

Ardleigh Parish Council
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FAO: Rachel Fletcher, Parish Clerk

Sent via email: ardleighnp@gmail.com

Date: 23 September 2022
Our ref: 62189/01/PR/CW/25801416v4
Your ref:

Dear Sir/Madam,

Ardleigh Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 Consultation – September 2022

We write on behalf of our client, Latimer (Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community “TCBGC”) Developments Limited, hereon in referred to as ‘Latimer’, in response to the above consultation. Latimer and its team welcome the opportunity to engage with Ardleigh Parish Council on its emerging Neighbourhood Plan (NP) and would welcome a meeting over the coming weeks to introduce ourselves and discuss how we can best work together to create a 21st-century garden community.

This letter provides Latimer’s response to the Regulation 14 version of the Ardleigh NP dated August 2022, organised under relevant headings.

Introduction and context

Latimer, partnering with Mersea Homes, is the master developer bringing forward the TCBGC and controls most of the land allocated for the new garden community. This is the largest strategic allocation in the North Essex Authorities’ Shared Strategic Section 1 Plan (hereon in referred to as the Section 1 Plan). Adopted Policy SP 8 and SP 9 of the Section 1 Plan allocates the area for between 7,000 and 9,000 new homes, 25 hectares of employment land, university land, community, leisure, retail and other associated uses. Policy SP 8 sets the Broad Location for the garden community and requires a Development Plan Document (DPD) to be prepared, including policies setting out how the new community will be designed, developed, and delivered. It is an important, strategic allocation for both Tendering and Colchester Councils to enable them to accommodate their required and planned growth. Failure to do so will result in unplanned, speculative developments which is not in the interests of either local planning authority or the Parish Councils.

We note that the northwest corner of the garden community lies within the Ardleigh Draft Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Area.

The Councils are currently preparing this DPD, with its Regulation 19 consultation scheduled for end 2022/early 2023. To inform the DPD, the Councils are

preparing a strategic masterplan for the garden community, which will be consulted upon alongside the DPD.

The Neighbourhood Plan Regulations (2012) require that NPs meet a number of basic conditions, which importantly includes a requirement to be in general conformity with strategic policies. Latimer is keen to emphasise to the Parish Council that the emerging and draft Ardleigh NP must conform with the adopted and examined Section 1 Plan, including Policy SP 8 and SP 9. It must not (and cannot) prejudice the delivery of this important strategic allocation and the ability of this garden community to deliver between 7,000 – 9,000 homes.

Paragraph 4.6 of the draft NP explains that the Parish Council intends to work closely and proactively with the Councils to progress the design and development of the garden community, which we fully support. It goes on to explain that the delivery of homes within the TCBGC will not take place until the NP period has expired (up to 2033), which is incorrect. The delivery of homes is currently scheduled to commence as early as 2025/2026 within the garden community allocation.

It is important therefore that policies in the emerging draft NP do not attempt to undermine the delivery of the garden community. To minimise this risk, and the risk of draft NP being rejected at examination stage, we would strongly encourage the Parish Council to progress its draft NP alongside the Councils emerging DPD, with a view to creating a complementary plan, rather than advancing it prior to adoption of the DPD.

We fully appreciate and understand that a new garden community of 7,500+ homes and all associated infrastructure and supporting uses will represent a significant change to the area. However, the area has been allocated in the Section 1 Plan and the Councils consider this is best way to accommodate growth and the increasing demand for new homes.

Latimer, in partnership with Mersea Homes, are wholly dedicated to delivering an exemplary new garden community over the coming decades. This change can therefore be seen as a positive and planned, and over the next 18+ months we look forward to positive engagement on shaping the detail of these proposals.

Response to emerging policies

Within this section we provide our response to specific policies under relevant headings.

Regarding Crockleford Heath, we understand the desires of some people within the community for no development to occur in its vicinity. However, this is in direct conflict with the strategic allocation in the Section 1 Plan, which anticipates Crockleford Heath forming part of the garden community and as such, change and appropriate development is anticipated. It is Latimer's aspiration that its proposals respect, enhance and reinforce the character of the existing area and strengthen the existing community in Crockleford Heath, and we look forward to ongoing discussions over the coming years as proposals are worked up.

Policy GDP: General Approach to Development

Latimer welcomes confirmation at paragraph 9.8 in that the NP does not seek to prevent or discourage any development that is permitted by the Local Plan (i.e. including the TCBGC), however, this is not reflected in the wording of Policy GDP, which does seek to restrict development outside of the settlement boundary. Such policy wording would limit the extent of developable land within the allocated garden community, which would undermine the ability for the allocated garden community to deliver between 7,000 and 9,000 homes. To avoid conflict with the Section 1 Plan, policy should only relate to land both outside of the settlement boundary and outside of the Broad Location for the TCBGC already allocated in the Section 1 Plan.

Policy CFP: Community Facilities

Latimer generally supports the aims of this policy. In relation to criterion 4, relating to proposals resulting in a net addition of housing being required to provide evidence that there is sufficient GP and/or primary school capacity, Latimer confirms that proposals within the garden community will ensure sufficient health, education and other community provision is provided to meet the needs of the new community. This will be a requirement of the DPD in any event and something Latimer is seeking to ensure from the outset to create a successful and thriving place.

Policy HP: Housing

Latimer objects to criterion 1, which conflicts with Section 1 Plan, Policy SP 8 and SP 9. To remedy this, this aspect of the policy should only relate to land both outside of the settlement boundary and outside of the Broad Location for the TCBGC. Latimer additionally object to criterion 3 as the housing mix for the garden community will be informed by the DPD and subsequent planning applications. Latimer is committed to delivering 30% affordable housing provision across the garden community, as required by the adopted Section 1 Plan.

Policy EP: Natural, Built & Historic Environment

We object to the inclusion of the TCBGC within this policy and respectfully request that it is specifically excluded from this policy as it directly conflicts with the Section 1 Plan, particularly as all related matters will be addressed within the DPD. Furthermore, detailed design codes will be developed by Latimer in consultation with the Councils, community and other stakeholders to inform future planning applications, all set within the framework of the Councils emerging DPD. Notwithstanding, having reviewed the Village Design Statement (VDS), there are many which are not appropriate for the TCBGC.

In relation to the natural environment, Latimer's intention is to protect and incorporate Public Rights of Ways, hedgerows and mature trees and ancient woodland where practical and appropriate to help integrate the new garden community with the existing area. We look forward to discussing this and other aspects of our proposals in due course.

Policy LGP: Local Green Spaces

As above, the TCBGC should be excluded from this policy as it directly conflicts with the Section 1 Plan and in any event these aspects will be addressed within the DPD and associated strategic masterplan.

Policy TP: Transport & Parking

Transport and parking are important considerations; however, the Councils may wish to adopt a bespoke approach within the TCBGC to minimise car travel and encourage a modal shift towards more sustainable travel patterns. This will be embedded within the ethos of the new garden community. We therefore object to this policy and respectfully request that the TCBGC is excluded to allow these important matters to be given due consideration as part of the DPD and development management process.

Conclusion

Latimer welcomes the opportunity to engage with Ardleigh Parish Council on its emerging Neighbourhood Plan (NP).

Whilst we support some aspects of the emerging NP, we are concerned that other aspects are not in conformity with the Section 1 Plan, namely Policies SP 8 and SP 9, and could prejudice the delivery of this important allocation. We would therefore encourage the Parish Council to advance its NP in parallel with the DPD, with a view to creating a complementary plan. Alternatively, the area covered by the draft NP could be limited to all areas outside of the allocated TCBGC Broad Location to allow the Councils emerging DPD to set the framework for this important strategic site allocation.

We would very much welcome a meeting to introduce ourselves, outline our aspirations, discuss our representations with you and explore how we can best work together to ensure appropriate foundations are laid to allow the creation of a successful, thriving exemplary 21st century garden community that we can all be proud. We will be in touch shortly to arrange this.

Yours sincerely



Pauline Roberts
Senior Director

Copy Russ Edwards and Luke Cadman – Latimer by Clarion Housing Group
 Gary Guiver and William Fuller – Tendring District Council