

West Bergholt Parish Council

CBC Issues & Options Consultation

13th May 2015 Planning Meeting Response

RURAL COLCHESTER Key Issues

w) Increasing the delivery of rural housing, including affordable housing, to create sustainable rural settlements.

x) Increasing the delivery of rural jobs.

y) Improving the provision of and access to community facilities in rural areas to support community needs and reduce social isolation.

z) Defining settlement boundaries to allow sustainable levels of growth in rural villages/hamlets without adversely impacting on the character of the villages/hamlets and surrounding countryside.

aa) Protecting the countryside for its own sake.

Questions

14. Have the correct issues been identified, are there any missing? We believe these are the main issues facing rural communities but would add the provision of superfast broadband as being of vital importance to rural areas both for business and residential use.

15. Do you have any thoughts on how the Plan could or should address these issues?

W: rural housing needs to be located in accessible locations logically in larger villages with adequate bus services or with good cycling and walking links to local services

X: there appears to be no delivery mechanism to assist with the delivery of rural jobs so a sectoral approach needs examining which looks at the type of traditional and new rural employment likely to be on offer. So rural broadband needs addressing as does the provision of start-up units.

Y: rural parishes and communities should be encouraged to develop Neighbourhood Plans and Parish Plans so that community facilities can be identified.

Z: we believe village envelopes should be examined or added to in larger areas by designated areas to supplement village envelopes. Again NPs have a vital role to play.

AA: there was a designation of Special Landscape Areas in former Local Pans. These should be reintroduced.

16. Do you have any further comments to make on issues related to the Borough? No

HOUSING Key Issues

- i) Development of realistic housing targets for both market and affordable housing.
- j) Allocation of new housing sites in the most sustainable locations.
- k) Integrating new housing into the community by getting the right densities and character appropriate to the Borough's diverse neighbourhoods ranging from the Town Centre.
- l) Building housing of different types and sizes to cater for the full range of ages and needs, with particular regard to the needs of specific groups including students, families, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities such as gypsies and travellers, and older residents.
- m) Addressing the issue of supporting people who want to build their own homes.
- n) Achieving high quality sustainable housing design with policies that strike a balance between ensuring quality through standards and supporting innovation through a flexible approach.
- o) Seeking to ensure, in addressing all of the issues above, that the end result is the creation of high quality, sustainable places.

Questions

8. Have the correct issues been identified, are there any missing? **Yes we think so but issue I needs careful thought. This has at its heart the notion that planning for housing tenure type is of vital importance but it is often not what developers are interested in providing. The Planning system has been emasculated in recent years such that any development is seen as being good – this needs challenging and sensible statutory guidance reintroduced at the local level as long as it is evidence-led.**

9. Do you have any thoughts on how the Plan could or should address these issues? **Yes**

I: there needs to be a balance struck between large and small sites. A reliance on larger sites may result in a slower build rate in the early years of the plan if infrastructure is an issue or there are many planning conditions to fulfill

J: transport infrastructure and provision of education is key to enabling new communities to be sustainable. Transport infrastructure must enable journeys to be made into Colchester as well as away from the town via trunk roads and railways. Making railway stations accessible and encouraging walking, cycling and travel by bus in general terms is vital

K: we would suggest the use of design guides (eg village design guides or the Essex residential design guide) and master-planning

L: this needs a mechanism to oblige developers to conform to the needs of the demographic profile anticipated

M: we suggest providing guidance, making a proportion of land available in development areas available and financial incentives to all be ways of encouraging this small but useful contribution to housing provision

N: financial incentives should be used to assist innovative sustainable design. We make the analogy here with the vehicle excise tax where the lower polluting cars pay the least tax. This could be applied to business rates or Council Tax

O: to achieve this there has to be some idea of what these places actually look like in practice and then compare developer proposals with these examples or ideals.

10. Do you have any further comments to make on housing related issues? No