view of Stansted Park as seen when you descend Chapel Hill. The Parish Council only voted to consider this site by a narrow majority.
- **STA7 - Elms Farm (behind Churchfields)** – strongly oppose development at an important location in relation to Stansted Park and also note access and traffic implications.
- **STA8 - Land at Pines Hill** - oppose as the site is designated green belt.
- **STA9 - Land to west (Bentfield)** – oppose as the site is designated green belt and provides a magnificent setting for the village within the rural landscape. It is good agricultural land.
- **STA10 – 10 Cambridge Road** – would accept development on a suitable scale subject to the commercial activities not being viable.
- **STA11 - Land to rear of 14-28 Cambridge Road.** - believe that the site should be retained for commercial use provided viability is demonstrated. If there is to be a change of use, residential development should be directed to smaller dwellings in light of the need demonstrated in a recent UDC survey. The Parish Council would strongly argue that a community gain in the form of a footpath from Cambridge Road to Crafton Green car park should be a condition.
- **STA13 - Bentfield Bury Farm** – oppose all development to the north-west of Bentfield Green (see STA9) for additional comments which apply.
- **STA14 - Land north of Stansted** – oppose the beginning of coalescence with Ugley and loss of agricultural land. Risk of ribbon development and other adjacent landowners seek to capitalise the opening up of this area.
- **STA15 - Land north of Catholic Church, High Lane** – oppose development on this triangle which forms an attractive entrance to the village from the north with long views across the countryside.
- **STA18 - Adjacent Broom End, Pines Hill** – oppose as the site is designated greenbelt.

Some small sites not included in the list may be worthy of consideration:

- **St Mary's School, St John's Road** – possible development for five dwellings but retention of playing field as an open space is considered essential.

- **The Three Colts, Cambridge Road** – a small development may improve the site provided the former pub (a listed building) is incorporated in a sensitive manner.
- **Redevelopment of Mead Court** – under discussion with UDC.
- **Almont House, High Lane** – planning approval already granted for 7 dwellings.
- **11-13 Cambridge Road** – should this site at some future date become unviable for commercial use (latter is supported by the Council), then limited residential development may be considered.

Two other considerations should be given weight:

- *Any development should emphasise small family houses or bungalows.* Further construction of small flats is opposed.
- *Gated developments are out-of-character* and create an unnecessary divide in the community.

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