

Submission to Inspector: Colchester Section 2 Local Plan

Beryl Cox

Consultation too little, too late & inadequate for a housing allocation of this site

My first point is one that I feel needs to be reiterated and that is to remind the Council that the Ranges site allocation was added to the Local Plan at a very late stage in the plan-making process, which began in January 2015. Stakeholders with an interest would not have participated at the earlier stage. The interested parties were only able to comment on the Draft Plan, in which the Ranges was now included. The consultation was the technical one in which respondents were asked about soundness tests in relation to the NPPF.

No justification for this housing allocation – Inadequate Infrastructure to support 1000 homes, contrary to NPPF.

The MOD proposed 2,000 homes on the site. Colchester Borough Council reduced this to 1,000. There seems to be no evidence, as required in the NPPF, to demonstrate how it was decided that the site was suitable for any housing, particularly given the habitat issues. It is very clear that the sustainability appraisal of the site was perfunctory and not fit for purpose - perhaps even to justify a pre-determined decision.

It was therefore not an accessible consultation for members of the public, who had been unable to express concerns about the inclusion of the Ranges in the plan and their reasons for doing so.

I wish also to reiterate my concerns that this would have considerably reduced the number of responses submitted. Also the legally implicated tick boxes at the beginning of the form would not have been understood by a lot of people and they therefore, did not submit a response.

Unsustainable growth & targets unachievable without causing harm to the environment

East of England growth figures for 2011 to 2017

Luton: Population +11,500 (5.6%) Homes +1,620 (7%) Prices +68%

Southend: Population +8,200 (4.7%) Homes +1,330 (6.2%) Prices +58%

Norwich: Population +7,900 (5.96%) Homes +1,340 (5.9%) Prices +41%

St Albans: Population +6,500 (4.62%) Homes +1,500 (43%) Prices +54%

Thurrock: Population +12,700 (8%) Homes +3,010 (4.2%) Prices +63%

Ipswich: Population: 5,200 (3.9%) Homes +1,520 (3.4%) Prices +47%

Colchester Population +16,600 (9.6%) Homes + 5,120 (32%) Prices: +51%

Peterborough: Population +15,200 (8.3%) Homes +5,080 (3%) Prices +41% Braintree:

Population +4,600 (3.13%) Homes 1,680 (2.74%) Prices +56%

Colchester is the fastest growing town in the East of England. We should not destroy valuable green open space for yet more housing. As shown below in the table of completed new builds per year:

**Completions
Data**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Year
Colchester Borough Council	1250	1243	1028	518	673	1012	617	725	943	1149	912	1048	1165	1124	Number of builds

In relation to the above points I do not consider the Local Plan to be sound.

Traffic: unsustainable. New residents will use their cars more than predicted by MOD

I also do not consider the Local Plan to be sound because of the massive weight of traffic already in this area. I have an email from Essex County Council dated 8th August 2005 (*appendix 1 re pelican crossing Mersea Road 8-8-2005*) confirming the traffic flow was high at that time and for that reason my request for a refuge crossing was agreed. This is the site opposite the main gate onto Middlewick Ranges. With the considerable amount of additional developments already built what would be the status now?

When a traffic survey was completed in the areas surrounding Middlewick, in November 2019, it was conducted "by a third party" I would like to have this on record that this survey was conducted whilst the local schools were not in session and therefore the findings were distorted and not fit for purpose. When I logged a complaint with Essex County Council they would not/ could not advise me who conducted the survey. (*Appendix 2: Traffic Data Email 26-1-2020*)

I would point out at the beginning and the end of the school day the traffic is horrendous and many residents are unable to use their drives. There are several schools in the area and all the surrounding roads are blocked at these times with the sometimes dangerous and inconsiderate parking. To add to these numbers would be irresponsible.

Likely to exacerbate air pollution hot spot, contrary to NPPF requirements

In addition to this Mersea Road is the worst in the town for pollution, already. It has been noted that this can be the cause of death with the toxic fumes. Another point is the cemetery and funeral processions are often held up due to the weight of traffic in this area. Here is the full list of areas in Colchester with more than 40 micrograms of nitrogen dioxide per cubic metre of air:

Mersea Road 21 - 52.4.
 Osborne Street - 51.5.
 Brook Street 28 - 50.5.
 Mersea Road 12 - 48.6.
 Lucy Lane North A12 - 47.6.
 Lucy Lane North Teralia - 47.4.
 Brook Street 23 - 46.9.
 Mersea Road 9 - 42.9.

Air pollution a cause in girl's death, coroner rules in landmark case

A coroner has made legal history by ruling that air pollution was a cause of the death of a nine-year-old girl.

Philip Barlow, the inner south London coroner, said Ella Kissi-Debrah's death in February 2013 was caused by acute respiratory failure, severe asthma and air pollution exposure.

He said she was exposed to nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter (PM) pollution in excess of World Health Organization guidelines, the principal source of which were traffic emissions".

Road pollution affects 94% of Great Britain, study finds

Exclusive:



Roads make up 1% of the country but the pollution produced may harm wildlife everywhere

Traffic in central London. Roadless areas are expected to become increasingly scarce due to the predicted 65% expansion of the global road network by 2050. Photograph: Carl Court/Getty Images

Damian Carrington Environment editor

@dpcarrington

Fri 12 Mar 2021 10.08 GMT

Pollution from roads affects virtually every part of Great Britain, with 94% of land having some pollution above background levels, according to research.

Roads, which occupy less than 1% of the country, “form vast, pervasive and growing networks, causing negative environmental impacts”, the scientists said.

The most widespread pollutants are tiny particles, mostly from fossil fuel burning, nitrogen dioxide from diesel vehicles, and noise and light. More than 70% of the country is affected by all of these, with the only land to escape road pollution being almost entirely at high altitudes.

The serious impact on human health from road pollution in urban areas is well known. But the researchers said even low levels of pollution may harm wildlife including birds, mammals and insects, although research to date is limited.

The findings are likely to apply to densely populated regions around the world, the scientists said, and roadless areas are expected to become increasingly scarce due to the predicted 65% expansion of the global road network by 2050. Today, there are an estimated 64m kilometres of road on Earth, a length equivalent to travelling 1,600 times around the equator.

Ben Phillips, of the University of Exeter, UK, who led the research, said: “In Great Britain, we basically live on an island completely covered by roads. We found half of land is no more than 216 metres from a road. That’s a really shocking and quite depressing statistic and it seems like that would have massive environmental consequences.”

“Pollution from roads impairs small animals by disguising the scent of flowers, fertilising habitats [with nitrogen] so they become unsuitable for specialist species, and spilling light pollution that disrupts their movements and life-cycles,” said Matt Shardlow, of the conservation group Buglife.

“This research exposes that the impact of roads has become omnipresent in the UK. In particular, microplastic pollution from car tyres is an emerging issue that must be addressed.”

The research, published in the journal Science of the Total Environment, concludes: “The ubiquity of road pollution should be seriously considered as a potential contributor to global and regional-scale environmental issues such as insect declines.”

The researchers started with maps of roads from motorways down to local access roads. “We found that 25% of land was less than 79 metres from a road, 50% of land was less than 216 metres away and 75% of land was less than 527 metres from a road,” they said.

They used available data on exhaust, metal, light, and noise pollution and how it disperses to estimate the total area affected. Background levels were deemed to be 0.1% of the level on the roads for particles and chemicals and 0.001% for light and noise, which are usually measured using exponential scales.

The study did not calculate the impact of other pollutants, such as de-icing salt and herbicides used on verges, or include the contamination of ponds

and streams, vehicle-wildlife collisions and the habitat fragmentation caused by roads.



New map reveals shattering effect of roads on nature

Previous studies of human health indicate that impacts from air pollution occur up to 500 metres from roads, and air pollution is known to harm birds, mammals and insects. Other research has shown roads can reduce populations of mammals up to 5km away. Across Europe, 98% of land is this close to a road.

The researchers said the extent of the influence of roads on the environment has been “somewhat overlooked and underestimated”.

Phillips said: “We’ve got global-scale environmental pressures and people always point at agriculture, because agriculture is absolutely everywhere across the country. The point we’re making is that road pollution is another thing that’s absolutely everywhere, even though it’s low level.”

Shardlow said: “While roads are contributing to insect declines and extinctions, much of the harm can be eased: lighting can be reduced, electric cars will reduce chemical pollution, wildlife bridges can be built to reconnect nature, and verges are increasingly managed to boost populations of wildflowers and pollinators.”

The UK government is planning a £27bn expansion of England’s road network, but the Guardian reported in February that transport secretary, Grant Shapps, had overridden official advice to review the policy on environmental grounds.

Phillips said: “The environment still isn’t prioritised enough in deciding whether or not these things go ahead.”

This article was amended on 16 March 2021. The study involved Great Britain, rather than Britain as the headline and text of an earlier version said.

I also do not consider the Local Plan to be sound due to the lack of infrastructure. All the local services are overstretched and all areas of health, appointments are very difficult to obtain within a reasonable time frame.

Our sewage system is completely outdated and now unfit for purpose due to the over development in the town. Anglia Water has been approached for data regarding blocked drains but this is not yet available.

Contrary to Colchester Borough Council's own evidence base and policies on wellbeing The council's evidence base for green space is out-of-date and no longer valid

I also do not consider the Local Plan to be sound because of the lack of open green space. This is the only area locally that is left to residents without taking to their cars. To remove this green lung cannot be justified.

Colchester Borough Council published a document entitled "Background Paper on Public Health and Planning Prepared by Colchester Borough Council Public Health Improvement Coordinator March 2017 (*Appendix 4 Background Paper on Public Health and Planning*) and this states:

Introduction 1.1 It is accepted that health and wellbeing are influenced by a wide variety of factors, including social, environmental and economic. There are substantial variations in health between the most and least deprived communities and this is evident within the borough of Colchester. As the influences on health and wellbeing are broad, therefore so are the ways to tackle poor health and health inequalities. Local authorities are uniquely placed to tackle health inequalities, as many of the social and economic determinants of health, and the services or activities which can make a difference, fall within their remit. The planning system plays a key role in many of these determinants of health.

It went on to say:

2 Policy DM1: Health & Wellbeing

Ensuring green space and attractive opportunities for active travel activities including walking & cycling Providing appropriate mitigation to avoid harmful emissions

And

2.6 Planning can play a key role in this and support the reduction of future health demand by improving the wider environment

So how does the council today justify going back on a policy document that they published themselves in 2017?

The "wick" is valued for exercise and general health and wellbeing and it is recognised that we all need fresh air and greenspace to thrive. This has been no more apparent than during the pandemic and lock downs. The "wick" has been a Godsend to us all.. The "wick" has uplifted my spirits for my 60 plus years and I want to current generation and beyond to enjoy and find peace there just as I have.

Contrary to National Planning Policies for biodiversity

I do not consider the Local Plan to be sound as the "wick" has a rich history which should be honoured and protected. Kitchener's Army used the area to train. This open space was gifted in 1850 for this very purpose. As it has been used for military pursuits since that time the area will be contaminated to a certain degree and also the remains of diseased livestock over the years.

I do not consider the Local Plan to be sound due to the rich wildlife area which contains many rare species and habitats. It already is noted that Middlewick Ranges is one of the premier wildlife sites in the Borough of Colchester, particularly important for its invertebrate populations. The use by MOD as a firing range has doubtless protected this area of semi-natural acid grassland from development in the past. The importance of the site is shown by the wealth of species data held going back over several decades. A report by the council's Curator of History confirms in 2006 that the area forms part of the County Wildlife site as identified in the Borough Plan. Middlewick Ranges is one of the Premier Wildlife sites in the Borough of Colchester (see *Appendix 4 Waste disposal site*) Since this time all wildlife species, grassland, birds and invertebrates etc have been documented.

The proposals do not represent sustainable development and will result in the destruction of a large area of valuable wildlife habitat and the degradation of retained habitats. The proposals DO NOT conform to NPPF guidelines for the protection of the environment and biodiversity; the proposals will result in unacceptable biodiversity loss and cause irreparable harm to a highly valued Local Wildlife Site.

Natural England in 2007 supported the concept of the area becoming an S.S.S.I. but due to insufficient resources they were unable to process an application and the situation was not pursued.

The "wick" falls under the impact zone of the Upper Colne Marshes SSSI and the Roman River SSSI and should therefore be protected. Our wildlife is already critically endangered and should be protected. It has been noted by nature group Rewilding Britain that a wildlife catastrophe is imminent and urgent action is needed to restore Britain's natural habitats. Essex Wildlife trust have warned of the dangers of insect decline following a publication of a stark report. Also the then Environment Secretary Michael Gove welcomed a declaration in Colchester to "restore and recover" nature.

Mr Gove said "I warmly welcome your statement of intent for the recovery of nature. The Colchester declaration, (*Appendix 6 Colchester Declaration*) your collective pledge for nature, to protect what remains and recover what has been lost. Landscape is a richer concept which embraces the wider environment, it's how nature co-exists with the human realm".

The proposals do not represent a sustainable development.

Mr. Jenrick's (*Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government*) white paper Building Greener states that our green spaces will be protected and enhanced. "There will be more building on brownfield land, to stop unnecessary building on valued green space. (see *appendix 5 The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP, Building Greener*) We are mandating net-gain for biodiversity to leave our natural environment in a measurably better state than beforehand.

chick.cox

From: George Ward HT [REDACTED]
To: chick.cox [REDACTED]
Sent: 08 August 2005 09:12
Subject: RE: Pedestrian crossing-Mersea Road

Dear Mrs. Cox,

The numerical criteria is a measure of the degree of conflict between pedestrians and traffic. Whilst traffic flows are high at this site pedestrian flows are relatively low and would have to increase substantially to meet the criteria for a zebra crossing. There are no numerical criteria for a refuge. I have now looked at the site and it looks promising. I will look at the funding possibilities and progress a detailed design when it looks as though funding could be available.

At Stansted Road there are refuges as part of the mini-roundabouts set up and two crossing points where there are substantial pedestrian flows to justify formal crossing points.

Regards

George Ward
 Senior Engineer
 Essex County Council
 Highways & Transportation
 East Area Office
 910 The Crescent Colchester Business Park
 Colchester CO4 9QQ

[REDACTED]

From: chick.cox [REDACTED]
Sent: 04 August
To: George Ward HT
Subject: Re: Pedestrian crossing-Mersea Road

Dear Mr Ward

Thank you for your reply regarding my enquiry of the feasibility of a crossing near the junction of Queen Elizabeth Way and Mersea Road, Colchester.

Not being a traffic engineer, I don't understand your term "numerical criteria", can you explain this?

I presume that it is something to do with traffic flow over this piece of carriageway. How, I wonder, will the massive development work being currently carried out along Berechurch Road and Berechurch Hall Road affect these criteria when completed. Even with the traffic flow and loads of today, one risks life and limb attempting to cross Mersea Road, how much worse has it got to be?

One last point, further along Mersea Road, close to the junction of Stanstead Road & Mersea Road, there are 4 central refuges and a zebra crossing in a distance of under 200 yards. What happened here? Did someone get their numerical criteria wrong (it's the same road with no junctions, so presumably the same weight of traffic, between that point and the point that I'm enquiring about) or did the council wait yet again for a serious injury to occur before acting?

As previously mentioned, I'm pleased that you are addressing this matter but I hope

From: SD Cox [REDACTED]
Sent: 26 Janua [REDACTED]
To: Traffic Data [REDACTED]
Subject: Traffic [REDACTED] d surrounding roads 29th November 2019
Importance: High

Dear Sir,

I wish to lodge a formal complaint regarding the traffic survey undertaken on 29th November 2019. This was including Mersea Road and Abbots Road Colchester and other surrounding roads.

As this survey was carried out when most local schools were not open this survey would have been considerably distorted and therefore "not fit for purpose". As the traffic is extremely busy at "dropping off" and "picking up" times, if the schools were closed the survey recordings would be unrecognisable from "normal" days.

Please explain your reasons behind this choice of date and also confirm when a further survey will be carried out in this area, so these figures can be correctly assessed.

I thank you in anticipation of an early response to this request and look forward to hearing from you shortly.

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs. B. Cox

-----Original Message-----

From: "Traffic Data" [REDACTED]
To: "SD Cox" [REDACTED]
Sent: 28/01/2
Subject: RE: Traffic survey Mersea Road Colchester and surrounding roads 29th November 2019

Thank you for your formal complaint. These surveys were undertaken by a third party, not by Essex Highways or on behalf of Essex County Council.

Paul Dolphin Traffic Data
[REDACTED]

Middlewick report waste disposal site

6.7 Case Officer:

Mr S McAdam

EXPIRY DATE:

26.09.06

Site:

Land at Middlewick Ranges, Mersea Road, Colchester, Essex

Application

No: M/COL/06/1401

Date Received:

14th August 2006

Agent:

Essex County Council

Applicant:

Eco Aggregates Ltd

Development:

Erection of recycling plant for inert materials and ancillary development. (ESS/41/06/COL).

Ward:

Harbour

The Council's Curator of Natural History has responded as follows: -

"The area under consideration forms part of the County Wildlife Site (SINC G31) as identified in the Borough Plan. **Middlewick Ranges is one of the premier wildlife sites in the Borough of Colchester**, particularly important for its **invertebrate populations**. In the past English Nature has suggested that the site could qualify for SSSI status. The use by MOD as a firing range has doubtless protected this area of semi-natural acid grassland from development in the past. The importance of the site is shown by the wealth of species data held in the Museum site file going back over several decades,

Historically, most of the recording of flora and fauna has been carried out in the area to the south - east occupied by the butts, because the specialised sandy conditions attract a wide range of fossorial (ground nesting) species of insect and the short sward attracts other specialized invertebrates. However, recent studies have indicated that the area of the ranges under consideration in the north-western part of the site is also of value for nature conservation. It is also likely that invertebrates from the butts area use this area for foraging. The RPS ecological survey, carried out under unspecified weather conditions on a single day, completely ignores the County conservation designation and merely hints at the possibility of the wealth of biodiversity present on the site.

Protected Species - Common lizards (*Lacerta vivipara*) definitely occur (last sighting August 2005), Badgers are known to have a sett in the vicinity and nesting birds (including skylark) are certainly present in season. Bats use the area for foraging, although no roosts are currently known. As pointed out in the survey, the flora is also of interest and in addition several local species of insect were recorded on a brief survey in August 2005. DC0902MW 01/02 14

In summary, as a point of principle the siting of such a facility on a County Wildlife Site, even on a temporary basis, surely goes entirely against planning guidance. On biodiversity grounds it is unsustainable for such a facility to be located on one of the Borough's premier wildlife sites.

In addition, acid grassland accounts for less than 1% of the Borough land area, protected reptile and mammal species as well as several bird species"

The Council's Landscape Officer has highlighted that the Councils 'Landscape Capacity of Settlement Fringes in Colchester Borough' (LDF technical document) identifies the landscapes capacity for change as 'limited' with a 'moderate' degree of sensitivity, i.e. the area may be able to accommodate the particular type of change with some degradation of character and value, but mitigation measures would be required to address potential landscape/environmental issues'.

Details of these mitigation measures should accompany the application for agreement, to ensure that development retains the distinctive nature of the landscape when experienced from both the settlement edge and firing range (particularly the network of footpaths criss-crossing it). The development and any associated mitigation proposals should also clearly demonstrate that they have fully address the sensitivities and requirements of sites SINC status. In conclusion, a full assessment of the proposals and the effect on the local landscape must be submitted. Refusal of the application is recommended as currently proposed, subject to revision/additional information.

Introduction

1.1 It is accepted that health and wellbeing are influenced by a wide variety of factors, including social, environmental and economic. There are substantial variations in health between the most and least deprived communities and this is evident within the borough of Colchester.

As the influences on health and wellbeing are broad, therefore so are the ways to tackle poor health and health inequalities. Local authorities are uniquely placed to tackle health inequalities, as many of the social and economic determinants of health, and the services or activities which can make a difference, fall within their remit (see figure 1). The planning system plays a key role in many of these determinants of health.

2 Policy DM1: Health & Wellbeing

2.1 All developments should be designed to help promote healthy lifestyles, support identified local health priorities and avoid causing adverse impacts on Public Health. Measures to support meeting these objectives include (but are not exclusive to);

- Ensuring good access to health facilities, services and open spaces
- Providing a healthy living environment where healthy lifestyles (including the mental wellbeing that quality open spaces within the urban environment, as well as physical activity in itself, can provide) can be promoted
- Ensuring green space and attractive opportunities for active travel activities including walking & cycling
- Providing appropriate mitigation to avoid harmful emissions

2.2 Health Impact assessments (HIA) will be required for all residential development in excess of 100 units and non-residential development in excess of 2500 square metres.

In addition, for other developments below the threshold limit, where the current available evidence suggest a negative impact will occur on health and wellbeing of that local population, including a deficiency of open space, consultation with the Public Health team will be required. Following this, the recommendation on the need for an HIA may be made. Early engagement with either the local CBC Public Health Improvement Coordinator or a member of the ECC Public Health team is therefore advised.

The purpose of the HIA will be to identify the potential health consequences of a proposal on the general population and specific identified groups in the population who may be impacted through the development, maximise the positive health benefits and minimise potential adverse effects on health and inequalities. Any HIA just be prepared in accordance with the advice and best practice for such assessments.

2.3 All developments with the potential to cause a deterioration in air quality will be required to provide appropriate mitigation and, where relevant, schemes will be required to provide an air quality assessment. Measures to mitigate any adverse impacts of the development will be provided and/or secured by planning conditions, section 106 contributions or CIL. Developments which will have an unacceptable significant impact of health and wellbeing which cannot be mitigated will not be permitted.

2.4 Developments that negatively impact on the identified health priorities or projected health issues of Colchester Borough Council and known vulnerable groups in the population will not be permitted. Specific health priorities in Colchester currently include reducing obesity, increasing physical activity, reducing health inequalities and supporting vulnerable people. In addition, CBC has a current focus on improving the lives of children and young people especially in areas of known deprivation within the borough.

2.5 Colchester Borough Council is working together with North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (NEE CCG) and other health system partners to improve the health and wellbeing of our population, reduce

demand on local health services and further the Council's strategic objectives to create a vibrant, thriving and welcoming place. This includes supporting the prevention agenda to enable individuals, families and communities to be more resilient.

- 2.6 Planning can play a key role in this and support the reduction of future health demand by improving the wider environment.
- 2.7 The following pages sets out some of the national Public Health Policy that highlight the links between planning and Public Health as well good practice guidance and evidence for the local health priorities

3 The National Context – Planning & Public Health Policy

3.1 National planning policy is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), with further guidance provided in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). One of the core planning aims of the NPPF is for planning authorities to: take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.

3.2 The framework also recognises that there is an inter-relationship between transport and health objectives, the importance of open spaces for the health and wellbeing of communities, the role planning can play in seeking to limit the impacts of pollution on human health and that the Local Plan should be based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the characteristics and prospects of the area.

3.3 In addition, the framework highlights that local planning authorities should work with public health leads and health organisations to understand and take account of the health status and needs of the local population (such as for sports, recreation and places of worship), including expected future changes, and any information about relevant barriers to improving health and well-being.

3.4 Fairer Society, Healthy Lives (more commonly known as the Marmot Review) proposed the most effective evidence-based strategies for reducing health inequalities in England from 2010.

One of the six policy objectives necessary to reduce health inequalities was to;
“Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities”

This made clear policy recommendations directly linking planning and public health which was to prioritise policies and interventions that reduce both health inequalities and mitigate climate change, for example by; improving things such as active travel across the social gradient, removing barriers to community participation and action, and fully integrating the planning, transport, housing, environmental and health systems to address the social determinants of health in each locality.

3.5 The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) produced ‘Planning Healthier Places’ in 2013 which highlighted the link between economic growth & good health, and the need to tackle local health inequalities within the local planning process.

The report specifically highlights the potential for the Local Plan to be used as a conduit for partners to engage in local interventions, bring forward health-promoting large scale development, plan healthcare infrastructure or target specific health issues such as obesity and a lack of physical activity. This was supplemented by ‘Public Health in Planning: good practice guide’ in 2015.

3.6 Additionally, a practical resource ‘Planning healthy-weight environments’ (2014) sets out 6 planning healthy weight environment elements which include:

1. Movement & Access – e.g. walking prioritised over motor vehicles & walking & cycling infrastructure provided
2. Open spaces, play and recreation – e.g. easy to get to natural green open spaces of different sizes & recreational spaces for all, with passive surveillance
3. Healthy Food – e.g. maintain & enhance opportunities for community food growing & avoid overconcentration of unhealthy food uses such as hot food takeaways in proximity to schools or other facilities aimed at children and young people.
4. Neighbourhood spaces and social infrastructure – e.g. Services & facilities co-located within buildings where feasible & public spaces that are attractive and easy to get to, that are designed for multi uses

5. Buildings – e.g. Adequate internal spaces for bike storage, dining and kitchen facilities & minimised car parking spaces
6. Local Economy – e.g. Centres and places of employment that are easy to get to by public transport, and on walking & cycling networks. Facilities for people who are walking & cycling such as secure bike storage, street benches, toilets

3.7 These key documents highlight the relationship between planning and public health and demonstrate the key role that planning plays in reducing health inequalities, improving health outcomes and also supporting the development of place-based health. Without this shift to prevention and sustainability, the current unsustainable health and social care system is likely to mean the NHS will face a funding gap of £25 billion by 2020.²

3.8 The following local health information provides the evidence for Colchester's current Public Health priorities. Evidence has been drawn from the local portrait for Colchester, prepared by Essex Insights at Essex County Council, the Public Health Outcomes Framework, the local health profile and the Indices of Multiple Deprivation.

Please note that since this data has been published, some ward boundaries within Colchester have changed slightly, however this should not affect the ethos of the report that highlights the links between deprivation and effect on health inequalities and health outcomes.

4. Local Health Context

4.1 Colchester is the largest district in Essex in terms of total population numbers. It has a relatively low proportion of over 65s although a 23% increase is expected between 2015 and 2025 equating to 7,460 more people. The over 65s population will then amount to 20% of the total Colchester population. This ageing population will put greater demand on health, social care services and housing needs.³ There are a number of areas of affluence in Colchester but also areas of deprivation. Of the 105 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Colchester, nine of them are in the most affluent 10% of England and four of them are amongst the most deprived 10% in England. Life expectancy is 7.7 years lower for men and 6.0 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Colchester than in the least deprived areas.³

4.2 Colchester Borough Council is developing a local Health & Wellbeing Plan. Public Health priorities for Colchester have been identified as

- **Reducing Obesity**
- **Increasing Physical Activity**
- **Reducing Health Inequalities**
- **Supporting vulnerable people**

4.3 In addition, CBC is focused on delivering a number of specific initiatives in collaboration with partners on improving the lives of children and young people especially in areas of known deprivation within the borough.

4.4 Reducing Obesity

Levels of adults who are overweight or obese are 65.4% with 29.1% of 10-11 year old children also being overweight or obese, both slightly worse than national figures.⁴

In 13 of Colchester's wards levels of excess weight for year 6 children are above 30% with the highest levels found in Berechurch Ward at 36.3%.

Evidence suggests that healthy food, particularly fresh produce, is less available in deprived areas and low income groups are more likely consume less healthy food.

The Local Plan should consider how to plan effectively for shops and community facilities. This could address issues including access to facilities, the range and mix of shops and facilities to meet needs and promote good health.

4.5 Increasing Physical Activity

In Colchester, 59.4% of adults are meeting the Chief Medical Officer's (CMO) guidelines for physical activity (150+ minutes per week) and 25.1% of adult residents are doing less than 30 minutes per week⁵⁶. Whilst this

is similar to the national average, residents could still do more to improve their levels of physical activity in order to benefit their health, to achieve a lower risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke and coronary heart disease and this means creating more opportunities for people to do so.

However, in the resident's survey 2015, 34% said that in the last week they did 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on five days or more, which was below the county average of 39%.

Colchester residents are most likely to cite lack of time (47%) as the main reason for not taking more exercise. Other reasons cited are lack of motivation and the cost.

This highlights the need for planning to ensure that access to and opportunities for physical activity are within the infrastructure and that access to open spaces and green spaces is protected. There are the obvious health benefits from being able to use open spaces for exercise, and there is evidence that exercising outside has more positive benefits for mental health than exercising indoors. On average 1 in 4 people will suffer with a mental health issue at some point in their life and the **proportion of people with a mental health problem in the North East Essex CCG area is higher than the national figure**

4.6 Reducing Health Inequalities

Health inequalities are defined as 'differences between people or groups due to social, geographical, biological, or other factors. These differences have a huge impact because they result in people who are worst off experiencing poorer health and shorter lives' (NICE LGB4 2012). The examples below, of which are not definitive, highlight some of the issues where planning could have an impact to reduce health inequalities and improve health outcomes.

- **Child Poverty. 16.1% of children live in Poverty in Colchester** (living in households where income is less than 60 per cent of median household income before housing costs). Evidence suggests that childhood poverty leads to premature mortality and poor health outcomes for adults. Reducing the numbers of children who experience poverty should improve these adult health outcomes and increase healthy life expectancy
- Berechurch, Old Heath, Newtown, Castle, St Andrew's and St Anne's.
- There were 3,442 households on the housing waiting list in 2014/15, which was the second highest number in Essex.
Homelessness is associated with severe poverty and is a social determinant of health. It is also associated with adverse health, including mental health, education and social outcomes, particularly for children. In 2014/15, the rate of households which were homeless or in priority need in Colchester was the third highest in Essex and worse than the national average of 2.4 per 1,000.
Colchester had a rate of homeless households in temporary accommodation awaiting a settled home in March 2015 that was the fourth highest in the county although slightly below the Essex average. It is a key role of the planning system to ensure there is a sufficient supply of housing. The planning system can also support this by supporting initiatives which aim to improve the quality of the existing housing stock
- The employment rate for 2015/16 is 77.9%, a slight decrease on the previous year of 79.1. Long term unemployment within Colchester is 4.1%, lower than the England average of 7.1%. However, higher levels of long term unemployment (between 9.7-35.9%) can be seen within 7 wards. These are Old Heath, Newtown, Castle, St Andrew's, St Anne's, East Donyland & St John's. The planning system can support economic growth by ensuring there is an adequate supply of land to allow employment development to take place. It can provide indirect support by supporting the provision of relevant facilities such as education and childcare and promoting these to be located in the most accessible locations
- Poor air quality is a significant public health issue. In Colchester mortality attributable to particulate air pollution for 2015 was 5.5%, higher than the England average of 4.7%.⁵ The burden of particulate air pollution in the UK in 2008 was estimated to be equivalent to nearly 29,000 deaths at typical ages and an associated loss of population life of 340,000 life years lost.
- **Alcohol** causes greater health problems in lower socioeconomic groups, even if alcohol consumption is less than those on higher incomes. Addressing alcohol related harm is key to improving public health and reducing health inequalities. During 2015/16 Colchester had a 12% increase in level of alcohol related hospital admissions, the second highest increase in Essex. This has steadily increased over the last 6 years. Number of premises licensed to sell alcohol per square kilometre in Colchester in 2015/16 was 1.8, higher than the national average of 1.3.⁵

4.7 Supporting Vulnerable People

As the ageing population increases this will have an impact on numbers of vulnerable people and conditions that the elderly population are more likely to suffer from including dementia, hip fractures and excess winter deaths as well as those with long term conditions, such as diabetes, and Cardio Vascular Disease .

Summary

This report has highlighted many of the links between planning and public health and the key local public health priorities that should be considered within the local plan. By doing so will help to reduce the burden on services that otherwise would present with an increasing ageing population as well as supporting the prevention agenda regarding reducing obesity, health inequalities and long term conditions, such as mental health issues and diabetes.

The Colchester Declaration 2019

Set against a backdrop of unprecedented concern for the future of the natural world, and intergovernmental reports that the current global response to the effects of human impact on nature is insufficient - the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty believes that now is the time to significantly increase the scale and pace of nature conservation activity in AONBs. Using our unique network and partnership model, we are making a collective Declaration on Nature in AONBs, setting out our strategy for change.

With many AONB host authorities having taken the step of declaring a Climate Emergency we are demonstrating our readiness to act to redress declines in species and habitats within the context of a wider response to climate change.

We believe

1. Natural Beauty has intrinsic value and means so much to people
2. AONBs should be places of rich, diverse and abundant wildlife
3. Nature recovery is central to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty
4. Climate change is the biggest threat to humanity and one of the greatest threats to biodiversity. Designated landscapes offer some of the most powerful solutions to the challenges of climate change
5. The network of AONBs and National Parks, their teams, partnerships, authorities and stakeholders offer a unique solution to tackling environmental challenges

We pledge

By July 2020

1. To enable an approach that creates opportunities within AONBs for people to make an emotional connection with nature.
2. To work towards the creation of Nature Recovery Plans for each AONB

By 2024

1. To embed an ecosystems services approach into all AONB Management Plans
2. To ensure all AONB management plans include meaningful measures around climate change mitigation and adaptation, including clear, measurable targets to support Net Zero

By 2030

1. That at least 200,000 ha of SSSIs in AONBs will be in favourable condition
2. That at least 100,000 ha of wildlife-rich habitat outside of protected sites will have been created/ restored in AONBs to further support the natural movement of plants and animals
3. That at least 36,000 ha of new woodland will have been planted or allowed to regenerate in AONBs following the principle of the right tree in the right place
4. That, by each AONB immediately adopting a species on the threatened list and by preparing and delivering a Species Action Plan, at least thirty species relevant to AONBs will be taken off the list by 2030

We call on Westminster and Welsh Governments to provide the power and resources to make these targets achievable

Building Greener

We will not just be building more and building better, but we will also be building greener and more sustainably.

Protected land will be just that - our Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and rich X heritage - will be protected as the places, views and landscapes we cherish most and passed on to the next generation as set out in our manifesto.

We're protecting our green spaces, and we're also enhancing them. We will build environmentally -friendly homes that will not need to be expensively retrofitted in the future, homes with green spaces and new parks at close-hand, where tree lined streets are provided for in law.

A new 'sustainability test' will apply to local plans to make sure they are consistent with our rigorous sustainability goals.

There will be more building on brownfield land, to stop unnecessary building on valued green space.

We are mandating net-gain for biodiversity: to leave our natural environment in a measurably better state than beforehand.

I appreciate the urgency of delivering a sustainable planning system with green foundations, and just how important this is for our country's future.

That is why we are strengthening the National Planning Policy Framework to better support climate change mitigation...

...why we are adopting a streamlined approach to assessing environmental impacts.

...and why we are bolstering our approach to energy efficiency standards to help meet our world leading commitment to net-zero by 2050. The UK is the first major economy in the world to pass a net zero emissions target into law and our Future Homes Standard will help to meet this.

Last year we consulted on proposals as a first step towards net zero homes. From 2025, we expect new homes to produce 75-80% lower CO2 emissions compared to current levels.

These homes will be 'zero carbon ready', with the ability to become fully zero carbon homes over time as the electricity grid decarbonises.

It represents real action to protect our environment and tackle climate change.