
From: Susan Orton <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 27 February 2015 12:48
To: Planning Policy
Cc: [REDACTED]; Helen Chuah; Mike Hogg; info@bobrussell.org.uk
Subject: Spatial Policy Team . Colchester Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation, 16 January - 27 February 2015

Spatial Policy Team
Colchester Borough Council
CO1 1ZE

26th February 2015

Dear Colchester Borough Council

Reference:

Colchester Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation, 16 January - 27 February 2015

Here are my answers and comments to selected questions from your online questionnaire.

Please send me confirmation of receipt of this email and display my comments, without my personal details, on your web site.

29 Which option do you think would form the most appropriate strategy for the growth of the Borough and why?

Firstly, I am fundamentally opposed to the implied assumption that growth is inevitably a 'good' thing. Recent decades have seen Colchester grow from a pleasant market town to effectively a small city, with all the disadvantages of a city but none of the advantages. Roads are congested, much of the green space has been consumed by creeping urbanisation with the proliferation of flats and dubious-quality housing, the town centre is decaying and the hospital is so overwhelmed that 'special measures' have been necessary. Our historical sites are disappearing under concrete. Future planning should consider sustainability and the preservation of our natural and historical assets, rather than just growth.

Of the proposed Plan, Options 2A and 2B, which do *not* involve new development to the East of Colchester, are most appropriate because the East is already well-developed, and has some well-used and important green open spaces nearby which are valued by the public, and are important for wildlife. These green open spaces, stretching to a distance of at least 1.5km away from existing development, should be untouched by new development. Too much new development directly on the Eastern border of existing developed areas of Colchester would create an unpleasant and unmanageable urban sprawl. Please also see my answer to question 32.

Furthermore, Colchester Council, by introducing a significant amount of residential or other development into the countryside to the East of Colchester, would materially harm the character and appearance of the rural area contrary to the objectives of national policy (National Planning Policy Framework, 2012, paragraph 17, 5th bullet point; paragraph 109; and paragraph 81 is also related, although paragraph 81 is specific to Green Belts). This may also contravene local planning policy.

Local and national policy should collectively recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, seek to enhance the rural landscape and visual amenity of any Green Belt or general green land, and prevent development conspicuous from within any Green Belt or general green land which would have an excessive impact on rural character.

32. Should we look to have high densities if possible, if so, where do you think higher densities would be appropriate and why?

See also my comments in response to question 29.

If there is to be new development to the East of Colchester, there should be a buffer of green, completely undeveloped land of 1.5km around Salary Brook.

This protected 'Salary Brook Valley' would include the Salary Brook itself, plus currently-undeveloped land 1.5km either side of the brook, along its entire length between Ardleigh and where the brook meets the River Colne.

25. Do you have any further comments to make on design and heritage related issues?

Many modern housing developments are a mishmash of different styles, often side-by-side. This looks awful. More control should be placed on housing developers, so that estates have a uniform, attractive appearance. Heritage of all kinds, including architecture, is a very important part of Colchester, and utmost importance should be placed on preserving it.

28. Do you have any further comments to make about issues related to the Natural Environment?

The natural environment is a very important resource for Colchester, its people and its wildlife, and should be preserved as much as possible.

Yours sincerely

Susan Orton

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