
Emerging Colchester Local Plan Part 2: Matters, Issues and Questions Consultation

Main Matter 8: West Colchester (WC1 to WC5)

March 2021

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 These representations have been prepared by Barton Willmore LLP on behalf of L&Q, Cirrus Land and G120 Land Ltd (the 'Promoters'). The Promoters were centrally involved in the Strategic North Essex Section 1 Plan (or Colchester Local Plan Section 1) (hereafter 'CLP 1') through their promotion of land west of Colchester, known as the Braintree/Colchester Garden Community. As such, they are key stakeholders in the overall Colchester spatial strategy.
- 1.2 The Promoters' involvement in the Colchester Local Plan Section 2 (hereafter 'CLP 2') has therefore been inherently limited due to their land interests being the subject of CLP 1. Representations were previously made to the Regulation 19 CLP 2 consultation and therefore through a combination of that and the involvement in CLP 1, we believe that their attendance in the Examination of CLP 2 is essential.
- 1.3 Furthermore, the Promoters remain fully committed to the delivery of a new community at Marks Tey and a Vision Document for approximately 1,000 dwellings with new primary school on land north of the A120/west of Marks Tey train station is appended to main matter statement 2. This is a standalone site that can deliver housing in the plan period in a highly sustainable location. It would also form part of a future larger new settlement west of Marks Tey, should the Council determine this to be an appropriate spatial strategy in the future.
- 1.4 The area proposed for approximately 1,000 dwellings has already been considered by the Council as part of the wider WST05 area in the Settlement Boundary Review (April 2017), and has been subject to Council appraisal as part of the wider CLP process.
- 1.5 This statement is made in respect of Matter 8: West Colchester Policies and directly in response to the two questions raised by the Inspectors in the Matters, Issues and Questions consultation closing 6th April 2021.

2.0 QUESTION 1: ARE THE POLICIES AND SITE ALLOCATIONS FOR WEST COLCHESTER JUSTIFIED BY APPROPRIATE EVIDENCE, HAVING REGARD TO NATIONAL GUIDANCE, AND LOCAL CONTEXT, INCLUDING THE MEETING THEM REQUIREMENTS OF THE CLP 1?

- 2.1 The Settlement Boundary Review actually provides very limited evidence or explanation as to the sustainability credentials and reasoning behind continuing to allow the extension of Colchester westwards, particularly in Stanway other than it has existing permissions already.
- 2.2 Rather it is suggested that by simply adjoining Colchester it is a sustainable location for development. Whilst we understand that in the main a number of the allocations now benefit from planning permission, some having now been built out, we believe that the continued expansion of the towns urban area beyond that already allocated for development, particularly westward can no longer be justified based solely on the fact it is adjacent to the urban edge of Colchester.
- 2.3 As development continues to spill out of Colchester in smaller pockets of allocation and development, it does not contribute to sustainable development and tackling climate change. For instance, we note that some allocations in Stanway are closer to Marks Tey station rather than Colchester's. Furthermore, smaller allocations will not contribute to the Council's lack of neighbourhood level green infrastructure as identified in the Green Infrastructure Review from the evidence base.
- 2.4 Instead, if new sites are required through the examination period, we suggest that development at Marks Tey would be more appropriate, which currently has no allocations despite being identified as a highly sustainable location. This can bring forward new infrastructure which may be of benefit to the existing community as well as future residents. Land west of Marks Tey station could be allocated for approximately 1,000 dwellings, a new primary school and local centre and whilst it could be standalone in its own right could form part of a new wider settlement based around Marks Tey in the future.

3.0 QUESTION 2: DO THE HOUSING LAND SITE ALLOCATIONS FOR WEST COLCHESTER SHOW HOW THEY WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE OVERALL HOUSING REQUIREMENT OF THE CLP SECTION 1 (14,720 NEW HOMES) AND ITS TIMESCALE FOR DELIVERY?

- 3.1 Whilst we believe that the Council should provide an updated housing trajectory as part of the examination process due to the delays associated with CLP 1, we believe that the West of Colchester allocations are deliverable over the plan period. We note a number of the sites benefit from planning permission already and have started to be built out.
- 3.2 As such we have no concerns to raise about their contribution to the 14,720 new homes and their timescales for delivery.

4.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 This Statement has been produced on behalf of L&Q, Cirrus Land and G120 Land Ltd in response to the questions posed by the Inspectors in Main Matter 8: West Colchester Policies. We have the following points to make:

- We do not object to the overall contribution these sites make to the 14,720 new homes required by the Council, particularly as a number of the sites already benefit from extant planning permissions.
- However, we have concerns that the Council's evidence base does not fully address why the continued outward expansion of Colchester as a town is more sustainable than alternative options. This is highlighted in the Settlement Boundary Review where the assessment is limited.
- Whilst we acknowledge that a new settlement west of Colchester no longer forms part of the CLP 1, the Promoters' remain fully committed to a new settlement at Marks Tey. Land is readily available for approximately 1,000 dwellings in a highly sustainable location on land west of the station for allocation in this plan period as a standalone development.
- We suggest that expansion at Marks Tey, particularly in the absence of any allocations, would be preferable should the Council be required to find new sites for development as part of the examination process.

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