

Chelmsford City Council Consultation Response

Colchester Borough Council – Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation January 2015

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1. These responses have been agreed by Chelmsford City Council's Development Policy Committee at its meeting on 5 March 2015.
2. Chelmsford City Council welcomes this forward-thinking consultation document which addresses long term strategic planning matters for Colchester. It puts forward bold and imaginative growth options and has clearly demonstrated Colchester Borough Council's willingness to work constructively with its neighbouring local planning authorities to plan in a sustainable manner. The existing Strategic Housing and Economic Growth Meetings that City Council Members and Officers attend with Colchester BC, Braintree DC, Maldon DC and Essex County Council counterparts can provide an on-going platform for further co-operation. Chelmsford City Council wishes to open a constructive dialogue under the 'Duty to Corporate' to include the following strategic cross-boundary matters:

A12/A120 Strategic Routes

- 3 The Government's recent announcement outlining strategic improvements to the A12 from the M25 to north of Colchester has the potential to provide a comprehensive package of strategic measures to help improve capacity and relieve congestion. This provides an important opportunity for Colchester, alongside Braintree, Chelmsford and Brentwood Councils to work together with the Highways Agency to ensure that these strategic improvements to the A12 are delivered.
- 4 The relevant Council's Local Plans should be consistent in helping to bring the essential A12 improvements to fruition. Significant levels of development in Colchester (and other local planning authority areas) have the potential to be constrained by these capacity issues.
- 5 Strategic improvements to the A120 from Braintree to the A12 will also be an important element to deliver significant development growth to the west of Colchester. Together with the proposed improvements to the A130 (new North East Chelmsford By-pass), this section of the A120 represent a critical missing link in the strategic road network in Mid and North Essex which will help to deliver growth.

Great Eastern Mainline

- 6 Although Network Rail's Anglia Route Study and the Greater Eastern Mainline Prospectus are outlined, the consultation document does not reference any specific projects or schemes that have the possibility to support new development growth. The key capacity constraints on the GEML are primarily within Chelmsford City Council's area. The constrained two line section between Shenfield and Witham limits capacity especially at peak times. Significant levels of development in Colchester (and Braintree/Tendring) have the potential to be constrained by these capacity issues.

- 7 In common with the A12 issue, there is the opportunity for the relevant Councils to use the development growth in their emerging Local Plans to demonstrate to Network Rail and the Department for Transport the need for strategic long term improvements, including four tracking (extended loop) north of Chelmsford.

Water Supply – Abberton Reservoir

- 8 The majority of the potable water supply for Chelmsford City Council's area is sourced via Abberton Reservoir. Any growth option for future development in Colchester should not prejudice any further potential expansion of the Abberton facility which may be required to serve future development needs in Chelmsford City Council's area.

Growth Options

- 9 The proposed Growth Options 1 and 2 both contain an option of a large new sustainable settlement in the Marks Tey area. It is accepted that the option diagrams are solely for indicative purposes, but the elongated area would somewhat negate the contribution that Marks Tey Rail Station could provide in sustainability terms and tend to make new services and facilities serving the development less accessible for the entire new community. A more nucleated area of search focused on the rail station could provide more sustainable options.
- 10 In relation to all of the Growth Options, significant development in Tiptree is likely to create further peak capacity issues to the A12 which may require new/improved junctions or other highway interventions.

5 March 2015