

## **Colchester Borough Council**

### **Colchester Borough Local Plan 2017 – 2033 Section 2 – Sustainability Statement Statement under Regulation 16 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004**

#### **Background**

Colchester Borough Council formally adopted the Section 2 Colchester Borough Local Plan 2017 – 2033 on 4 July 2022 at Full Council.

The Section 2 Local Plan and the Strategic Environmental Assessment report, and accompanying documents are available on Colchester Borough Council's website: <https://www.colchester.gov.uk/local-plan/>

In accordance with Regulation 16 (3) and (4) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, the Council has produced this statement which sets out the following:

1. How the environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme;
2. How the environmental report has been taken into account;
3. How opinions expressed and results of public consultation have been taken into account;
4. The reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and
5. The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.

#### **How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Colchester Local Plan Section 2.**

Environmental considerations have been integrated into the Local Plan. The Local Plan protects open spaces and designates local green spaces, which will result in positive effects on the setting, identity and distinctiveness of the Borough. The heritage assets will be protected through the policies in the Plan including Policy DM16. In addition the Place Policies identify the heritage assets which require specific consideration in respect of proposals for development on allocated sites. Biodiversity, including hedgerows, trees and woods, will be protected and it is also likely that biodiversity will be enhanced through a number of policies including Policy CC1 on Climate Change and Sustainability including a provision for tree canopy cover and ENV1 specifying Biodiversity Net Gain as well as consideration for a range of other environmental qualities. The Local Plan will avoid and mitigate likely significant effects in terms of recreational disturbance on Habitats sites in combination by requiring contributions towards the Essex Coast Recreational disturbance

Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy. The Local Plan also includes policies which will seek to promote good design and sustainable transport.

### **How the environmental report has been taken into account**

The preparation of the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment has been an iterative process parallel to the various stages of the Colchester Local Plan preparation and document process. At each stage the emerging Colchester Local Plan was subject to a thorough assessment against the Sustainability Objectives, which were identified through the Sustainability Environmental Assessment framework. Colchester Borough Council together with Place Services (Essex County Council) undertook the SA, incorporating SEA, of the Publication Draft Section 2 Local Plan. The Publication Draft Local Plan and supporting evidence base, including two accompanying Section 1 and Section 2 SA Reports, were submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination in October 2017. The final SA report and the Sustainability Report of the Main Modifications to the Colchester Local Plan Section 2 demonstrate how sustainability objectives have been taken into account and integrated into the final Colchester Local Plan.

### **How opinions expressed in relation to the environmental report have been taken into account**

The SA has influenced the plan during its preparation. Recommendations have been taken into account and the SA has helped to select the preferred options. The opinions of those consulted have also been taken into account. A summary of the consultation comments and responses to the Scoping report consultation is included in section 2.5 and a summary of the consultation comments and responses to the Preferred Options consultation is included in section 17 Appendix 2 of the Sustainability Report.

The details about how the SA process has informed the preparation of the Section 2 Local Plan can be found in Section 13.4 of the 2017 SA Report which accompanied the examined Local Plan.

### **The reasons for choosing the Colchester Local Plan Section 2 Policies as adopted, in light of other reasonable alternatives considered.**

At each stage the SA involved testing the options presented in the Colchester Local Plan Section 2 against the sustainability objectives. The results of the SA help to inform how the policies should be taken forward to the next stages of the document. An outline of

how the assessment was undertaken at each stage of the development of the Colchester Local Plan Section 2 is set out in sections 5-10 the Sustainability Appraisal report. Each policy appraisal in sections 5-10 includes a table explaining the reasons for choosing the publication draft plan in light of other reasonable options considered.

**The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme**

Colchester Borough Council produces an annual Authority Monitoring Report, which monitors the implementation of planning policies. It includes a range of environmental indicators, which will be used to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan. In addition table 6 in the Sustainability Report for the Main Modifications to the Colchester Local Plan Section 2, draws on the information presented in Chapter 17: Monitoring of the Section 2 Local Plan, the indicators proposed to monitor the Section 1 Local Plan, and the latest Authority Monitoring Report and presents the updated monitoring framework for monitoring the potential sustainability effects of implementing the Section 2 Local Plan. The monitoring framework has been designed to assist the Council in assessing the performance of the local plan policies and evaluating progress in plan delivery. It is based upon clearly defined and measurable indicators. This approach will ensure that where monitoring indicates any significant threat to the environment or where development may prejudice the achievement of sustainability objectives, the Council is able to take informed and appropriate action.

Planning Policy July 2022.