

**COLNE HARBOUR MASTER PLAN
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING
DOCUMENT
SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

DRAFT SCOPING REPORT**

**Prepared for Colchester Borough
Council and Essex County Council
by
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I. INTRODUCTION

OBJECTIVES AND STRUCTURE OF THE SCOPING REPORT

- I.1. This report sets out the scope of the Sustainability Appraisal of the objectives, strategic policies and proposal plans to be developed as part of the Colne Harbour Master Plan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The report and its consultation represent the first major stage of the Sustainability Appraisal process.
- I.2. The Report takes account of the aims and requirements of Sustainability Appraisal and the SEA Directive¹ and sets out a proposed framework of objectives to be applied to the SPD. It provides a focus for consultation with relevant stakeholders and Colchester Borough Council (CBC), in order to gain feedback on the framework for the appraisal process. Once agreed the framework will provide the structure for appraising options developed for the Colne Harbour Master Plan SPD. As an iterative process, the findings from the appraisal process will feed into the development of the SPD to incorporate key sustainability issues in the Master Plan and maximise the sustainability of Colne Harbour now and for future generations.
- I.3. The report is structured into the following sections:

Section 2 provides an overview of the SA/SEA process and how this can be integrated with Colne Harbour SPD.

Section 3 provides a characterisation of the area covered by the Colne Harbour Master Plan SPD including key sustainable development issues. The review of relevant plans, policy guidance and strategies, and the collection of baseline information and indicators are also discussed.

Section 4 sets out the proposed SA/SEA Framework to be applied to the Colne Harbour Master Plan SPD as it is developed and describes the development of the sustainable development objectives it contains.

Section 5 provides an explanation of subsequent stages and tasks of the SEA/SA process and how this will be integrated with the production of the SPD

¹ The SEA Directive: European Directive 2001/42/EC (EC, 2001)

2. INTEGRATING SA/SEA WITH COLNE HARBOUR SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

OVERVIEW OF SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL AND THE SEA DIRECTIVE

- 2.1. The most widely used definition of sustainable development is:

“Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”²

- 2.2. Mechanisms for delivering sustainable development are intrinsically linked to recent reforms of the planning system. Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development³ emphasises this, stating that:

‘Planning authorities should ensure that sustainable development is treated in an integrated way in their development plans. In particular, they should carefully consider the inter-relationship between social inclusion, protecting and enhancing the environment, the prudent use of natural resources and economic development.’⁴

- 2.3. Section 39(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) makes sustainability appraisal mandatory for Regional Spatial Strategy revisions and for new or revised Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. The purpose of SA is to promote sustainable development through the better integration of economic, social and environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans. It should be viewed as an integral part of good plan making involving ongoing iterations to identify and report on significant effects of the plan and the extent to which sustainable development is likely to be achieved.
- 2.4. The European Directive 2001/42/EC (known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment, or SEA Directive) has the objective, as defined in the Government’s guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment (“SEA guidance”)⁵ *‘to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans...with a view to promoting sustainable development’.*
- 2.5. Recent ODPM guidance on SA⁶ (which supersedes the ODPM SEA guidance) explains the difference between environmental assessments required under the SEA

² From ‘Our Common Future (The Brundtland Report)’ – Report of the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development *in* Securing the Future: delivering UK sustainable development strategy, HMSO (2005)

³ Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development, ODPM (2005)

⁴ From Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development, ODPM (2005) *in* Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents, ODPM (2005)

⁵ *The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities*. ODPM, October 2003.

⁶ Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks. ODPM (2005)

Directive and SAs of development plans as required under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. There are many parallels but also some differences, and the guidance clearly shows how assessments to comply with the SEA Directive can be integrated with current practice on SA. Simply put, SA includes a wider range of considerations, extending to social and economic impacts of plans, whereas SEA is more focussed on environmental impacts. The SA guidance describes how it is possible to satisfy both requirements through a single appraisal process undertaking a joint SEA/SA. Throughout the report SA is used to mean “sustainability appraisal incorporating the requirements of SEA”.

STAGES AND TASKS IN SA

- 2.6. The ODPM guidance on SA introduces the SA process and explains how to carry out SA as an integral part of the plan-making process. **Figure 2.1 and table 2.1** set out the main stages of the SPD preparation process and shows how this links to the SA process. This report brings the results of tasks carried out within the scoping stage (Stage A) together into a report for consultation with relevant stakeholders.

Figure 2.1: Incorporating SA within the SPD process (from Figure 8, Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks, ODPM (2005))

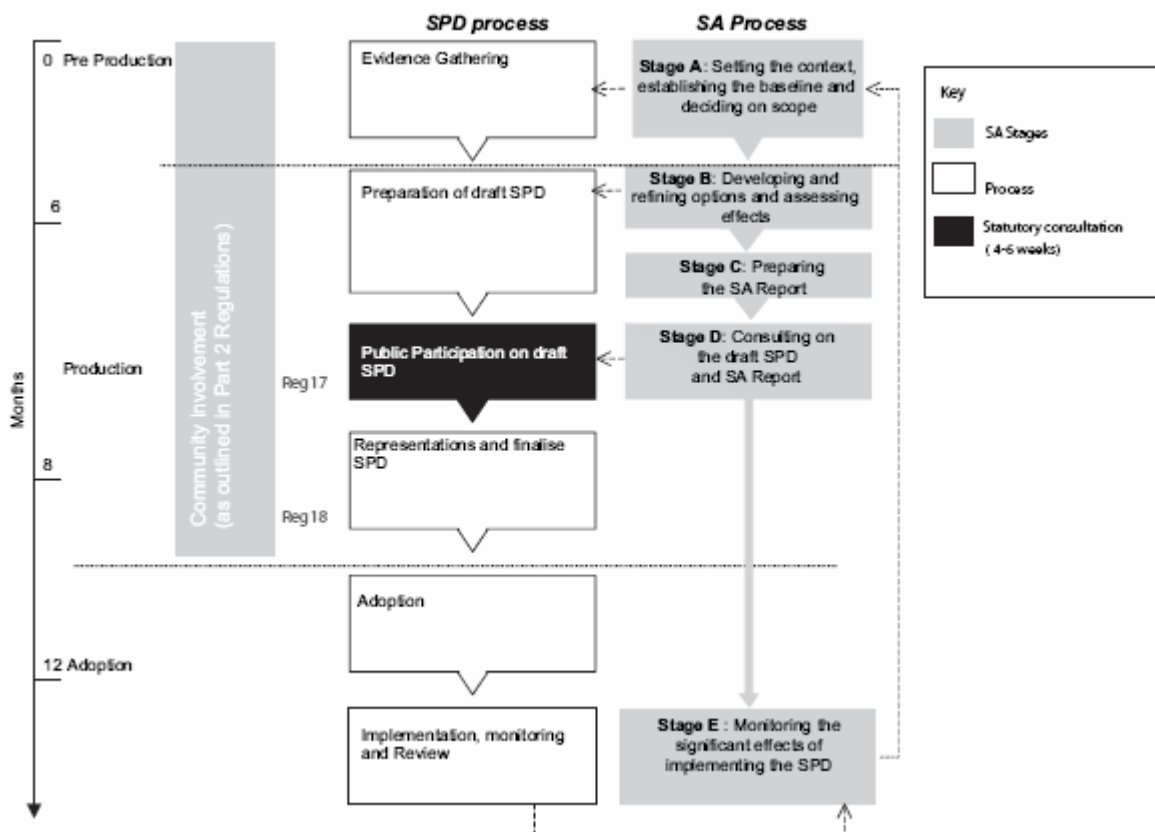


Table 2.1: Incorporating SA within the SPD process (from Figure 9, Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks, ODPM (2004))

SPD Stage 1: Pre-production – Evidence gathering
SA stages and tasks
<p>Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A1: Identifying other relevant policies, plans and programmes, and sustainable development objectives. • A2: Collecting baseline information. • A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems. • A4: Developing the SA framework. • A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA.
SPD Stage 2: Production – Prepare draft SPD
SA stages and tasks
<p>Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B1: Testing the SPD objectives against the SA framework. • B2: Developing the SPD options. • B3: Predicting the effects of the draft SPD. • B4: Evaluating the effects the draft SPD. • B5: Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects. • B6: Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the SPD.
<p>Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C1: Preparing SA Report.
<p>Stage D: Consulting on draft SPD and Sustainability Appraisal Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D1: Public participation on the SA Report and the draft SPD. • D2: Assessing significant changes.
SPD Stage 3: Adoption
SA stages and tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D3: Making decisions and providing information.

Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the SPD

- E1: Finalising aims and methods for monitoring.
- E2: Responding to adverse effects.

CONSULTATION AT THE SCOPING STAGE

- 2.7. As part of the scoping stage, two consultation workshops were held at the end of October 2005, one with council members and officers and the other with a wider group of interested parties. Feedback received on sustainability issues in the Colne Harbour area have been taken into account and incorporated into this report. In order to meet the requirements of the SEA Directive, the Local Planning Authority (Colchester Borough Council (CBC)) must seek the views of the four statutory environmental bodies designated in the SEA Regulations (the Countryside Agency, English Heritage, English Nature and the Environment Agency) on the scope and level of detail of environmental information to be included in the SA Report. Consultation with a balance of other key interested economic and social and bodies is also desirable at this stage⁷. Following the statutory five week consultation period on this SA Scoping report, it is likely that changes will need to be made to incorporate stakeholder feedback, which may require objectives of the SA framework to be modified.

COLNE HARBOUR SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

- 2.8. East Colchester, and in particular the Hythe area, has seen considerable change over the last few years. As a result, several planning related initiatives have focused on this area, with the East Colchester and Hythe Regeneration Area identified in the Adopted Colchester Local Plan⁸ providing the main planning policy framework for the area. The Local Plan sets out a number of specific objectives for the Regeneration Area:
- (a) To ensure that all development in the area contributes positively to the social, economic and environmental regeneration of East Colchester;
 - (b) To create a balanced and harmonious mix of uses and environment so as to maximise benefits in the area and Colchester as a whole;
 - (c) To make the river and adjoining sites, from East Bridge downwards, the focus for regeneration and environmental enhancement;
 - (d) To improve the overall environment of the area by:

⁷ Paragraphs 4.2.19-20 of the ODPM guidance 'Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents' clarify the requirements for consultation at the scoping stage.

⁸ Adopted Colchester Local Plan, Colchester Borough Council (2003)

- (i) removing or reducing sources of pollution and contamination;
- (ii) protecting and enhancing the natural environment;
- (iii) upgrading the built environment and protecting the historic heritage;
- (iv) promoting high standards for new development;
- (v) improving public transport links and reducing traffic congestion where possible;
- (vi) promoting regeneration through working and creating partnerships with developers, residents and outside bodies.

2.9. As the plan-making authority, Colchester Borough Council has responsibility for the overall preparation and adoption of the SPD, as one of a suite of Local Development Documents to be adopted within the Colchester Borough Local Development Framework⁹.

2.10. Preparation of the Plan is being carried out by consultants (project team led by David Lock Associates), steered by the Colchester Renaissance Partnership and supported by CBC, Essex County Council (ECC), East of England Development Agency (EEDA), as well as Essex Development and Regeneration Agency (ExDRA) and the Colne Harbour Project Group. The Plan will provide an updated and more detailed regeneration plan, building on foundations laid by the Colne Harbour Design Framework SPG¹⁰. It will help to secure key objectives for the Regeneration Area providing a clear development and regeneration vision.

2.11. The SPD will provide a master plan, the scope of which includes:

- Undertaking a baseline on the progress of the East Colchester regeneration objectives.
- Undertaking public consultation, enabling the community and stakeholders to shape the outcome.
- Producing a detailed development and regeneration vision for the study area that secures the key objectives of the Colchester Local Plan and the Cone Harbour Design Framework and contributes to the delivery of the ODPM's Sustainable Communities Plan and the regional economic strategy.
- Producing a site-specific Development Brief for the EEDA-owned site (known as the 'Coldock' building).
- Establishing the infrastructure (community, transport, health, education and green infrastructure) necessary to ensure the vision is sustainable and develops a clear and costed analysis of the phasing of the development and infrastructure.

⁹ The latest information on the preparation of Colchester's Local Development Framework can be found on the Borough's website at the following address <http://www.colchester.gov.uk/>

¹⁰ Colne Harbour Design Framework Supplementary Planning Guidance, Colchester Borough Council and Essex County Council (2001)

- Developing an implementation plan for the Haven Road area which sets out the actions and resources to secure successful delivery of regeneration objectives.
- 2.12. SPDs form part of the new generation of planning documents and guidance introduced by Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004). Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks¹¹ paragraph 2.43 sets out the scope of SPDs, stating that:
- ‘Supplementary planning documents may cover a range of issues, both thematic and site specific, which may expand policy or provide further detail to policies in a development plan document. They must not however, be used to allocate land. Supplementary planning documents may take the form of design guides, area development briefs, master plan or issue-based documents which supplement policies in a development plan document. The following principles apply to a supplementary planning document:*
- i. it must be consistent with national and regional planning policies as well as the policies set out in the development plan documents contained in the local development framework;*
 - ii. it must be clearly cross-referenced to the relevant development plan document policy which it supplements (or, before a relevant development plan document has been adopted, a saved policy);*
 - iii. it must be reviewed on a regular basis alongside reviews of the development plan document policies to which it relates; and*
 - iv. the process by which it has been prepared must be made clear and a statement of conformity with the statement of community involvement must be published with it.’*
- 2.13. An SPD is particularly suitable in this instance as it allows for more detail and guidance to be provided for potential developers, regeneration bodies and other organisations on the most appropriate type, mix and location of new development.

DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

- 2.14. SA/SEA requires difficulties encountered in undertaking Sustainability Appraisal to be recorded. The main difficulties encountered at this stage relate to gaps in baseline data which are discussed in **Chapter 3** ‘Sustainability Issues in Colne Harbour’.

¹¹ Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks, ODPM (2004)

3. SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES IN COLNE HARBOUR

REVIEW OF RELEVANT PLANS, PROGRAMMES AND POLICY OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. The ODPM guidance on SA explains that Local Planning Authorities must take account of relationships between the SPD and other relevant policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives. Also, the SEA Directive specifically requires environmental protection objectives established at international, European Community or national levels to be taken into account. A review of relevant plans, programmes and sustainability objectives in existing international, national, regional, county and local policy and strategy documents was therefore undertaken allowing. This enabled:
- consideration of how the SPD is affected by outside factors and inform the development of appraisal objectives;
 - the relationship between the SPD and other plans and programmes to be established;
 - key sustainability issues to be highlighted.
- 3.2. A list of documents reviewed is provided in **Table 3.1** and full reviews setting out the key objectives relevant to the SA of the Colne Harbour SPD are set out in **Appendix I**.

Table 3.1: Reviewed Plans and Programmes

Title	Author	Date
International		
The World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg. Commitments arising from Johannesburg Summit	United Nations	Sept 2002
Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)	European Community	2000
Waste Framework Directive (75/442/EEC as amended by Directive 91/156/EEC,)	European Commission	2000
Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora (Directive 92/43/EC) (The Habitats Directive).	European Commission	1994
Air Quality Framework Directive	European Commission	1996
Kyoto Protocol and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change	United Nations	1992
National		
The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Working together for clean air.	DETR	2000
Water Resources for the Future – A Strategy for England and	Environment	2001

Wales.	Agency	
Making Space for Water: Developing a New Government Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in England. A Consultation Exercise.	DEFRA	2004
Securing the Future. The UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy.	HMSO	March 2005
Planning Policy Guidance Note 1: General Policy and Principles	ODPM	1997
Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development	ODPM	Feb 2005
Planning Policy Guidance 4: Industrial, Commercial Development and Small Firms	ODPM	2005
Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres	ODPM	2005
Planning Policy Guidance Note 9: Nature Conservation	ODPM	1994
Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks.	ODPM	2004
Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport.	ODPM	2001
Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment	ODPM	1994
Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation.	ODPM	2002
Planning Policy Statement 22: Renewable Energy	ODPM	2003
Planning Policy Statement 23: Planning and Pollution Control.	ODPM	2004
Planning Policy Guidance Note 24: Planning and Noise.	ODPM	1994
Planning Policy Guidance Note 25: Development and Flood Risk.	ODPM	2001
Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing	ODPM	2000
Planning Policy Statement 10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management.	ODPM	2005
Regional		
East of England Integrated Regional Strategy,	East of England Regional Assembly	2005
A Sustainable Development Framework for the East of England	East of England Regional Assembly	2001
Sustainable Communities in the East of England – Building for the future	ODPM	2004
A shared Vision: the regional economic strategy for the East of England	East of England Development Agency	2004
Revised regional housing strategy for the East of England: Strategy Document 2005-2010	East of England Regional	2005

	Assembly	
'Our Environment, Our Future' The Regional Environmental Strategy for The East of England	East of England Regional Assembly	2003
Local		
Transport for Colchester	Essex County Council and Colchester Borough Council	2004
Colchester's New Transport Strategy	Colchester Borough Council	2001
Essex and Southend-on-Sea Replacement structure Plan	Essex County Council and Southend Borough Council	2001
Adopted Review Colchester Borough Local Plan 2004-2011	Colchester Borough Council	2004
Colchester Borough Council Supplementary Planning Guidance: Affordable Housing	Colchester Borough Council	2004
Colchester Borough Council Supplementary Planning Guidance Community Facilities	Colchester Borough Council	2004
An external materials guide for new developments in Colchester	Colchester Borough Council	2004
Colne Harbour Design Framework	Colchester Borough Council and Essex County Council	2001
Colchester 2020 – 'A Vision for Our Future', Colchester's Community Strategy	Local Strategic Partnership	2003
Contaminated Land Strategy for Colchester Borough Council	Colchester Borough Council	2000
Local Economic Development Strategy for Colchester Borough 2004-2007	Colchester Borough Council	2004
Colchester Strategic Plan 2004-2007	Colchester Borough Council	2004
Colchester Housing Strategy	Colchester Borough Council	2003
Colchester's Housing Strategy Update 2004-2005	Colchester Borough Council	2005
Colchester Urban Capacity Study,	Colchester Borough Council. Produced by Halcrow Fox	2001

BASELINE DATA AND INDICATORS

Purpose of baseline information

- 3.3. The ODPM SA guidance notes that ‘baseline information provides the basis for predicting and monitoring effects and helps to identify sustainability problems and alternative ways of dealing with them’¹². The SEA Directive (Annex 1b) requires the provision of information on “the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme”.
- 3.4. Collation of existing sustainability data has highlighted key sustainability issues in East Colchester and the Colne Harbour area (set out in the Characterisation, paragraphs 3.9-3.34), and sets the context for the appraisal of the SPD. Data has been presented in terms of economic, social and environmental issues in Colne Harbour, although it is recognised that many issues are cross-cutting and the appraisal will need to keep this in mind.
- 3.5. The baseline information, trends and indicators are set out in **Appendix 2** and will be referred to when assessing the SPD.

Data Sources

- 3.6. Much of the baseline information collected has been taken from the plan and programmes review, although a number of additional sources shown in **Table 3.2** have also been used.

Table 3.2: Sources of baseline data

Document
2001 Census Profile of Colchester Town – including demographic, ethnicity, deprivation, economic and commuter profiles, Office for National Statistics (2002)
Colne Harbour Maritime Heritage Study, Jonathan Rochford (2005)
Economic and Social Impact Assessment – East Colchester Tidal Barrage, Halcrow Group Ltd (2004)
Environmental Baseline Study – Amended Final Report, Colchester Borough Council (2005)
Contaminated Land Strategy, 4th Revision, Colchester Borough Council (2003)

Data Gaps

- 3.7. Despite covering a wide range of material and establishing a good evidence base for the majority of objectives and issues, there are some gaps in the baseline data. The key areas of missing data concern:
- Levels of crime within the Colne Harbour area – Although there is significant information on the levels (generally low) and types of crime within Colchester, specific data for the area covered by the SPD has not been sourced. Crime is

¹² Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks. ODPM (2005)

nevertheless a potentially a key issue, particularly as evidence of other, often related issues such as high levels of deprivation, is significant.

- Flood Risk – To date, no Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken to determine how suitable land is in the borough for development in the future. Flood risk is however a key issue as the Environment Agency have designated a large proportion of the proposed SPD area as ‘high-risk’ zone 3¹³ meaning that new developments within the area will need their own flood risk assessments.
- Biodiversity – A lack of baseline data for the relatively small area of Colchester borough makes it difficult to evaluate biodiversity implications. The Environmental Baseline Study – Amended Final Report, Colchester Borough Council (2005) suggests that Phase I Habitat Surveys are required as a minimum for the Borough.
- Energy consumption - There is currently no data available on average energy consumption per person or the amount of renewable energy generated.

- 3.8. More specific recommendations on how to fill significant data gaps will be developed throughout the remainder of the SA process.

CHARACTERISATION OF COLNE HARBOUR AND SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

Introduction

- 3.9. To provide a context for appraisal, this section describes the environmental, social and economic character of areas likely to be affected by the SPD. This characterisation has been developed through, and should be read in conjunction with, a review of existing baseline information as described in **Appendix 2**. It also incorporates qualitative information gathered at two consultation workshops held at the end of October 2005 with local council officials and stakeholders. Key issues described within the characterisation are reflected in the draft appraisal framework set out in **Chapter 4**.

Overview

- 3.10. Colchester is the third most populous borough in Essex with 155,794 residents in 2001, 11.9% of the County's total population¹⁴. The majority of the population live in the urban centres of Colchester and West Mersea. The Colne Harbour SPD focuses on an area within the River Colne Regeneration Area (RA), identified in the Adopted Colchester Local Plan, 2004. The SPD covers an area known as The Hythe where three wards meet - St Andrew's, New Town and Harbour. The SPD also extends slightly into St Anne's ward. The four wards represent around 32,450 people; just over one fifth of Colchester's population, with St Andrew's being the most densely populated with 4,925 people per square kilometre¹⁵. **Figure 3.1** shows the general

¹³ Planning Policy Guidance 25, ODPM (2001)

¹⁴ 2001 Census National Statistics Office (2002)

¹⁵ Adopted Colchester Local Plan, Colchester Borough Council, 2004

location of the proposed SPD and the wards it covers. The final boundaries will be defined as the SPD is prepared.

Figure 3.1: The SPD focus area



- 3.11. The area has experienced long-term economic downturn, culminating in the closure of Colchester Port in 2001. There are also a number of social and environmental issues, including comparatively high levels of deprivation and degradation of the river environment. The area has, however, potential for regeneration as highlighted in the Colchester Borough SPG *Colne Harbour Design Framework, 2001*. The main economic, social and environmental issues in Colne Harbour are summarised below.

Economic

- 3.12. The local economy of Colne Harbour was traditionally based around the manufacturing and marine industries. It has suffered due to the decline of waterborne freight and the final closure of the port, leading to a long-term degeneration of the waterfront and surrounding area. Despite the decline in manufacturing, 87 businesses remain in this sector, employing 740 people¹⁶.

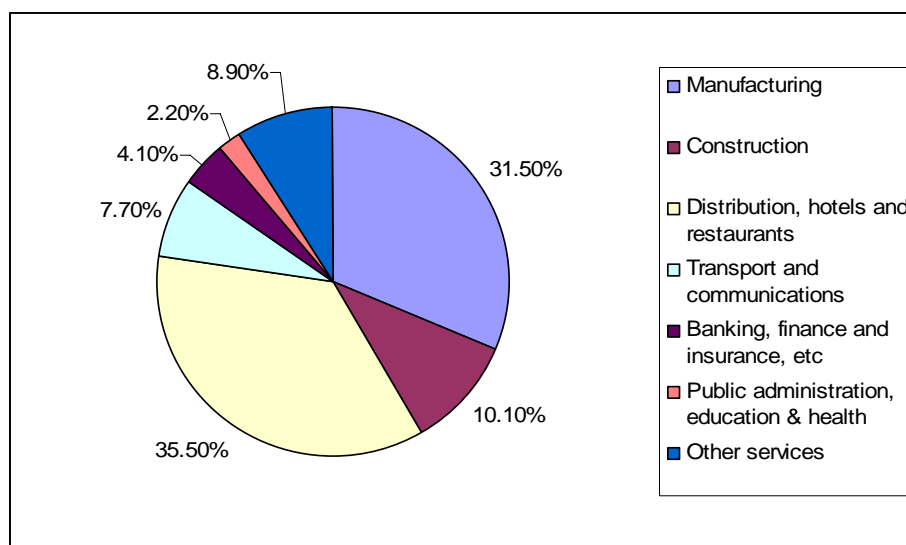
¹⁶ Economic and Social Impact Assessment – East Colchester Tidal Barrage, Halcrow Group Ltd (2004)

- 3.13. There has been increased dependency on a small number of large employers¹⁷. The University of Essex is one these major employers, with around 2000 staff. The University offers potential economic regeneration prospects for the area, with a proposed research park that incorporates business space with some housing and student accommodation on a 10 hectare site. **Table 3.2** shows the number of employers and employees by sector and **Figure 3.2** shows the proportion of employees per sector within the existing SPG area.

Table 3.2: The number of firms and their employees in the existing SPG area

	No. of Firms	Employees
Manufacturing	23	233
Construction	6	75
Distribution, hotels and restaurants	30	263
Transport and communications	3	57
Banking, finance and insurance, etc	8	30
Public administration, education & health	1	16
Other services	16	66
Total	87	740

Figure 3.2: Employees by Sector in existing SPG Area



Source: Business Select 2003 in Environmental Baseline Study – Amended Final Report, Colchester borough Council (2005)

- 3.14. Unemployment is relatively low in Colchester, when compared with Essex and the country as a whole. Colchester's unemployment is concentrated in the Colne

¹⁷ The Colchester Economic Audit: Into the New Millennium, A Report Prepared for the Colchester Economic Forum (2000) in Environmental Baseline Study – Amended Final Report, Colchester borough Council (2005)

Harbour area, with the four priority wards, accounting for 20.7% of the boroughs population on Job Seekers Allowance¹⁸. **Table 3.3** shows the extent of economic activity in the four wards covered by the SPD relative to Colchester as a whole.

Table 3.3: Economic Activity & Inactivity Rates, 2001

	Colchester	Harbour Ward	New Town Ward	St Andrew's Ward	St Anne's Ward
All aged 16-74	111,746	3,962	6,724	6,852	6,247
Economically Active	68.5%	69.5%	74.5%	57.8%	68.3%
Economically Inactive	31.5%	30.5%	25.5%	42.2%	31.7%
Unemployment 16-24 year olds	0.6%	0.9%	1.0%	1.4%	0.8%
Long Term Unemployed	0.6%	0.8%	0.9%	1.3%	0.8%
All Unemployed (Economically Active)	2.3%	3.3%	3.3%	4.0%	2.9%

Source: Census 2001 in Environmental Baseline Study – Amended Final Report, Colchester borough Council (2005)

- 3.15. Colchester generates a substantial number of new businesses start-ups each year, around 2200, which is comparable to other towns in the area. However, 440 businesses struggle each year to find suitable and affordable accommodation¹⁹. Similarly there appears to be a shortage of 'grow on' accommodation for well-established businesses.
- 3.16. The market for office accommodation is relatively slow, with a greater supply than demand in the Colchester area. There is a presumption against any new major retail outlets in the SPD area, due to the recent approval of a major retail outlet (B&Q)²⁰. Local stakeholders feel that the lack of smaller retail outlets (shops and restaurants) is a key factor behind the lack of local jobs²¹. Industrial and commercial warehouses are currently yielding around 7.5-8% on investment, with the highest land values approaching £6 per sqft in the Whitehall industrial estate which abuts the SPD area to the southeast²².
- 3.17. Despite the slow local economy, there is potential to utilise resources, such as the river, for recreation and tourism. This might provide the impetus for further capital investment.

Key Economic Issues

- 3.18. The following economic issues should be addressed by the SEA/SA of the SPD:

¹⁸ Local Economic Development Strategy for Colchester Borough 2004-2007, Colchester borough Council (2004)

¹⁹ Local Economic Development Strategy for Colchester Borough 2004-2007, Colchester borough Council (2004)

²⁰ Adopted Colchester Local Plan, Colchester Borough Council (2004)

²¹ Economic and Social Impact Assessment – East Colchester Tidal Barrage, Halcrow Group Ltd (2004)

²² Economic and Social Impact Assessment – East Colchester Tidal Barrage, Halcrow Group Ltd (2004)

Key Issues	Sustainability Framework Objectives
Relatively low levels of economic activity, employment levels and income, particularly in the three most deprived wards; Harbour, St Andrew's and St Anne's.	1. To reduce economic disadvantage by improving access to a wider range of employment opportunities
Employment is based on declining manufacturing and distribution sectors, with a small number of large employers.	2. To encourage regeneration which improves the diversity of the local economy, including inward investment in tertiary industries
Potential opportunities to encourage recreation and tourism linked to the river environment	
Difficulties in finding suitable and affordable business accommodation	3. To improve the supply of flexible, low cost business accommodation

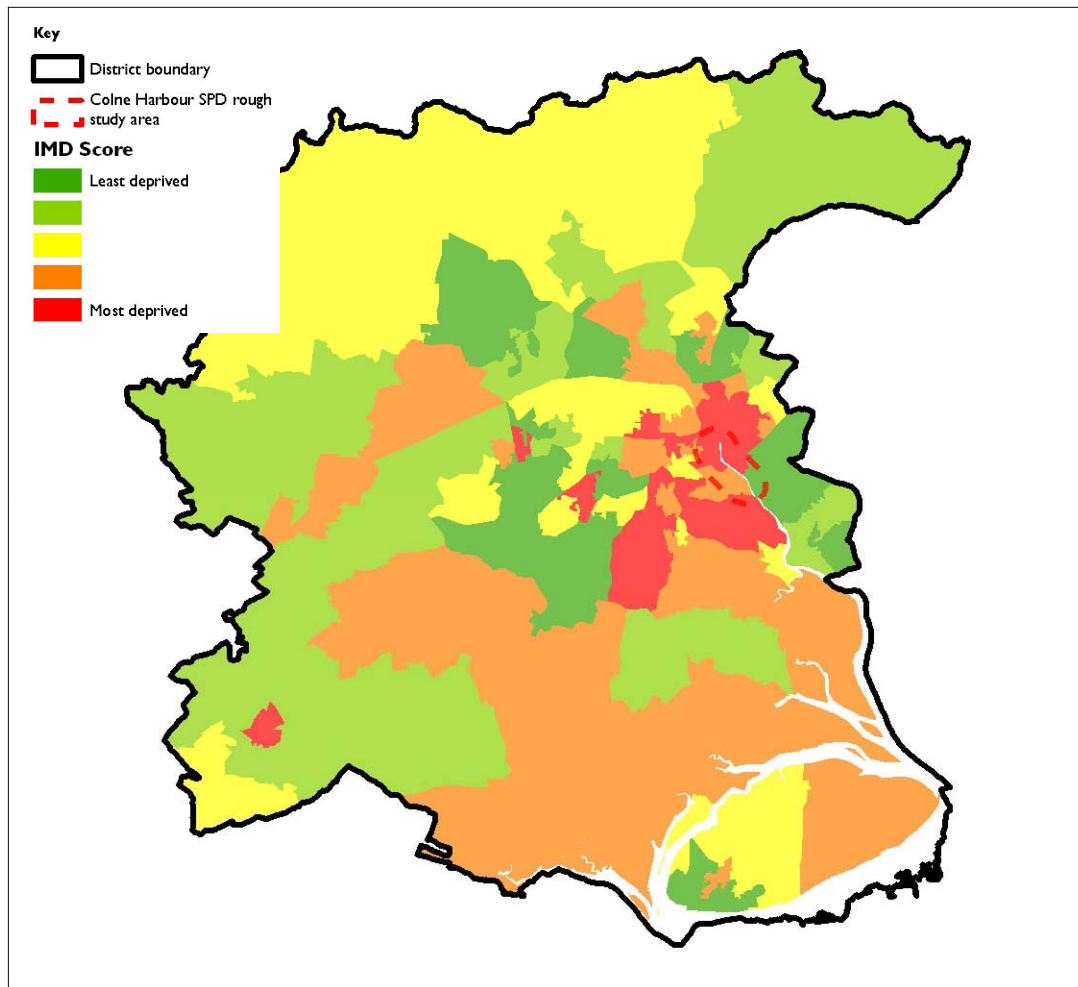
Social

- 3.19. As a whole, Colchester is a relatively prosperous area, ranking 213 out of 354 districts in England (1 being the most deprived), on the Index of Multiple deprivation²³. There is wide variation throughout the borough however. Four wards in the district are in the 20% most deprived wards in the East of England and targeted by the council as 'priority wards'. Three of these wards - Harbour, St Andrew's and St Anne's - converge within the proposed SPD area. St Andrew's, which incorporates the Hythe and waterfront areas, is the most deprived, ranking in the highest 10% of deprived wards in the country²⁴. **Figure 3.3** shows the location of the most deprived wards in Colchester.

²³ The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 contains seven domains of deprivation: income deprivation, employment deprivation, health deprivation and disability, education, and skills and training deprivation, barriers to housing and services, living environment deprivation and crime and covers each local authority down to ward level in the UK.

²⁴ Local Economic Development Strategy for Colchester Borough 2004-2007, Colchester borough Council (2004)

Figure 3.3: Index of Multiple Deprivation score by ward



- 3.20. Educational attainment (academic and vocational) is low – a third of people in Colchester with no qualifications are from the four priority wards. Employer dissatisfaction with employee skills is also twice as high in Colchester as it is in the rest of Essex. Reflected in these relatively low employment levels are poor levels of health and long-term illness. About 12% of people of working age living in Colchester have a long-term illness. St Andrew's has the highest proportion of disabled people out of Colchester's 27 wards and the sixth highest out of 284 wards in Essex²⁵. Harbour and St Anne's also have high numbers of people living with a disability.
- 3.21. In 2001 there were 63,706 households in Colchester Borough, about three-quarters of which were in privately owned homes. Of the 25% rented homes, 10.94% were rented from a local authority²⁶. With growing demand for homes, due to an increasing number of people living on their own²⁷ and substantial in-migration, there is increasingly a shortfall in affordable housing²⁸. In addition, the Council accepts around 500 families a year for re-housing whilst council homes continue to be sold at

²⁵ Census 2001, Office for National Statistics (2002)

²⁶ Census 2001, Office for National Statistics (2002)

²⁷ Colchester Strategic Plan 2004-2007, Colchester Borough Council

²⁸ Environmental Baseline Study – Amended Final Report, Colchester Borough Council (2005)

a rate of 160 – 180 each year. A large proportion (64%) of council homes did not meet the government's decent homes standard in 2002/03²⁹. The Council's Housing Needs Survey (2002) identified a need for socially rented housing rather than low-cost home ownership or cheap housing for sale³⁰.

- 3.22. There are at least four distinct communities living within the SPD area, each with particular needs; residents of social housing where the focus should be on facility provision; residents of 'Old Hythe' where emphasis for improvement is on heritage and restoration, and a large transient population made up of 'buy-to-let' tenants and a large student population. In addition, Colchester's ethnic minority groups (about 3.8% of the population³¹) may have specific requirements. St Andrew's ward and neighbouring Wivenhoe Cross ward have the highest ethnic diversity in the borough, with a particular presence of people of Chinese origin. Chinese students also form the largest minority group attending the University.
- 3.23. As the most self contained borough in Essex, more than 77% of Colchester's workforce lives within the Borough and in-commuting is less than out commuting³². Around 61% of people drive to work, whilst only 13% use public transport. Travel for shopping, leisure, education and other activities is also generally increasing³³ and it is predicted that traffic levels in Colchester will grow by as much as 36% by 2011 if no action is taken³⁴. Traffic congestion in Colchester, and in particular East Colchester, presents both social and environmental issues.
- 3.24. From a social perspective, the Eastern Approaches Road Scheme attempted to solve the problem of congestion and delay that a high volume of traffic causes. The level of through traffic remains high, however, and alternative transport options and traffic management measures need to be introduced following the demise of the second phase of the project³⁵. Passenger use of Hythe Station is increasing by 3% per annum³⁶, although the station has become run-down and is in need of regeneration.
- 3.25. Within the context of the regeneration of Colne Harbour, the issue of transport also raises fundamental questions about the aims of any regeneration scheme; whether there is a focus on increased accessibility and connectivity for improved integration with the town centre or promoting a range of activities and services for the area to be more autonomous in its own right.
- 3.26. The Hythe Community Assessment (2000) found that there is a limited provision of leisure and recreation facilities rather than problems with existing facilities. There is a popular community centre that has been open for four years and there have been efforts to open a doctor's surgery, although this has met several start-up problems.

²⁹ Colchester Strategic Plan 2004-2007, Colchester Borough Council

³⁰ Environmental Baseline Study – Amended Final Report, Colchester Borough Council (2005)

³¹ Census 2001, Office for National Statistics (2002)

³² Environmental Baseline Study – Amended Final Report, Colchester Borough Council (2005)

³³ Environmental Baseline Study – Amended Final Report, Colchester Borough Council (2005)

³⁴ Transport for Colchester, EEC and CBC (2004)

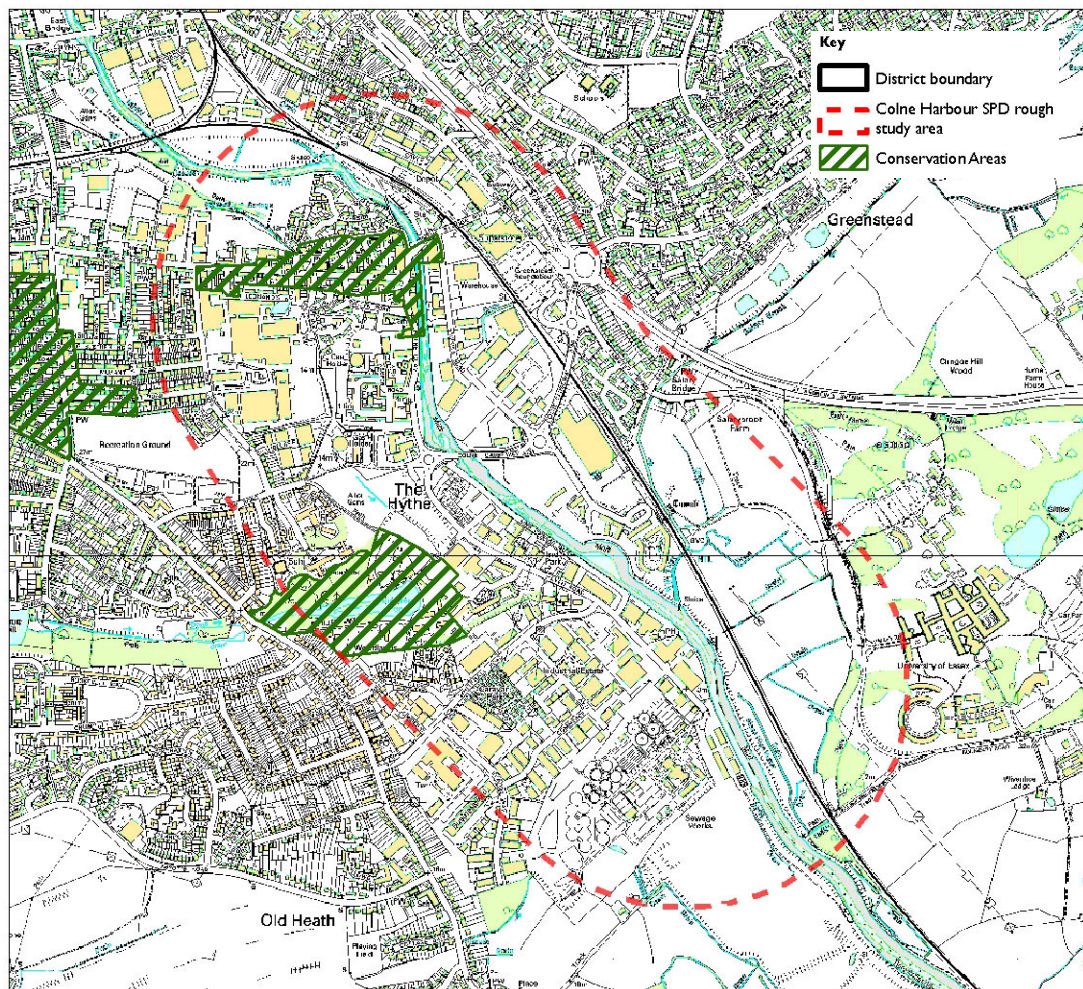
³⁵ Adopted Colchester Local Plan, Colchester Borough Council, 2004

³⁶ Colchester's New Transport Strategy (CBC, 2001)

Also, some residents believe that the area lacks shops, take-away food outlets and other restaurants limiting the number of local jobs³⁷.

- 3.27. The quality of the local environment has been declining and problems have been identified around the untidiness of the streets, inadequate street lighting and the disrepair of many footpaths³⁸. Some parts of the built environment are of high quality, with two conservation areas within and one close to the proposed SPD area (see **Figure 3.4**). However, there are only 1.54 hectares of open space per 1000 people, below the national standard of 2.83 hectares per 1000 people³⁹

Figure 3.4: Conservation Areas



- 3.28. Crime in Colchester is relatively low⁴⁰, however, recorded incidents are increasing at a rate of 6.2 per cent (significantly higher than the national average of 0.6%)⁴¹ and local residents are concerned about safety.

³⁷ Economic and Social Impact Assessment – East Colchester Tidal Barrage, Halcrow Group Ltd (2004)

³⁸ Economic and Social Impact Assessment – East Colchester Tidal Barrage, Halcrow Group Ltd (2004)

³⁹ Environmental Baseline Study – Amended Final Report, Colchester Borough Council (2005)

⁴⁰ Colchester Strategic Plan 2004-2007, Colchester Borough Council (2004)

⁴¹ Census 2001, National Statistics Office (2002)

Key Social Issues

3.29. The following social issues should be addressed by the SEA/SA of the SPD:

Key Issues	Sustainability Framework Objectives
Low levels of educational attainment and skills shortage linked to the labour market	4. To increase levels of educational attainment through the provision of opportunities for education and skills development
Poor levels of health, particularly limiting long-term illness in the wards of St Andrew's and Harbour.	5. To increase the level of health and wellbeing of residents within Colne Harbour to be more in line with Colchester as a whole
Shortfall in affordable housing and high proportion of council housing not meeting Government's decent housing standard	6. To provide an adequate affordable housing supply, with improvements in standards of living accommodation
High levels of traffic congestion and need to improve public transport service quality and connectivity of Colne Harbour	7. To reduce traffic congestion and improve accessibility through alternatives to the private car
Poor access to a range of community services including education, local shops, open space, leisure and recreational facilities.	8. To encourage mixed use redevelopment which reflects the needs of local communities, including improved accessibility to essential services and facilities
The quality of the local environment has declined and, although overall levels of crime in Colchester are low, perceived levels of crime and safety are important	9. To create a stronger sense of place and community identity with a high quality, safe living environment

Environment

3.30. Pollution in Colchester is generally low, although there is evidence of some land contamination, as well as some localised air, water and noise pollution due to industrial activities⁴² and traffic congestion. Deterioration in air quality has been recorded in the town centre predominately due to increased traffic congestion. Transport is the main source of climate changing pollution, and emissions from transport sources are predicted to increase significantly in the next 15 years⁴³. This localised pollution, along with odours from industry or the sewage works, could

⁴² Colne Harbour Maritime Heritage Study, 2005

⁴³ Environmental Baseline Study – Amended Final Report, Colchester Borough Council (2005)

potentially cause conflicts with neighbouring land uses, particularly for residential uses moving into the area.

- 3.31. Although there are no national nature designations within the study area, it remains environmentally sensitive. There are three local Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (Salary Brook, Distillery Pond and University Sites) as well as the river environment. There also important habitats such as coastal grazing marsh, which is declining, ancient woodlands and traditional orchards as well as the Colne Estuary SSSI further down stream. **Figure 3.4** shows the international and national nature conservation designations in the surrounding area and **Figure 3.5** shows the local nature conservation designations in and around the proposed SPD area.

Figure 3.4: International and National Nature Conservation Designations

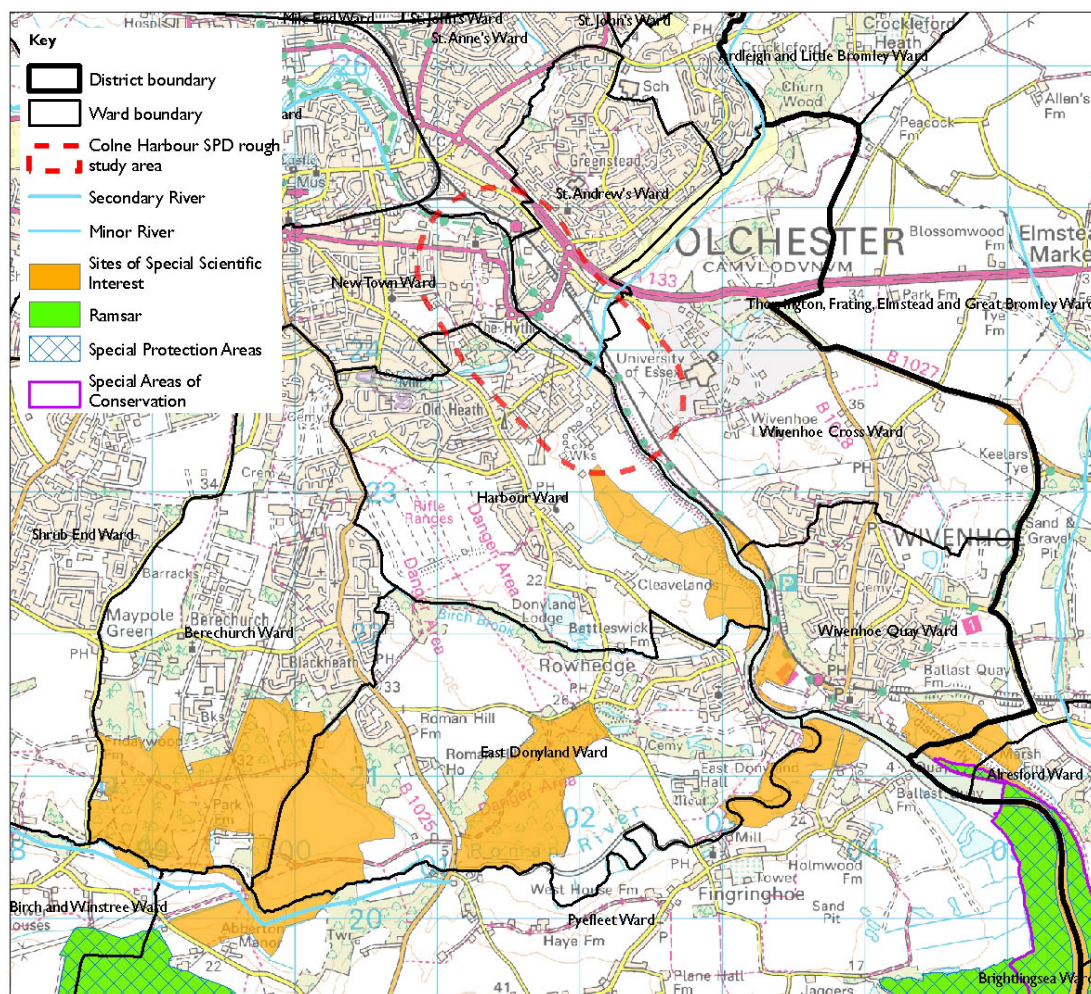
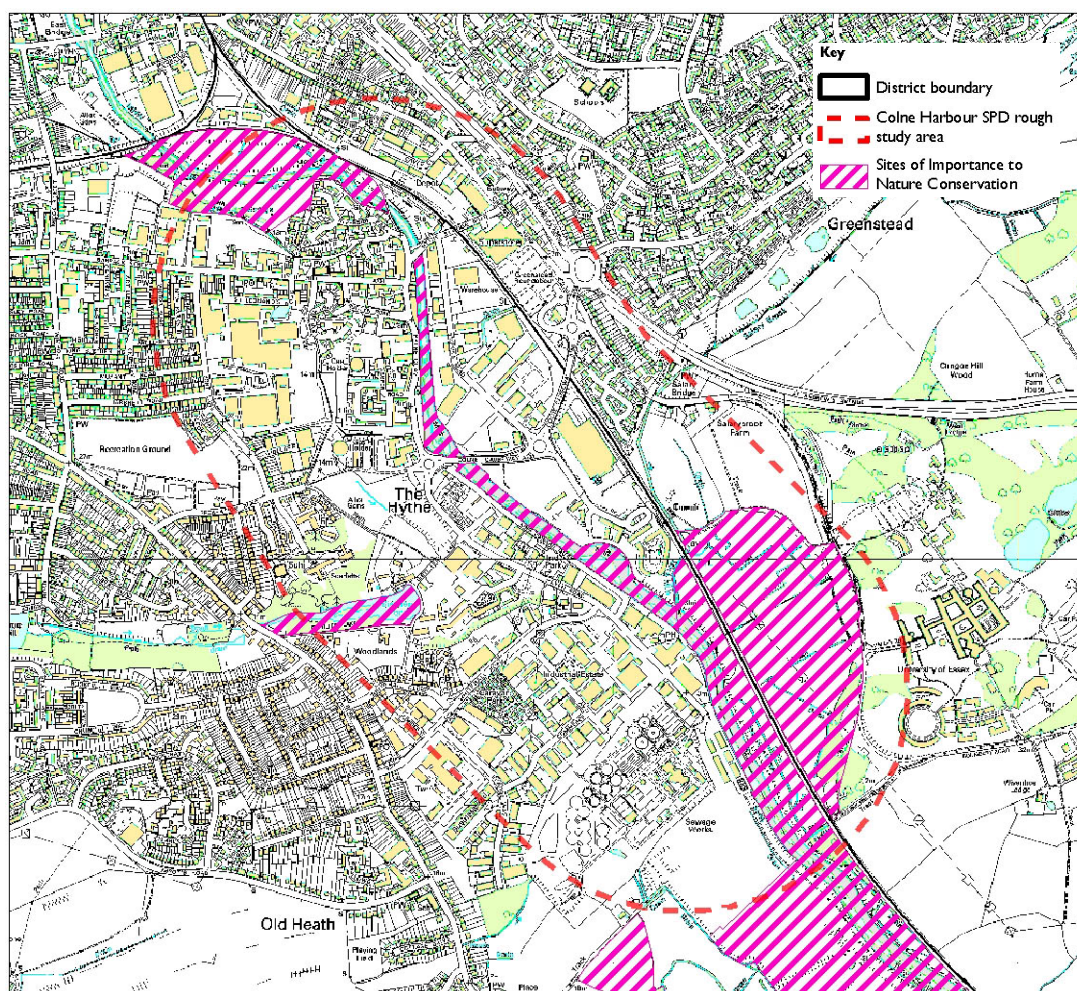


Figure 3.5: Local Nature Conservation Designations



- 3.32. The river has generally very good chemical and biological qualities, although it has had high nitrate and very high phosphate concentrations in recent years leading to increased eutrophication⁴⁴. The river is badly silted and in need of restoration in some places in Colne Harbour⁴⁵.
- 3.33. Although no Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken to determine how suitable land is in the borough for development in the future,⁴⁶ it is evident that significant stretches of the River are at risk of flooding. A large proportion of the area covered by the SPD falls under Flood Risk Zone 3 (see **Figure 3.4**), constituting a high risk area⁴⁷ (include ref to PPG 25 as footnote) under PPG 25. The risk is heightened as increased hard-standing associated with development is leading to

⁴⁴ Environmental Baseline Study – Amended Final Report, Colchester Borough Council (2005)

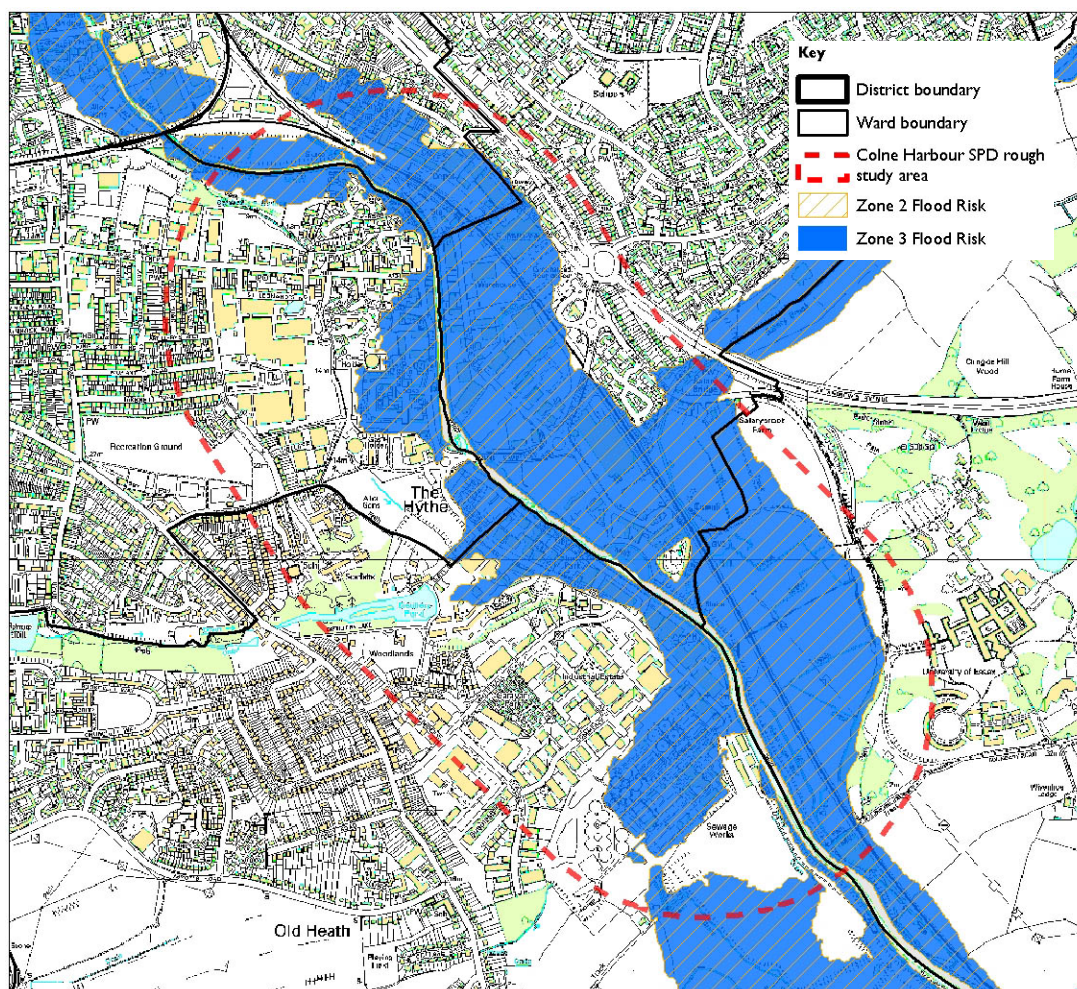
⁴⁵ Colne Harbour Maritime Heritage Study, 2005

⁴⁶ Environmental Baseline Study – Amended Final Report, Colchester Borough Council (2005)

⁴⁷ Planning Policy Guidance Note 25: Development and Flood Risk, ODPM (2001)

increased surface water run off and none of the sea defences provide adequate protection for the 1 in 200 year flood in the borough.⁴⁸

Figure 3.4: Flood Risk Zone 3 in the SDP proposed area



Key Environmental Issues

3.34. The following environmental issues should be addressed by the SEA/SA of the SPD:

Key Issues	Sustainability Framework Objectives
Although pollution levels are generally low, there is localised land contamination and air, water and noise pollution linked to industrial activities and traffic congestion.	10. To encourage prudent use of natural resources including improvements to local air, water and soil quality
Significant stretches of the river are at risk of flooding and increased	11. To reduce the effects of and develop a managed response to climate change, in

⁴⁸ (Halcrow Report, Table 7).

hard-standing in the catchment is heightening the risk.	particular to safeguard against flood risk
There are three local nature designations with the SPD area and several national designations in close proximity that offer a range of habitats, including salt marsh which is potentially sensitive to increased river activity.	12. To maintain and enhance biodiversity and landscape quality
There are important areas of built heritage including two conservation areas	13. To maintain and enhance architectural and historical character and quality

LIKELY EVOLUTION OF THE ISSUES WITHOUT THE SPD

- 3.35. The current trends and issues outlined above are likely to continue without further intervention due to uncertainties as to the most appropriate type, mix and location of new development and management of existing land use in the Colne Harbour area. Subsequent stages of the SA will include consideration of the 'do nothing' option alongside policy options that are developed and will provide more detailed information on the likely evolution of Colne Harbour based on the existing policy framework (primarily the Local Plan and the Colne Harbour Design Framework).

4. PROPOSED FRAMEWORK OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

PURPOSE OF SA FRAMEWORK

- 4.1. The SA framework of sustainability objectives is central to the appraisal process, providing the main mechanism for assessing the effects of policies as they are developed.
- 4.2. Paragraphs 4.2.14-18 of the ODPM guidance on undertaking SA explains how the framework of objectives should be developed. In particular, it is important that the objectives cover the full breadth of economic, environment and social issues as well as topics listed in the SEA Directive⁴⁹. Objectives can be taken from a range of plans and developed to reflect local circumstances. They should be outcome-focused to enable potential effects of policies to be assessed and developed alongside relevant indicators for monitoring implementation. It is also important to ensure that the number of objectives is manageable for undertaking appraisals and given the type of plan to be appraised.

DEVELOPMENT OF PROPOSED FRAMEWORK

- 4.3. The proposed Sustainability objectives are set out in **Table 4.1**. These have been developed in line with the ODPM guidance and will form the basis of the appraisal framework.

Table 4.1 Proposed Sustainability Objectives

<i>Economic</i>
1. To reduce economic disadvantage by improving access to a wider range of employment opportunities
2. To encourage regeneration which improves the diversity of the local economy, including inward investment in tertiary industries
3. To improve the supply of flexible, low cost business accommodation
<i>Social</i>
4. To increase levels of educational attainment through the provision of opportunities for education and skills development
5. To increase the level of health and wellbeing of residents within Colne Harbour to be more in line with Colchester as a whole
6. To provide an adequate affordable housing supply, with improvements in standards of living accommodation
7. To reduce traffic congestion and improve accessibility through alternatives to the private car

⁴⁹ See (f), article 5(1), Annex I of European Directive 2001/42EC

8. To encourage mixed use redevelopment which reflects the needs of local communities, including improved accessibility to essential services and facilities
9. To create a stronger sense of place and community identity with a high quality, safe living environment
Environmental
10. To encourage prudent use of natural resources including improvements to local air, water and soil quality
11. To reduce the effects of and develop a managed response to climate change, in particular to safeguard against flood risk
12. To maintain and enhance biodiversity and landscape quality
13. To maintain and enhance architectural and historical character and quality

- 4.4. **Appendix 3** illustrates how the proposed sustainability objectives were formulated by highlighting objectives of other relevant existing plans – objectives for East Colchester and Hythe Regeneration Area in the Adopted Colchester Local Plan East, Sustainability Appraisal objectives of Magdalene Street SPD (a recently completed SA relating to a site adjacent to Colne Harbour with similar issues) and relevant objectives from other plans and programmes reviewed. The table also shows how these objectives relate to the SEA directive as well as key sustainability issues arising from the characterisation of the area (see **Chapter 3**).

APPRAISAL METHDOLOGY

- 4.5. The SA objectives will be used in a matrix to assess the potential effects of policies of the SPD as they are developed. Policies will be scored against of the objectives using the system based on that set out in **Table 2.2**. One score will be allocated to each objective with commentary provided to explain the reasoning for the scores given. Scores will be brought together to assess the overall sustainability effects, taking into account the relationship between economic, social and environmental issues.

Table 2.2 Scoring system to be used for appraisals

Score	Definition
++	Policy likely to significantly support SA objective
+	Policy likely to provide some support for SA objective
0	Neutral impact/no relationship to SA objective
-	Policy could give rise to some minor conflict with SA objective
--	Policy likely to significantly conflict with SA objective
+/-	Policy could both support and conflict with SA objective
?	Uncertain effects

5. SUBSEQUENT STAGES AND TASKS OF THE SA PROCESS

STAGE B: DEVELOPING AND REFINING OPTIONS AND ASSESSING EFFECTS

- 5.1. The initial task in Stage B involves testing the objectives of the SPD against the SA framework to ensure they are in accordance with sustainability principles. If appropriate, ways of refining the objectives will be suggested as well as identifying potential areas of conflict or synergy between objectives.
- 5.2. LUC will then appraise options being considered for the SPD, including the Master Plan and development brief. Options will be refined during this iterative process, the results of which will appear in the Sustainability Appraisal Report. The ODPM SA guidance clarifies that options to be appraised must represent 'reasonable alternatives' allowing for meaningful comparison of sustainability effects. For Colne Harbour SPD, this might include alternatives mixes of land uses, including different levels and types of housing and employment activity.

STAGE C: PREPARING THE SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL REPORT

- 5.3. The SA report on the draft SPD is a key output of the appraisal process, presenting conclusions on the effects of options appraised for a statutory six-week public consultation. The report will illustrate how the preferred option was developed, and include proposals for mitigating any anticipated significant conflicts and maximizing potential benefits.
- 5.4. The SA report must also show that the SEA Directive's requirements have been met and include a non-technical summary. **Figure 5.1** provides a draft format for report contents.

Figure 5.1 Draft format for final SA report

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Summary and Outcomes<ul style="list-style-type: none">Non-technical summaryStatement on the difference the process has madeHow to comment on the report2. Introduction<ul style="list-style-type: none">Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability AppraisalAims and structure of the reportBackground to Colne Harbour Master Plan SPD3. Methodology<ul style="list-style-type: none">Approach to SAStages and tasks undertaken |
|---|
-

Consultation
Limitations

4. Sustainability issues and character of Colne Harbour
 - Links to other plans and programmes
 - Social, environmental and economic issues
 - Baseline data and indicators
 - SA appraisal framework
5. Issues and Options
 - Alternative options considered
 - Assessment of effects
 - Choice of preferred option
 - Mitigation and maximising benefits
6. Appraisal of Colne Harbour Master Plan SPD
 - Assessment of effects
 - How effects were considered in developing policies and proposals
 - Mitigation and maximising benefits
7. Implementation
8. Monitoring Proposals

STAGE D: CONSULTING ON DRAFT SPD AND SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL REPORT

- 5.5. The final SA report will be consulted on alongside the statutory six week pre-submission stage of the SPD, expected to take place in March 2006. Consultation will need to comply with the Statement of Community Involvement and requirements of the SEA Directive. Should any significant changes be made to the SPD as a result of public consultation, additional appraisal work may need to be carried out and the final SA report amended to reflect the results.

STAGE E: MONITORING THE SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS OF IMPLEMENTING THE SPD

- 5.6. The final SA Report will set out recommendations for monitoring the sustainability effects of the SPDs. Recommendations for a process for dealing with adverse or unexpected effects will also be included in the SA report.
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APPENDIX I

Plan and programme reviews

APPENDIX 2

Baseline information

APPENDIX 3

Development of proposed Sustainability Appraisal objectives