Deadline 3 - Comment on Examining Authority's Written Question LV1.6 - Landscape and visual methodology

By the North-West and South-West of Chelmsford Parishes Group

Landscape and visual methodology: Key Views, Valued Landscape and Landscape Character Areas in Broomfield; and Protected Lanes in Writtle, Chelmsford.

Introduction

North-West and South-West of Chelmsford Parishes Group ('the Parishes Group'/'the Group) is an alliance of 9 parish councils: Broomfield, Chignal, Great Waltham, Highwood, Ingatestone and Fryerning, Little Waltham, Margaretting, Roxwell and Writtle. The Group is grateful for the opportunity to comment on question LV1.6 and trusts this will be useful to the Examining Authority (ExA).

Background/Purpose of this Comment

In Written Question LV1.6, the ExA has asked the Applicant to '*ensure that all relevant neighbourhood plans, RPG description and conservation area appraisals are considered and any relevant references provided*.' This follows a representation from Roydon PC regarding policy 16 of the Diss and District Neighbourhood Plan. The purpose of the Group's comment is to draw attention to similar issues relating to Broomfield NP and Writtle NP. The Group is therefore grateful to the ExA for requesting this additional detail and clarity.

Broomfield NP

1. Policy BFD2 – Protecting Broomfield's Landscape Character states:

Proposals for development outside the Settlement Boundary will be required to be accompanied by a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment or other appropriate evidence proportionate to the scale of the proposal, that demonstrates how the proposal:

i. can be accommodated in the countryside without having a significant detrimental impact, by reason of the development's scale, materials and location, on the character and appearance of the countryside and its tranquility and distinction from the main built-up areas; and

ii. conserves and enhances the unique landscape and scenic beauty within the Parish, having regard to the Neighbourhood Plan Landscape Appraisal and Neighbourhood Plan Review of Local Green Space, Valued Landscape and Key Views and the Valued Landscape identified on Map 5 and Important Views on Map 6.

Map 5 indicates the areas meeting the criteria for Valued Landscape and designated as such. Map 6 indicates the 29 Key Important Views. The data for both is drawn from the 'Review of Local Green Space, Valued Landscape and Key Views', (Drawing 5) which is attached to this representation.

Also attached is the NP Landscape Appraisal. This defines 8 local character areas, of which 4 (Areas E, F, G and H) are particularly affected by the Application.

2. The Parishes Group's concerns are that:

a) The impact of the Application is not illustrated or referenced in relation to the relevant Key Views. Instead, the impact from just one alternative viewpoint is presented in the ES. It is likely that Key Views 19, 20, 23,24, 26 and 27 would all be impacted; and potentially Views 6, 7 and 14.

b) The impact on the designated Valued Landscape west of Church Green ('Land west of Church of St Mary with St Leonard, Broomfield') has not been sufficiently assessed, even though it is only about 600 metres from the OHL at its closest point.

c) Local landscape studies associated with neighbourhood plans have been given insufficient weight in the ES, despite being more up-to-date and containing greater detail then higher-level, more generic studies referenced in the Application. The Broomfield NP Landscape Appraisal illustrates this point. The Local Character Area G, which is transected by the OHL proposed in the Application is assessed in some detail (Landscape Appraisal, p.38) and judged to be:

'highly sensitive to change and development due to its rural characteristics and elevation. It is therefore considered unsuitable for residential and commercial development'.

Writtle NP

Locally Protected Lanes and Tracks form an important element in the Writtle NP (para.s 8.13 – 8.17, pages 81-83), with aspirations to consider designation of 2 additional lanes. However, both the existing designated Protected Lanes, Nathan's lane and Newney Green, would be severely impacted by the OHL and pylons in the Application.