

Colchester Borough Council

Draft Publication Local Plan (Regulation 19) – Section Two

Sustainability Appraisal Environmental Report

Spatial Policy Team

June 2017

16.25 Mersea Island Allocations (Policy SS12a)

Policy SS12a contained the following preferred site allocations:

PREFERRED SITE ALLOCATIONS IN MERSEA ISLAND				
Site Reference (Name)	Address	Use	Potential Yield / Size	Reasons for selection
MER02	Dawes Lane, West Mersea	Housing	100	This was previously considered for 120-150 dwellings. The site is adjacent to the settlement boundary and relates well to existing uses; there are local facilities including shops, primary school and a medical centre reasonably close to the site. For this reason the site is considered a suitable and sustainable allocation in light of all reasonable alternatives.
MER18	Brierley Paddocks, East Road, West Mersea	Housing	100	This was previously considered for 230 dwellings. The site represents a logical extension to the settlement of West Mersea and relates well to existing uses; there are local facilities including shops and a bus stop close to the site. For this reason the site is considered a suitable and sustainable allocation in light of all reasonable alternatives.

The call-for-sites and SLAA identified the following sites which can be considered reasonable alternatives for exploration and assessment within this SA:

ALTERNATIVE SITE OPTIONS IN MERSEA ISLAND				
Site Reference (Name)	Address	Use	Potential Yield / Size	Reasons for rejection
MER20	Land north of Estuary Park Road, West Mersea	Housing	20-25	The site does not currently have access or any road frontage. The site is also not considered available site ownership and whether it has been promoted are unknown.
MER24	East Road, West Mersea	Housing	48	It is uncertain whether the site has sufficient road frontage to enable an access to be delivered to required highway design standards. The site also

ALTERNATIVE SITE OPTIONS IN MERSEA ISLAND				
Site Reference (Name)	Address	Use	Potential Yield / Size	Reasons for rejection
				has frontage onto Cross Lane and a Public Right of Way. Although the site is adjacent to the settlement boundary, development can be considered an illogical extension in regards to current development being frontage only which may further set a precedent for backland development.
MER02(2)	Dawes Lane, West Mersea	Housing	120-150	This was previously considered for 120-150 dwellings and development at this scale remains an alternative for the purposes of the SA at this stage. The site is adjacent to the settlement boundary and relates well to existing uses; there are local facilities including shops, primary school and a medical centre reasonably close to the site. Development at this scale however has been rejected for a smaller scheme of 100 dwellings.
MER18(2)	Brierley Paddocks, East Road, West Mersea	Housing	230	This was previously considered for 230 dwellings and development at this scale remains an alternative for the purposes of the SA at this stage. The site represents a logical extension to the settlement of West Mersea and relates well to existing uses; there are local facilities including shops and a bus stop close to the site. Development at this scale however has been rejected to better reflect proportionate growth in the settlement, in consideration of the current number of dwellings in West Mersea and the range of available facilities on the Island. It is considered that an appropriate level of growth across the plan period would see the delivery of approximately 200 dwellings.

The following table assesses the preferred sites for allocation, alongside all reasonable alternative options in the broad area for comparison purposes.

Table 110: Sites within Mersea Island

Objectives	Assessment Criteria	Site (by reference number)	
		Preferred	Non preferred

		MER 02	MER 18	MER 20	MER 24	MER 02(2)	MER 18(2)
1. To provide a sufficient level of housing to meet the objectively assessed needs of the Borough to enable people to live in a decent, safe home which meets their needs at a price they can afford	Proportionate housing growth	+	+	+	+	+	-
	Affordable housing	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Housing type / tenures	0	0	+	0	0	0
2. To ensure that development is located sustainably and makes efficient use of land	Regeneration Area	0	0	0	0	0	0
	PDL / Greenfield	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Accessibility	-	+	-	+	-	+
	Density	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Mixed use	0	0	0	0	0	0
	ALC	?	?	0	?	?	?
3. To achieve a prosperous and sustainable economy that improves opportunities for local businesses to thrive, creates new jobs and improves the vitality of centres	Employment use?	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Town / district centre?	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Rural economy	0	0	0	0	0	0
4. To achieve more sustainable travel behaviour, reduce the need to travel and reduce congestion	Access arrangements	++	++	--	?	++	++
	Sustainable travel	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Sustainable transport infrastructure	0	0	0	0	0	0
5. To build stronger, more resilient sustainable communities with better education and social outcomes	Distance to Primary school	-	?	-	?	-	?
	Distance to Secondary school	--	--	--	--	--	--
	School capacity	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Open space	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Improving skills	0	0	0	0	0	0
6. To improve and reduce inequalities in health and wellbeing and tackle crime issues by keeping our communities safe and promoting community	Access to employment	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Healthy lifestyles	?	?	?	?	?	?

Objectives	Assessment Criteria	Site (by reference number)					
		Preferred		Non preferred			
		MER 02	MER 18	MER 20	MER 24	MER 02(2)	MER 18(2)
cohesion							
7. To conserve and enhance the townscape character, and the heritage and cultural assets of the Borough	Cultural heritage	?	?	?	?	?	?
	Archaeology	?	?	?	?	?	?
	Local listings	0	0	0	0	0	0
8. To value, conserve and enhance the natural environment, natural resources and the biodiversity of the Borough	Landscape / AONB	-	-	+	-	-	-
	Visual impact	?	?	?	?	?	?
	Settlement setting	?	+	+	+	?	+
	SSSIs (Inc. IRZs)	?	?	+	+	?	?
	CPB	-	-	-	-	-	-
	International and national sites	?	?	+	+	?	?
	Woodland / TPOs	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Groundwater (SPZ)	+	+	+	+	+	+
	AQMAs	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Contamination	0	0	0	0	0	0
9. To make efficient use of energy and reduce, reuse or recycle waste	Sensitive receptors	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Waste facilities	+	+	+	+	+	+
10. To reduce climate change impacts, support mitigation and encourage adaptation	Flood Risk Zones	++	++	++	++	++	++
	Surface water flood risk	++	++	++	++	++	++
	Water infrastructure	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Water bodies	+	+	+	+	+	+

16.25.1 Cumulative and Synergistic Effects of the Mersea Island Allocations

The preferred allocated sites within West Mersea will have significantly positive impacts on the provision of proportionate and affordable housing for the benefit of the existing community.

It is possible that there are negative cumulative impacts associated with international wildlife designations resulting from the two allocations; specifically regarding increased visitor numbers and recreational pressures on the Blackwater Estuary and Colne Estuary SPAs, SSSIs and Ramsars. Planning applications for development of 50 or more dwellings are required to be consulted upon by Natural England in regard to these potential impacts and further mitigation measures should be integrated into the Plan if necessary in line with the findings of the Local Plan's HRA / AA.

The impacts on landscape and visual impact can also be said to have cumulative negative impacts resulting from the preferred site allocations both in line with their proximity to each other inland and their location within the Coastal Protection Belt; however it should be acknowledged that Policy SS17a ensures that suitable landscaping to screen the development will be required to minimise any negative impact on the surrounding landscape and to protect the open rural character of land within the Coastal Protection Belt regarding land at Dawes Lane, and that design and suitable screening/landscaping to minimise any negative impacts on the adjacent listed building and/or its setting will be required for land at Brierley Paddocks.

Whereas the alternative allocations are not expected to have potential negative implications in this regards it should be noted that these alternatives do not currently have sufficient access arrangements and represent more illogical extensions to the built form of West Mersea.