

Chapter 12

The Chilton Mixed-Use Development

Introduction

12.1 This chapter sets out a suggested package for mixed-use development proposals involving a significant area of land in the Chilton and Woodhall area, immediately to the north of Sudbury.

12.2 It is intended to create a new neighbourhood. This mixed-use “package” will provide an exciting opportunity to form an integrated and sustainable development. The scale of the development will allow variety and diversity; increase the attractiveness of the town and increase the population, thereby improving its prospects for securing greater retail and commercial investment within and beyond the period of the Local Plan.

1. To accommodate a major proportion of the Babergh District’s housing and employment growth needs during the Local Plan period, in line with Government guidance and strategic planning policy.
2. To create an integrated, high quality and sustainable mixed-use development that maximises the physical, economic and social benefits for Sudbury and Great Cornard and the surrounding area.

Objectives

12.3 In identifying sites to be allocated for housing in local plans, Government Guidance (PPG3) requires local planning authorities to follow a search sequence, starting with the re-use of previously developed land and buildings in urban areas, then urban extensions, and finally new development on greenfield land around nodes in good public transport corridors.

12.4 The Babergh District is mainly rural in nature, with Sudbury being the larger of its two market towns. Few previously developed sites are available for residential redevelopment in the Plan period, and they are insufficient to meet the identified housing requirements for the District.

Policy Context

- 12.5 In 2002 the District Council commissioned consultants to undertake an Urban Capacity Study to provide a robust assessment of the level of housing development which could be provided in sustainable settlements on previously developed or under-used land. The Study advised that a significant amount of greenfield land would need to be allocated to meet the requirements of the Suffolk Structure Plan 2001. The District Council has accepted these findings, and the Chilton proposal is consistent with these results.
- 12.6 PPG3 recognises that not all new development can take place in towns. If development has to take place outside urban areas, planning authorities are advised to use the most sustainable option. Planned extensions to existing urban areas are likely to prove the next most sustainable option after building on appropriate sites in urban areas. PPG3 also advises that local authorities should promote developments that combine a mix of land uses, including housing.
- 12.7 The Suffolk Structure Plan 2001 specifically identifies Sudbury as a location for major growth. The proposition that Sudbury should perform a significant role in satisfying the housing growth requirements of the Babergh District over the Plan period is, therefore, consistent with strategic planning policy.
- 12.8 The principle of extending the urban edge of Sudbury in the Chilton area has already been established as a result of the Babergh Local Plan Alteration No. 1, and referred to in Chapter 3. Approximately 6.0 hectares of land are currently being developed for housing. The new road, which serves that development off a new roundabout on Waldingfield Road, has been designed to a standard capable of serving further development, and of being extended to form a distributor road.
- 12.9 In addition, some 2.0 hectares of land to the north of the Woodhall Business Park were allocated in the Babergh Local Plan Alteration No. 1 for employment purposes, and 5.5 hectares of land north of Waldingfield Road were allocated for leisure purposes. A further 22.7 hectares of land north of the Woodhall Business Park were also allocated for formal recreation. This last allocation is no longer required for that purpose, but the area it covered is now included in the Chilton Mixed-Use Development package.
- 12.10 Altogether some 30.2 hectares of mostly greenfield land had been allocated for different forms of development. The bulk of that land is now included as part of the Chilton Mixed-Use Development package, so the principle of development in this area is not new and forms part of the existing Statutory Local Plan.

Background

12.11 The Babergh Local Plan Alteration No.2 Issues Report included reference to the opportunity for major mixed-use development in the Chilton area. Concerns from a number of sources following publication of the document included:

- urban encroachment into the countryside;
- the ability to restrict further development;
- mixing of residential and employment traffic;
- using the south-western corner of the former Chilton Airfield for employment purposes; and
- potential traffic congestion in Sudbury.

12.12 The District Council has produced a development package including various changes and refinements derived from consultations with a wide range of interested parties.

12.13 The District Council shares the widespread public concern about the possible effects of this scale of development on the highway infrastructure of Sudbury and the amenities of residents living next to principal traffic routes. It believes that the key to minimising the effect is in the provision of a comprehensive package of highway management measures. These will be worked up in more detail in the Master Plan, see 12.20 below. There is no proven need for the proposed Sudbury Western Bypass to be completed before development begins. This finding has arisen as a result of work on the Sudbury and Great Cornard Local Transport Action Plan (LTAP). However, a range of necessary highway management measures have been identified that should be introduced with the development.

12.14 The Master Plan will provide more detail on the highway management measures to be introduced, both in Sudbury town centre and within the development. Of particular importance are:

- access to the Chilton Mixed-Use development will be taken off the proposed distributor road;
- improvements to Springlands Way/Northern Road in view of their traffic loading and poor accident records;
- a two-tier standard of provision for the distributor road to encourage access to employment areas from the Tesco roundabout only, with a lower standard for access to the remainder of the development;
- bus priority and improvement measures within the development and on routes to Sudbury town centre;
- traffic management measures to prevent the use of Acton Lane north of the development as a short cut to outlying areas; and
- any further schemes to mitigate the possible adverse effects of the development, resulting from further studies to be undertaken at the Master Plan stage.

(See the final part of Policy CP01 below which refers to the need for a S.106 Planning Obligation to secure highway improvements.)

The Chilton Mixed-Use Development Package

12.15 The Chilton Mixed-Use Development package represents the most sustainable solution for peripheral growth in the Sudbury and Great Cornard urban area. The Council has carefully considered other locations but they have significant landscape, wildlife, potential for flooding or other environmental constraints.

12.16 Chilton offers the following major advantages:

- development is already under way, or has planning permission, and current proposals can build on this;
- transport infrastructure for site access is already in place or can be put in place;
- it is well related to the major employment areas of the town, and will enable much needed new employment land to come forward relatively quickly to meet employment needs;
- the land has no landscape or wildlife designation, and much of the development will be in a natural bowl in the landscape;
- it will provide an opportunity to address “housing needs” in this part of the Babergh District where there is the greatest demand, as confirmed in the Babergh Housing Needs Survey 2000;
- the “package” is realistic, viable and deliverable; and
- the package will include on- and off-site transport improvements consistent with sound principles of sustainable development.

12.17 The layout of the Chilton Mixed-Use Package is for indicative purposes only as the proposed Master Plan will provide more detail.

Housing

12.18 Development at Chilton offers the opportunity to create a quality living environment of relatively high-density development. Approximately 34.0 hectares including public open space and strategic green corridors (greenways) are allocated for residential development. This will provide a net developable area of approximately 19.0 hectares, which can provide for 700 dwellings, producing an average density of around 37 dwellings per hectare. This is within the Government’s target density range.

12.19 In the residential areas, the District Council will require 35% of the properties (dependent upon the local need being demonstrated) to be provided in an affordable form. These properties are likely to be held by registered social landlords. This means that up to 245 dwellings could be available for households in housing need in the greater Sudbury area.

12.20 As this is the main allocation in the Plan, the District Council will work in partnership with others to secure production of a Master Plan. From this, Development Briefs will be produced for individual housing areas, indicating the development layout, design, density, communication, housing mix and open space principles to be followed by developers. The kind of housing will be strongly influenced by the District Council's Housing Needs Study 2000.

12.21 The Chilton Mixed-Use Development Package will enable much needed employment land to be brought forward at the earliest opportunity in the Sudbury area. Almost no employment land is currently available in this area, which is of particular concern to the District Council. The level of employment land required during the Plan period has been advised by the Employment Land Study 2002, (See Chapter 4).

Employment

12.22 Overall, approximately 19.8 hectares of undeveloped land is allocated, with the majority (14.5 hectares) on new sites adjacent to, and accessed by the new distributor road. Traffic management measures will ensure that business traffic accesses and leaves the new employment area via the "Tesco" roundabout route and will preclude access eastwards to avoid any undue mix of residential and business traffic.

12.23 A smaller, undeveloped employment area (2.0 hectares) is allocated as part of an employment allocation featuring the Chilton Grain complex (5.3 hectares) which, under the Babergh Local Plan Alteration No. 1, had a leisure allocation. This change recognises the nature of recent and current activity in this area. This employment area will be accessed independently by Waldingfield Road, thereby avoiding any unsatisfactory mixing of residential and business traffic. Access to the area for people and goods will be enhanced.

12.24 The District Council has liaised with the Local Education Authority about the long-term educational implications arising from development at this location. The intention is to develop a primary and middle school campus based on the existing All Saints Middle School site in Acton Lane. The existing middle school will need to be re-orientated and slightly increased in size to accommodate both a new pre-school nursery and a new primary school. However, a considerable number of shared facilities will also be a feature of the development in the area. This new educational campus will be geographically near to the heart of the new neighbourhood, acting as a focal point for community education and other social activity.

Schools and Playing Fields

- 12.25 Vehicular access to the campus will be from Acton Lane, but it is intended that this road be closed near the school to avoid through-traffic. Acton Lane from the north will effectively be diverted onto the new distributor road. All new housing will be designed to provide safe links to the school campus by cycle and pedestrian routes. The schools and adjoining playing field areas will extend to about 11.0 hectares.
- 12.26 There is a minimum need for 3.9 hectares of formal recreation provision within the development based on National Playing Fields Association standards. 8.2 hectares are proposed in addition to formal children's play areas which would be required within the housing areas.

Community and Retail Facilities

- 12.27 A total of 3.1 hectares are allocated for community and retail facilities. This would enable the creation of a neighbourhood centre to establish a focus for this part of Sudbury, to accommodate new community and retail facilities. These facilities, including any retail buildings, will be in close proximity to the playing field area and will also be well placed geographically to serve residents. A school drop-off provision will be provided at this location.

Retail Expansion

- 12.28 The District Council considers it prudent to allow for the future expansion of the Tesco superstore at the western end of the Chilton development area. The store may wish to grow in the future, given that 700 new dwellings with a population of perhaps 1,600 people, in addition to new development recently built on the opposite side of the road – in the Springlands area north of Sudbury – will be its catchment.
- 12.29 Rather than eliminate the possibility of expansion by developing around the store on all sides, it is sensible to allow for some growth on the western side, between the store and the new distributor road, should this be necessary and acceptable in relation to Local Plan retail policies and protection in particular of the vitality and viability of both the Town Centre and the proposed Chilton Neighbourhood Centre.
- 12.30 The Retail Capacity Study 2002 carried out for the Council identified a need for a possible further 10,000 square metres of floorspace in Sudbury for the provision of bulky goods retailing. The Council will make provision of a site adjacent to the employment allocation for approximately 1.6 hectares of bulky comparison goods retailing and will monitor future need for additional bulky goods floorspace.

Note: Bulky goods are defined as types of goods typically too large (and/or heavy) to transport on foot (or cycle), including durable household goods and textiles (e.g. audio visual equipment; most furniture, floor and wall coverings; larger electrical kitchen goods such as fridges, freezers, cookers/microwave ovens, washing machines and tumble driers; curtains and bedding); DIY goods and larger hardware.

Community Woodland

- 12.31 The community woodland defining the northern edge of the development area will extend to some 30.2 hectares. Some areas in the allocation will be left as small meadows or glades, to improve aesthetic appreciation and biodiversity through visually important tree planting that will screen the whole fringe of the development. Appropriate phases of the woodland will be planted before each phase of the development begins.
- 12.32 The community woodland will form a valuable wildlife and informal recreational area, including cycle and pedestrian routes, as well as providing a major landscape feature. New tree and shrub planting will be of indigenous species. The woodland will link with existing hedgerows and Public Rights of Way in the area, providing extended wildlife corridors. Where it covers the Former Chilton Airfield Arable Margins County Wildlife Site, or may have an effect on the well-known local reptile populations, care will be taken at the design stage to ensure that there is no adverse impact.
- 12.33 The District Council will ensure the community woodland is owned by an appropriate body, to be managed in perpetuity.

Cycle and Pedestrian Routes

- 12.34 A good start has been made in providing strategic cycle and pedestrian routes in the Chilton area, as a result of residential development already undertaken. New cycle and pedestrian routes will link residential areas to each other and to employment areas, the community woodland, schools and community facilities. They will be designed to encourage safe movement. A new strategic cycle and pedestrian route will be developed, linking the Chilton area with Sudbury town centre and with Acton. Chapter 9 provides the background to the role of the Sudbury and Great Cornard Local Transport Action Plan in this context.

Public Transport

- 12.35 The development will be designed with public transport in the forefront such as bus connections and bus shelters. Sudbury already has a useful 'in town' bus service. The Chilton development will be designed to ensure that buses can access the area effectively, and have appropriate pick-up points. Most houses will be within 400 metres of a bus stop. By providing a convenient, efficient and frequent link to the town centre, many car trips may be avoided. The distributor road may contain bus priority sections, to increase the attraction of public transport.
- 12.36 The scale of the Chilton package will enable this public transport investment to be achieved. Bus services, linking to a new bus and rail interchange at the Railway Station, will be secured and these will encourage commuters to use buses and trains for linked journeys for their travel needs. Chapter 9 gives the public transport background in the context of the Sudbury and Great Cornard Transport Action Plan.

- 12.37 The following policy aims to guide the form of the Chilton Mixed-Use Development Package to ensure that the development meets all of the District Council's aspirations for an integrated, high-quality and sustainable development. In addition, the development must comply with all other relevant District-wide policies in this Plan.

CP01 The following mixed land-use allocation proposed in the Chilton and Woodhall area north of Sudbury will be required to have an approved Master Plan. Development Briefs will be prepared and submitted at the appropriate time having regard to any proposed phasing programme. The planning application must be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment.

a) 19.0 hectares of net developable land to the north-west and south-east of Acton Lane are proposed for residential development. Access will be provided from a new distributor road linking the roundabout adjacent to the existing Tesco superstore on Springlands Way with Aubrey Drive. Proposals are expected to provide:

- structural landscaping along the boundaries of the site contiguous with the new distributor road and those boundaries of the site which do not abut the community woodland. This must take account of existing features such as trees, hedgerows and watercourses;
- a high standard of layout, design and landscaping that accords with the relevant adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance set out in The Babergh Guidance Note No. 7 – “An Approach to the Development of New Housing in Babergh” and the “Suffolk Design Guide for Residential Areas”;
- surface water attenuation to minimise the risk of flooding;
- for existing rights of way to be integrated into the development in line with relevant adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance relating to development and public rights of way. These are to be made into “greenway” features in the site; and
- for appropriately designed strategic cycle and pedestrian routes to be provided to enable safe movement between housing zones and the other elements.

- b)** 14.9 hectares of land to the north of the Woodhall Business Park are allocated for general employment use. Access to this development will be from the new distributor road referred to at (a) above. Proposals for development are expected to provide:
- for the layout of the development to be designed to encourage business traffic to access and leave via the new distributor road connection with the “Tesco” roundabout route, so as to minimise conflict between residential and business traffic;
 - provision for a waste transfer station, household and recycling and refuse depot;
 - a high standard of layout, design and landscaping. This must meet relevant adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance relating to new employment development;
 - for the layout of the development to minimise visual and noise intrusion on adjacent land uses;
 - substantial structural landscaping to be provided in phase with the development;
 - provision for a workplace nursery, to cater for at least 60 places, should be made within the Chilton development, which offers an attractive environment at an accessible location;
 - applications for new employment development will be expected to be accompanied by a “green travel plan”, which promotes sustainable modes of transport for staff and visitors;
 - adequate advance signing is provided; and
 - provision is made for an appropriate stopping facility with an information board at the entrance(s) to the site.
- c)** 5.3 hectares of land to the north of Waldingfield Road are allocated for employment use(s) which will have only a low impact in terms of their traffic generation and on residential amenity. Access to this development will be by Waldingfield Road.
- d)** 1.6 hectares of land to the east of the existing Tesco superstore are allocated for bulky goods provision, with access from the new distributor road. Should the anticipated demand for this use not materialise consideration will be given to employment uses on the site.
- e)** 1.3 hectares of land to the west of the existing Tesco superstore are allocated for retail use to allow for the potential expansion of the existing superstore. Proposals for development are expected to provide:

- evidence that there is a need for such development and there will be no material adverse impact on the vitality and viability of Sudbury town centre or on the establishment of the proposed Chilton Neighbourhood Centre and its subsequent vitality and viability. Given the inevitable uncertainty in such assessments contributions will be sought for strengthening the town centre and the Chilton development;
- structural landscaping along the edge of the new distributor road;
- a new vehicular access to the superstore delivery facility is required from the new distributor road, together with pedestrian and cycle friendly access to the site from the Chilton development;
- a “green travel plan” that seeks to promote sustainable modes of transport for store deliveries, staff and customers; and
- appropriate alterations to the existing roundabout junction with the A134.

f) 8.2 hectares of land is allocated for recreation and leisure facilities. Access will be by the new distributor road referred to at (a) above. Proposals will be expected to provide:

- structural landscaping along the edge of the new distributor road;
- a high standard of layout and design for all buildings;
- a co-ordinated approach to the provision of structures, such as floodlights and buildings for storage, groundstaff;
- any floodlighting to accord with Policy EN22; and
- a multi-use games area/“teen zone”.

g) i) 6.4 hectares of land are allocated for education and associated playing field use, to produce a nursery, primary and middle school campus, based on the existing All Saints Middle School.

g) ii) 1.55 hectares of land are proposed for a neighbourhood centre accessed from the distributor road providing between 2,300 and 2,700 square metres of retail floorspace subject to a Retail Impact Assessment and examination of the sequential test demonstrating that there is no adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Note: In considering proposals for development for the centre all provisions of PPS6 will be applied.

g) iii) 1.55 hectares of land are proposed for community facilities.

h) 30.2 hectares of land to the north of the proposed development are allocated as a community woodland. The wood will have an average width of 50 metres and be designed and managed to achieve:

- definition and containment of the development area;
- an attractive and varied landscape and biodiversity feature of indigenous trees and shrubs, which will screen new development;
- provide a buffer between the new development areas and the surrounding communities; and including open spaces, glades and rides;
- linkage with existing hedgerows and rights of way in the area, providing extended wildlife corridors; and
- an appropriately designed cycle and pedestrian route through the woodland, linking to housing clusters and thereby helping to facilitate movement around and in the development area as well as providing a local recreational and exercise facility.

It is a requirement that provision of the woodland will include financial arrangements for its long-term management and for the local community to be involved in its establishment and management. Its provision is a requirement of (a), (b), (c) and (d) above and will be expected to be provided in phase with these other developments.

Provision of the new distributor road or part of it will be a requirement of the allocations (a), (b), (d), (f) and (g) (i, ii & iii) above. The new road will be carefully landscaped and include appropriately designed pedestrian and cycle crossing points, to ensure safe movement between the various elements of the development. A section from the Tesco roundabout will be of a suitable standard to provide access to the employment areas and the neighbourhood centre, while the remainder will be designed to a lesser standard to serve the residential and community areas. Appropriate traffic management measures will be needed to ensure that commercial traffic uses the appropriate access provided.

If a negotiated agreement cannot be reached to secure the necessary means of access for the Chilton development, the Council will consider the use of Compulsory Purchase Order powers.

The development will be designed to ensure that buses can access the area effectively and have appropriate pick up points. Most houses will be within 400 metres of a bus stop. Buses will be given priority through the design of the road network.

New cycle and pedestrian routes will be required to permeate throughout the development in the form of greenways. They will link residential areas, the community woodland, schools and other community facilities.

The District Council will seek a Planning Obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to provide for:

- highway improvements to the A134 Springlands Way/Northern Road to maintain and improve junction capacity and safety;
- improvements to maintain and facilitate cycling and pedestrian routes between the development and Sudbury town centre, including safe crossing of the A134 and linking to neighbouring villages;
- improvements for cycling and pedestrians on Waldingfield Road;
- provision of bus priority measures and associated improvements extending from the development to Sudbury town centre;
- investigation of facilities for potential real-time information provision or hail-and-ride service options within the development;
- contributions for bus service to and within the development;
- traffic management measures to prevent the use of Acton Lane north of the development as a short cut to outlying areas from the new housing;
- Belle Vue junction improvements;
- Acton Lane Cycle Link (south-west of Springlands Way);
- affordable and small houses;
- the provision and long-term management of the community woodland; and
- the provision and long-term management of structural landscaping, and public open space and play areas in the development.

Cemetery at St Mary's Church

- 12.38 Sudbury Town Council informed the District Council of the need to identify a suitable site for a new cemetery. In 1995, the District Council allocated the site to the south-east of St. Mary's Church, Chilton as a new cemetery for Sudbury. This will provide the needs for the next 50–60 years.

CP02 2.4 hectares of land adjacent to St. Mary's Church, Chilton are proposed for a cemetery. Proposals for development are expected to provide structural landscaping to the north and east of the site and grassing of the area of archaeological interest.

