

Mr Jonathan Quilter
Corporate Manager – Strategic Planning
Brentwood Borough Council
Town Hall
Ingrave Road
CM15 8AY

11 November 2022

Dear Mr Quilter,

BRENTWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY DRAFT CHARGING SCHEDULE, SEPTEMBER 2022

On behalf of our client, Tesco PLC, we hereby submit representations in response to the consultation on Brentwood Borough Council's (the Charging Authority) Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Draft Charging Schedule, September 2022. We welcome the opportunity to respond to the consultation, including the evidence within the Brentwood Borough Council CIL Viability Assessment that underpins the Schedule.

Background

Land at Sawyers Hall Lane, Brentwood (herein after "the Site") has been promoted by Tesco for residential led development since 2016. The Site comprises 16.9 hectares sustainably located close to Brentwood town centre and capable of delivering up to 400 new homes together with open space, sustainable drainage, biodiversity net gain, school drop-off area and provision both on and off-site for retention of the Hopefield Animal Sanctuary.

It is anticipated that the Site will be brought forward as a policy compliant scheme including affordable housing and a residential mix designed to meet local housing needs. The Site has been previously considered by the Council as a reserve site for housing during preparation of the Brentwood Local Plan, although not identified or allocated in the March 2022 adopted Local Plan. The Site therefore remains to be promoted as a residential led development towards the forthcoming Brentwood Local Plan review. Where the Site is potentially allocated in the Local Plan review then the proposed market housing will be CIL liable.

Figure 1: Land at Sawyers Hall Lane, Brentwood



GL Hearn and Tesco wish to raise the following concerns relating to the Brentwood draft CIL schedule.

Detrimental Impacts on Housing Delivery

The most recently published housing delivery test data published by the government in January 2021 confirms the Brentwood housing delivery test measurement for the last 3 recording years as totalling 774 homes delivered against a requirement of 1,169, representing only 66% and resulting in a 2021 housing delivery test consequence of a *'presumption in favour'* of residential development. Housing delivery rates within Brentwood for both market and also affordable housing have therefore been persistently lagging behind the actual housing requirement for a number of years with the consequential need to significantly increase housing delivery over forthcoming years, including through the Local Plan review period. It is submitted that the Brentwood draft CIL rates proposed for residential development at £250/sq.m are exceptionally high and likely to cause detrimental impacts on housing delivery and housing affordability within Brentwood. Continued slow housing delivery will result in detrimental social impacts within Brentwood and the housing market area due to restricted housing supply and availability, as well as detrimental economic impacts and restricted economic growth.

Where the outcome of the Brentwood housing delivery test remains weak then the consequence of a presumption in favour is also likely to be maintained. This will increase the risk of speculative planning applications for housing development within the Borough resulting in unplanned development, rather than delivery of Plan led development.

The exceptionally high Brentwood draft CIL rates of £250/sq.m for residential are also directly opposed to the aims, aspirations and targets to increase housing delivery as set out within the Brentwood Housing Action

Plan, November 2021 as well as the Council's Housing Strategy for 2021-2026. Introducing a high CIL rate will inevitably slow housing delivery rates and risk the ability for new housing schemes to achieve policy compliant affordable housing provision.

The proposed Brentwood draft CIL rates at £250/sq.m for residential development are unusually high in comparison to CIL rates within similar local neighbouring authorities. The residential CIL rate for nearby Chelmsford is notably lower at £174.37/sq.m, and the nearby Boroughs of Thurrock, Maidstone, Southend and Maldon have draft CIL rates for residential at less than £100/sq.m. Whilst Castle Point has a draft residential CIL rate of £250/sq.m this has been objected to very strongly by a large number of housebuilders and site promoters, with the rate still to be subject to examination in public and against the backdrop of Castle Point having withdrawn the Local Plan and the Authority being without a 5-year housing land supply. Similarly, Basildon has draft residential CIL rates proposed at different levels for different geographical areas, including £250/sq.m for Billericay. However, the Basildon CIL rates are also untested through examination in public, and the Authority is also without an up-to-date Local Plan or a 5-year housing land supply. Imposing such a high residential CIL rate will place Brentwood at risk of further hampering housing delivery within the Borough and risks following the same path as Castle Point and Basildon towards an inability to provide a 5-year housing land supply.

Strategic Housing Sites

Larger strategic housing sites will typically contribute significant s106 contributions towards site specific infrastructure requirements such as highway safety, road and junction improvements, community facilities and strategic open space/landscaping/biodiversity net gain/sustainable drainage measures. It is submitted that the Brentwood CIL rate for residential should therefore be reduced significantly, and consideration should also be given to site specific CIL rates for strategic residential developments applicable to schemes of 300 to 400 or more dwellings.

Please do inform GL Hearn of any further work undertaken by Brentwood Council on the proposed CIL rates and associated viability evidence, as well as future statutory stages with the CIL examination process.

Please contact [redacted] if you require any further information or clarification in connection with this submission and the Site at Sawyers Hall Lane, Brentwood.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

GL Hearn