

Colchester Borough Local Plan 2017 – 2033

Section 2 Examination

Main Matter 9 - Sustainable Settlements (Policies SS1 to SS16)

- *Are the Sustainable Settlements policies and site allocations justified by appropriate available evidence, having regard to national guidance, and local context, including the meeting the requirements of the CLP 1?*

Policy SS5 – Eight Ash Green

Hopkins Homes submitted representations to the Submission Local Plan setting out our objection to the policy wording which sought to set a maximum yield for this village, on the basis that this was not justified and would not allow the Parish to plan for more growth than indicated in the Local Plan, thereby inhibiting the Parish from delivering wider benefits associated with development in the village.

Whilst it is acknowledged that there is now a made Neighbourhood Plan that allocates a site for 150 dwellings, we submitted objections to the proposed figure of 150 dwellings on the basis that it was unclear from the Sustainability Appraisal how the limit of 150 dwellings had been determined as being appropriate for this village. As such, we considered the policy was unjustified.

The identified maximum yield for this village is not justified by the evidence to support the Plan and puts at risk the ability of the Plan to ensure that housing needs are met. The village is acknowledged as being sustainable in the Plan and is therefore an appropriate location for increased housing provision.

To overcome these concerns, it was suggested at the time that the policy be amended as follows:

- Amend criterion ii) to require at least 150 dwellings rather than 150 dwellings.

The Draft Schedule of Recommended Modifications to the Publication Draft Colchester Local Plan: Section Two (March 2021) includes a modification which seeks to replace the entire policy with new text to reflect the fact that there is now a made Neighbourhood Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan was made prior to examination of the Section Two Local Plan, namely at a point when the proposed level of growth within the village had not been tested. The fact that the Neighbourhood Plan is now made does not mean that this is the only growth option and further evidence on why this is the appropriate strategy, having regard to reasonable alternatives is required by the Council.

Hopkins submits that further growth could be accommodated in Eight Ash Green to provide flexibility in the Council's housing delivery.

As such, the strategic Policy should continue to provide guidance in respect of the appropriate level of growth and should include reference to a housing target which should be expressed as

a minimum figure. This would ensure flexibility in the event that the Neighbourhood Plan is subject to review in the coming years.

In addition to the site now Allocated within the made Neighbourhood Plan, a further site within the control of Hopkins Homes is available to the north of Halstead Road, as shown on the attached Plan. This would provide a wholly suitable and sustainable location to accommodate circa 100 dwellings together with community uses over the Plan period.

Policy SS15 – West Bergholt

Hopkins Homes similarly raised objections to the Submission Local Plan on the basis that it set a maximum yield of 120 homes for this village. We submitted that it was unjustified and would not allow the Parish to plan for more growth than indicated in the Plan, thereby inhibiting the Parish from delivering wider benefits associated with development in the village.

Indeed, Policy PP9 of the Neighbourhood Plan states that “*The minimum number of dwellings to be provided over the Neighbourhood Plan period will be 120*”. This therefore provides flexibility should further allocations be sought as part of any Neighbourhood Plan review.

It is also unclear from the Sustainability Appraisal how the limit of 120 units has been determined as being appropriate for this village, especially given its sustainability credentials that are clearly articulated in the Plan. As such, it was submitted at the time that the policy was unjustified.

To overcome these concerns it was suggested that the policy be amended as follows:

- Amend criterion ii) to require at least 120 dwellings.

The Draft Schedule of Recommended Modifications to the Publication Draft Colchester Local Plan: Section Two (March 2021) includes a modification which seeks to replace the entire policy with new text to reflect the fact that there is now a made Neighbourhood Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan was made prior to examination of the Section Two Local Plan, namely at a point when the suitable level of growth had not been tested. The fact that the Neighbourhood Plan is now made does not mean that this is the only option and further evidence on why this is the appropriate strategy, having regard to reasonable alternatives is required by the Council.

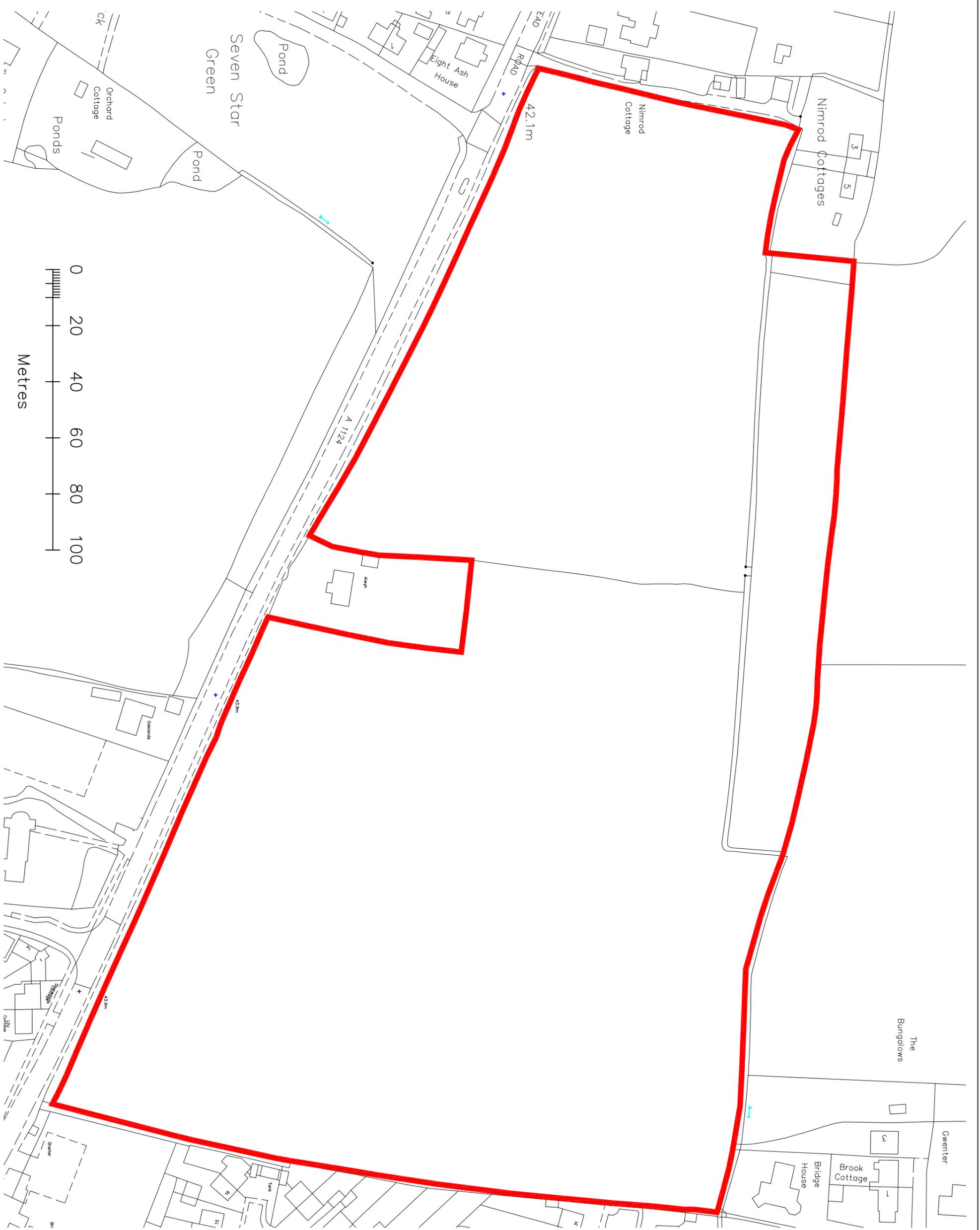
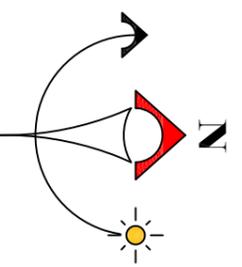
Hopkins Homes considers that this village has the potential to accommodate a significantly higher level of growth than proposed and that as such, there should be flexibility for growth in excess of 120 dwellings.

As such, the strategic Policy should continue to provide guidance in respect of the appropriate level of growth and should include reference to a housing target which should be expressed as a minimum figure. This would ensure flexibility in the event that the Neighbourhood Plan is subject to review in the coming years.

In addition to the sites now Allocated within the made Neighbourhood Plan, a further site within the control of Hopkins Homes is available to the east of Site B as Allocated under Policy PP13 and subsequently Permitted for residential development under Application Reference 191997, as shown on the attached Plan. This would provide a wholly suitable and sustainable location to accommodate circa 75 dwellings.

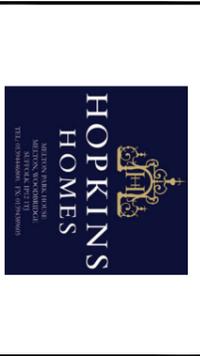
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Rev. Date Details



PLANNING

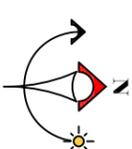
Project:	Project No:
Eight Ash Green	Dwg No: CP-001
Rev: -	Rev: -
Drawing:	Scale: 1:1250 @ A3
Site Location Plan	Name:
Plot Numbers:	Drawn By: JLE
	Date: 28.03.21
	Checked By: DMC
	Date:



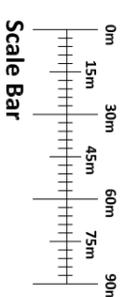
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Site Location Plan

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Project No:	BER2
Project:	Colchester Road West Bergholt
Dwg No:	001
Scale:	1:1250 @ A3
Drawn By:	JLE
Date:	29.03.21
Checked By:	DMC
Plot Numbers:	-

