

OVERVIEW OF THE CHELMER MEAD EXHIBITIONS

1.1 Introduction

As part of Chater Homes' pre-submission work, four public exhibitions were held in Henham, Great Dunmow, Felsted and Elsenham on the week commencing 10 December 2007. The exhibitions, organised by specialist community consultation company Green Issues, formed part of Chater Homes overall strategy of promoting the viability of its proposals for Chelmer Mead within Uttlesford District Council's (UDC) consultation on Preferred Option for Growth, as part of the LDF process.

The exhibitions presented two alternative scenarios for the land controlled by Chater Homes which could be considered by UDC when progressing to the next stage of the LDF process. These were as an alternative to the Council's preferred Option (4) of a single new settlement of 3000 dwellings on land between Elsenham and Henham or as a potential site to accommodate an allocation of housing numbers apportioned to the Great Dunmow area under the other remaining options (approximately 1000 dwellings).

1.2 The objective

The purpose of the exhibitions was to give all residents in the Dunmow and Elsenham area the opportunity to view Chater Homes' development proposals and express their views directly to the assembled project team or through the medium of a feedback form. This provided the means of gaining the input of local residents before Chater Homes made its final submission. The feedback also gave the developer an early opportunity to get a sense of the levels of support for the Chelmer Mead proposals. The exhibition sought respondents' views on four sections; design & layout, transport, community benefits and general comments.

1.3 The invitations

The exhibition details were sent by letter to 11,863 households within Uttlesford, focusing on the areas in and around Great Dunmow and Little Dunmow, and Elsenham and Henham. Invitation letters were also sent to district and parish councillors and relevant officers and council clerks. In addition, the exhibition was publicised in the local press in the week prior to the exhibition. A news release was

also sent to local newspapers detailing the exhibitions. Subsequent coverage has been gained since the exhibitions occurred.

1.4 The exhibitions

Across the four days 373 people attended the exhibitions, with 87 people filling in feedback forms. After the events 19 forms and 18 emails were sent to Green Issues.

The overall analysis of the feedback from Henham was one of support for the development proposals. Specific points raised were that the A120 would provide adequate transport links to Chelmer Mead, that the plans were more environmentally friendly (than Option 4), the separation of Great and Little Dunmow was beneficial and the proposed secondary school would relieve pressure in the Dunmow area. However, there was concern at the lack of rail links.

The overall analysis from Great Dunmow was mixed, with both positive and negative feedback on the scheme layout. There was scepticism over the deliverability of community benefits, concern over congestion on the highway network, an expressed need for greater public transport provision and a level of opposition to the perceived loss of countryside.

The overall analysis from Felsted demonstrated more opposition to the Chelmer Mead proposals than in other locations. There was scepticism about the proposed community benefits, concern about the impact on local roads, outright opposition to development and a fear that the proposals could stall the delivery of Oakwood Park's community facilities.

Elsenham produced a much more positive response with a number of attendees complimenting the design and layout. Other points raised included recognition of the community benefits which the proposals would bring to Great Dunmow, and the benefit of the secondary school. However, there was a level of concern over the delivery of community benefits in light of Oakwood Park, and about access to A120

1.5 Next steps

After January 11 Green Issues will collate all feedback received and produce an exhibition report. Copies will be mailed to all those who provided feedback and left contact details, UDC and relevant councillors and parish councils.