

COLCHESTER LOCAL PLAN

**ADOPTED FOCUSED REVIEW
OF THE CORE STRATEGY (2008)
AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES (2010)**

JULY 2014

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

This non-technical summary provides an explanation of Colchester Borough Council's Focused Review of its Local Plan.

Introduction

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published by the Government on 27 March 2012, replaced a considerable amount of planning policy previously contained within a number of national policy documents. The consolidated guidance is intended to make the planning system less complex and more accessible, and to promote sustainable growth.

The NPPF is a material consideration in the preparation of local plans and also provides guidance in the determination of planning applications. This means that its publication created a need for local authorities to reconsider their intentions for reviewing and developing local planning policies.

What is a Focused Review?

Colchester's strategy for maintaining an up-to-date plan entails a two-stage approach. The Focused Review, the first stage, forms the initial, limited, review of policies which could be readily amended without the need to prepare further extensive evidence in respect of those specific policies. Only those policies that clearly require updating due to non-compliance with the NPPF were included in this stage. The second stage is the Full Review. The Full Review will be a completely new Local Plan and will include amendments to the spatial strategy; housing and employment targets; and site allocations, as these issues require the support of updated evidence base work. The Full Review is programmed for adoption in 2017.

The policies contained within this Focused Review document will replace the previous versions of these policies, contained within the adopted Core Strategy (2008) and the Development Policies DPD (2010). All other policies will remain unchanged, until they are replaced through the Full Review of the Local Plan.

These are the policies that have been amended by the Focused Review:

- **Sustainable development** – the Government's model policy has been added, to reflect the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development (Core Strategy Policy SD1).
- **Changes to the system of planning obligations and introduction of Community Infrastructure Levy** – the text has been modified to reflect latest guidance on planning contributions in relation to both site specific and strategic infrastructure improvements (Core Strategy Policies SD2, SD3 and Development Policy DP3).
- **Affordable housing** – the policy on affordable housing is modified to comply with the NPPF's requirements to pay careful attention to viability and costs in plan-making and decision-taking, including the change in economic circumstances since the original policy was adopted in 2008 (Core Strategy Policy H4).

- **Housing density and mix** - tables on density and housing mix have been deleted because they do not adequately reflect particular site constraints and requirements, and, accordingly, may not have fully accorded with the greater flexibility provided in the NPPF (Core Strategy Policies H2 and H3).
- **Gypsies and travellers** –The changes to the Gypsy and Traveller Policy wording clarify how the Local Plan will treat gypsy and traveller applications prior to the adoption of a new Local Plan policy, which will be based on updated evidence (Core Strategy Policy H5).
- **Neighbourhood Planning** – policies now include references, where appropriate, to the new system of Neighbourhood Plans (Core Strategy Policy ENV2).
- **Rural exception sites** – policies have been modified to allow for a limited degree of market housing on rural exception sites to enable the delivery of affordable housing (Core Strategy Policy H4 and ENV2).
- **Rural workers' housing** – a new Core Strategy Policy on rural workers housing is included, to provide guidance that is no longer provided nationally (Core Strategy Policy H6).
- **Equestrian uses** - Policy DP24 is deleted as the changes to the rural policies, noted above, are considered to address the issues previously covered in this detailed policy on equestrian uses.
- **Minor changes** – Minor changes include updates to ensure consistency with the NPPF; removal of references to superseded Planning Policy Statements and Guidance Notes, and wording clarification (Core Strategy Policy ER1, Development Policies DP1, DP13, and DP15).

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1. INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published by the Government on 27th March 2012, replaced a considerable amount of planning policy previously contained within a number of national policy documents. The consolidated guidance is intended to make the planning system less complex and more accessible, and to promote sustainable growth.
- 1.2 The NPPF is a material consideration in the preparation of local plans (see Section 19(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) and also provides guidance in the determination of planning applications. This means that its publication created a need for local authorities to consider how they would update their plans to reflect the NPPF.
- 1.3 Following the publication of the NPPF, Colchester Borough Council reviewed its adopted policy documents against the requirements of the NPPF in order to identify any areas of inconsistency. Initial assessments found that the NPPF has implications for some of the policies contained within the adopted Core Strategy and the Development Policies DPD. The Council, accordingly, chose to embark on a two-stage process to review its Local Plan.
- 1.4 This document forms **Stage One** of the review process. It involved a focused review of the Core Strategy and Development Policies to revise those policies that could be readily amended to be consistent with the provisions of the NPPF, without the need to prepare further extensive evidence in respect of those specific policies. Revisions do not include any amendments to the spatial strategy, housing and employment targets, or allocations.
- 1.5 The NPPF requires that local authorities should 'identify and update, annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a five year supply of housing against their housing requirements with an additional buffer of 5%' and to 'identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15'. Our housing monitoring figures establish that the Council can demonstrate an adequate supply of housing land availability to meet the requirement to maintain a 5 and 10 year supply. There is also an additional 3 years worth of housing land. This means that a more fundamental review of policies and sites for large-scale development is not immediately required.
- 1.6 **Stage Two** is a full review of the Local Plan which will form a new plan for the Borough, extending to 2032 and beyond. As shown in the Local Development Scheme, work on this stage has commenced, and Issues and Options consultation for the new Local Plan is programmed to begin in January 2015. Initial work includes working with adjacent authorities under the 'duty to co-operate', on issues such as strategic site allocations and infrastructure requirements.
- 1.7 The Focused Review underwent two stages of consultation to allow for widespread involvement in the review process, in compliance with the Council's

Statement of Community Involvement and The Town and County Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012). The initial Issues and Options consultation stage, carried out in March - April 2013, provided an opportunity for the Council to outline the areas which it considered needed to be reviewed. The Council then consulted on revised policies, prior to submission to the Secretary of State for examination.

- 1.9 When adopted, these amended policies will be identified as being adopted in 2014 and will replace the previous versions of these policies in the adopted Core Strategy (2008) and Development Policies (2010) Development Plan Documents. All other policies will remain unchanged until a full review of the Local Development Framework is undertaken. The examination of the Focused Review DPD (November 2013 – April 2014) did not endorse any of the unchanged policies as being in conformity with the NPPF.

Structure of the Document

- 1.10 For each policy to be revised, the reasons for the revision are given, followed by the revised policy. Words to be deleted are shown as struck out text, while additional new text is underlined.

Sustainability Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 1.12 A Sustainability Appraisal was prepared to inform the production of the Focused Review DPD. The Sustainability Appraisal process ensured that sustainability of the Plan policies was properly tested.
- 1.13 The Council also carried out screening for the Habitats Regulations. The screening showed that the Focused Review was not likely to result in significant impacts, meaning an Appropriate Assessment was not required.

2. SUSTAINABILITY POLICIES

Core Strategy Policies

SD1 – Sustainable Development Locations

Reasons for Proposed Changes

- 2.1 Policy SD1 has been revised to meet the NPPF requirement that all plans should be “based upon and reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development, with clear policies that will guide how the presumption should be applied locally” (paragraph 14 & 15). The proposed additional wording is taken directly from the Planning Inspectorate’s model policy, which is promoted as an appropriate way to meet this NPPF expectation.

Colchester Borough Council will promote sustainable development and regeneration to deliver at least 14,200 jobs between 2001 and 2021 and at least 19,000 homes between 2001 and 2023.

Throughout the borough, growth will be located at the most accessible and sustainable locations in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy below and the Key Diagrams. Development proposals will be expected to make efficient use of land and take a sequential approach that gives priority to accessible locations and previously developed land (PDL). Proposals should seek to promote sustainability by minimising and/or mitigating pressure on the natural, built and historic environment, utilities and infrastructure, and areas at risk of flooding.

In support of Colchester’s aim to be a prestigious regional centre, the Borough Council will promote high quality design and will focus on enhancing the character and quality of the Town Centre, the Regeneration Areas and key Gateways to Colchester. Development in Colchester Town will be primarily focused on the following broad locations (see Key Diagrams):

- Town Centre
- North Growth Area
- East Growth Area
- South Growth Area
- Stanway Growth Area

The Council will also seek to sustain the character and vitality of small towns, villages and the countryside, and development will be expected to achieve a high standard of design, sustainability and compatibility with local character.

When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that applications can be approved wherever possible and to secure

development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking account whether:

- Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole: or
- Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

p. 35 in original Core Strategy

Explanation

No changes.

3. PLANNING CONTRIBUTIONS/COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Core Strategy

Reasons for Proposed Changes

- 3.1 The adoption of the Core Strategy in 2008 predated the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations in 2010. Accordingly, the Council's policies SD2, SD3 and DP3 have been updated to reflect these changes, along with the NPPF. If the Council adopts a CIL charging schedule, it will partially replace the system of separately negotiated planning obligations for infrastructure and facilities requirements.
- 3.2 A minor change is made to Policy DP4 (Community Facilities) to clarify the wording and make it more positive, in line with the pro-active approach supported in the NPPF (see inter alia paras 14, 186-187).

SD2 – Delivering Facilities and Infrastructure

The Borough Council will work with partners to ensure that facilities and infrastructure are provided to support sustainable communities in Colchester. New facilities and infrastructure must be located and designed so that they are accessible and compatible with the character and needs of the local community.

New development will be required to provide the necessary community facilities, open space, transport infrastructure and other requirements to meet the community needs arising from the proposal. Development will also be expected to contribute, as appropriate, to strategic projects that support sustainable development and the wider community.

The Council will seek ~~to employ standard charges where appropriate~~ to ensure that new development makes a reasonable contribution to the provision of related facilities and infrastructure. This will either be through a planning obligation (usually contained within a Section 106 agreement) and/or, if applicable, through a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payment, following adoption of a CIL charging schedule.

A CIL charging schedule would set a specified charge for each square metre of gross internal floorspace, related to the use class of the development. CIL payments will contribute to the provision of infrastructure to support development. The tariff approach will be based on a comprehensive review of the need, timing and scale of investment and how this relates to the key growth areas set out in the Core Strategy. Planning obligations and s278 agreements will continue to be used to make individual applications acceptable. The Council will publish a list of infrastructure to be funded through CIL to ensure developers do not pay twice for the same item of infrastructure. The viability of developments will also be considered when determining the extent and priority of development contributions.

p. 36-37 in original Core Strategy

Explanation

Supporting development with the necessary community facilities and transport infrastructure is essential to creating sustainable communities. The Borough Council does not have the resources or the necessary powers itself to provide all the facilities and infrastructure. Therefore, the Council will need to work with partners to collect contributions from development through Section 106 agreements and, potentially, CIL payments, ensuring that the contributions requested are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; directly related to the development; and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. ~~and collect contributions from development, ensuring that the financial contributions requested are fair, proportionate, and tied in to clear priorities for the overall sustainable development of the Borough.~~

SD3 – Community Facilities

The Borough Council will work with partners to deliver key community facilities (see Table SD3) to support the Sustainable Community Strategy and to develop Colchester as a prestigious regional centre.

The Council will also provide facilities for the local communities, based upon an analysis of needs, with particular regard to disadvantaged groups. New development will be required to provide, or contribute towards the provision of community facilities to meet the needs of new communities and mitigate impacts on existing communities. Safe, direct routes for walking and cycling and appropriate bus services will be established to serve existing and new pre-school, primary, and secondary school communities.

Community facilities should be located in centres or other accessible locations to maximise community access and build a sense of local community identity. The Council supports the retention and enhancement of existing community facilities and encourages multi-purpose community facilities that can provide a range of services and facilities to the community at one accessible location. Where existing facilities can be enhanced to serve new development, the Council will work with developers and local partners to audit existing facilities and assess the requirement for additional facilities to deliver comprehensive provision of services to serve these extended communities. The Council will work with local partners, such as Parish Councils or Community Associations, to plan and manage community facilities.

p. 37 in original Core Strategy

Explanation

No changes to Explanation or Table SD3.

Development Policies

Policy DP3: Planning Obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy

~~The Council intends to develop proposals~~ may choose to implement a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), further to the enabling provisions in the 2008 Planning Act. The CIL will be a charge used to help fund necessary local and sub-regional infrastructure which supports the objectives of the Core Strategy and the development of the area. ~~It will involve an agreed charging schedule which will allocate the proposed amount to be raised from CIL to each main class of development. The charge will be related to the scale and type of development proposals. A CIL charging schedule would stipulate a charge, per square metre of gross internal floorspace, for each main use class of development. A proportion of CIL funds would be passed to Parish/Town councils.~~ The Council will work with partners to deliver key infrastructure projects, as identified in the Core Strategy. The Council will continue to seek planning obligations through Section 106 agreements ~~will continue alongside or in place of CIL and standard charges will be implemented~~ with details set out in Supplementary Planning Documents.

p. 14 in original Development Policies

Explanation

~~The Planning Act 2008 contains powers for the introduction of a CIL, but detailed regulations have yet to be completely finalised. In the interim period, the Council will continue to develop its understanding of infrastructure needs and overall funding potential from all sectors. The Council has a successful track record in securing and delivering projects using Section 106 funding, and it would be expected to continue to play an important role in the future. The CIL breaks the direct link between the obligation and the development so that a wider range of infrastructure spending can be provided through the planning system. It is noted, however, that while CIL is expected to provide significant additional monies for infrastructure, it will not replace mainstream funding.~~ Community Infrastructure Levy was introduced by the Planning Act 2008 and came into force on 6 April 2010, through the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended). The Council is not required to introduce a CIL charging schedule, but may choose to do so. If this is the case, a standard charge, per square metre of gross internal floorspace, will be set for each main use class of development. CIL funding would contribute to infrastructure and facilities, which would be identified in a Regulation 123 list.

In addition to a CIL payment, developments will be expected to address infrastructure requirements directly related to the development, including affordable housing through provision on site, or through a Section 106 contribution. In the event that the Council does not adopt a CIL charging schedule, contributions will continue to be sought through Section 106 contributions. The Core Strategy (Table 6d – Key Facilities and Infrastructure) identified the key infrastructure needed to support Core Strategy objectives, and the Council continues to work closely with other public and private

sector providers to refine the list as necessary and deliver projects. ~~The Council has adopted a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) which~~ Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) set out standard charges that will be applied to new development in appropriate circumstances. ~~These are based on robust evidence and will continue to evolve and develop.~~

Policy DP4: Community Facilities

Support will be given to the provision of new community facilities, and to the retention and enhancement of existing community facilities, where these positively contribute to the quality of local community life and the maintenance of sustainable communities in accordance with other policy requirements.

The involvement of the local community will be sought in identifying the importance of local facilities. Any proposal that would result in the loss of a site or building currently or last used for the provision of facilities, services, leisure or cultural activities for the community, or is identified for such uses by the Site Allocations DPD/Proposals Map, will ~~only~~ be supported if in cases where the Council is satisfied that:

- (i) An alternative community facility to meet local needs is, or will be, provided in an equally or more accessible location within walking distance of the locality (800 m); or
- (ii) It has been proven that it would not be economically viable to retain the site/building for a community use; and
- (iii) The community facility could not be provided or operated by either the current occupier or by any alternative occupier, and it has been marketed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority in order to confirm that there is no interest and the site or building is genuinely redundant; and
- (iv) A satisfactory assessment has taken place that proves that there is an excess of such provision and the site or building is not needed for any other community facility or use.

p. 15 in original Development Policies

Explanation

No changes.

4. HOUSING POLICIES

Core Strategy

Policy H2

Reasons for Proposed Changes

- 4.1 Minimum density requirements, previously contained within PPS3, have been removed from the NPPF which only makes limited reference to densities. The NPPF allows local authorities to set their own approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances within the context of the surrounding area and scheme design. The indicative housing densities found within Policy H2 and Table H2a of the Core Strategy were adopted at a time when higher density developments were being brought forward by developers. However, in recent years, housing sites have been brought forward at varying densities, mainly driven by on site constraints and policy considerations such as design and parking standards. In many instances the site constraints and other policy requirements influence the viability of the scheme which then informs the density of the proposed development, thus reducing the need for indicative densities.
- 4.2 It is still considered appropriate to encourage higher densities in more accessible locations and centres, where access to services and public transport opportunities are good. Allowing lower density development in the suburban and rural parts of the Borough balances the spread of densities across the Borough and encourages the effective use of land as promoted by national policy.
- 4.3 As part of this review, the Council has removed Table H2a, as the indicative densities found within this table are no longer considered relevant now that national density targets have ceased. A more flexible approach, where proposed developments take account of the surrounding area and landscape features, is seen as the most appropriate way forward and builds upon the guidance found within the Essex Design Guide and Urban Place Supplement. Development within the villages at a density between 30-40 dwellings per hectare is often seen as over development and out of keeping with the surrounding area. Higher density developments found within the Town Centre tend to be taller, mixed use, flat developments which can be designed in response to the surrounding areas. Policy standards such as parking, amenity space and design principles often dictate the density of a proposed development. This allows for greater flexibility and the development of schemes which respond to their context, which is considered to be in keeping with the NPPF.

Policy H2 – Housing Density

The Borough Council will seek housing densities that make efficient use of land and relate to the context. New developments must enhance local character and optimise the capacity of accessible locations.

Locations with good access to centres, particularly the Town Centre and the Urban Gateways, are more suited to higher density development, although a flexible approach will be important to ensure that densities are compatible with the surrounding townscape. Other locations with lesser access to centres and public transport should involve more moderate densities. The density of developments also needs to be informed by the provision of open space and parking, the character of the area, and the mix of housing.

~~Table H2a provides indicative guidance on appropriate densities that relate to the accessibility of a location. A context appraisal will be required to identify the accessibility and local character of a location and therefore inform an appropriate density.~~

Table H2a – Indicative Housing Densities

Accessibility	Indicative Locations	Indicative Housing Densities
Very High	Town Centre and within 400m of Urban Gateways	Over 75 du/ha*
High	Within 800m of the Town Centre, and Urban Gateways	Over 50 du/ha
Moderate	Colchester Town and District Settlements (Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe)	Over 40 du/ha
Low	The Borough's villages	30 to 40 du/ha

p. 49-50 in original Core Strategy

Explanation

The density of housing development can have significant implications for sustainability, local character, travel behaviour, development land take, and residential amenity.

Housing development will be focused on the most accessible locations to reduce the need to travel, promote regeneration and protect greenfield land. Higher density developments can accommodate more people at locations with good access to employment, shops and education, and allow residents to easily access their needs by walking, cycling and public transport. This in turn supports the provision of local business, services and infrastructure. However, high density development that is poorly located or poorly designed can have adverse impacts on the local community, built character, traffic and sustainability. High density developments need to have regard to biodiversity and open spaces provided within urban areas and on brownfield sites.

Densities therefore need to be moderated at less accessible locations and to reflect local character. The provision of open space, parking and a mix of housing will also have moderating affect on densities. Areas with lesser access to centres and public transport, such as villages and outer-suburbs are suited to lower densities. ~~Lower density developments can provide more open space and large family housing, but developments below 30du/ha are considered to be too inefficient and inconsistent with national planning policy as set forth in PPS3.~~

Policy H3

Reasons for Proposed Changes

- 4.6 Core Strategy Table H3a encouraged developers and landowners to make effective and efficient use of land by providing a greater number of units in the most accessible areas through the delivery of flat and maisonette type developments, predominately within these locations. In areas which were deemed to have a lower accessibility, houses of various sizes were encouraged to provide a more suburban and rural character type developments. The NPPF outlines that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development by delivering a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable inclusive and mixed communities across the Borough.
- 4.7 The Core Strategy, adopted in 2008, provided information relating to indicative densities which were considered appropriate across the Borough. To better inform these density requirements, Table H3a provided a guide for the types of dwellings that the Council would expect within various locations and informed developers with regards to the layout of schemes and the type of units expected across the Borough. The guidance in the table is now largely redundant due to the removal of national density requirements and the flexibility provided by the NPPF. In most instances schemes are generally developed to take into account onsite characteristics and constraints, and are brought forward to be in keeping with the existing context of an area. Table H3a is, therefore, deleted.

Colchester Borough Council intends to secure a range of housing types and tenures on developments across the Borough in order to create inclusive and sustainable communities. Housing developments should provide a mix of housing types to suit a range of different households, whilst also realising the opportunities presented by accessible locations. The mix of housing types should therefore be ~~guided by Table H3a and~~ informed by an appraisal of community context and housing need.

Housing developments will also need to contribute to the provision of affordable housing and homes that are suitable to the needs of older persons, persons with disabilities and those with special needs.

p. 50 in original Core Strategy

Table H3a – Indicative Mix of Housing Types

Accessibility	Houses			Flats and Maisonettes		
	1-2 Bed	3 Bed	4+ Bed	1 Bed	2 Bed	3+ Bed
Very High	-	-	-	++	++	+
High	+	+	+	+	++	+
Moderate	++	++	+	+	+	+
Low	++	++	+	-	-	-

++ Important + Appropriate - Unnecessary, but may be suitable

Explanation

All housing developments in Colchester should be inclusive and accommodate a diverse range of households and housing need to create mixed communities. Housing developments must provide a range of housing types that can accommodate a range of different households, including families, single persons, older persons and low income households.

Table H3a illustrates the There is an important relationship between housing diversity, density and the accessibility of the location. Town Centre locations, for example, are highly accessible and can support high density flats, but they also need to accommodate a range of household sizes. Suburban locations have moderate access and should accommodate a range of housing types and household sizes. Rural locations have low accessibility and will suit low density development, but should also still provide for small and low income households.

In 2011¹⁰¹, the average household size was 2.33⁷ persons. Approximately 29% were single person households, roughly 36% were 2 person households, and another 29% of households had dependent children. In 2021, the average household size is projected to shrink to around 2.31 persons, and single person households are likely to grow to about 35% of the total.

In 2001, flats and maisonettes represented about 15% of total housing stock and probably occupied less than 5% of housing land. Between 2000 and 2006, about 31% of new dwellings constructed were flats and maisonettes, whilst 69% were houses or bungalows. In 2006, flats and maisonettes represented about 17% of total housing stock. Although more flats and maisonettes have been constructed in recent years the overall proportion is still relatively low.

Housing Delivery

	Houses			Flats		
	1-2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed +	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed +
2000-2006	12%	30%	27%	7%	22%	2%

During the same period, houses with 3 or more bedrooms represented 57% of total completions, whilst 2 bedroom houses represented only 12%. Given that the average price for a 4 bed house was over £300,000 in 2006, there is concern that the mix of housing is not reflecting community need.

All housing developments therefore need to provide a more balanced range of housing types to reflect identified community need. The mix of housing should reflect the housing needs of the community, and therefore higher density developments in the urbanised areas still need to provide accommodation suitable to families and larger households, and low density developments in villages still need to provide housing for small and low income households.

Policy H4 – Affordable Housing

Reasons for Proposed Changes

- 4.9 The NPPF seeks to maintain a balance between the delivery of affordable housing and ensuring that overall levels of housing viability and delivery are not compromised by overly onerous requirements for affordable housing. The NPPF replaces nationally set targets for housing delivery with a requirement for all local authorities to develop a local evidence base for the amount of housing required, supported by appropriate allocations. The revised policy wording removes the requirement for 35% affordable housing set by the East of England Plan and replaces it with a target which reflects viability in Colchester. The lower target of 20% arises from research which investigated the impact of providing affordable housing on overall development viability.
- 4.10 National policy has expanded the definition of acceptable schemes for rural exception sites to include an element of market housing to cross subsidise the delivery of affordable housing. The revised wording reflects this, while continuing to ensure that the main function of rural exception sites is the provision of affordable housing units.

The Borough Council is committed to improving housing affordability in Colchester. The Council will be seeking to secure ~~20%~~^{35%} of new dwellings (including conversions) to be provided as affordable housing (normally on site), as follows:

- In Colchester Town and Stanway, Tiptree, Wivenhoe and West Mersea, affordable housing will be required on housing developments for 10 or more dwellings.
- In the other villages, affordable housing will be required on housing developments for ~~3~~⁵ or more dwellings.
- An equivalent financial contribution will also be sought for developments below these thresholds.

Where it is considered that a site forms part of a larger development area, affordable housing will be apportioned with reference to the site area as a whole.

This level balances the objectively assessed need for affordable housing in the Borough established by the Council's evidence base against the requirement for flexibility to take account of changing market conditions. For sites where an alternative level of affordable housing is proposed below the target, it will need to be supported by evidence in the form of a viability appraisal.

In exceptional circumstances, where high development costs undermine the viability of housing delivery ~~on brownfield sites~~, developers will be expected to demonstrate an alternative affordable housing provision.

Affordable housing development in the villages of rural Colchester Borough will be supported on rural exception sites contiguous with village settlement boundaries, provided a local need is demonstrated by the Town/Parish Council on behalf of their residents based on the evidence gained from an approved local housing needs survey. A proportion of market housing which facilitates the provision of significant additional affordable housing may be appropriate on rural exception sites. Information to demonstrate that the market housing is essential to cross-subsidise the delivery of the affordable housing and that the development would not be viable without this cross-subsidy will be required. At the scheme level, the number of open market units on the rural exception site will be strictly limited to only the number of units required to facilitate the provision of significant affordable housing units on a rural exception site. The number of affordable units on a site should always be greater than the number of open market units delivered in this way. The actual number will be determined on local circumstances, evidence of local need and the overall viability of the scheme. General design of the homes should be comparable regardless of tenure within a single integrated development layout.

The Council will require developments to integrate affordable housing and market housing, with a consistent standard of quality design and public spaces, to create mixed and sustainable communities.

p. 51-52 in original Core Strategy

Explanation

The need for affordable housing is high in Colchester, as it is elsewhere in the Eastern region. ~~The East of England Plan has set a policy target of 35% affordable housing for planning permissions in the region.~~

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2007 (SHMA) identified that the average house price in Colchester was approximately £200,000 in 2006, whilst the gross (median) household income was only £23,874. The SHMA observes that few households aspiring to home ownership have access to enough money to purchase a home in Colchester. The SHMA identified a need for 1,104 affordable homes per year. ~~which is very high given the total housing provision in the EEP is only 830 per year. The SHMA suggests this high need would justify an Affordable Housing target over 35% if the developments were viable.~~

Affordable housing requirements must be balanced with other requirements for transport infrastructure, community facilities, open space and sustainable construction. The viability of housing delivery also needs to be maintained, particularly in regeneration areas. ~~The Housing Viability Report identified that a significant portion of developments would not be viable with an affordable housing requirements of 40%.~~

~~Even at lower levels of affordable housing, viability was a problem, particularly on previously developed land.~~

As identified in the Affordable Housing Viability Report it is considered that a 35% 20% target maintains a balance between essential housing need and viability, whilst maintaining consistency with the regional target. Where 20% is not considered to be viable, applicants will need to submit information on viability as set forth in the Affordable Housing SPD. The Council will expect developers to meet the Council's reasonable costs associated with viability appraisals in instances where the level of affordable housing is disputed. A target of 35% 20% will optimise affordable housing delivery on greenfield land whilst facilitating the regeneration of rundown areas.

In instances where the provision of affordable housing is supported by the delivery of some open market units on a rural exception site, it will be essential to ensure that the number of open market units never dominates a particular scheme. In determining the number of open market units required to facilitate the delivery of affordable units, the Council will expect applicants to demonstrate viability calculations starting with 100% affordable housing. The same calculations should then be applied with the introduction of one open market unit at a time until a point is reached where the delivery of the rural exception site becomes viable. The number of open market units on a rural exception site should be less than the number of affordable units delivered.

H5 – Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople

Reasons for Proposed Change

- 4.14 Since adoption of the Core Strategy in 2008, guidance on Gypsies and Travellers has been affected by the revocation of the East of England Plan and its single issue review on Gypsies and Travellers which set pitch allocations. In addition, the Government published Planning Policy for Travellers Sites in March 2012. In the absence of regional guidance, the Essex Planning Officers Association (EPOA) commissioned a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment for the period to 2033 which was completed in summer 2014. This study will form part of the Council's evidence base to inform the Full Review of its policies. In the interim period, the wording of the original adopted policy has been amended to reflect the changed context for assessing and delivering gypsy and traveller accommodation.

The Council will identify sites to meet the established needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople in the Borough. ~~A suitable site for gypsies and travellers is being provided in Severalls Lane, Colchester; and additional sites will be identified (in the Site Allocations DPD) as required to meet future need. Although no need for sites for travelling showpeople has been identified, the matter will be kept under review.~~

The Council will seek to locate sites within reasonable proximity to existing settlements, and with access to shops, schools and other community facilities. Sites should also provide adequate space for vehicles and appropriate highway access. Any identified need for 'transit' (temporary) sites for gypsies and travellers will be met in appropriate locations related to the current working patterns of the travelling community.

In the intervening period up to the adoption of a new Local Plan, the Borough Council will use the national Planning Policy for Traveller Sites and the National Planning Policy Framework as material considerations in the determination of planning applications for gypsy, traveller and travelling show people accommodation.

p. 52 in original Core Strategy

Explanation

~~At present there is a shortage of sites to accommodate the established needs of gypsies and travellers in the Borough and the wider region. To date, however, there is no identified demand for sites for travelling showpeople in the Borough. A single issue review of the East of England Plan is being undertaken to address these issues and its proposals for pitch provision in the Borough will be used to inform the Site Allocations DPD. The Borough Council will seek to provide appropriate sites to meet the needs of the gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople in the Borough. These sites need to provide gypsy and traveller communities with good access to community facilities,~~

employment and shopping. Additional sites will be identified as necessary through ~~in~~ the Site Allocations ~~DPD~~ process.

Following the Government's publication of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites in March 2012, the Essex Planning Officers' Association (EPOA) has commissioned, on behalf of all Essex local planning authorities, a new Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) for the period 2013-2033. This new assessment is anticipated to be completed in the Autumn of 2013 and will provide an up-to-date evidence base to inform a Full Review of Colchester Borough Council's adopted development plans.

In advance of the adoption of a new Local Plan, the Council will be able to use national guidance to guide the determination of planning applications for gypsy and traveller accommodation.

H6- Rural Workers Dwellings (New Policy)

Reason for Proposed Changes

- 4.16 The introduction of the NPPF resulted in the cancellation of much of the previous national policy guidance. PPS7, which set out criteria for rural workers dwellings in Annex A was deleted as part of this process. Colchester's adopted Local Development Framework, did not include a policy on Rural Workers Dwellings because the subject was adequately covered by national policy. The introduction of the NPPF created a policy gap in this area. The lack of policy and criteria to guide the provision of Rural Workers Dwellings was further highlighted following an appeal (ref. APP/A1530/A/12/ 2181879.) In response, in April 2012, the Council produced a Rural Workers Guidance Note. This Guidance Note is superseded, with its guidance now incorporated within this new *Permanent Rural Workers Dwellings* policy, to provide a clear direction for applications for rural workers dwellings and to ensure conformity with national guidance.

Permanent Rural Workers Dwellings

Planning permission will be granted for new agricultural/rural workers dwellings as part of existing businesses where all of the following criteria are met :

- (i) evidence is provided to show that there is an essential functional need for a permanent dwelling
- (ii) the need is related to a full time worker who is primarily employed in agriculture, forestry or some other rural based business
- (iii) the size and design of dwelling is commensurate with the needs of the rural business
- (iv) the business has been established for at least 3 years, has been profitable for at least one of them, is financially viable and is likely to remain so in the future
- (v) the functional need cannot be met by another suitable and available dwelling. Conversion of an existing building should be considered in preference to new build

- (vi) the proposed development satisfies all other Local Plan policy requirements

Temporary Rural Workers Dwellings

Where a new dwelling is essential to support a new activity, whether a newly-created unit or an established one, it will normally, for the first three years, be provided by a caravan or other temporary accommodation.

Applications will need to be supported with the following information:

- (i) clear evidence of a firm intention and ability to develop the enterprise concerned (significant investment in new buildings is often a good indication of intentions);
- (ii) essential functional need
- (iii) clear evidence that the proposed enterprise has been planned on a sound financial basis. The evidence should include a business plan of at least 3 years duration;
- (iv) the functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit, or any other existing accommodation in the area
- (v) If permission for temporary accommodation is granted, permission for a permanent dwelling is unlikely to be granted within 3 years. If, after 3 years, a permanent dwelling is approved, the temporary dwelling must be removed from the site.

Conditions will be attached to any permissions granted for new rural workers dwellings to remove permitted development rights and restrict the occupancy to that required for the rural business concerned or other agricultural/rural use nearby.

Where a rural dwelling is no longer needed to support a rural business, applications to remove the occupancy restrictions will have to meet the following criteria. Evidence should be submitted that an essential functional need no longer exists at the property and is unlikely to in the foreseeable future. The applicant will be expected to provide details of instructions to estate agents, and the response to that advertising, demonstrating that:-

- (i) the property has been marketed for rent or sale for at least 18 months and advertised continuously in that period at a price reflecting the occupancy condition; and
- (ii) the advertising should be within both local newspapers and relevant national agricultural magazines; and
- (iii) the property has been offered both for sale and to rent on the same basis as above to all farmers, horticulturalists and other rural businesses where a dwelling may be justified in the locality (i.e. having holdings within a two mile radius of the dwelling)

Explanation

The NPPF states that one of the few circumstances where a new dwelling within the countryside may be justified is when accommodation is required to enable agricultural or rural workers to live at or in the immediate vicinity of their place of work. While Colchester Council's preference is for such workers to live in nearby towns or villages, or suitable existing dwellings to avoid new and potentially intrusive development in the countryside, it acknowledges that there will be some instances where the nature and demands of certain rural businesses will make it essential for one or more people engaged in the enterprise to live at, or very close to, their place of work.

Such a need however must be essential to the successful operation of the rural business. Any proposal for a new agricultural/rural workers dwelling will be expected to satisfy all the criteria set out in Policy H6.

The need for a rural workers dwelling could be generated by a range of traditional rural land activities such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, rural estate management, certain equestrian businesses and horticulture.

Applications will be subject to a functions test to establish whether it is essential for the proper functioning of the business enterprise for one or more workers to be readily available. Such a requirement might arise where a worker or workers need to be available round the clock to respond to situations where livestock/animals or agricultural processes require essential care at short notice or emergencies that could otherwise cause a serious loss of crops or products e.g. by frost or failure of automatic systems.

Given the restrictions on the delivery of new dwellings in the countryside, the scale and design of any proposals for rural workers' dwellings should reflect their countryside location and their function as housing for a rural worker.

While many people work in rural areas e.g. in offices, schools, workshops, garages and garden centres, it is unlikely that they will have an essential need to live permanently at or near their place of work. Being employed in a rural location is not considered sufficient justification to qualify as a rural worker with an essential housing need.

Changes in the scale and character of agricultural and forestry businesses have the potential to affect the longer-term requirement for dwellings in the countryside particularly where these had an "agricultural worker occupancy" condition attached when planning permission was granted. In such cases, the Borough-Council recognises that it would fulfil no purpose to keep such dwellings vacant, or that existing occupiers should be obliged to remain in occupation simply by virtue of a planning condition that has outlived its usefulness. Nevertheless, the Borough Council will expect applications for the removal of an occupancy condition to demonstrate convincingly that there is no long-term need for an agricultural dwelling in the locality. Such dwellings could be used by other agricultural and rural workers seeking accommodation within the wider surrounding area, therefore it will need to be demonstrated to the Borough Council that the dwelling tied to an occupancy condition has been effectively marketed to likely interested parties in the area concerned, and that no genuine interest has been shown regarding the purchase or rental of the dwelling for a rural worker with an essential need to live in the local community.

Development Policies

5. ENVIRONMENT POLICIES

Core Strategy

ENV2 – Rural Communities

Reasons for Proposed Changes

- 5.1 The NPPF widens the scope of acceptable schemes for rural exception sites and provides that local authorities should consider whether allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs (Para 54). The addition of the word 'primarily' is considered to provide for a level of market housing in order to improve viability and deliverability whilst retaining the focus on meeting local needs for affordable housing.
- 5.2 Amendments have also been made to the policy to reflect the greater emphasis in the NPPF on rural economic development.
- 5.3 The final sentence of ENV2 has been modified to include Neighbourhood Plans which were introduced by the 2011 Localism Act, and subsequent regulations, to provide a mechanism for local communities to programme and guide further growth in their area, providing they meet the basic conditions contained in the Localism Act.

The Borough Council will enhance the vitality of rural communities by supporting appropriate development of infill sites and previously developed land (PDL) within the settlement development boundaries of villages. The design and construction of new village development must be high quality in all respects, including design, sustainability and compatibility with the distinctive character of the locality. Development should also contribute to the local community through the provision of relevant community needs such as affordable housing, open space, local employment, and community facilities.

Outside village boundaries, the Council will favourably consider sustainable small-scale rural business, leisure and tourism schemes that are of an appropriate scale and which help meet appropriate to local employment needs, minimise negative environmental impacts, and harmonise with the local character and surrounding natural environment. Development outside but contiguous to village settlement boundaries may be supported, primarily where it constitutes an exception to meet identified local affordable housing needs.

Towns and villages are encouraged to plan for the specific needs of their communities by developing Neighbourhood Plans which provide locally-determined policies on future development needs. Communities are also

encouraged to continue to develop other plans, where appropriate, such as Community Led Plans Parish Plans and Village Design Statements, for adoption as guidance.

p. 67 in original Core Strategy

Explanation

Rural communities in Colchester comprise the villages identified in the Settlement Hierarchy (SD1 Appendix B).

National evidence indicates that villages in the catchment area of larger towns struggle to retain facilities, even when more housing is built. ~~The East of England Plan noted that “the growth of villages has been unable to halt the closure of village services and commuting has increased dramatically”.~~ Colchester Town is the main provider of shopping, services, employment, and community facilities for the Borough as a whole. Elsewhere in the Borough, only Wivenhoe, Tiptree and West Mersea provide a sufficient level of shops, services and employment to maintain a reasonable level of self containment. In general, rural communities do not provide sufficient shops, services and facilities to support significant growth.

Within rural communities, ~~small scale appropriate development will be supported on PDL and infill sites within the village boundaries. The Site Allocations DPD will provide an opportunity to review the extent of village envelopes previously set through the Local Plan process. This development will need that to optimises the sustainability of villages by increasing rural employment opportunities, and by contributing towards community facilities and open space, will be supported.~~ and, local employment. a community need assessment. Affordable housing will also be supported on rural exception sites where supported by a Local Housing Needs Assessment. The Council is also seeking to sustain and enhance local employment and rural enterprises.

Neighbourhood Plans which were introduced through the Localism Act in 2011, will be adopted as part of the Development Plan for Colchester, if they pass a referendum, while Village Design Statements and Parish Plans will continue to be adopted as planning guidance.

Development Policies

Policy DP24 – Equestrian Activities

Reasons for Proposed Changes

- 5.6 The NPPF (paragraph 55), while generally restricting the construction of isolated new dwellings in the countryside, permits exceptions. One of the exceptions is where a dwelling is required for rural workers who need to live permanently at or near where they work. The original Development Policy DP24 did not allow for the construction of rural workers housing as part of equestrian related developments in the countryside or urban fringe in Colchester. As a result, the policy was out of date in terms of the policy exceptions set out in paragraph 55 of

the NPPF relating to the development of isolated rural housing in the countryside. This was also confirmed at an appeal (APP/A1530/A/12/2181879). As a result of this appeal decision, the need for a rural workers' dwellings policy was identified and a new Policy, H6, has been added to Colchester's Development Plan through this Focused Review.

- 5.7 Proposals for equestrian related developments will be adequately considered through policies ENV1 and ENV2. Where a need arises for a rural workers dwelling associated with an equestrian business, such applications will also be assessed against the new Policy H6. For this reason, Policy DP24 is deleted.

~~Planning permission will be supported for equestrian related development if it can be demonstrated that the proposal:~~

- ~~(i) Cannot be located within existing buildings on the site through the re-use or conversion of buildings for any related equestrian use before new or replacement buildings are considered;~~
- ~~(ii) Is satisfactory in scale and level of activity, and in keeping with its location and surroundings;~~
- ~~(iii) Will not result in development leading to an unacceptable intensification of buildings in the countryside and urban fringe or have a detrimental impact on the townscape setting or local landscape character.~~
- ~~(iv) is related to an existing dwelling within the countryside or will not lead to pressure for the development of a new dwelling~~

Explanation

~~Equestrian development includes all forms of horse related activities including the erection of stables through to racing stables, sand schools and all-weather gallops. Where a new dwelling is proposed as part of an equestrian development it will be necessary to demonstrate that it is needed for a rural worker and essential to the equestrian business. Proposals for equestrian developments need to be assessed monitored carefully to ensure the cumulative effect of the fencing, stabling, ménage, and ancillary buildings and housing where proposed, does not lead to overdevelopment in countryside areas or create conflicts with other rural uses. An equestrian use will not be considered to justify the erection of a dwelling in a location where permission would normally be refused.~~

Core Strategy

6. DESIGN AND AMENITY

Policy DP1: Design and Amenity

Reason for Proposed Changes

- 6.1 Paragraph 96 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should expect new development to take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption. Policy DP1 has been amended to reflect this.

All development must be designed to a high standard, avoid unacceptable impacts on amenity, and demonstrate social, economic and environmental sustainability. Development proposals must demonstrate that they, and any ancillary activities associated with them, will:

- (i) Respect and enhance the character of the site, its context and surroundings in terms of its architectural approach, height, size, scale, form, massing, density, proportions, materials, townscape and/or landscape setting, and detailed design features. Wherever possible development should remove existing unsightly features as part of the overall development proposal;
- (ii) Provide a design and layout that takes into account the potential users of the site including giving priority to pedestrian, cycling and public transport access, and the provision of satisfactory access provision for disabled people and those with restricted mobility;
- (iii) Protect existing public and residential amenity, particularly with regard to privacy, overlooking, security, noise and disturbance, pollution (including light and odour pollution), daylight and sunlight;
- (iv) Create a safe and secure environment;
- (v) Respect or enhance the landscape and other assets that contribute positively to the site and the surrounding area; and
- (vi) Incorporate any necessary infrastructure and services including recycling and waste facilities and, where appropriate, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), and undertake appropriate remediation of contaminated land; and
- (vii) Take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption.

For the purpose of this policy ancillary activities associated with development will be considered to include vehicle movement.

p. 12 in original Development Policies

Explanation

No changes.

7. OPEN SPACE POLICIES

DP15 – Retention of Open Space and Indoor Sports Facilities

DP16 - Private Amenity Space and Open Space Provision for New Residential Development

Reasons for change

- 7.1 Minor changes are made to two paragraphs in the explanatory text for Policies DP15 (Retention of Open Space and Indoor Sports Facilities) and DP16 (Private Amenity Space and Open Space Provision for New Residential Development). These reflect the fact that Government guidance in PPG17 has been superseded by the NPPF, and that the Council is updating its evidence base on sports and recreation facilities.

Explanation

DP15, former paragraph 7.2, p. 39 in original Development Policies:

Against this background, it is intended to secure the retention of existing facilities unless a case can be made that alternative provision will be provided in a wholly acceptable manner. Alternative provision could comprise existing provision in the locality of the type of open space as defined by the NPPF PPG17 (Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation), providing there is not a deficiency in that type of open space in the locality. ~~A full~~ A number of documents including the PPG17 Audit and Assessment of the Borough's public open space and sports and recreational facilities ~~was undertaken by consultants PMP and published in (2007); which along with the Colchester Parks and Green Spaces Strategy (2008); Colchester Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011); and Playing Pitch Strategy (2008)~~ will be used by the Council when assessing planning applications relating to proposed development of open space and sports facilities. Sport England should be consulted on any application that is likely to prejudice the use of or lead to the loss of use of land used as a playing field (whether presently used, or used within the last 5 years, or allocated for such use).

DP16, former paragraph 7.6, p. 41 in original Development Policies:

Developments should help contribute to the accessibility, quantity and quality standards ~~set for the different open space typologies defined in PPG17. These standards are set out in Appendices N, P and Q in the Borough Council's PPG17 Open Space, Sport and Recreation study.~~ All open space shall be provided in a timely manner (so as to enable reasonable and appropriate access by new residents to this facility); should be fully equipped in a satisfactory manner as agreed by the Local Planning Authority; and, laid out at the expense of the developer and where appropriate, dedicated to the Council with suitable provision for ongoing maintenance.

GLOSSARY

This glossary is neither a statement of law nor an interpretation of the law and its status; it is only an introductory guide to planning policy terminology and should not be used as a source for statutory definitions. Reference should also be made to the Glossary within the NPPF.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Subsidised housing provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. The extent of the subsidisation is determined by local incomes and local house prices to ensure housing is set at a cost which is affordable to households who cannot afford market housing.

ALLOCATION

The designation of land in the Plan for a particular use such as housing.

ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

A report submitted to the Government by the Local Planning Authority assessing progress with and the effectiveness of the Local Plan. The recent planning reforms have changed the requirement of an Annual Monitoring Report to be submitted to Government, instead replacing it with an Authority's Monitoring Report (the Council has however retained the original name for clarity).

BACKLAND DEVELOPMENT

Land located behind a street frontage which is not directly visible from the street and is surrounded by other development, including rear gardens and private yards, as well as larger undeveloped sites.

BROWNFIELD SITES/ PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED LAND

Sites that have been, or currently are, subject to some form of built development. There are exclusions such as land that has been occupied by agricultural buildings and private gardens.

CENTRES – TOWN CENTRE, URBAN DISTRICT CENTRE, RURAL DISTRICT CENTRE

National policy provides that local authorities should define a network and hierarchy of centres that is resilient to anticipated future economic changes. Centres can be defined on a local authority's proposal map in order to establish a hierarchy of sequentially appropriate locations for town centre uses. In Colchester, centres include the Town Centre along with District Centres, which include five Urban District Centres in the urban area of Colchester, along with Rural District Centres in Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe.

CHANGE OF USE

The change in use of a building or other land for a different purpose. In considering a change of use it is normally necessary to establish whether the change is "material" and whether by virtue of the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended), development requiring planning permission is involved. Additional changes of use which do not require planning permission were brought about by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England) Order 2013.

CODE FOR SUSTAINABLE HOMES

A single national standard developed by the Government to guide industry in the design and construction of sustainable homes. The Code uses a sustainability rating system indicated by 'stars' ranging from one to six.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community facilities are buildings which enable a variety of local activity to take place including, but not limited to, the following:

- Schools, Universities and other educational facilities
- Libraries and community centres
- Doctors surgeries, medical centres and hospitals
- Museums and art galleries
- Child care centres
- Sport and recreational facilities
- Youth clubs
- Playgrounds
- Places of worship
- Emergency services

Privately owned buildings such as pubs and shops can also provide community services and activities.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)

A levy allowing local authorities to raise funds from owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in the area.

CONSERVATION AREA

An area designated under Section 69 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as an area where it is desirable to preserve or enhance the character of its special architectural or historic interest.

CORE STRATEGY

The Core Strategy is one of the development plan documents forming part of a local authority's Local Plan. It sets out the long term vision (over ten years) for the area, the strategic objectives, and the strategic planning policies needed to deliver that vision.

DEDHAM VALE AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

Environmentally sensitive land designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 for its special landscape value.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT (DPD)

Spatial planning documents that form the development plan for Colchester Borough. They are subject to independent examination and are geographically presented on the Proposals Map.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

A written evaluation of the effect on the environment of a proposed development (also known as an Environmental Impact Statement).

EVIDENCE BASE

A collective term for technical studies and background research that provides information on key aspects of social, economic and environmental characteristics of the Borough. This enables the preparation of a sound Local Plan meeting the objectives of sustainable development.

GREENFIELD SITES

Land that has not been developed and/or subject to any kind of built development (e.g. currently in agricultural use).

HOUSING DENSITY

Number of houses per acre/hectare.

HOUSING STOCK

Total residential accommodation in the Borough comprising all housing types and tenure.

HOUSING TENURE

The condition that land or buildings are held or occupied under; predominate tenures include owner-occupied (i.e. freehold, leasehold), privately-rented, socially-rented and shared ownership (part-owned and part-rented).

INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION

The process by which a planning inspector may publicly examine a planning document before issuing report of findings. Inspectors will report to the local authority and identify conflicts between the plan and national policy and regulatory process. However, they will only be able to recommend modifications to overcome these issues if the council ask them to. In addition, councils can suggest their own modifications for assessment by the Inspector during the examination, as well as making minor non-material changes themselves. The council is then free to choose to accept the inspector's modifications and adopt the plan, or resubmit a new plan.

INFILL DEVELOPMENT

The development of a small gap in an otherwise continuous frontage of built development.

LISTED BUILDINGS

Buildings included and described in the statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural and Historic Interest published by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. Listed Buildings are considered worthy of special protection because of their architecture, history or other notable features. Listed Building Consent must be obtained from the Council before they can be altered, demolished or extended.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (LDS)

The Local Development Scheme sets out the Council's project plan for the preparation of planning documents. It lists the local development documents to be prepared and provides a timetable for producing them.

LOCAL PLAN

A Local Plan (formerly Local Development Framework) is a portfolio of documents which plans for the future development of an area. The main purposes are:

- To develop policies and general proposals and relate them to precise areas of land;
- To provide a detailed basis for development control;
- To provide a detailed basis for co-ordinating the development and other use of land;
- To bring local and detailed planning issues before the public.

LOCALISM ACT 2011

The Localism Act has devolved greater powers to councils and neighbourhoods and given local communities more control over housing and planning decisions.

MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATION

A factor to be taken into account when deciding the outcome of a planning application.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)

Government planning policy which replaces a large number of Planning Policy Guidance notes and Planning Policy Statements with one single document. It sets out new planning requirements and objectives in relation to issues such as housing, employment, transport and the historic and natural environment amongst others.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

A plan prepared by a Parish Council, Neighbourhood Forum, or other locally constituted community group, for a particular neighbourhood.

PLANNING OBLIGATION

Legal agreement made between a developer and the local authority under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 or a unilateral undertaking by the developer alone, by which the developer undertakes to carry out works, make payments, or agree to certain conditions covering matters which are outside the scope of a planning permission and which may include off-site works.

PROPOSALS/POLICY MAP

Statutory part of the Local Plan showing, in map form, where the policies of the Plan apply.

PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

Outdoor area used for recreation, which is open freely to the public and is owned by a local authority.

RURAL EXCEPTION SITES

Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. Small numbers of market homes may be allowed at the local authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.

SEQUENTIAL TEST

A planning principle that seeks to identify, allocate or develop certain types or locations of land before others. For example, brownfield sites before greenfield sites, or town centre retail sites before out-of-centre sites.

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI)

The Statement of Community Involvement sets out how the Council intends to involve the community in the planning system. This includes involvement in the preparation of plans and the determination of planning applications.

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA)

A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

STRATEGIC HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT (SHLAA)

The purpose of a SHLAA is to identify new housing sites that have a good chance of development. It will include those sites that already have planning permission or are allocated for housing in the Local Plan. In addition, landowners, agents and house-builders, public and private bodies and members of the public may suggest other sites. Only land in the more sustainable locations will be included in the plan.

STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT (SHMA)

A study of the way the housing market works in any particular area. It looks into the type of households living in the area, where they work and what sort of housing they live in. It attempts to estimate future housing needs across the area, broken down by tenure and size of housing.

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)

Supplementary material which sets out planning requirements or advice at a greater level of detail than the Local Plan, but which does not set out new policy. Examples adopted by the Council include the Affordable Housing and Better Town Centre Supplementary Planning Documents.

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL (SA)

The consideration of policies and proposals to assess their impact on economic, social and environmental sustainable development objectives.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.