

‘North of Broomfield’ – 450 more houses

Bloor Homes have carried out the first stage of consultation about their new development ‘north of Broomfield’.

Thank you to all residents who have contacted us, come to a Planning Committee meeting and/or attended the Bloor Homes consultation in the Village Hall in January. For those that haven’t been able to, here are some of the questions we’ve been asked and the answers.

WALTHAM FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT



Where is it?

As you can see on the map, the development site is on the north side of Woodhouse Lane and the Hospital site. It's west of Blasford Hill (B1008) and east of the KEGS playing field, partly in Broomfield Parish and partly in Little Waltham.

Is it where they're building houses now, on Hospital Approach?

No, that's a different smaller development by Countryside Properties.

What are Bloor Homes proposing?

450 dwellings, a neighbourhood centre and a new access road into Broomfield Hospital. However, the current masterplan shows the road stopping short of the Hospital site. At the moment, the proposed neighbourhood centre is likely to be a daycare nursery and a building with multifunctional community rooms and workspaces.

Won't that make the traffic in Broomfield worse?

On the plus side, a new access road into the Hospital site should help to ease congestion on Hospital Approach and the adjoining roads, as it would offer an alternative route to the Hospital for people coming from the north. But a development of this size is likely to make congestion worse overall, especially in the centre and southern parts of the village.

Broomfield Parish Council had a professional traffic study carried out. This suggested that traffic through the village would increase by 8-10% at peak times. However, that assumes the new Hospital access road is built. If not, the traffic would be worse. Also, it's been suggested that the new road would be limited to certain traffic (e.g. staff, deliveries) and that would reduce its effectiveness in relieving traffic on Hospital Approach and adjoining roads.

To read the Parish Council's traffic study, go to: www.broomfieldessex.co.uk click on Chelmsford Local plan and then click on The Transport Report.

Where would children go to school and how would people get to the doctor?

Children would be allocated primary school places at Little Waltham or Broomfield and secondary places at Chelmer Valley. Primary school places are one reason why the new development has been limited to 450 homes. Similarly, it is not big enough to support a whole new GP surgery, so the health authorities would have to work with existing surgeries to provide enough capacity.

What has the Parish Council been doing so far?

Working with residents and neighbouring parish councils, the Parish Council has succeeded in getting the planned number of dwellings reduced from 1,500, first to 800 and then down to 450. Originally, there was a danger that 1,500 houses would be built in the countryside all round the Hospital. We believe this would have eventually led to all the countryside between Broomfield and Newlands Spring being built on.

So, on the positive side, the Parish Council has succeeded in reducing the development and the resulting traffic problems. We have also made sure that the City Council planners and the developers are aware of our forthcoming Neighbourhood Plan, including the views that residents expressed in the Plan Questionnaire in 2017 about the types of housing they would find more/less acceptable.

Can this 'North of Broomfield' development be stopped?

It's highly unlikely. That's because this site is included in the forthcoming Chelmsford City Local Plan, which sets out where new development will take place between now and 2036. The Local Plan has now completed most of its stages, included an 'examination' by an independent inspector. Although she is forcing Chelmsford to make some changes to the new Local Plan, all the signs are that these won't affect the 'north of Broomfield' development (despite the Parish Council putting up a strong case against it, based on traffic). We will know for definite when her final report is published – that's due anytime now.

This consultation is about the 'masterplan' for the site. What does that mean?

All big sites in the Local Plan must have a masterplan. The masterplan sets out the general layout of the roads, housing blocks and any facilities (including green space). It doesn't go into detail about the design or type of houses. Those will be the subject of more detailed planning applications later and there will be more consultation about each of those. However, this masterplan consultation is important because, once the masterplan is agreed, the basic layout will be finalised and it will guide all the later stages.

What does the Parish Council think?

Although we've had some success in reducing the size of the development and influencing other aspects (e.g. the significant amount of green space), we still have two main concerns:

1. The new access road into the Hospital must be completed. Also, its use mustn't be restricted in a way that limits its effectiveness in reducing traffic in Hospital Approach and adjoining roads.
2. We want to establish a strong, wooded green buffer on the north and west sides of the site where it adjoins the open countryside. This would screen development from the higher land to the west and the existing homes on Woodhouse Lane and Partridge Green. It would also create attractive walks and a wildlife corridor from Puddings Wood towards Sparrowhawk Wood (to the north of the site).

Also, before we reach the detailed planning applications, we also want to make sure that our residents' views about housing are taken on board, as revealed in the 2017 Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire. These include:

- Small family homes, affordable (rented or shared equity) starter homes, homes for the active retired and bungalows are preferable to large executive homes
- New buildings should have a traditional rather than modernist design
- New houses should generally be built in small groups of around 25 homes max (a bit like the cul-de-sacs seen in some parts of the village).

How can I find out more information?

Have a look at the following websites and keep an eye on them for future information:

Bloor Homes: www.broomfieldconsultation.co.uk

Chelmsford City Council: www.chelmsford.gov.uk and type **20/00001/MAS** into the search bar

Parish Council: www.broomfieldessex.co.uk

What happens next?

By the time you read this in *Broomfield Times*, the masterplan consultation will be over. The City Council planners and the developers Bloor Homes will be sifting through the comments and hopefully taking them on board.

At Broomfield Parish Council, we'll continue to do everything we can to make 'north of Broomfield' as acceptable as possible for existing residents and as attractive as possible for all residents, both new and old. Please feel free to contact us at the Parish Office or by e-mailing planning@broomfieldessex.co.uk if you have any comments, concerns or questions.

John Blake

Chair of the Planning Committee