

WEST BERGHOLT - NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



The Neighbourhood Plan is intended to provide guidance to people who are thinking about proposed developments such as an alteration to an existing property.

1 FOREWORD

A Neighbourhood Plan is a type of planning document, introduced in the Localism Act 2011, which allows local people to have a say in the future growth and development of their community. The West Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan sets out a number of policies all of which have the aim of preserving the unique characteristics of the parish, whilst welcoming improvements and change that will ensure the vibrancy of the community into the future. We are really pleased with the constructive feedback we received to our Regulation 14 draft of the Neighbourhood Plan and have directly incorporated many of the suggestions received. Policies cover the protection of the countryside and local amenities, support for local businesses and provision of new sustainable housing development. Although construction of homes is a controversial issue, we need new homes to contribute towards the wider need in the district and to ensure a supply of suitable affordable and marketable homes for local residents who wish to stay in the village close to family, friends or employment.

The Plan and its supporting background documents were prepared following significant public consultation by a Steering Group, reporting to West Bergholt Parish Council and consisting of:

- Brian Butcher, Jenny Church, Terry Claydon, Janet Crichton, Rowly Castiglione, John Gili-Ross, Murray Harlow, Jo King, Günter Klaphake, Andrew Savage, Phil Spencer, David Short, Harry Stone, Stuart Thackrah, Bob Tyrell and Laura Walkingshaw.

In addition, the following have made valuable contributions to the work of the Steering Group:

- Phil Cook, Paul Downer, Jacqui Jenner, Austen King, photographers Gail Stubbins & Tony Morris, and the children of Heathlands School responsible for the individual policy chapter icons.

On behalf of the Parish of West Bergholt I would like to thank everyone who has been involved with the project. I would also like to thank the following for their assistance and support:

- Sarah Sapsford and colleagues at the RCCE; Alison Eardley, Planning Consultant during the evidence gathering and analysis stage; Ann Skippers, our Planning Consultant, for giving us the benefit of her vast knowledge and experience in planning and neighbourhood planning, and for extensive help and guidance with drafting documents and policies;
- The Supporting Communities in the Neighbourhood Planning programme, funded by the Department of Communities and Local Government and administered by Locality in partnership with the Royal Town Planning Institute (including Planning Aid), the Community Development Foundation, Urban Vision, Eden Project and URS; together with Groundwork UK, Community Rights Programme Team, which funded the assistance from Planning Aid and provided grant funding to help with consultants' fees and other aspects of the process;
- Colchester Borough Council officers and Councillors for guidance and encouragement, in particular Cllrs Marcus Harrington, Dennis Willets, Brian Jarvis and Lewis Barber and Officers Rachel Forkin, Sandra Scott and Shelley Blackaby.

Finally, the Parish Council and the Steering Group would like to thank all those residents and those who work within the parish, and indeed those organisations who do not, who have participated in the public consultation events, responded to the surveys and shown support for the Neighbourhood Plan.

Chris Stevenson Chair, Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group & West Bergholt Parish Council, November 2018

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5 INTRODUCTION

5.1 About Neighbourhood Plans

The Localism Act 2011 introduced a number of measures allowing communities to shape the future of their area and to deliver the sustainable development that they need. One of these measures is the Neighbourhood Plan. This is a new type of planning document, which can set policies for the use of land detailing the expectations of the community and the quality and type of development sought. A Neighbourhood Plan must comply with a higher-level planning policy at district, national and European level and must be based on evidence. Following community consultation, it will be examined by an independent examiner and must be approved by residents at a local referendum. The made or adopted plan will become part of the development plan for the local area and will be used in determining planning applications and appeals.

A Neighbourhood Plan cannot be used to stop development. There is a requirement for new homes nationally and every Neighbourhood Plan must plan for new growth.

West Bergholt Parish Council resolved to prepare a plan so that the community could work together to shape the future of the village and have a say about where new homes should go and what they should look like, how the local economy should be supported, how the countryside and open spaces of the village should be protected and how local facilities and infrastructure could be improved.

The Parish Council, although the sponsoring body for the Neighbourhood Plan, recognised that the wider community had to play a major role in producing the plan and so agreed that a Steering Group made up of Parish Council representatives and people from the community be set up to write the plan and consult upon it.

5.2 The purpose of a Neighbourhood Plan

A Neighbourhood Plan has a number of functions. In a strict planning sense, it relates to the use and development of land and, in this sense, its primary purpose is to help in deciding future land allocations for a variety of uses, notably, but not exclusively, housing and subsequently planning applications in the Plan Area. However, it is also an opportunity to cover in a holistic sense a great deal more. Communities have manifold needs and a Neighbourhood Plan allows these needs to be set out in a way that the community can plan for priorities that it feels need addressing, everything in fact from sport to transport! Thus, the Neighbourhood Plan for West Bergholt will be a successor to the current Parish Plan and will contain separately identified aspirations and ideas that go beyond the strict planning and development remit of the Neighbourhood Plan. These are called the Community Ambitions.

West Bergholt as a community resides in a locality which has a common cultural and historical heritage, shares common characteristics and interests and perceives itself distinct in many respects from the larger community of Colchester. The community's aspirations are to maintain and enhance its community feel and environment, its housing and businesses and the safety of the community, setting these out as Community Aspirations.

Localism provides the opportunity for local decisions to be made by local people. As long as it can be demonstrated that the Neighbourhood Plan is inclusive and deals with potential and planned growth, then there is no reason why it would not be agreeable to the community when submitted for referendum or by Colchester Borough Council, which must approve the plan.

The purpose of this document is therefore to:

- Set out a framework to guide residents, local authorities and developers on how the community wishes to manage and control future development in the Plan Area over the next 15 years, along with its facilities, services and environment;
- Record the historical and existing status and nature of the community and its environment;
- Establish an Action Plan that provides the community with a prioritised plan to improve its facilities, services and environment on a voluntary and assisted basis.

The Neighbourhood Plan therefore:

- Identifies the main community issues and objectives for West Bergholt as a whole;
- Makes proposals for the development and use of land and allocates land for specific purposes;
- Sets out the community's policies for the management of development;
- Provides an Action Plan that schedules a series of desired projects arising from the communities' vision for sustainable growth in their Neighbourhood Area;
- Documents the mechanisms for monitoring and the timescales for delivering the plan and its proposals.

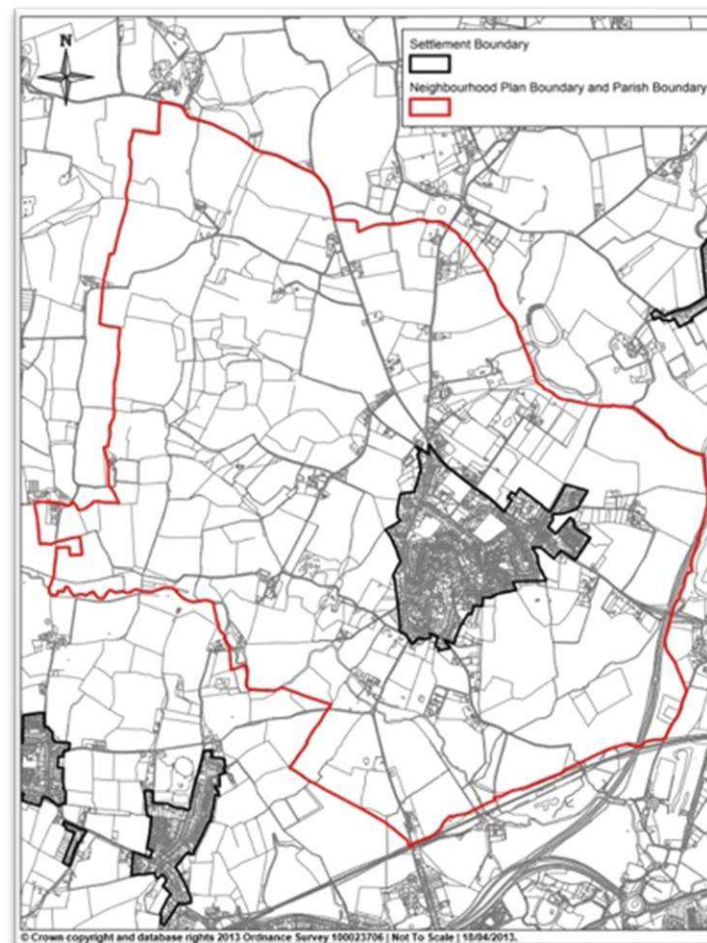
5.2.1 The Neighbourhood Plan Period

The West Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan will be for the period from 2018 to 2033.

5.2.2 The Plan Area

Following an application to Colchester Borough Council to designate the parish of West Bergholt as a Neighbourhood Plan area, a statutory

consultation was held in June 2013. No objections were forthcoming and the plan was confirmed and is shown adjacent:



Neighbourhood Plan Area

6 PREPARING THE PLAN

6.1 How the Plan was produced

The plan was a community-led affair but affiliated to the Parish Council who acted as its sponsor. The Neighbourhood Plan was informed by village workshops, community surveys and other parish meetings. The process was overseen by a Steering Group, made up of both residents and business owners within the parish of West Bergholt, who valued the opportunity to have a say in the future shape and development of their village.

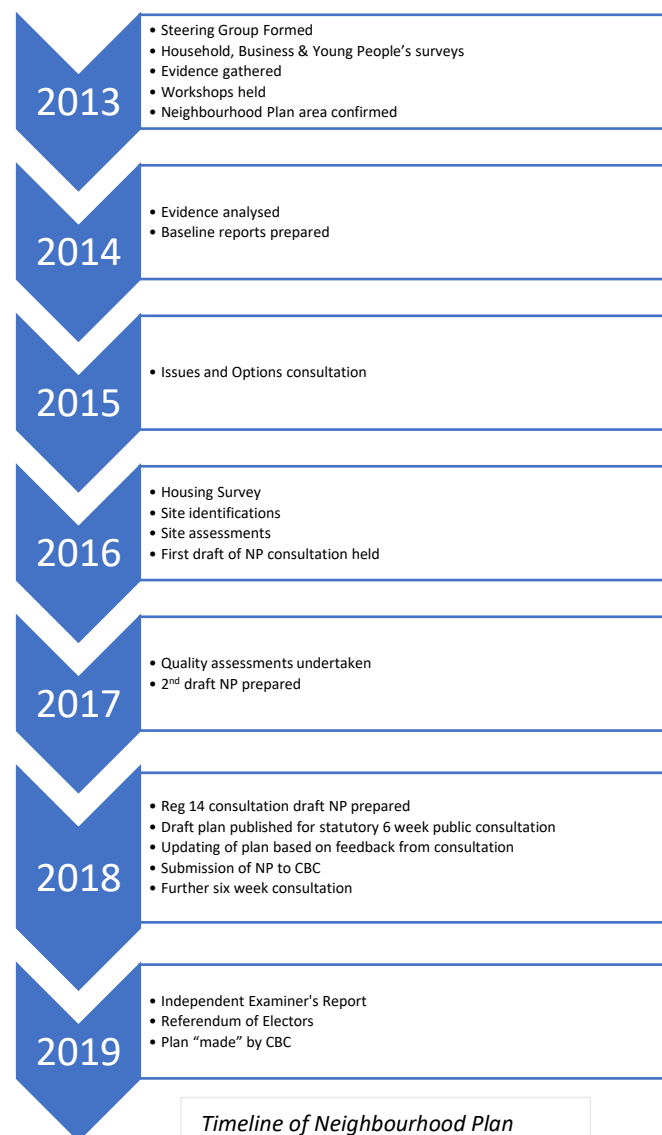
6.2 Legal Requirements

A Neighbourhood Plan must comply with a number of conditions, known as the Basic Conditions. These require that the Plan:

- has regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- contributes towards the achievement of sustainable development;
- is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area;
- does not breach and is compatible with European Union (EU) obligations;
- is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

6.2.1 National Policies and Advice

The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF) is the principal document in which national planning policies are contained.



Government guidance is provided on the Planning Practice Guidance website.

6.2.2 Sustainable Development

The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

6.2.3 Wider Policy Context for the area

West Bergholt sits within a number of other plan and service areas including:

- National Government which sets out Planning Policies & Frameworks and other matters including strategic infrastructure;
- Essex County Council which produces plans for a number of functions including minerals and waste, education, social services, highways and libraries;
- Colchester, which produces the Local Plan for the Borough area;
- Its own Parish Council, which has at its heart the representation of its community to other bodies, as well as specific localised functions covering open space, parish facilities such as community buildings and other facilities such as play and recreational activities;
- Service Specific Plans such as those set out by the Police and Fire Services and the National & Mental Health Services;
- Deregulated private bodies such as transport and utility bodies, which provide us with power, water and public transport services;
- Voluntary sector which comes in a variety of guises to fill gaps in the public and private sector.

The Neighbourhood Plan sets out to ascertain which areas would benefit from intervention and to sound its community out on areas where they think planning could be carried out at a local level.

6.2.4 Development Plans for the area

The development plan for the area consists of the Essex Minerals Local Plan 2014 and the Essex & Southend Waste Local Plan 2017, which currently provide the local planning policies which govern minerals and waste development in Essex. Colchester Borough Council have produced a set of adopted Development Plan Documents (DPD) that are referred to as the adopted Local Plan which guides future growth and development in the Borough up to 2021.

The DPD comprises the:

- Core Strategy (adopted 2008, amended 2014);
- Site Allocations DPD (adopted 2010);
- Development Policies DPD (adopted 2010, amended 2014);
- Proposals Maps (adopted 2010);
- Tiptree Jam Factory DPD (adopted 2013).

The biggest impact on local land use planning matters is Colchester's Local Plan. A new Local plan is in the process of being formulated to cover the period up to 2033. Our Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Local Plan and it has also taken into account the direction of the emerging Local Plan, although the relationships with other service and planning bodies is in fact equally important.

6.2.5 EU obligations

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening determination was prepared for the Neighbourhood Plan, which concluded that the Neighbourhood Plan will not result in significant environmental effects and therefore a SEA is not needed. Natural England and Historic England agreed with the conclusion that SEA is not required.

However, towards the latter stages of the Neighbourhood Plan development the draft Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) was circulated to LPA Officers. Whilst the RAMS was in draft form, the Essex Coast RAMS set out Zones of Influence (Zoi), which have been agreed by Natural England. Residential development falling within the Zoi is likely to significantly affect Habitats sites through increased recreational disturbance in-combination with other plans and projects across Essex. The whole of Colchester Borough is within the Zoi, which means that all residential development in Colchester Borough is likely to significantly affect Habitats sites through increased recreational disturbance in-combination. The Neighbourhood Plan therefore needs to consider appropriate avoidance/ mitigation measures. Until recently this could be done through a screening opinion, and a HRA screening report was prepared for the Neighbourhood Plan concluding no likely significant effects. However, a recent decision from the European Court of Justice (People Over Wind and Sweetman) requires avoidance and mitigation measures to be considered in an appropriate assessment rather than a screening opinion.

The implications of this are that an appropriate assessment is required for the Neighbourhood Plan, even though the effects are in-combination and relatively minor when considering that the Neighbourhood Plan allocates land for 120 dwellings and West Bergholt is not adjacent to a Habitats site.

Changes were made to the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations in December 2018 making it clear that Neighbourhood Plans can have an appropriate assessment under the Habitats Directive and meet the basic condition of no likely significant effects on Habitats sites. An appropriate assessment was prepared for the Neighbourhood Plan. The SEA Directive states that SEA is mandatory if an appropriate assessment is required. Therefore, a SEA has been prepared for the Neighbourhood Plan.



6.2.6 Human Rights

The Neighbourhood Plan must comply with the Human Rights Act 1998 and be compatible with the rights protected by the European Convention of Human Rights, including those dealing with privacy, discrimination and property.

The *Basic Conditions Statement* explains in detail how the West Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan complies with the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements.

6.3 Consultation & Engagement

The Steering Group overseeing the development and assembly of the Neighbourhood Plan was keen to establish the following:

- Reaching the attention of as large an audience as possible;
- Providing regular opportunities to participate at key stages in the plan's production;

- Providing feedback opportunities;
- Giving information;
- Partnering with organisations which have a stake in the plan.

The group set out to do this via its meetings, workshops, surveys, exhibitions, face to face meetings and through a visible presence on the website, village notice boards and in the Village Bulletin. A full consultation and involvement summary are provided in the supporting documents.

6.3.1 Consultation: Baseline 'the current situation'

In 2013, workshops and surveys were undertaken to establish how people felt about the village and to establish key lines of enquiry. Surveys of households, businesses, schools and colleges were undertaken. Results are included in the supporting documents, but key points were recorded as follows:

In total, nearly 500 households representing over 1000 people responded to the various consultations.

Key issues identified were:

- Traffic issues and road maintenance - Road safety;
- More facilities for older children;
- Residents having a say in new development;
- Smaller starter or mixed-use developments favoured - Minimum possible new development favoured;
- Better provision of broadband;

Other points identified were:

- Strong degree of support for maintaining the identity of the village - Very strong support for preserving the environment;
- Residents feel safe in the village from crime or anti-social behaviour.

6.3.2 Consultation: Issues and Options

In April and May 2015, an Issues and Options exhibition and consultation were carried out. This took the information from the earlier surveys plus independent evidence from desktop research and played this out to the community through a range of scenarios and propositions. Results are included in the supporting documents, but key points were recorded as follows:

- 98% of residents thought it was very important or important to have a Neighbourhood Plan;
- 93% of respondents felt that giving residents a chance to influence and shape the plan and associated development was the most important reason to have one;
- Over 80% supported the vision for the plan;
- Support for the objectives, issues and proposals for the plan components were supported by well over 50% of residents;
- The option restricting the amount of housing to 100 units over the Neighbourhood Plan lifetime emerged as the clear favoured option.

6.3.3 Consultation: The Draft Outline Plan and Policies

In October 2016, a consultation on the draft plan and policies was undertaken.

Key points were as follows:

- 70-90%+ agreement on policies;
- Broad agreement to the location of new housing.

In 2018 the Neighbourhood Plan was issued in draft for a six-week consultation period in accord with Regulation 14. The responses from that consultation were duly considered and a Regulation 16 version of the Plan was submitted to Colchester Borough Council.

7 ABOUT WEST BERGHOLT

7.1 A Brief History of West Bergholt

West Bergholt is a small compact rural parish located to the north west of Colchester comprising an area of 929 hectares. Dating back to the 11th century the village was originally known as Bercolta, later recorded as Bergholt Sackville, after the Sackville family who held the main manor from the early 12th century to the 17th century. The village is recorded in the “Doomsday Book”. It was finally named West Bergholt in the early 20th century to distinguish it from East Bergholt in Suffolk.

The landscape surrounding the village is attractive and undulating and is bounded to the south and west by the sloping valleys of the river Colne and St Botolph's Brook. The north and east are arable farmlands interspersed with small woodlands. Indeed, the name Bergholt is derived from the Anglo-Saxon terms 'beorg' meaning hill and 'holt' meaning wood. There are ten local wildlife sites of importance for nature conservation, including the famous Hillhouse Wood (owned and administered by the Woodland Trust) known to many as the 'Bluebell Wood'.

The village has 34 buildings listed for architectural merit. The only grade 1 listed building is the Church of St Mary in Hall Road, adjacent to Bergholt Hall. Now redundant, but still consecrated, the church is used for special services and village events. The building was originally Saxon in origin.

West Bergholt has evolved into its current form through circumstances to meet local needs and demands. Historical development has resulted in the broad shape of the village in terms of houses and amenities provided to meet the needs of residents, and this has largely determined the shape of the settlement boundary which has remained unaltered for many years.

The village has had a largely agricultural heritage and the population settled at approximately 1200 from 1801 to 1961. During the 1800's the village was

home to Daniell's brewery which operated successfully until the 1950's. The new owner, Truman's, operated from the site until 1989, when it was developed into houses and flats.

7.2 Population

The village expanded significantly in the 1960's and 1970's and currently has a population of 3,344 residents and 1,363 households. The Parish has a large elderly population compared with Colchester Borough as a whole. In addition, it has a slightly larger population of those aged 5 to 17 years. Approximately 20% (675) of residents are of retirement age compared with 15% at Borough level and approximately 17% (574) are aged 5 –17 years. This compares with approximately 14% at Borough level.

7.3 Village Life

7.3.1 Village Society and Community Facilities

The village features the large 400 place Heathlands Primary School, Bluebells Pre-School and other child and baby care facilities. There is a Church of England, St Mary the Virgin, and an additional redundant church, St Mary's Old Church, used on special occasions. There is a doctors' surgery and a pharmacy in the village and the general hospital is about 3 miles away. The village voluntary Care Network has over 20 members who can be contacted for transport when required. There are two general stores, one incorporating a post office with access to banking facilities, a gift shop, hairdressers, and three Public Houses. There are other commercial outlets including a garage workshop, shops and business parks.

The venues available for hire for groups to meet include the Orpen Hall and the attached John Lampon Hall, where there is parking available. There is a Social Club attached to the Hall that is open in the evenings and weekends and available for the public to hire during the daytime. The Parish Church

also has meeting rooms for hire. All are well used. The Lorkin Daniell Field and Poor's Land are available for recreation and are often used by the local West Bergholt Football Club and the Bergholt Heath Youth Football Club respectively.

The Cricket Club has the use of a field off the main Colchester Road. There is a Multi-Use Games Area on the Lorkin Daniell Field which is available for hire for tennis and other sports. The Scout Hut is situated on the Heath by the primary school and is well used by different groups and activities. The green field areas can be made available for events. There are 3 areas of children's playground equipment and an area for 140 allotment plots.

7.3.2 Environment

The Parish has a wonderful mix of undulating farmland with the beautiful River Colne valley accessed by a network of public footpaths including public access to ancient woodland. The vast majority of the parish is rural with agriculture the dominant feature (both arable and dairy). Within the village, there are numerous ponds, open spaces and vegetation that complements the built environment. As a result of a good network of local roads and Public Rights of Way (PROW), there are numerous opportunities for the community to enjoy both local environments within the main village settlement and those close at hand in the surrounding countryside.

The rural landscape provides some accessible green space such as Hillhouse Wood and many PROW, including long distance paths such as the Essex Way. Also, within the settlement boundary is the Village Green (known as The Heath), pockets of smaller green space generally within housing areas (amenity greens), the churchyards and three ponds. The village does not have a formal public park or garden as such within its boundaries, however there are some older properties that have significant trees or hedgerows that contribute to the rural character and biodiversity value of parts of the village. A few trees are protected with Tree Preservation Orders. Hedgerows and verges within villages are generally not protected.

When considering the built environment although there is a mix of eclectic modern housing styles, the village has nevertheless a good range of older buildings of architectural value with many listed buildings including several of both architectural and historic importance.

The surveys conducted in compiling the Neighbourhood Plan overwhelmingly revealed that existing public open spaces and important landscape and wildlife areas were universally valued and as a result should be protected.

7.3.3 Housing and Planning

The growth in population in the late 1960s and in the 1980's was the result of new estates being constructed and a variety of styles mark this expansion such as those around Lexden Road, Mumford Road and Pirie Road, as well as the development on the former Truman's brewery site. More recently there have been smaller developments usually consisting of four or more bedroomed detached properties closely positioned on sites within the settlement boundary.

In preparing the Village Design Statement in 2011 the housing areas of the village were divided up into character areas to help distinguish the mixture of vernacular and modern housing styles and help assess the applicability of housing and extension proposals.

West Bergholt remains a highly desirable village in which to live. Being situated just outside and to the northwest of Colchester – Britain's *Oldest Recorded Town*, West Bergholt village is conveniently placed for those residents who work in Colchester and its close proximity to the A12 means that it is well placed for people who work in Ipswich or Chelmsford. Being only 2.5 miles from the main railway line into London has meant that West Bergholt has become an extremely desirable commuter location.

It was the land released for development in the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's that marked the most significant increase in housing numbers within the village. Due to the location of most of the new estates the village 'look and

feel' was maintained with some supporting improvements to facilities for the community. It has to be said though that the modern housing design was at odds with the older housing and although functional the design and style now looks dated and the housing no longer meets the needs of the Parish in terms of the mix of tenure and the lack of affordable housing.

The formal Settlement Boundary indicates the boundary inside which there is a presumption that development will be allowed (subject to planning permission). The opportunities for such development are reducing over time and therefore there is likely to be the need for some additional growth.

It is evident from the consultations undertaken so far, including the 2008 West Bergholt Parish Plan, that whilst some wish the village to stay exactly as it is without expansion, many more envisage a limited and appropriately planned increase in development providing the types and numbers of new housing to meet the needs of the Parish whilst maintaining the village character.

7.3.4 Business and Commerce

Nowadays, with the decline in agricultural employment, many residents commute to Colchester for work as well as travelling to towns such as Ipswich and Chelmsford because of the close proximity to the A12. It is also a desirable location for those commuting into London.

In most cases the commercial and employment areas have evolved over time. As well as two general stores (including a Post Office in the Co-op), a pharmacy, a hairdresser's, an accessories shop, three public houses and other commercial premises there are business parks located in Colchester Road, Nayland Road, Bourne Road, Fossetts Lane and at Armoury Farm. These house independent businesses as well as offering some office space. In addition, there are many small businesses which operate from people's homes. These all provide local employment whilst harmonising with village life.

7.3.5 Sports and Recreation

The village currently has use of the following building and land assets

- The Lorkin Daniell Playing Field and the Orpen Memorial Hall are village assets held in Trust and managed by the Parish Council as Sole Trustee. These assets are available for public use and hire.

Over the years the Parish Council in its capacity as Trustee for Charity land, has added to or enhanced the village hall buildings located in Lexden Road to meet the ever-increasing demands of a thriving and vibrant village. Booking demand for the village halls increases annually and these buildings are used at near full capacity. The expansion of the hall is essential if future demand over the next 15 years is to be met.

Other community buildings exist and are owned and maintained by organisations, each being largely self-financing. They include:

- St Mary's Hall – administered by the Church of England Church committee
- Scout Hut - administered by the Scout group but located on Trust land

Village open spaces held in trust and managed by the Parish Council include:

- Lorkin Daniell Playing Field
- Village Green – to the south of Heathlands School
- Poor's Land – to the north of Heathlands School
- The Allotments

The cricket pitch and club house are located on privately owned land and is managed by the Cricket Club

Recreational facilities, the current situation:

- The Lorkin Daniell Playing Field hosts:
 - A full-size adult football pitch
 - A club house and changing facilities
 - Training area for Bergholt Heath Youth Football Club

- A children's play area
- A Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) used for tennis, 5 aside football and basketball
- Annual Village Fete
- Poor's Land provides a recreation area for:
 - Junior football
 - Dog walking
 - Heathlands School inc. sports day events
 - Annual Heathlands PTA fireworks display
 - Visiting mobile attractions - Circus etc.

7.3.6 Community Safety

Crime in West Bergholt is generally low but with the withdrawal of neighbourhood policing and regular PCSOs, crime has been rising. Current snapshots reveal the following incidence of crime and its composition:

Number of crimes: 3 per month

Typical composition: Theft from Vehicle, Burglary, Antisocial Behaviour

The parish has an active Neighbourhood Watch scheme in the village. As a result of neighbourhood policing changes there is no longer a regular mobile police presence where residents can seek advice or make their concerns known.

West Bergholt is served by the Local Community Meetings initiative (LCM) are multi agency problem solving groups, working alongside the local community to address crime, anti-social behaviour and quality of life issues.

The village has a very active Community Speed Watch group (CSW) with resource and equipment being shared with Eight Ash Green. The CSW group is recorded as being in the top five most active groups in Essex.

The village also has a Traffic Safety Group educating and reminding drivers on the importance of safer driving and careful parking.

Snow clearance volunteer teams are in place and the Parish Council maintain equipment and salt supplies for use by volunteers. An Emergency Plan for the village has been drawn up to support Colchester Borough and the emergency services.

7.3.7 Communication

Communication in this sense refers to the formal means of relaying information that the Parish Council needs to undertake, as well as informal ways to get messages across from differing interest groups within the village to the population. The key objective was supported by nearly 98% of the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire respondents.

There are 4 main channels in which the village communicates;

- Face to face
- The quarterly Village Bulletin and the occasional Village Newsletter
- West Bergholt website
- Social media

The full Parish Council meets 10 times a year (excluding the months of August and December). There is always time set aside for villagers to air views, ask questions or make comments. The PC committees meet as frequently prior to the main meeting. Village residents are welcome to attend the "Environment", the "Premises" and the "Planning" committees.

The Co-op, pharmacy, pre-school and school are at the centre of village life and you will often see people informally meeting and passing the time with friends and family adding to the sense of community.

Village Bulletin and Village Newsletters

The Parish council supports the publication of a quarterly Village Bulletin which is delivered to all households. A brief, more up to date "Village Newsletter" is produced periodically when there is no Bulletin and displayed in the notice boards and on other sites around the village.

The Parish Council also maintains a number of notice boards which are kept up to date regularly. In addition, the church and school have their own newsletters.

West Bergholt Website

westbergholt.net – the website page for the village provides a calendar of events electronic copies of the bulletin, village updates, minutes of the council & committee meetings and details of the parish councillors.

Social media

A number of the clubs in West Bergholt have active websites. The majority of these sites have a good following. The village website is managed by a third party.

Facebook (note member numbers as of Nov 2018)

West Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan page (296 members)– this provides updates to the community and the progress around the plan

West Bergholt Hub and community page (3305 members) – this provides advice, adverts, questions and village updates.

West Bergholt and surroundings selling page (2708 members) - this provides a place for locals to see any second-hand goods.

West Bergholt latest news (580 members) – this provides local village updates

There are also a number of Facebook pages for the Cricket Club, Football Clubs, Parent and Toddler Group, Bergholt Youth Group and West Bergholt Pharmacy all totalling circa 850 members.

Twitter (note member numbers as of Nov 2018)

- West Bergholt PC (134 followers) – this provides latest news and updates

- West Bergholt CC (455 followers) – this provides updates for the cricket club
- West Bergholt FC (901 followers) – this provides updates for the football club

7.3.8 Transport and Highways

The village has generally good main (B1508) and minor road connections to the A12, Colchester town centre, the rail station, Tollgate retail area and towards Sudbury and the rural Essex-Suffolk border area.

Bus services are provided by two companies, Chambers, providing an hourly service to Colchester and Sudbury, and First Bus that operates a 30-minute frequency peak and daytime service to the town centre via the Rail Station. On Sundays the frequency of buses drops to two-hourly. School buses serve the main secondary schools whilst the voluntary Care Network helps patients attend clinics.

Information gathered during the Parish Plan established the following:

- General accessibility to a car: 92% have driving licences and 81% have access to a car

Typical usage of different modes of transport have been calculated from a travel diary survey conducted by Essex County Council some time ago. (ECC 2005)

Car	Bus	Train	Cycle	walk
86%	28%	23%	25%	64%

Popular destinations are: the rail station and adjacent retail park, town centre, the hospital, access to the A12 and the Stanway/Tollgate area for retail shopping.



8 VISION, AIMS AND FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPING OUR PLAN

8.1 A Vision for Our Parish and Village

The Neighbourhood Plan intends to influence the future for the better by the concerted actions of many agencies and organisations and to do so in harmony with the wider community in West Bergholt. This will have an impact on West Bergholt as a place and will similarly affect its community as individuals, families and groups of citizens. This is reflected in a vision statement which was tested out during consultation periods, with the majority of those providing feedback feeling it was appropriate for a plan lasting many years.

The West Bergholt Vision Statement:

“By 2033 West Bergholt will be a prosperous community which has taken control of its destiny through local decision-making; which has achieved a sustainable mix of development; and where the combination of the built and natural environment provides an attractive location for residents, businesses and visitors alike.”

8.2 Our Aims

Our community, its residents, clubs, societies, organisations, businesses and individuals aspire for an ever-improved quality of life. These aspirations are many and varied. We have grouped the main aspects under the overarching aims, set out below:

Creating a sense of community:

To improve and extend opportunities for all age groups to interact and take part in a wide range of activities and improve communication between and across community groups.

Caring for our environment:

To maintain the distinctiveness of the parish and its identity by protecting the natural and built environment for the enjoyment of future generations and to explore opportunities to create new areas of accessible open space.

Enhancing and expanding community amenities:

To provide improved community facilities which support local groups especially in the areas of sport and recreation, community buildings, telecommunications and meeting areas.

Integrating sustainable communities throughout the parish:

To support limited expansion in the parish and involve the local community in all aspects of development and change, through consultation and active involvement to determine new housing needs, infrastructure needs, changes in land-use designation or husbandry.

8.3 Taking Action

This process of implementing our Neighbourhood Plan will be through the following:

- Seeking compliance with the Plan’s Planning Policies;
- Seeking ways of implementing and funding infrastructure requirements to realise both the Planning Policies and Community Ambitions;
- Developing a holistic action plan, made up of Planning Policies and Community Ambitions.

9 SUSTAINABLE GROWTH; A FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE OF WEST BERGHOLT

9.1 What do we mean by Sustainable Growth?

For most people sustainability relates to the use of the planet's resources and the impact this has on the natural environment and the resultant quality of life for its inhabitants. Whilst this remains undoubtedly true, sustainability in planning terms has widened to incorporate all the factors that sustain communities. These include:

- Environmental matters, the health and quality of our natural and built environments.
- Economic outlook, the opportunities to enable a prosperous community and enabling aspects such as access to jobs, ability to successfully trade and the necessary infrastructure to maintain prosperity.
- Social and community wellbeing, covering everything from our health to the ability of people to interact with their society.

In our Neighbourhood Plan we are taking a holistic view of our community and concentrating on what will be our needs going forward, not just our immediate requirements, but the needs of our children and even grandchildren. What sustains a community now cannot be assumed to be suitable for future generations.

Our Neighbourhood Plan draws together a number of community ambitions and planning policies to enable a sustainable approach to change and development and this is incorporated in an umbrella Sustainable Development Planning policy.

9.2 The Framework for Developing Our Plan

We have adopted a strategy to meet our vision and aims. In order to do this comprehensively a framework of eight working areas which map



directly or indirectly onto the aims has been assembled:

- Village Society and Community
- Environment
- Housing and Planning
- Business, Commerce and Employment
- Sports and Recreation
- Community Safety
- Communications
- Transport, Highways & Infrastructure

The scope of each identified working area includes planning and non-planning related matters. Not all of the activities relate to the development and use of land. Therefore, whilst each working area is presented in full here, non-planning issues are identified separately as community ambitions and distinguished from the planning policies later on in this document.

Village Society and Community Facilities:	<u>Scope:</u> To improve and extend opportunities for all age groups and the wider community to take part in a wide range of activities including as volunteers. Identifying vulnerable people in our society and ensuring they get the support they need to maintain a thriving community support network.
	<u>Activities:</u> Clubs, societies, volunteering and mechanisms to strengthen the community and look after the vulnerable. To provide improved community facilities which support local groups especially in the areas of community buildings, telecommunications and meeting areas.
Environment:	<u>Scope:</u> To maintain the distinctiveness of the parish and its identity by protecting the natural and built environment for the enjoyment of future generations and to explore opportunities to create new areas of recreational open space.
	<u>Activities:</u> The quality of our built and natural environment, its protection, enhancement and improvement.
Housing and Planning:	<u>Scope:</u> Support limited expansion in the parish and involve the local community in all aspects of development through consultation and active involvement to determine new housing needs.
	<u>Activities:</u> The quantity, quality, location and provision of new dwellings in the parish.
Business and Commerce:	<u>Scope:</u> Creating opportunities to work and trade locally.
	<u>Activities:</u> Seek to examine controlled expansion of existing employment opportunities or new opportunities if scope exists; maintain and, where practical, enhance the existing facilities of retail and eating and drinking.
Sport and Recreation:	<u>Scope:</u> Promoting increased opportunities to get active and participate in sport.
	<u>Activities:</u> Provide new areas of open space for formal and informal sport and recreation to promote healthy living and lifestyles.
Community Safety:	<u>Scope:</u> Create an environment which promotes a feeling of safety where the perception and incidence of crime is low and where the chance of being the victim of a traffic related accident is minimised.
	<u>Activities:</u> Dealing with perceived and real safety issues, whether criminal or traffic related and working with the police, the community at large and highway authority.
Communication:	<u>Scope:</u> Keeping the community informed through a wide range of media and promoting two-way dialogue and creating the opportunity for participation in democratic processes and decision making.
	<u>Activities:</u> To improve communications through a range of activities with our website and social media at its core to provide residents with a means to be consulted on village affairs.
Transport:	<u>Scope:</u> Moving around in the parish on foot, bike, horse, car or bus and ascertaining the wider infrastructure requirements.
	<u>Activities:</u> Maintain and improve existing accessibility by bus, walking and cycling. Introduce 20mph zones on streets. Improve maintenance of our highways, bridleways, pathways and verges. Investigate the infrastructure of power, water and drainage.

10 FUTURE DEVELOPMENT; PROMOTING INCLUSIVE GROWTH

10.1 Addressing Our Children's Future

Currently West Bergholt benefits from a range of assets and an environment which suits many in the community, but the forward nature of our plan means we need to examine whether the “place” aspects and the “people” aspects are indeed well matched in the future. We have decided to do this by looking at the people aspects first, and to assist with this we have made some generalisations. No one family group or indeed single person household, has the same needs or characteristics but by looking at typical needs we can tease out at a strategic level the issues that need to be addressed.

To promote community wellbeing and village sustainability as a whole the needs of separate but often interlinked family types need to be identified.

The various family types are defined as;

- Younger & Developing Families - Early Years Play, Pre & Primary Schooling
- Developing Families with Teenagers
- Mature Families & Couples - Adult Households
- Single Adult Living
- Senior Years - Largely Retired Residents

We have further looked at the eight categories of our plan and made an assessment of the likely differing needs of each household type. This in turn gives an appreciation of the various facilities that will be needed in future years.

10.2 Matching Strategic Needs to Family Type Requirements

Presently West Bergholt has the assets needed to provide the facilities to support the current needs of the community. To a large degree this has come about as a direct result of the generosity and good planning by village

benefactors. For example, Mr O.G. Orpen, (director of Daniell's brewery) whose estate paid for the village hall known as the Orpen Memorial Hall in 1938 and Mr T.D. Daniell who, in 1939, donated 4 acres adjacent to it for recreational use and now has an adult football pitch, tennis courts and children's play area. Similarly, the Poor's Land (c. 5 acres) and the village allotments (c. 6 acres) were donated by other benefactors.

Future benefactors with a willingness and financial ability to provide additional community assets such as those provided under the estates of Mr Orpen or Mr Daniell are most unlikely. In addition, other facilities such as the various housing stock, the transport services, our roads, footpaths and pavements, the shops and business facilities have largely been either market-led, developed over hundreds of years or planned centrally by upper tier bodies.

Given the above and the seemingly endless directions in which our plan could lead us across our eight categories, the strategic building blocks of our plan can emerge in a way that makes sense not only in their own right but which will best suit the needs of the community. This will help enable a sustainable outcome for all.

10.2.1 Younger and Developing Families – Early Years Play; Pre and Primary Schooling

Whilst the needs of this family group are currently adequately provided for through existing facilities in the village, some facilities are operating at maximum capacity. In particular, affordable housing for young families is scarce and as a result some may be forced to move away from the village even though other facilities such as the school would normally attract them.

Children's play areas are located at; The Lorkin Daniell Playing Field; Earle Havard Playpark by Pirie Road; Pocket Park by Maltings Park. All three play areas are constrained by limited space for future expansion in their current

form. Pre-school facilities are provided by Bluebells which almost fully occupies the Orpen and John Lampon Halls during the term time week days. A lack of storage space means that equipment used by this award-winning group needs to be moved on a daily basis and stored outside the Halls.

Heathlands Primary School was extended to provide 50 additional spaces in 2014 for the children of West Bergholt and neighbouring villages. It is assumed this expansion will meet the schooling needs for the next 15 years. However, no provision was made to ease the congestion caused by parents bringing their children to school by car.

Footways and cycle paths to and around the school are in need of improvement. A new footway on the south side of Colchester Road adjacent to the school would be highly beneficial to help promote walking to school and ease parking during school time. Dedicated cycle paths would help parents feel more confident in allowing their children to cycle to school.

Summary of future needs:

- Improved provision of affordable housing
- Expansion and updating of children's play facilities
- Measures to improve traffic safety around the school
- New footways and cycle paths to change means of travel to school

10.2.2 Developing Families with Teenagers

State-funded Secondary Schools, Grammar and Further Education Colleges, are available outside of the village with some public transport available to and from Colchester schools. There are independent schools in the local area but also a small number of parents organise transport to schools in areas such as Ipswich. A few teenagers do cycle to school during term time when light and weather permits although there are no dedicated cycle paths between West Bergholt and Colchester or Lexden. Various clubs and sporting activities are available for teenagers including football, cricket, tennis, scouts, girl guides, etc. Bergholt Youth Group (BYG) operates from within the village halls and weather permitting uses the Multi Use Games

Area and Lorkin Daniell Playing Field. This group has nearly 100 members and meets fortnightly. Holding additional club nights depends on attracting a sufficient pool of volunteer helpers. A youth shelter was constructed on the Lorkin Daniell playing field by the Parish Council and Essex County Council in 2012 but there is a growing need and demand to provide a venue, such as a café, for young people to meet socially. Unfulfilled demand has existed over a number of years for a zip wire to be provided however lack of suitable space and funding has meant this has not come to fruition. Facilities for adults within this group are met through clubs and recreational pursuits in the village. Neither an indoor nor outdoor gymnasium exists in the village nor is there a swimming pool. Adequate number of pubs, and restaurants exist to meet the needs of the future.

Summary of future needs:

- Provision of a venue with the facility for young people to meet socially
- An expansion and upgrading of sports facilities and opportunities.

10.2.3 Mature Families and Couples, Adult Households

As West Bergholt is deemed a desirable place to live many younger adults continue to live in the village, sometimes with their parents, as they grow up and parents tend to stay in their family homes when children leave. For those wishing to downsize it is often not easy to find alternative suitable accommodation. Shops, a Post Office and pharmacy provide an invaluable service and residents consider themselves fortunate to have a well appreciated doctor's surgery. A pleasant environment is important to this group and so open spaces, including the allotments, walks and woods need to be well maintained. Facilities for adults within this group are met through clubs and recreational pursuits in the village but these need to be expanded and well publicised.

Summary of future needs:

- Maintain and develop the pleasant environment provided by the village open spaces.

- Improve sports facilities and encourage opportunities for involvement in a full range of activities

10.2.4 Single Adult Living

Some living accommodation exists to meet single adult requirements and is provided through flats and apartments in various locations including the Truman Building in Maltings Park. Many of the facilities needed for this group match those defined above, but, in particular, there is a need to encourage involvement in clubs, societies and sports activities. At present the village has adequate pubs and restaurants but an alternative venue for meeting socially, especially for single adults, would be desirable.

10.2.1.1 Summary of future needs:

- Encourage opportunities for involvement in a full range of activities
- Provision of a venue with a facility to meet socially

10.2.5 Senior Years, Largely Retired Residents

Whilst some property downsizing does occur, many in this category choose to remain in the original family home. Sometimes there is a reluctance to leave the home where the family grew up and in other cases there is a lack of suitable or affordable senior years housing. Bungalows are sought after and desirable throughout the village and often change hands very quickly. Other features in the village currently that are relevant to this group include:

- There is no sheltered accommodation within the village which houses a resident warden.
- Sufficient clubs and societies exist to meet most needs but may need to be better publicised.
- An adequate public transport system provides the means to shop in the town centre or to travel further afield if desired.
- A well-developed Care Network involving volunteers provides transport for those that need it, generally for medical appointments.
- A local doctors' surgery and pharmacy provides vital services for this group of residents.

As a caring society it is essential that vulnerable residents in this group, especially those without local family and friends, are supported. This will be achieved in an appropriate way through the various volunteer and professional groups which exist, and which would naturally come into contact with vulnerable people through their work programmes and initiatives.

Summary of future needs:

Make the village “senior friendly” both by providing a safe environment and sufficient well publicised recreational activities.

- Ensuring an adequate supply of appropriate accommodation
- Maintaining an efficient Care Network, well supported by volunteers
- Providing good appropriate communications with all senior citizens, especially the lonely and vulnerable.



Matching Strategic Needs to Family Type Requirements & Prioritisation

Category	Younger Families Pre school	Developing Families	Mature families	Single adult living	Senior Years (largely retired residents)
Village society & community	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓✓
Environment	✓	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Housing & planning	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓✓
Business & commerce	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓

Sports & recreation	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓
Community Safety	✓✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
Communications	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓
Transport, highways & infrastructure	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓✓

✓✓✓ Highly relevant ✓✓ Moderately relevant ✓ Minor relevance

11 STATUTORY AND NON-STATUTORY ASPECTS

11.1 Components of the Neighbourhood Plan

It is realised that Neighbourhood Plans although part of the planning system must also inspire the wider community, and so each of our strategy elements has been examined in terms of how it affects three important aspects:

- Matters affecting land use: aspects of the plan which change “place” through new land uses are a statutory planning matter in the main and so these are shown on our plans and maps and articulated in each section.
- Matters which may or may not affect land use but which certainly require formal discussion are covered by the Planning Policies, again articulated in each section.
- Projects and Initiatives: those activities which are largely Community Ambitions are listed in each section separately.

This Neighbourhood Plan will thus contain development and use of land policies, but that, as part of that process and through engaging with the community, many other matters have emerged and these are captured as Community Ambitions.

11.2 How the Plan takes the strategy in action

In the chapters that follow each of the elements is examined to ascertain what Planning Policies are needed to guide either development proposals or what Community Ambitions are needed to bring about improvements to people or place aspects where the emphasis is what the community can achieve in concert with others rather than with developers.

In ascertaining the policy basis, the following thought process has been employed:

Stage	Output
One	What the base line situation is. This evidence base is crucial to understand the starting point for assessing needs. The evidence comes from a number of sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Databases, inventories and reports already in existence and readily available. • Surveys which have been undertaken during the Neighbourhood Plan’s production, these may be factual or public perceptions.
Two*	With the evidence base established the Strategy then passes through the following stages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define issues & opportunities • Define options • Define priorities
Three	Produce a robust set of policies. There will be two types of policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Policy and/or • Community Ambition

* See SWOTs under each Policy section

11.3 Sources of Information

The Plan is evidence led, through each stage. In order to signpost and document the route, the following reports and summaries are available in the Appendix 2 to the Neighbourhood Plan document. These are listed below under the same headings of the table:

Stage	Evidence
One: Baseline Information	West Bergholt Village Appraisal 1998
	Parish Plan 2008
	Village Design Statement 2009
	RCCE Community Profile of West Bergholt
	West Bergholt Position Statement
	Consultation Report 2018 (Baseline Surveys)
	Other useful background evidence
Two: Opportunities, Options and Priorities	Consultation Report 2018 (Issues and Options)
	West Bergholt Housing Needs Survey 2015
	Housing Sites Allocation Appraisal 2018
	Emerging Infrastructure Priorities
Three: Compliance and Policy Formulation	Consultation Report 2018 (Draft Neighbourhood Plan)
	Consultation Report for Reg 15/16 (incorporates responses to Reg 14 consultation) 2018
	Basic Condition Statement 2018

12 POLICIES AND COMMUNITY AMBITIONS

The Plan from here on in contains the detailed policies and community ambitions that will help to meet the community's vision for West Bergholt and address key issues that have been raised during consultation. Planning Policies relate to the use and development of land. Community Ambitions relate to the wider aspirations which the community can achieve through their own efforts.

The Planning Policies (in the blue tables) will be taken into account by the local planning authority, Colchester Borough Council and other decision makers when determining planning applications and appeals. Development proposals will also be determined with reference to national policy and the development plan. In addition, these Planning Policies will guide developers and prospective applicants.

The Community Ambitions (in the green tables) form the basis of a more community focused set of initiatives which will largely replace those in the Parish Plan.

Each chapter that follows is preceded by an introductory section, which outlines the background and intent of the policy and community ambition and refers to relevant evidence contained in the supporting documents and other evidence base material, which is listed in Appendix 2.

The website also provides copies of or links to the remaining evidence base documents or explains where they are available. In all of the analysis we have

asked ourselves "Is what we have fit for the next 15 years?" To help with this a SWOT analysis has been undertaken.



13 VILLAGE SOCIETY & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

13.1 Objectives

- To improve and extend opportunities for all age groups and the wider community to take part in a wide range of activities.
- To identify vulnerable people or groups in our society and ensure they get the support they need.
- To promote and raise awareness of opportunities to increase participation and to maintain a thriving community support network.
- To improve facilities for the community.



13.2 Background & Intent

The village is the principal location for facilities for individuals, groups, clubs and societies to meet and take part in recreational and social activities. As a result, in part due to the generous benefactor- provided bequests in the

early to mid-part of the 20th century. There have been an ample provision of meetings areas at the Orpen Memorial Hall Complex supported by those at local churches, as well as large areas of open space at the Lorkin Daniell Field, Poor's Land, Village Green and the Allotments. A large number of individuals and clubs and societies use these facilities on a regular basis.

However, in understanding the future requirements of the village and parish it has been instructive to understand pressures that are being felt and whether these assets are well placed to provide for the future particularly as the village expands. These pressures have emerged through examining various information sources and through surveys.

13.3 Evidence

13.1.2 *Community Buildings*

There is a large village hall complex available to hire which is managed in Trust by the Parish Council. Part of the building is licenced to West Bergholt Social Club open to all members of the community to join.

The halls and rooms are booked up weeks, if not months, in advance and for some uses such as indoor sports are not really adequate for all the purposes asked of it. There is neither a Parish Office nor Community Hub and therefore the village lacks a central point of contact and co-ordination thus relying on contact being made through email and suchlike. Elsewhere other meeting places are available to hire at the Scout Hut and Church Halls.

Feedback from surveys highlighted these limitations and there was support for expansion where this was affordable and practical.

To support further use by the community new or expanded facilities at the Orpen Memorial Hall complex will be required.

13.1.3 *Community Facilities*

Away from buildings there are the allotments, 3 play areas, two sports fields and a multi-use hard court area; the recreational areas are predominantly used for football and tennis. There are regular users of all these facilities which are very well established.



Overall there are currently plots for future allotment holders but little opportunity for further uses of the sports areas. This matter is picked up later in the document, however the feeling is that some consolidation is required to allow for informal use of open spaces as distinct from regular uses. Major drawback for sport includes the lack of changing facilities and toilets.

Of concern is also the rapidly diminishing space in the churchyard for burials and this is expected to become exhausted within two years.

13.1.4 *Community Activities*

There is a wide range of clubs, societies and interest groups and more being set up all the time. The main issue here is over-use of the hall facilities which is covered above. Although the clubs and societies cover children up to age 15 and middle and older age groups, there is a lack of activities for older teenagers and younger adults. Central to promotion of these activities is the use of information systems, electronic booking arrangements and the link up with the website and social media. As a further example of the pressure



on facilities the extensive use of the hall complex by the Bluebell Pre-school group is testament to the need to enable daytime activities to be catered for as the population ages and older residents endeavour to find places to meet up.

13.2 Protection of Community Facilities

Guidance regarding the information that should be provided within a combined Marketing Assessment and Viability Report to support proposals

where a change of use of land and buildings is proposed which would result in a loss of existing community uses.

In the event that community facilities become vacant and there is no realistic prospect of the premises being occupied for the existing, or an alternative community use, planning proposals for redevelopment or development requiring a change of use will not be supported unless accompanied by a combined Marketing Assessment and Viability Report undertaken by a professional agency with acknowledged experience and competency in marketing similar facilities. The combined Marketing Assessment and Viability Report should include:

- Viability evidence, demonstrating that the premise is no longer viable in its existing use (which considers the ability of the community use to continue to trade) and evidence which considers the ability of the site to accommodate an alternative cultural or leisure use, meeting the needs of the local area.
- A survey providing details of other local community uses in the Parish to determine whether there is a need in the neighbourhood area which could reasonably be accommodated in the existing premises, including details of consultation with public and community service providers to establish their needs and accommodation requirements.
- Copies of all marketing literature and details of individuals and organisations contacted regarding the availability of the premises; and
- Expressions of interest received, with full reasons given as to why any offer was not accepted.

The combined Marketing Assessment and Viability Report should demonstrate that;

- The property has been freely exposed to the market covering a continuous period of not less than 12 months; and that

- The site has been marketed at a realistic price or rent. (The sales price/rent should reflect rates generally paid by community groups or voluntary organisations within Colchester Borough Council's administrative area).

If requested, developers should be prepared to fund the entire costs associated with a peer review of any combined Marketing Assessment and Viability Report, by an independent valuer appointed by the Borough Council, at the Council's sole discretion, to independently assess the veracity of any combined Marketing Assessment and Viability Report submitted in support of such proposals.

For replacement facilities, applicants must demonstrate these are of the same standard or better than those lost, and that the new location will be easily reached by existing users of the facility.

13.3 Summary SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A great number of clubs and societies which cater for a wide range of interests. • A good community spirit which encourages residents to volunteer to support clubs and promote village activities. • A range of social opportunities for retired people • A thriving Youth Group for 10-14-year olds which meets fortnightly run by local volunteers. • An oversubscribed School and Pre-school • Local doctor's surgery • A well-supported variety of village shops including a hairdressers & Post Office. • Allotments right in the heart of the village. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting areas are nearly always fully booked some time in advance. • Poor or patchy broadband service. • Public toilet facilities lacking in the village. • No community focal point, coffee shop or informal meeting area. • Facilities for older children and young adults are lacking. • St Mary's churchyard almost full. • No Parish Council administration centre.

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further development of community facilities at the Orpen Memorial Hall complex. • Provision of a centralised, coordinated booking system for rooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced village interaction and lack of village cohesion • Increasing social isolation particularly for certain age groups.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce enhanced and faster broadband service for the whole village. • Provision of a community focal point. • Toilet facilities for users of recreational areas. • A coffee shop. • Enlarged children's play areas e.g. adventure playground. • Provision of a new cemetery or burial ground. • Provide Parish Council administrative centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closure of clubs and societies as a result of lack of volunteering. • Loss of key facilities to housing. • Lack of younger volunteers as a result of West Bergholt becoming more of a dormitory village.
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13.4 The Plan's Approach

The Approach in the plan is threefold:

- to provide more buildings facilities;
- to investigate further activities for young adults;
- to seek to open a community centre not just for the Parish Council administration but also to allow an informal meeting area where residents and visitors can meet over coffee and where new facilities can be considered such as space for a community library etc.

As the objectives relate in part to the use and development of land and wider community aspirations both Planning Policies and Community Ambitions have been developed.

13.5 Policies and Community Ambitions

Policy No.	Village Society and Community Planning Policies
PP1: Protection of Community Facilities	<p>All development proposals must ensure that they do not give rise to adverse impacts on the quality of life and wellbeing of the local community and provide enhancements wherever possible and, where appropriate, promote diversity and enhance community cohesion through the provision of new multiuse facilities or contributions to existing facilities.</p> <p>The loss of existing community buildings will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated through a combined Marketing Assessment and Viability Report demonstrating that the property has been marketed for not less than 12 months and confirming that there is no longer an effective demand for the existing use within the locality and there is no viable alternative community use for the site, meeting the needs of the local area.</p>
PP2: New Community Facilities	<p>Proposals that improve the quality and/or range of community facilities, particularly those for younger and older age groups, will be supported provided that the development is of a scale appropriate to the needs of the locality and is conveniently accessible for residents of the village. Provision for a parish office/community hub will be supported.</p>

Ambition No.	Village Society and Community Ambitions
CA1: Community Buildings	<p>In order to provide for the needs of the parish the village hall complex consisting of the Orpen and John Lampon Halls will be further enhanced as a community resource. Further community buildings may be considered should opportunities present themselves.</p>
CA2: Societies & Clubs	<p>Village societies, clubs and other community-based organisations will be actively promoted through a variety of communication channels. New community members will be informed how to participate in village and parish life through all available media channels, both electronic and print based.</p>

14 ENVIRONMENT

14.1 Objectives

- To maintain the distinctiveness of the parish and its identity by protecting, conserving and enhancing the natural and built environment for the enjoyment of future generations.
- To explore opportunities to create new areas of open space.
- To integrate new areas of development into the environment in a way which complements the built and natural environment.

14.2 Background & Intent

Situated on the edge of the Colne valley on a hill rising from St Botolph's Brook, the Parish is part of an attractive landscape with a mixture of arable and dairy farms extending from the curtilage of the village itself. Within the village are areas of open and recreational space and allotments and although there is a mixture of urban form the village has a good proportion of historic and grade listed buildings. Both rural and urban environments throughout the parish are valued by our community. There is no doubt that the village and its setting within a very rural parish combined with its degree of separation from Colchester makes the area a very desirable place to live, resulting in pressure on the environment.

So, whereas the environment is generally well maintained there are aspects which need careful attention if future generations are to continue to enjoy it. These may be classified as areas where protection is needed, enhancements to quality of man-made and natural environments and accessibility to environments.

14.3 Evidence

14.3.1 *Open Spaces*

Open space in the parish is predominantly sited in the village where the recreational areas (when not used for sporting activities) are available for walking, jogging and exercising. There is a fragment of ancient heath in front of the village school as well. Due to the way that development has blended in with the environment these areas are attractively lined with mature hedges and tree planting, some of which are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) which overflows into neighbouring streets creating natural walking routes which reinforce the feeling of being in a rural area despite the expansion of the village to over 3000 inhabitants. The main issue over recent years is that the majority of the recent housing developments that have been built have not made provision for further open space. An aspect that was picked up in the Parish Plan was that biodiversity action plans are required for the open spaces and allotment areas and especially the Heath notwithstanding the need for these to continue to serve sports uses and cater for informal recreation.

14.3.2 *The Landscape Surrounding the Village*

The community surveys demonstrated a strong affection for the surrounding landscape, the high quality of which is demonstrated in the Indicative Views (Map CA7 and photos of views in Appendix 2C). For example, on the west and south-west approaches to the village, the topography changes and land slopes down to the Colne Valley which can be reached by numerous footpaths which are extensively used by residents. The area also contains Hillhouse Wood an area of ancient woodland purchased by the community for the Woodland Trust who maintain it with the assistance of a "Friends" group of local volunteers. Although the overall area has general protection by Colchester Borough Council countryside

policies, there is a need for a careful mix of improved access, good husbandry and only allowing development of a sympathetic type which respects this special landscape setting.



14.3.3 *Urban Character*

This plan has followed the advice provided by Historic England on their website concerning *Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment* and the listed buildings are adequately protected by current planning legislation from either wholesale change or unsympathetic extensions.

The village has the greatest concentration of housing in the parish and despite the rather unsympathetic non-indigenous styles which have appeared of late, many of the buildings are distinctive and have a definite Essex look due to the use of local materials and design. Local distinctiveness is an important part of Essex's heritage and this is greatly valued as indicated in the draft Neighbourhood Plan survey of 2016 when 88% of respondents supported the concept of declaring and protecting 'Character areas' from degradation. The Character area, "the Lanes", which has many of the older

village buildings, is a prime example of where protection from unsympathetic development must be provided. (see Map PP5)

However, with regards to Heritage Assets, our Community Ambition CA4 is an aspiration that will be guided by the CBC Development Policy DP14: Historic Environment Assets and Core Strategy UR2.

In addition, various vernacular styles are discernible and have been included in the Village Design Statement. Developers are encouraged to respect these building styles, when designing new dwellings or when householders are considering extensions to their properties. Unfortunately, some developments, such as the Mumford and Pirie Road estates, have tended not to include adjacent enhancements to the streetscape which would include features such as seating and paved areas as well as tree planting and landscaping

14.3.4 *Informal Recreation*

Great use is made of the many footpaths leading from the village to all other parts of the parish, especially The Essex Way which in this part of Essex links the neighbouring parish area of Fordham to the west and Great Horkesley to the east. There is a general lack of bridleways and few dedicated cycle ways. It is an ambition to recreate the circular walking and cycling guides which help people navigate their way around the village to enjoy the many historic and attractive features that exist.

14.3.5 *Environmental Stewardship*

With the loss of certain public services which the community used to take for granted comes the need for environmental stewardship. The village has the services of three handymen who attend to vegetation management as well as picking up litter and making running repairs to communal gates and fencing. This is an ever-expanding area of the Parish Council's work and care will be needed with new development to ensure that future housing areas are afforded a similar level of stewardship. Funding these "village wardens" is a constant concern.

14.3.6 *Local Green Spaces and Green Infrastructure*

Local green spaces can help to provide social, economic and environmental benefits, indeed some of the community and environmental benefits of local green spaces in West Bergholt include:

- Providing such in the public realm, where social interaction can take place;
- Providing pitches and facilities for sports and physical activity;
- Providing habitats for wildlife and natural corridors;
- Providing flexible space for recreation and local cultural events;
- Providing an attractive setting and outlook for surrounding residential properties;
- Providing part of the character and setting of historic buildings.

Consistent with advice from the National Planning Policy Framework, the Local Green Spaces designated in this Plan comprise green space which is:

- in reasonably close proximity to the village;
- demonstrably special to the village and holds a particular local significance;
- local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

The sites to be designated as Local Green Space, referenced as LGS, are as listed below and as shown on Map PP4:

LGS1 - Lorkin Daniell Field

LGS2 - Poor's Land

Green infrastructure is the network of green spaces, river systems and numerous other environmental features in the Parish that are also vital to the sustainability of West Bergholt. It includes the River Colne and St Botolph's Brook.

West Bergholt's green infrastructure also includes the play parks, the playing field and Poor's Land, large domestic gardens, the village green, woodland, scrub and heathland, wetlands, road corridors, pedestrian paths,

rights of way, the allotments, cemeteries and churchyards, be they in private or public ownership and whether or not they are publicly accessible.

All green spaces and Local Green Spaces in the Parish form part of West Bergholt's green infrastructure.

However, to protect, enhance and increase the village's green infrastructure a separate policy will be developed, respecting the landscape, character and distinctiveness of West Bergholt, for the benefit of its people and wildlife.

14.3.7 *Local Wildlife Sites*

There are ten Local Wildlife Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation within the area which are protected within the local planning system. They are:

Co61 - Wood near Fordham Place

Co63 - Hillhouse Wood

Co65 - West Bergholt Wet Woods (including Aldercar Woods)

Co69 - Spring Wood

Co70 - Stitching Wood

Co71 - Grove Wood

Co72 - West Bergholt Hall Church

Co77 - West Bergholt Heath

Co79 - West Bergholt Church

Co87 - Spring Grove

14.3.8 *Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS)*

The Essex Coast is rich and diverse and has many European protected sites. There are a number of Local Plans in preparation in Essex which seek to deliver a significant number of homes over the coming 15-20 years. These new homes have a potential to bring new visitors to sensitive coast areas, resulting in potential impacts on protected sites both individually and in combination through recreational disturbance.

As a consequence, Natural England in September 2017 advised that 11 districts/boroughs Councils across Essex should jointly prepare an Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS). The strategy sets a strategic approach to identifying the scale of recreational disturbance to Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and Ramsar sites along the Essex Coast and proposes measures to mitigate impacts.

14.3.9 *Flooding and Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs)*

The village of West Bergholt in its elevated position is within an area designated by the Environment Agency as Flood Zone 1, being an area with a low probability of flooding. The exception is to the south east and south west boundaries to the Parish, to the banks of the River Colne and St Botolph's Brook, which not by coincidence are in Flood Zone 3.

It is not thought that any development site will be situated in anything other than Flood Zone 1, however, if it was then it would require its own flood risk assessment.

Where appropriate, development sites will be expected to be provided with their own sustainable urban drainage system (SuDS) as an alternative way to manage surface water by reducing or delaying rainwater run-off.

They aim to mimic the way rainfall drains naturally rather than conventional piped methods, which can cause problems such as flooding, pollution or

damage to the environment. SuDS is as a sustainable and natural way of controlling surface water run-off. Soakaways are commonly used SuDS features but so are permeable surfaces and filter drains, green roofs and swales integrating with the landscape design to add amenity for the community as well as aiding biodiversity.



14.4 Summary of SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surrounded by open countryside. • Attractive open farmland • Protected woodland and trees. • The Colne Valley. • Rural open spaces. • Some historic and listed buildings. • Historic character areas in residential neighbourhoods. • Separation from Colchester's urban sprawl. • Area of wild heathland in the centre of the village. • Three ponds of differing ecological importance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time consuming and professional management of rural areas and open spaces required. • Litter and fly-tipping. • Lack of bridleways. • Legacy of poor-quality urban planning of previous large developments. • Need for biodiversity action plans for open spaces. • Dog fouling.

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the available amount of public open space especially where new development is proposed. • Enhancing our environment through planting and urban realm improvements. • Protecting vulnerable environments through community action. • Improved access to rural environments through enhanced public rights of way (PROW). • Sympathetic management of open spaces to promote wildlife. • All planting programmes undertaken to enhance the natural & visual environment. • Developing relationships with local land & property owners to enhance the natural, visual environment (hedges & verges). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern that future development proposals will adversely affect the urban and rural environments that we all enjoy. • Natural landscape may degrade over time if not managed. • Overdevelopment leading to lack of wildlife corridors in the village. • Invasive species-related diseases altering the landscape for the poorer.

14.5 The Plan's Approach

The approach to this area of the plan is very much seeking to ensure that new development is able to make a positive contribution to the environment either through its design or through planning contributions to the upkeep of the environment.

As the objectives relate in part to the use and development of land and wider community aspirations both Planning Policies and Community Ambitions have been developed.

14.6 Policies and Community Ambitions

Policy No.	Environment Planning Policies
PP3: Open Spaces	Development proposals that ensure new open spaces are intrinsic to their proposals and not designated as single purpose use but deliver multiple functions and benefits, which link to the green infrastructure network, through green corridors, cycle or footpaths and demonstrate environmental gains will be supported.
PP4: Local Green Spaces	The following areas designated as Local Green Space, are shown on Proposals Map PP4: LGS1 - Lorkin Daniell Field LGS2 - Poor's Land Proposals for any development on Local Green Spaces will be resisted other than in very special circumstances.
PP5: Character Area	The "Character Area" designated on Map PP5, which reflects the built local distinctiveness of Essex's heritage, will be protected from degradation. Development proposals will be expected to respect its features and character in relation to the scale, design and setting of any development.
PP6: Trees and Hedgerows	Development proposals which conserve trees and/or hedgerows will be supported. Where development proposals would necessitate the loss of such features, appropriate mitigation will be supported, subject to there being no protective designations in place.
PP7: Natural Environment	<p>Development proposals which provide protection and where appropriate enhance biodiversity by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Protecting designated sites, protected species and ancient and species-rich hedgerows, grasslands and woodlands; and b) Preserving ecological networks, and the migration and transit of flora and fauna; and c) Protecting ancient trees or trees of arboricultural value, or ancient woodlands; and d) Promoting the mitigation, preservation, restoration and recreation of wildlife habitats, and the protection and recovery of priority species; and e) Providing a net gain in flora and fauna; and f) Adopting best practice in sustainable urban drainage with development proposals incorporating the provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) unless it can be demonstrated to be technically unfeasible, will be supported. <p>Proposals which demonstrate that ecological considerations have been properly assessed in relation to likely impacts and where appropriate proportionate mitigation measures are agreed, will be supported.</p>

Policy No.	Environment Planning Policies
PP8: Recreational disturbance Avoidance & Mitigation Strategy (RAMS)	All residential development within the zones of influence of Habitat Sites will be required to make a financial contribution towards mitigation measures, as detailed in the Essex Coast RAMS, to avoid adverse in-combination recreational disturbance effects on Habitat Sites. In the interim period, before the Essex Coast RAMS is completed, all residential development within the zones of influence will need to deliver all measures identified (including strategic measures) through project level HRAs, or otherwise, to mitigate any recreational disturbance impacts in compliance with the Habitat Regulations and Habitats Directive.

Ambition No.	Environment Community Ambitions
CA3: Streetscapes	Streetscapes will be enhanced through planting and good verge and hedge management.
CA4: Heritage Assets	Any changes to heritage assets will be expected to be carried out sympathetically so that their character and appearance is preserved or enhanced proportionally.
CA5: Green Infrastructure	New areas of green infrastructure will be incorporated within an appropriate maintenance plan. All areas of green infrastructure will be enhanced through a biodiversity plan which seeks to improve the conditions for wildlife.
CA6: Countryside Access	Access to the countryside will be improved through use of the existing public rights of way network
CA7: Indicative Views	The views indicated on Map CA7 provide examples of the quality of the natural environment around the Parish that are highly valued by the community and therefore will be protected and, wherever possible, enhanced.



15 HOUSING AND PLANNING

15.1 Objectives

- To support expansion to meet the identified needs of the parish.
- To involve the local community in all aspects of development planning through consultation and participation.
- To provide for a mixture of tenure type reflecting the housing needs of the community.
- To conserve and protect the existing character and environmental setting so that new development is satisfactorily integrated into its surroundings and new residents can take advantage of the characteristics of our location.

15.2 Background & Intent

West Bergholt is an attractive place to live due to the surrounding countryside combined with accessibility to larger towns, travel hubs and employment areas. There are many long-term residents of the village, including families going back several generations.

There is a growing elderly population and house prices are higher than the national average. Older residents do not wish to move from the village, but a number would like to move to smaller homes that are more suitable for their circumstances. As a result, some remain in larger homes that could be more suitable for family accommodation.

Housing is split between the original irregular pattern of housing in the Lanes area of the village with the newer styles of estate type development characteristic of the 1960's, 70's and 80's.

15.3 Evidence

15.3.1 *Tenure type and demand for housing*

There is a long-standing need for affordable housing for local people, particularly for young adults wishing to live independently and for young families.

Consultations have shown that residents want West Bergholt to remain a village and that its character should not be harmed by inappropriate new housing development, particularly that which might add to traffic and parking problems around the village.

Yet the majority of residents accept the need for new homes. There is a desire for a mixture of housing types, with highest support for small family homes for sale followed by affordable homes for local people to rent, and lowest support for large family homes for sale.

Residents state that good design is important and new houses should not have a harmful impact on existing homes.

Overall there are a number of aspects to consider here including tenure type, number of dwellings required, wider sustainability issues and pressure from outside the village. As the population gradually ages, there is a need for limited housing to support new families, either from within the village or from outside. This helps maintain the balance of the age pyramid. Secondly there is a need to identify the right balance of housing type, and thirdly because there is little room inside the current settlement boundary there is a need to consider changes to its boundary.

There are currently 1500 dwellings in the parish with planning permission in place for a handful more (Nov 2018). The majority of homes are owner occupied.

The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure a supply of sufficient homes to meet local needs and contribute to the retention of a sustainable community. An appropriate housing mix must suit elderly residents as well as first time buyers and those needing affordable homes. Valued parts of the landscape will be protected by building as far as possible on brownfield sites or sites where development will not have a harmful impact on the countryside.

There is limited space for new development within the settlement boundary and many houses within the area have inadequate parking facilities, leading to on-street parking.

Residents value the countryside and wish to protect it from inappropriate development.

15.3.2 *Village Design Statement*

The Parish Council produced a Village Design Statement (VDS) in 2011 as a product of consultation with the community and as a derivative document of the successful Parish Plan. It demonstrated how, by employing best practice, it was possible to improve and create West Bergholt as a place of quality and identity. New buildings designed to the VDS contributed to the diversity and individuality of the village, while reflecting local heritage and character.

The VDS was then adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by Colchester Borough Council and contained a detailed description of the existing character and main features of design in the village of West Bergholt and provided a guideline for how this should be respected in any new development whether it was for new buildings, extensions, alterations or changes of use.

The VDS contained 37 policies covering General Design, Sustainable Construction, Protecting Local Distinctiveness, Parking and General Streetscape Guidance with the most important strategic ones being incorporated within the general Housing Planning Policy PP10.

However, the VDS has now (2024) been removed as a supporting Neighbourhood Plan document as since 2019 Colchester City Council and national planning guidance is considered to have superseded its advice.

In addition to the VDS, the Neighbourhood Plan recognised the value of using the still widely accepted design standards, the Essex Design Guide and Building for Life 12 in shaping and assessing basic design principles to build better designed homes and neighbourhoods.

Indeed, the Neighbourhood Plan (2024) still considers both should be followed in designing homes for West Bergholt in their most current versions:

- The Essex Design Guide (EDG) has been digitally revamped to provide contemporary socio economic, environmental, and best practice guidance to interested parties in the provision of new housing.
- Building for Life 12 (noting that this has been updated as Building for a Healthy Life) is a design tool with 12 simple, easy to understand questions around which ideas can be shared and explored to help structure discussions about proposed new residential development between home builders, local authorities, communities and other stakeholders. It is ideal for facilitating local community participation in the place making process.

15.3.3 *West Bergholt's Distinctiveness*

Residents value the countryside around the village and the distinctiveness resulting from the effect of the separation created from other urban areas. In particular, the need to maintain this feeling of separation from the built-up area of Colchester was supported during the Neighbourhood Plan consultation surveys of 2013 and 2015.

Therefore, an ambition of West Bergholt's Neighbourhood Plan is to ensure West Bergholt's rural landscape, its separation from Colchester and its views over the Colne valley are protected by planning policies. A

coalescence policy is proposed (PP12) to prevent development starting to erode the “gap” between the village and the outskirts of Braiswick.

The justification for this policy is contained within two reports by Chris Blandford Associates who were appointed by Colchester Borough Council to produce them. The first is a report on Landscape Character Assessment produced in 2005 and the second is a report on Assessment of Open Countryside dated 2009. Both are cited as evidence in the publication draft of Colchester’s new Local Plan.

The 2005 report describes the landscape character areas of the Borough through a series of designations. Of relevance here is reference A5 which is entitled A5 Colne Valley Slopes which is described as having a number of key characteristics described below (italics denote direct quotes)

- *Relatively steep v-shaped valley slopes facilitate attractive and open views across and along the River corridor;*
- *Principal road network consisting of narrow tree-lined (sometimes sunken) lanes traversing the valley sides to the north and south;*
- *A mosaic of medium to large-sized irregular and regular, predominantly arable fields with medium hedgerows containing semi-mature/ mature hedgerow trees;*
- *Some larger semi-enclosed arable fields and concentrations of smaller fields with intact hedge boundaries adjacent to settlements;*

The report further describes some Key Planning and Land Management Issues including:

- *Potential pressure from urban expansions on the edge of West Bergholt, Fordham, Wivenhoe and Colchester;*

Overall the report recommends that the appropriate Landscape Strategy Objective should be to “Conserve and Enhance” which the following Landscape Planning Guidelines:

- *Ensure any new small-scale development in, or on the edges of Fordham, Wivenhoe, West Bergholt and Colchester is of an appropriate scale, form and design and uses materials which respond to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive building styles and materials;*
- *Ensure any new development on valley sides is small-scale, responds to historic settlement pattern, form and building materials;*
- *Maintain cross-valley views;*
- *Conserve views of the river and floodplain;*

In the second report Chris Blandford and Associates in section 4, builds on their earlier report on Land scape Character Assessment in 2005, and relevant sections of this report are summarised below (again italics denote direct quotes):

- Firstly, the Landscape Context:

“The medium to large-scale nucleated village of West Bergholt is situated approximately 1km to the north-west of Colchester, and the two settlements are separated by an area of open countryside (See Figure 4.1). To the south-east of this area, housing within Colchester protrudes westwards in a linear form along the B1508. Larger settled areas of Colchester lie adjacent to the A133, approximately 1.2km to the south of this built development protrusion. The A12 dual carriageway bisects the open countryside between West Bergholt and Colchester, passing north to south between the settlements broadly along the alignment of St. Botolph's Brook. The villages of Great Horkesley and Eight Ash Green are situated approximately 1.5km to the northeast and 1.35km to the south-west of West Bergholt, respectively.”

- Secondly on the evaluation of countryside character and landscape quality, the report comments:

“When travelling westwards out of Colchester along the B1508, there is a distinct sense of leaving the settlement and entering a rural landscape on account of the woodland along the settlement edge and the subsequent

sudden descent from the plateau edge to a relatively open agricultural landscape. The lack of inter-visibility and general lack of intra-visibility between the settlements contributes to a strong sense of settlement separation. Vegetation plays a primary role in restricting visibility between West Bergholt and Colchester. The topographical variation and senses of distance and openness provided by the St. Botolph's Brook valley Increases the perception of settlement separation.

The contribution made by various areas of land between Colchester and West Bergholt to the separation of settlements has been assessed below according to whether they provide a high, medium, or low contribution."

These assessment findings concluded that the gap between West Bergholt and Colchester has a High Contribution, namely that:

"The locations of the two settlements close to the edges of the plateaux overlooking the St. Botolph's Brook valley are such that there is a relatively high potential for visual coalescence of settlements. Heading westwards out of Colchester along the B1508, there is a fairly abrupt transition between the Colchester built-up area and the countryside beyond, with views of the countryside only opening up once past the tree belts alongside the A12.

There is an almost continuous belt of arable fields between the A12 and the south-eastern edge of West Bergholt. This belt of agricultural land, together with associated woodland, tree belts and hedgerows, provides a strong sense of rural character. The group of houses located some 300m west of the Colchester settlement edge are generally perceived as buildings in the open countryside on account of views obtained of nearby arable fields and their location away from Colchester on the far western side of St. Botolph's Brook valley. However, the presence of these houses set amongst trees on the valley side slopes does weaken the strength of rural character and the sense of having departed from Colchester for people travelling between the settlements.

It is the strong rural character of the land between these settlements, the topographical variation, the distinct sense of departure and arrival at the

settlement edges and the lack of intra-visibility and inter-visibility between the settlements that results in this land having a high overall contribution to the separation of settlements."

- *Finally, the report concludes:*

"any new built development.....on the land as identified as providing a high contribution to the separation of settlements is likely to seriously undermine the sense of settlement separation and the strong rural character of this predominantly arable landscape. Any new development to the west of the A12 is likely to result in visual coalescence.....and would result in diminishing sense of leaving Colchester and entering West Bergholt....."

It is therefore considered that there is ample justification for PP12 to maintain the gap between West Bergholt and Colchester.

15.4 Summary of SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Character housing areas of a mixed style, age and tenure. • Popular facilities are conveniently located for existing housing. • Existing Village Design Statement. • Village separate from Colchester by natural and man-made boundaries. • All housing areas close to attractive landscapes. • Well established village character. • Green spaces well distributed amongst housing. • Active and experienced Parish Council Planning Committee. • Dedicated & committed Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal opportunity for downsizing. • Limited opportunity for affordable housing. • Commuter village leading to overinflated property market. • Gentrification of the village affecting the availability of affordable homes.

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixture of development sites available for consideration. • Local landowners willing to contribute to the village. • Opportunity to influence own destiny with Neighbourhood Plan. • Opportunity to redress the balance of housing types. • Chance to develop housing stock for younger people. • Chance for older people to downsize and free up family properties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A tendency for new housing to be expensive, executive homes. • Land on all sides of the village vulnerable to speculative development. • Attractiveness of village leads to housing shortages. • Most new housing at inflated prices. • Most developments on small scale to avoid the requirement to build affordable homes.

15.4.1 Identifying Housing Needs

Colchester's adopted Core Strategy outlined that the Borough needs to allocate and build 19,000 homes between 2001 and 2023, an average of 830 homes a year. In line with national policy contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Council is required to ensure sufficient housing land is supplied to meet local housing needs.

The Council has developed a new Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) target for the submitted Emerging Local Plan of 920 houses a year which takes into account the requirements of the NPPF 2012; and will ensure the Borough provides a five-year supply of specific deliverable sites and identifies a supply of specific developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15.

The target of 920 homes a year reflects a comprehensive evidence base which includes the following:

- Objectively Assessed Housing Need Study produced by Peter Brett Associates (PBA) in July 2015 and updated November 2016 for Braintree, Chelmsford, Colchester and Tendring Councils.
- Review of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) work in Chelmsford, Colchester, Braintree and Tendring to bring it into compliance with the NPPF and PPG - HDH Planning and Development Ltd, December 2015.

These figures reflect the OAN of 920 dwellings per annum which has been endorsed by the Local Plan Inspector (letter dated 27th June 2018). Accordingly, it is considered that the figure is fit for purpose despite the publication of the revised NPPF and PPG, updated population projections and the current consultation on the standard methodology.

Colchester Borough Council has determined the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for the district using projected growth figures provided by the Government and in its Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA), CBC set an OAN figure for the district of 11,152. The emerging District Plan provides for 7,210 for existing commitments and 7,853 new allocations, totalling 15,063 over the Plan period.

A target for West Bergholt, (considered by Colchester Borough Council as a Sustainable Settlement as it has a sufficient population base and a range of community facilities and infrastructure to support appropriate growth), has been set in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan Policy SS15 in the publication draft Local Plan of 120 dwellings. This is higher than the 100 proposed during early consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan has sought to take account of the emerging Local Plan and its predicted levels of growth for the area.

15.4.2 *Housing Supply & Tenure Type*

The household Neighbourhood Plan Survey indicated over 40% preference for the following types of development:

- Starter/low cost homes for first time occupiers/young families
- Small, mixed group, developments
- Warden assisted or sheltered housing
- “Downsizing” housing

Following this, the ‘Issues & Options’ Questionnaire indicated support for around an additional 100 new dwellings, of which the majority would be ‘of type, style and numbers deemed necessary to meet the Parish’s needs.’

Then in November 2015, a full ‘Housing Needs Survey’ was commissioned from the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE). Their report indicated that 53 people had given details of different local accommodation required in the next five years and beyond. Whereas some of this could be provided by the commercial sector as houses to buy (34%), there remained a need for rental accommodation and shared ownership.

Furthermore, the timescales that this need was predicated on were:

- Next 5 years: 25 units 5 – 10 years: 28 units

The survey only covered up to 5 years or over. However, we may assume that local need would be similar between year 11 and year 15 of the plan making a total of around 75 homes needed to satisfy local need. Whereas this would accommodate local need it is reasonable to assume that some additional housing would be required from people wishing to move into the village – say a further 25 units making a total of 100 units over the 15-year lifetime of the plan. This is not inconsistent with the CBC policy SS15 and accords with the Issues and Options support by the results of village surveys. This equates to an average building rate of around 6 or 7 houses per annum.

15.4.3 *Housing Location*

A number of sites were assessed for their suitability and availability for housing development during the Plan period. The Report on the Assessment of Potential Housing Sites (see supporting documents in Appendix 2) explains the methodology used and sets out the individual assessments.

Initially with over 20 sites being put forward in the Local Plan “call for sites” there was a need to strategically sift the broad locations. Colchester Borough Council in their settlement boundary review and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group both assessed sites being proposed. Three broad areas were considered and the section below is a summary of findings taken from Colchester Borough Council’s Settlement Boundary Review.

- **Area 1 Expansion to the north east of B1508 Colchester Road** (within limits of existing built development boundaries opposite playing fields/Treble Tile pub).

Development in this area, within the limits of the existing built development to the north-west and south-east, would fill in gaps along Colchester Road. Development would be closest to the existing facilities and services in the village although there would need to be provision made for safe crossing of Colchester Road. Development in this location could also provide additional sports pitches in the same area as the existing Cricket Club Ground, with the potential to share some facilities.

- **Area 2 Expansion to the south/south-east of West Bergholt**

Development in this area could be considered to fill in gaps along the existing settlement boundary. For example, small areas of land with access off existing roads to the south of the village could be considered. However, due to identified constraints, larger scale expansion beyond the existing settlement boundary and built-up limits towards Colchester is not considered suitable.

- **Area 3 Expansion to the west of West Bergholt**

This area has been considered, similar to the areas above, as any potential development would be located around one of the three main roads in West Bergholt. Development to this side of West Bergholt would be within 400m of the main facilities in the village. However, it is not clear if access to the land is possible without taking access off Cooks Hall Road or Hall Road, which are both rural roads located at the southern and northern ends of the broad area of search.

Although the broad sifting of sites was helpful to determine an initial view, to assist a more definitive focus of where new housing might be developed, a number of principles have been devised in consultation with Colchester Borough Council, in that development:

- should only be considered if abutting the existing CBC Local Plan ‘settlement boundary’.
- should not reduce the separation of the village from Colchester.
- should not encroach on (or visually affect) the ‘area of the parish to the south east of the settlement boundary’.
- should be close to the main village amenities.
- should be able to contribute to addressing ‘Transport, Highways and Infrastructure’ needs.
- should be located such that any traffic impacts are satisfactory, or any adverse impacts are satisfactorily mitigated.
- may continue within the settlement boundary but only where a limited number of “windfall” sites present themselves.
- any development abutting the settlement boundary should provide for a mix of housing and incorporate areas of open space.
- Development should consist of smaller housing units which respect the identified needs of the community including affordable housing, housing for downsizing and starter housing.

These principles have been applied to the areas of development put forward to date as part of Colchester’s Local Plan preparation and those

sites identified as the most appropriate taking all matters into account, including CBC and community surveys and the RCCE survey, it was decided to make the appropriate allocations on two sites, and those preferred for housing development are contained in two locations off of Colchester Road, one opposite the Poor's Land and the other opposite the Treble Tile Public House.

These sites are also deemed supported in Colchester Borough Council's emerging Local Plan and the paragraphs from the latest publication draft of the Local Plan are reproduced below:

- Para 14.223 *There are a number of constraints which restrict the availability of sites suitable for development. To maintain the current settlement pattern, development will continue to be located around the three main roads with facilities located centrally where possible.*
- Para 14.224 *There is currently limited inter-visibility between Colchester and West Bergholt. However, there is a relatively high potential for visual coalescence of settlements and any new built development on land to the south of the village may undermine the sense of settlement separation. Development to the south of the village towards Colchester on Colchester Road is therefore not considered suitable due to the high potential of visual coalescence.*
- Para 14.225 *Development to the north of the village on Colchester Road/Nayland Road would extend new development away from existing key facilities and into open countryside, which is not considered sustainable.*

These sites are in the ownership of parties which have indicated their commitment to deliver housing and this is evidenced in the supporting documents (see Appendix 2).

Both sites are located in Flood Zone 1, an area with a low probability of flooding.

15.4.4 *Details of the Housing Sites*

The design and layout of the scheme should respect the semi-rural nature of the village in this location.

The site boundaries will generally follow the topography of the field boundaries.

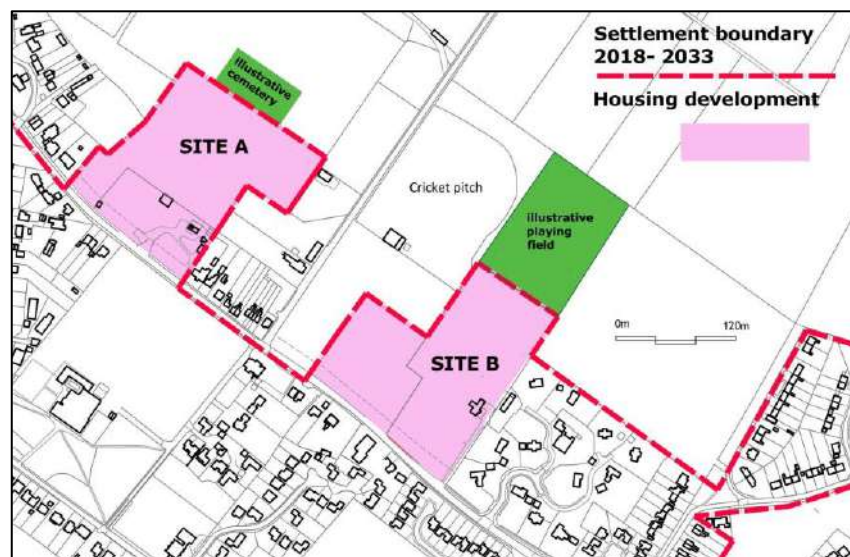
The density of the development should average about 25 dwellings per hectare to maintain the Parish's prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), by delivering well-designed, attractive and healthy places to live in.

Further, the tenure mix as discussed in Chapter 10 reflects the need for space with those wishing to downsize preferring bungalows and a garden to



tend whilst younger families desire garden space for health and socialising. This is a chance to improve on the planning mistakes of the past.

The proposed sites are shown below in pink on Map PP9/2.



In common with the wider Colchester Borough area there is a need for housing to be skewed towards the provision of 1 bed and 2 bed dwellings for housing market entrants and 3-bedroom family housing.

Given the locations one could expect new residents to be accessing the village amenities by foot, therefore appropriate treatment of Colchester Road will be essential, as will be good quality passenger waiting facilities for those wishing to travel to Colchester and towards Suffolk by bus.

Colchester Road is the main distributor road in the parish and traffic is signed to Colchester and Bures/Sudbury from either end of the parish approaches. The road carries an Annual Average Daily Traffic flow of some 4,500 vehicles. Average speeds are very high and speed surveys have recorded an average daily 85 percentile speed over 40mph in the vicinity of the junction with Nayland Road and approaching 40mph in the vicinity of the development sites.

Although the speed limit is 30mph there is only one roundabout controlled junction at Chapel Road with the remaining junctions being give way with

priority for traffic on the B1508. Due to the function of the road and the configuration of its junctions there is little control of speeds in practice and the road also carries a fair degree of heavy goods vehicles and buses. Colchester Skip Hire for example (located in Wormingford) have a licence to recycle waste materials and one of their routes in the area sees skip lorries passing through the village. Although carefully controlled by planning regulations the presence of these vehicles causes concern to residents due to the size and noise from these vehicles. Bus traffic is regular and amounts to 4 services an hour during the working day. As there are no waiting restrictions the road also attracts parking especially at weekends, making visibility poor and creating a safety hazard for all. Lastly School Lane is a location where parents access the school approaches at dropping off and picking up time exacerbating localised congestion and parking matters.

These characteristics of the road have been cited many times by residents in the parish responding to both Parish Plan and Neighbourhood Plan surveys as warranting attention and discussions with the Highways Authority are under way to arrive at a means of controlling and reducing speeds. There is an active Traffic and Safety Group looking into a wide variety of speeding and traffic safety issues in the village.

Due to the high recorded speeds and the desire to ensure good connectivity by sustainable modes and safe highway arrangements a number of improvements will be needed. This will include suitable safety and access arrangements which promote safe routes across the road towards the village and a means of calming traffic as it travels through the village on the B1508. A means of crossing Colchester Road safely is essential. New mini roundabouts at the junctions of the new development areas with Colchester Road, and a new zebra crossing sited to allow access to the rest of the village safely, including the nearby school, church and sports fields are a possibility although such measures will need to be discussed with the highway authority and the developer. It is expected that safe access and crossing facilities will be provided by the developer along with improvements to bus passenger waiting areas.

15.4.5 *Energy*

Whilst energy efficiency targets are set nationally in the Building Regulations, West Bergholt's Neighbourhood Plan will encourage developers to demonstrate how they have followed the 'energy hierarchy' in reducing energy demand before implementing renewable energy schemes or make the most of solar gain and passive cooling through the orientation, layout and design of the development.

Applicants must include a section in the design and access statement explaining how sustainability considerations have been incorporated into the development. Reference should be made to:

- How the design contributes to reducing energy use.
- Any renewable or low carbon energy technologies incorporated into the development.
- The provision of open space and the opportunities this provides for biodiversity, flood storage and people.
- Sustainable drainage systems.
- Sustainable waste management such as provision of space for recycling and composting.
- How the development promotes sustainable modes of travel.

There is much to be explored and many different ways in which the community could benefit from renewable energy using such as wind turbines, battery pods and community renewable heat initiatives. Whilst policies will be developed to encourage the use of cycling, walking and public transport - all forms of sustainable transport, the Neighbourhood Plan will also include a policy for the installation in new developments of an electrical infrastructure that will support as a minimum community charging points for electric vehicles.

15.5 The Plan's Approach

A number of policies allocates sites. Each of the site allocation policies have a number of criteria designed to ensure that new development reflects and

respects the character of West Bergholt and to enable it to integrate into the prevailing character of the locality in which it is located as identified in the Village Design Statement which helps to identify the key characteristics of our parish.

These measures will help to ensure that a high standard of development and design is achieved in West Bergholt and will discourage development that looks out of place and is poorly integrated with its surroundings.

As the objectives relate in part to the use and development of land only, Planning Policies alone have been developed.

Commentary on policies

Policies below relate to sites at Sites A and B.

The site allocation policies, together with other Planning Policies, are intended to ensure that a high quality of design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings is achieved in line with this core planning principle in the NPPF.

15.5.1 *Affordable Housing*

New housing developments will be required to include at least 30 percent affordable homes.

15.5.2 *Planning Applications*

Any development proposals for sites allocated in this Plan will need to obtain planning permission from Colchester Borough Council, which will consider the application against its own policies and national policies together with the policies of this Plan.

In the design of sites A & B, consideration may be given to how adjacent land could at some future point be accessed to provide further land for subsequent housing needs in future Neighbourhood Plan publications.

15.6 Policies

Policy No.	Housing Planning Policies
PP9: Housing Sites	<p>The settlement boundary is shown on Map PP9/1. The minimum number of dwellings to be provided over the Neighbourhood Plan period will be 120. These dwellings will be provided on Site A and Site B as shown on Map PP9/2.</p> <p>Development proposals on allocated housing sites should provide a mix of housing types and tenures to meet the demands of the local housing market and as appropriate the needs of West Bergholt and the wider Borough. Dwellings appropriate for first time buyers, homes for older people or small families will be supported.</p> <p>A mix of housing tenure will be encouraged. Subject to the viability, development proposals will be expected to deliver a proportion of affordable housing in accordance with adopted Strategic Borough wide policy.</p> <p>Landscaping will be an important and integral part of the design and layout of the scheme, including appropriate public open space. Principal roads will be designed to ensure that they are appropriate to the character of the area and to provide safe access for vehicles and pedestrian movement. Development proposals for Sites A and B with layouts designed to accommodate capacity for roads and utility services to contiguous backland to facilitate development beyond the Plan period will be supported.</p> <p>The provision of land for a cemetery and land to accommodate sports facilities adjacent to the cricket ground, shown for illustrative purposes on Map PP9/2 will be supported.</p>
PP10: Design	<p>All new development should be of a high-quality design and sustainable construction is encouraged. Account should be taken of the guidance and principles in the Neighbourhood Plan, which seeks to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness. In particular new development and any additions or extensions to existing dwellings will be expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have an acceptable visual impact on the valley sides; and • Give careful consideration to mitigating the impact on views across the village; and • Buildings must respect the character of and be in harmony with their surroundings in respect of plot width, layout, building lines, materials, height, proportion, scale and massing; and • Planning applications must show contextually the impact of their proposals on adjacent buildings by means of adequately detailed plans with accurate street elevations to avoid unacceptable adverse impact upon the amenities of the occupiers of nearby residential properties; and • Details of boundary walls, fences and gates shall reflect the character, design and materials of means of enclosure within the village to mitigate the impact of urbanisation.

Policy No.	Housing Planning Policies
PP11: Energy Hierarchy	Development proposals shall demonstrate how these have been prepared having regard to the energy hierarchy in reducing energy demand including the use of renewable energy and making the most of solar gain and passive cooling through the orientation, layout and design.
PP12: Coalescence	Development will not be supported in the area shown on Map PP12 if individually or cumulatively it would result in increasing the coalescence between West Bergholt village and Braiswick, reducing their separate identity by reducing the separation between these two settlements.
PP13: Highways Network	Proposals to develop Site A and Site B shown on Map PP9/2 and subject to speed reduction measures and accessibility improvements to be funded by the developers of Site A and Site B where appropriate, will be supported.

16 BUSINESS AND COMMERCE

16.1 Objectives

- To support local business and retain local employment.
- To encourage local employment opportunities through controlled expansion of existing employment located on, or adjacent to, the existing business parks.

16.2 Background & Intent

The main employment in the parish is a mixture of traditional farming activities and those which have evolved from diversification on existing and former farm sites; business parks which in the main consist of small multiple units of varying size and scale; more isolated businesses; healthcare; retail and leisure/entertainment and finally businesses run from home.

At the very beginning of the Neighbourhood Plan process, in 2013, the Steering Group felt it would be useful to garner the views of the community on a range of broad issues that might be relevant to the Plan. Questionnaires were produced to target residents, businesses and young people. Approximately half of the resident respondents felt that it would be helpful to encourage the controlled expansion of commercial areas to support local employment. In addition, 70% of the businesses felt that their current business premises were not going to meet their future growth needs and it was also commented on the existing need for more business units.

During 2015, the “issues and options” consultation saw 66% of respondents supporting the draft objective seeking to examine controlled expansion of existing employment opportunities etc. whilst the following draft Neighbourhood Plan survey in 2016 resulted in 92% of respondents supporting ‘Any expansion of the existing business parks is to be

sustainable, limited and appropriate for the location and associated infrastructure’.

The Neighbourhood Plan will therefore need to provide the opportunity for further employment which is likely to come from the business parks and a summary of these follows.

16.3 Evidence

16.3.1 *Pattens Yard Business Park - Nayland Road*

This is a long-established village business enterprise site, which provides mixed-use office space and storage type facilities. A number of business tenants operate from this site. The site lies on Nayland Road with little if any on-street parking occurring and vehicles are parked within the boundary of the business park. Site ownership changed in 2013 following planning and boundary rationalisation of the site. Conditions were placed on operating hours etc. at this time. In 2015 planning permission was granted for limited development of the buildings facing the entrance to the site which greatly enhanced the site appearance whilst providing expansion. This business park largely operates in harmony with the wider village community providing local mixed employment. The green space to the immediate west of the active building business area is under the same ownership. Agricultural and private land is evident on all sides to the west of Nayland Road. This site is capable of being expanded to increase and enhance village business opportunities.

16.3.2 *Armoury Farm Business Park – Armoury Road*

This is a well-established business park formed initially as a family business and has developed to accommodate mixed business types for more than 40 years. The only road to the site is Armoury Road, which starts at Colchester Road as a public road and it then becomes a private road (un-adopted by

the local authorities) at the north-east end to feed the business park and some residential housing. The condition of the private road is maintained through private investment. The site is surrounded by open space used for the stabling and exercise of horses to the west and farmland laid to crops to the north, east and south. Low-density residential homes form part of the main site with the nearest properties making use of the stable facilities. A number of small mixed and diverse businesses operate from within the industrial units located on this site. Lying to the north east of the village and on sloping ground towards the A12 this business park is capable of expansion without overly compromising the wellbeing of nearby residents. Some improvement to Armoury Road will be necessary if this site is expanded and any resulting increased traffic may have an impact on those residents that live in and off Armoury Road towards Colchester Road.

16.3.3 *Bourne Farm Business Park – Bourne Road*

A small but well-established business park located at the bottom of Bourne Road operated as a family business. The business park provides mixed business accommodation originally from a set of farm outbuildings, which have been renovated and updated over the years. Open space farmland surrounds the business park on three sides and expansion to the park in relation to open space available is possible. The area is located within the Colne Valley and any potential expansion must be considered in terms of erosion of the natural characteristics of the valley. The site lies on Bourne Road, which is fed by Chapel Lane, Queens Road and Newbridge Hill (Lexden Road). Bourne Road is an adopted road maintained by Essex County Council and in places it narrows significantly as it passes through the more densely residential areas to the west of the site towards the village core. If the site is to be considered for expansion, then traffic restrictions should be imposed for vehicular access to the site so as to retain the rural feel currently enjoyed by residents along Bourne Road. Bourne Road becomes a dead end from a private vehicle perspective once the road meets Bourne Farm. There is a public right of way footpath that continues from Bourne Farm towards Braiswick and the “Playgolf” golf course.

16.3.4 *Chancers Farm Business Park - Fossetts Lane*

This business park is a small modern conversion of former poultry sheds and provides mixed business accommodation. Open space farmland surrounds the business park on three sides and expansion to the park in relation to open space available is possible. The area is located within the Colne Valley and any potential expansion must be considered in terms of erosion of the natural characteristics of the valley. The site lies on Fossetts Lane, which is fed by Church Road and Mill Lane (in Fordham) and Rams Farm Road leading toward West Bergholt village. Fossetts Lane is an adopted road maintained by Essex County Council and is extremely narrow making the business park unsuitable for HGV access. If the site is to be considered for expansion, then usage must remain either service industry or light/specialized manufacturing, with minimal traffic movements in order to retain the rural feel currently enjoyed by residents. Although the site is in the parish adjacent fields to the west are in the neighbouring parish of Fordham.



16.3.5 *Other Employment Areas*

These are provided by:

- Village shops

- Pubs
- The Parish Council
- Churches
- The Hop House
- Various peripheral businesses inside and outside the village
- Farms

These commercial, retail and employment sites provide useful opportunities to work locally and any expansion plans will be viewed sympathetically on a case by case basis.

In particular every effort will be made to include these in advertising in the Village Bulletin and in the Business Directory on the village website.

In addition to the general support for controlled growth of business and employment opportunities as mentioned above, in the draft Neighbourhood plan survey of 2016 there was particular support for developing small scale business units in existing farm buildings.



Farm diversification sites will therefore be supported by Business and Commerce Planning Policy PP15 as a means of improving employment opportunities in the more rural areas. This policy is supplemental to Colchester Borough Council's Development Policy DP8: Agricultural Development and Diversification.

16.4 Summary of SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good mix of employment in the parish, both modern and traditional. • Several small business park sites. • Reasonable road access to employment sites. • Three well-used village pubs. • Strong concentration of professional trades in the village. • Variety of shops. • Strong agricultural community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of space for shops to expand. • Poor accessibility by public transport, cycling and walking to business parks. • Lack of dedicated parking at shops. • Limited retail facilities. • Lack of integration of business parks with the village. • Poor or patchy broadband. • Lack of employment areas zoned in the Local Plan as employment sites.

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All business parks have capability to expand. • Promotion of businesses through marketing and publicity. • New broadband connectivity. • Upgrading of business parks. • Further farm diversifications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pub companies altering tenancy agreements and pubs subject to short term closures and long-term threat of redevelopment for housing. • Business parks being developed as housing sites. • High business rates.

16.5 The Plan's Approach

This will be to support appropriate expansion of the business parks and encourage and support individual businesses wherever possible.

As the objectives relate in part to the use and development of land only,
Planning Policies alone have been developed.

16.6 Policies

Policy No.	Business, Commerce and Employment Planning Policies
PP14: Expansion of Employment Sites	<p>Proposals to upgrade or extend existing employment sites will be supported provided that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the impact on the amenities enjoyed by occupants of nearby properties is acceptable; and • they do not compromise the character of the area or openness of the countryside; and • where appropriate, they satisfactorily demonstrate expected traffic impact is acceptable in terms of highway safety and the amenity of nearby residents.
PP15: Farm Diversification	<p>Development proposals for the diversification of farms will be supported where this enables production from the land to continue and where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there are no significant negative effects upon the landscape; and • development does not result in unacceptable traffic by way of Heavy Goods Vehicles on rural roads; and • local employment is retained

17 SPORT AND RECREATION

17.1 Objectives

- Promote increased opportunities to get active and participate in sport and informal recreation.
- To develop our recreational facilities to meet the needs of an expanding population.
- To tailor facilities to the needs of all ages.
- To make best use of our sports and recreational facilities.
- To consider the need for new areas of land for organised sports.

17.2 Background & Intent

The formal sports and recreation facilities in West Bergholt are limited in the main to the village although there are plenty of opportunities for informal recreation through areas of open space and public rights of way which allow the public access to the countryside. There are also signed cycle routes in the area within easy access of the village. In the appraisal of this area of the plan it has become apparent that it is the open spaces in the village which are in danger of becoming inadequate to serve the needs of a growing population and one whose demographic is changing. Coupled with a need to allow people increased opportunities to improve their health and well-being the Neighbourhood Plan has identified the following areas where improvements are needed:

- Formal sports facilities
- Areas and management of open space

17.3 Evidence

17.3.1 *Lorkin Daniell Playing Field and Poor's Land*

The adult football pitch together with its associated clubhouse dominates the Lorkin Daniell playing field limiting realistic expansion and enhancement of the village hall footprint, children's playground, Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) and tennis facilities.

The people of our parish should have access to the very best affordable facilities both now and in the future. However, the location of the football pitch limits expansion and enhancement of family recreation and play facilities sited on the Lorkin Daniell Playing Field. West Bergholt Football Club has previously attempted to purchase land for a new site, and to enlarge and improve its clubhouse but has been unsuccessful due to the prohibitive cost.

There is a lack of informal recreational areas for ad hoc non-team-based sports use and too much emphasis on open spaces being used for football. Even for formal sports use there is a lack of good "clubhouse" facilities as demonstrated by their absence on the Poor's Land. Other drawbacks for these areas include: lack of a zip wire or teenage outdoor play areas and lack of an adventure playground for children past the age where they would enjoy the playground that exists. Although the MUGA is popular, the tennis courts are too few in number to form the basis for a tennis club which would need three courts to allow competitions and club tournaments.

Historically the Lorkin Daniel Field has been used by West Bergholt Football Club and the Poor's Land by Heathlands School and Bergholt Heath Youth Football Club, on an informal but mutually agreed basis. There is though, a perceived need to actively manage the use of the fields to improve their accessibility to other groups, e.g. fitness groups, family recreation/social

events, etc. and formal arrangements put in place to ensure, for instance, reinstatement of the fields by users after an event. This process has begun but a community policy is deemed needed to ensure this process continues, being one that requires that the fields are increasingly actively managed by the Parish Council as Trustees of the fields for the benefit of the community as a whole.

17.3.2 *Changing the emphasis of current sports areas and introducing new facilities*

It is evident that not everything can be accommodated on the current sites. It is therefore proposed to look for a further site so that there could be a differentiation between informal sport and children's play areas and the formal team sports. New sports areas and purpose-built facilities such as clubhouses and changing areas could be incorporated into a new site. The relocation of the football pitch and associated clubhouse to a consolidated and centralised team and dedicated recreational sports area, would benefit the entire community. This would release a significant part of the Lorkin Daniell Playing Field for improved child, teenage play and generalised recreation use. The Lorkin Daniell Playing Field and Poor's Land sites would then provide the opportunity for more planting and seating together with expanded provision of children's adventure play area equipment with zip-wires and similar provisions for older children. Although consultations will need to take place and funding sought, relocating the football pitch and clubhouse would open up the Lorkin Daniell Playing Field to more diverse family uses including providing space to expand the already heavily booked village halls as well as affording the MUGA additional space for an additional tennis court and the provision of an all-weather 5 aside football area. The children's play facilities could be vastly improved and expanded to appeal to children of all age groups.

Overall consolidation of sports and recreation areas to optimise usage would allow the following benefits to accrue:

- Teenage and child play and recreational facilities could be expanded across that part of the Lorkin Daniell Playing Field currently occupied by the adult football pitch, allowing potential enhancement of facilities similar to those provided in Marks Tey, Great Horkesley or the Maldon children activity centre.
- Expansion and enhancement of the village hall facilities would be possible which are currently limited and unlikely to meet demands for the next 15 years.
- Allow dedicated areas of the village hall complex for Pre-school activities.
- Allow more indoor club and pastime activities to operate from the village hall complex located centrally within the main village residential area.
- Allow expansion of the village halls car park to safely accommodate future needs for Pre-school and Heathlands School drop-offs, use of the MUGA or for car parking whilst adults and their children enjoy the child and teenage play facilities.
- Future proof team sport within the village. New and existing sport needs can be met through a purpose designed and designated area.
- The junior football team could be relocated subject to appropriate consultation to the new area releasing Poor's Land for more generalised recreational or school use activities as required. Poor's Land is held in Trust with the Parish Council as Sole Trustee.



17.4 Summary of SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good recreational opportunities for popular organised sport. • Open spaces allow informal recreation. • Team sports and children's play areas provided. • Network of PROW and cycle routes. • Popular allotments based at central location in the village. • Variety of indoor recreation clubs for various ages. • Well-established team sports clubs for all ages. • Floodlight Multi Use Games Area based at village hall. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sporting areas often confined to single usage. • Sporting areas not available due to regular bookings. • Lack of changing and toilet facilities. • Poor vehicle access and parking inadequate at some sites. • Overuse of existing facilities leads to degradation.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hillhouse Wood recreational facilities in local woods 	

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New development areas may allow further areas of open space and opportunities for further sports pitches. • Possibility of amalgamating formal sports in one area. • Reallocation of space in the Lorkin Daniell and Poor's Land sites for informal recreation. • Development of PROW and cycle routes. • Development of Bridleways. • Online booking system for floodlight MUGA. • Purpose-built changing & toilet facilities. • Parish Council uses expertise & contacts to support clubs with grants and managing the bureaucratic process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of opportunities for all members of the community. • Lack of facilities leading to depleted health of the community. • Requirement to travel away from the parish for some sport and recreational facilities. • Lack of volunteers running sporting clubs. • Vandalism of facilities.

17.5 The Plan's Approach

As a fundamental first step towards future sustainable and planned village growth it is important to identify and reserve an area that can be dedicated exclusively for team or specialist sports. In meeting this objective any future potential housing and business development areas could be planned and implemented in a co-ordinated manner which would not compromise the

earmarked village recreational areas. Any land chosen should be capable of meeting the immediate needs of football clubs in the village and be enhanced in phases to meet future sporting needs. Taking into account the nature and gradient of land in and around the village, an appraisal of a number of different sites was undertake. The analysis appears in the evidence report of such in supporting documents (see Appendix 2).

As the objectives relate in part to the use and development of land and wider community aspirations both Planning Policies and Community Ambitions have been developed.

17.5.1 *Proposal for a site to the rear of Site B*

Map PP9/2 shows an ideal location for any future consolidated team ball sports. This land adjoins the settlement boundary, is adjacent to the Cricket Club and is used for arable farming. There are several advantages to this site

- Within easy reach of the main residential areas which is largely located to the south and east of the site with agricultural land lying to the north.
- Adjacent to the existing cricket club and pavilion.
- Space available for car parking.
- Site can be developed for sport in phases to meet evolving demand.
- Plenty of space to accommodate adult and junior football, rugby other team sports, practice facilities and teenage play facilities.

Therefore, when considering proposals for the development of Site B, consideration should be given to facilitating subsequent evolution of the sports area by ensuring that the layout of housing development should not fetter future development of this area, including the opportunity to deliver adequate access to it in the future.



17.6 Policies and Community Ambitions

Policy No.	Sport and Recreation Planning Policies
PP16: New Sports Facilities	Proposals for the development of Site B in accordance with Policy PP9 including sports facilities on land adjacent to the cricket club as illustrated on Map PP9/2, subject to viability will be supported.

Ambition No.	Sports and Recreation Community Ambitions
CA8: New Sports Areas	New sports activity areas will be developed as opportunities arise. Consolidation of sports activities may take place as a result.
CA9: Lorkin Daniell Field	The Lorkin Daniell Playing Field will be actively managed so as to allow improved access to recreational activities.
CA10: Poor's Land	The Poor's Land will be actively managed so as to allow improved access to recreational activities.
CA11: Consolidated Sports Areas	New consolidated sports activity areas will be expected to promote a wide variety of sports. Clubhouse facilities and parking must be provided, and the facility must have good accessibility to other parts of the village.

18 COMMUNITY SAFETY

18.1 Objectives

- To create an environment which promotes a feeling of safety where the perception and incidence of crime is low, by ensuring new developments are designed so as to reduce the incidences of crime and fear of crime.
- To see the traffic circulation and parking environment managed to minimise the chance of being the victim of a traffic-related accident.
- To help protect vulnerable members of the community from harm in and around the home and from inclement weather.

18.2 Background & Intent

Crime and fear of crime and the perceptions of safety on the streets in the parish is a constant concern although in recent years the anti-social aspects have reduced somewhat. This is very much an area demanding a multi-agency approach involving the police, emergency services and emergency planning officials together with village organisations and residents. Such an approach is also needed for promoting safety in the home especially in an area that has an increasing number of elderly residents who may be at risk of burglary, deception-type crime and even risk of fire.

18.3 Evidence

18.3.1 *Crime and Fear of Crime*

Whilst crime levels and the fears of crime are low there are hot spots of such within the village. Evidence of the crimes committed is noted on a monthly basis in the Parish Council minutes. There is a perception of a lack of police presence and as a result of neighbourhood policing changes there is no longer a regular mobile police presence where residents can seek

advice or make their concerns known. The area has an emerging active Neighbourhood Watch scheme in the village.

West Bergholt is served by the Local Community Meetings initiative (LCM) and multi-agency problem solving groups, working alongside the local community to address crime, anti-social behaviour and quality of life issues.

A recent development which is being pursued is the recruiting of a Special Constable for the village who can deal with a variety of issues such as anti-social behaviour and traffic and parking offences.

However, building designs that seek to reduce the incidence of crime and fear of crime will be endorsed by the Parish Council, noting advice on how such can be achieved is available from the Design Council from their guide “Designing Out Crime” and other similar guides. All Design and Access statements should thus incorporate advice on how the issue of designing out crime has been addressed in preparing the proposed design.

18.3.2 *Community Safety*

An emergency plan for the village has been drawn up to support Colchester Borough and the emergency services. Snow clearance volunteer teams are in place and the Parish Council maintain equipment and salt supplies for use by volunteers.

18.3.3 *Road Safety*

Traffic and road safety related matters are the chief concern of residents as evidenced by the public engagement and consultation exercises that have been carried out both for the Parish Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan.

The issues are classified as follows:

- Speeding in Chapel Road, Colchester Road and Lexden Road

- Parking and traffic issues in New Church Road
- Parking around the Co-op, New Church Road and School Lane
- Safety of school children and pedestrians and cyclists in the vicinity of the school and the Co-op

A Traffic Safety Group has been set up to understand and help towards finding solutions to the above issues. The Group has drawn up a Traffic Safety Plan for the village and which has a special focus on the 400-place school which causes general issues of safety for young students traveling to school but also an ever-growing problem of illegal, anti-social and dangerous parking at school drop off and pick up times. The focus is on a programme of Engagement, Encouragement, Education, Enforcement and Engineering. There are many initiatives under way across all of these fronts including the introduction of new 20mph speed limits and waiting restrictions. The group has been active recruiting a team of volunteer parking monitors to occasionally patrol a few areas in the village to curtail poor parking. There have also been a series of articles on the Parish website and local Facebook page, such as the one below.



A "sign the pledge" stall was also manned at the annual Village Fete where residents promised to drive carefully and park considerately. Regular liaison with Heathlands School takes place to help understand problems better, to help promote the School Travel Plan and to find initiatives to improve safety further.

The village has a very active Community Speed Watch group (CSW) with resource and equipment being shared with Eight Ash Green. The CSW group is recorded as being in the top five most active groups in Essex.

18.4 Summary of SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively low levels of crime. • An existing traffic and safety group and strategy. • Snow-clearing volunteers. • Emergency Plan. • Community Speed Watch. • Parish Council able to respond to emergency with retained staff. • Facebook Hub a good warning mechanism. • Strong community spirit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speeding and parking issues. • Large primary school results in many younger students walking around the village at peak time. • Oversubscribed school leads to increased parking pressures. • Lack of street lights may lead to a perceived feeling of vulnerability. • Lack of regular police presence. • Elderly population vulnerable to bogus callers and from dangers around the home and at times of inclement weather. • Trip hazards caused by poor footway condition.

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic safety plan/20 mph zones and streets. • Special Constable Scheme. • Safety in the Home Fire Service Initiative. • Local Community Meetings • Online reporting tool • Neighbourhood Watch and possibility of using existing Safeland app. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Escalating crime. • Traffic speed and volumes increasing due to expansion of village with attendant risk of serious accident. • Rural hinterland difficult to police. • Difficulty of recruiting volunteers. • Rural crime rapidly increasing.

18.5 The Plan's Approach

The Essex Neighbourhood Policing role is constantly changing. Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) roles have been cut. Dedicated PCSO's have to be 100% funded by the community. Alternate policing methods could be considered. Volunteer Special Constables are being recruited with full powers of arrest matching those of regular police officers. A further example of the volunteer sector meeting community needs of today and the future. Occasional antisocial behaviour occurs and local police presence would help control such behaviour. A Traffic Safety Plan (TSP) for the village which concentrates on the roads around the school and the junction of New Church Road and Chapel Road. Appropriate expansion of the TSP should be a consideration for all new building development sites.

As the objectives relate in part to the use and development of land and wider community aspirations both Planning and Community Ambitions have been developed.



18.6 Policies and Community Ambitions

Policy No.	Community Safety Planning Policies
PP17: Designing Out Crime	Where appropriate, development proposals which demonstrate that they have been designed to reduce the incidence of crime and fear of crime will be supported.
PP18: New Road Layouts	Development proposals incorporating the design of new road layouts that discourages indiscriminate parking and promotes a safe pedestrian and cycling environment, where appropriate will be supported.

Ambition No.	Community Safety Community Ambitions
CA12: Neighbourhood Watch	Neighbourhood Watch schemes including Speed Watch and Farm Watch will be encouraged and supported.
CA13: Road Safety	Road safety issues will be highlighted through regular monitoring of issues and plans of action developed with the relevant agencies. Particular attention will be paid to areas around the school, the Co-op and other areas of high pedestrian footfall.
CA14: Anti-social Behaviour	Anti-social and other behavioural issues will be monitored and reported to the authorities and measures developed with the Police and the Community Safety Partnership to reduce their incidence.
CA15: Crime	Crime and fear of crime will be monitored, and remedial actions discussed and devised with the police and other community safety groups.
CA16: 20mph Zones	Where new streets are proposed, these should be 20 mph speed limit zones

19 COMMUNICATION

19.1 Objectives

- To keep the community informed through a wide range of media.
- To promote a two-way dialogue through creating the opportunity for participation in democratic processes and decision making.
- To enable the community to participate in forums and discussion groups about issues at large in the parish.

19.2 Background & Intent

There are 4 main channels in which the village communicates;

- Face to face
- Village Bulletins and Newsletter form
- West Bergholt website
- Social media

Communication channels are constantly changing and methods can always be improved. Different age groups use different methods and the main concerns are:

- How to manage the communication channels?
- Which information to put out to achieve maximum exposure of issues and events?
- How to co-ordinate effort so that communication between different groups is put to best effect?

19.3 Evidence

19.3.1 *Democratic Aspects*

The Parish Council has its main meeting and its committees and sub-committees but is anxious to build on the task and finish groups and more permanent single-issue groups that it has started to spawn. Groups exist covering the annual village fete; the traffic and safety group; the village broadband group; the multi-games area users committee and of course the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The emphasis will be to support groups and drawn in volunteers who can act as a pool for other groups and societies to draw upon and to tap the huge resources and skills that exist within the community.

19.3.2 *The Village Bulletin*

The Parish Council supports the publication of a quarterly Village Bulletin which is delivered to all households. A brief, more up to date “Village Newsletter” is produced periodically when there is no Bulletin and displayed on the notice boards and available at other sites around the village. Feedback from the surveys suggested that the Bulletin is a much-loved publication which even with all the electronic mediums available people want to see continue. The main issues to combat are modernising the content, introducing more “newsy” material to dovetail with the retrospective nature of the reporting. The emphasis will be to supplement the current editor with an editorial team and some parish reporters.

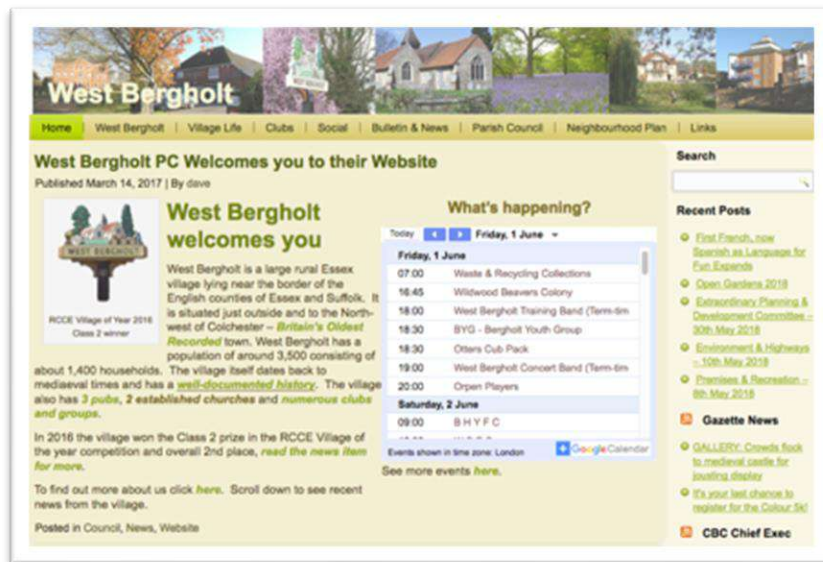
19.3.3 *Conventional Noticeboards*

The Parish Council also maintains a number of notice boards which are kept up to date regularly. In addition, the Church and School have their own newsletters. There is always a call for more noticeboards but although these

can be considered the immediate need is to better manage the ad-hoc posters and informal notices pinned to most telegraph poles in the village. Here it is proposed to better utilise purpose-built sign hangars at strategic locations to affix event-type community news items.

19.3.4 *West Bergholt Website*

westbergholt.net – the website page for the village provides a calendar of events, electronic copies of the bulletin, minutes of the council & committees, village updates and details of the parish councillors. Its strengths lie in its dedicated webmaster who posts news stories and relays smaller snippets of the same items to Facebook and Twitter. The website will continue to be updated and used for an increasing number of uses such



as village surveys and parish polls for example. One initiative from the past is being resurrected both electronically and in paper form, that of the Information Pack for new householders.

19.3.5 *Social Media*

There are a number of active sites for West Bergholt and the clubs that exist in the parish. The majority of the sites have a good number of followers. The issue here is how organisations can follow up comments many of which can be utilised to better effect by providing clarification on popular items such as planning issues, broadband updates and crime activity.

19.3.6 *Broadband*

Broadband services in the village are a mixed provision of wireless technology provided by County Broadband; fibre provided by Virgin; small areas fibred by BT, whilst most streets also allow connection through BT copper wiring. The result is unsatisfactory with many unmade roads not benefiting from Fibre at all and the wireless technology not providing speeds of superfast or ultrafast standards. The NPPF considers advanced, high quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable growth.

Therefore there is the need to ensure that digital connectivity is considered at the earliest possible opportunity when preparing development proposals to maximise the chances of new properties being connected to the high speed broadband network by encouraging developers to engage early with network providers, and specifically to take up Openreach's free service of providing a connectivity assessment prior to submitting a planning application. Openreach's connectivity assessment service is an optional service. It is desirable that developers take up this service in West Bergholt to optimise the delivery of broadband infrastructure. On sites less likely to be served by an adequate Openreach fibre network, developers will be encouraged to investigate other broadband provision such as satellite broadband or community-led schemes as part of their assessment. Applicants will be expected to submit a Broadband Statement with their planning application summarising the outcome of their early engagement with network providers and explaining how they intend to ensure satisfactory broadband provision in light of the findings, including a

“connectivity assessment” (provided at no cost by Openreach) of the anticipated broadband speeds and connectivity to a site at least 9 months before the first occupancy of the site to avoid the default to copper wire connectivity. The connectivity assessment will show:

1. if the development will be covered by the existing fibre broadband infrastructure,
2. if a developer contribution charge is applicable, and how much,
3. the forecasted range of ADSL (copper broadband) speed irrespective of Superfast fibre infrastructure availability, and
4. the lead-time to deliver fibre infrastructure if in exceptional cases this is greater than nine months.

The Parish Council will not expect the provision of superfast broadband where the costs would be disproportionate in relation to the development proposal. It may be in some cases that ducting or other equipment could be provided to make properties ‘ready’ for future improvements to the network if it is cost prohibitive for improvements to be made at the time of the planning application.

This policy will support and work in connection with the new Building Regulations (Part R – Electronic Communications) that came into effect in January 2017. The new regulations require in-building physical infrastructure to enable copper or fibre-optic cables or wireless devices capable of delivering broadband speeds greater than 30Mbps to be installed in new dwellings.

The development of high-speed broadband technology and other communications networks also plays a vital role in enhancing the provision of local community facilities and services.

19.4 Summary of SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website. Village Bulletin. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information can be poorly sequenced and communicated.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facebook Hub and Community and NP Groups. PC meetings. Working Groups which encourage community participation. Notice boards. Communications Officer at PC. Annual Parish Meeting and village events. Community information from the Police. Safeland app. For traffic safety issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media information based on opinion not facts. Social media information not acted upon due to poor take up by various groups and ages. Scattergun approach to information. Data security. Retention of useful information amongst special interest groups.

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further use and development of website & social media. Further Facebook Groups. Use of Twitter, Instagram etc. Making more specialised information available e.g. crime. Create a village forum. Information pack for new residents Developing the potential of the Village Bulletin. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feeling that data is not used to good effect. Hidden concerns only appearing within groups and not shared. Suspicion. Resentment of officialdom. Poor participation in Council activities. Socially isolated groups which do not use electronic media. Threat of hacking. Trolling threat on social media.

19.5 The Plan's Approach

We believe the various methods of communication we have in the village put us in a strong position for the future. The explosion of the internet and social media is growing year on year and our current platforms give us a great advantage to reach out to more locals. One critical point to reference is ensuring we have the right broadband capability and to ensure this is sustained and all areas covered.

As the objectives relate in part to the use and development of land and wider community aspirations both Planning Policies and Community Ambitions have been developed.

19.6 Policies and Community Ambitions

Policy No.	Communication Planning Policies
<p>PP19: Communications Network</p>	<p>Proposals for new residential (sites of 2 dwellings or more) and commercial development will be supported which demonstrate how they will provide future occupiers with sufficient broadband connectivity including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) demonstration of early engagement with infrastructure providers; and b) be accompanied by a 'Broadband Statement' that explains the current internet connectivity in the site's locality and the potential for the site to be provided with high speed broadband, including an assessment of the feasibility of providing fibre to the premises (FTTP) infrastructure; and c) make provision for new premises to be provided with high speed (superfast)¹ broadband, or if this is not feasible at the time of the application, undertake all reasonable actions to enable a superfast connection at a future date. <p>The Parish Council will strongly support the provision of Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) infrastructure in all new built development on major development sites unless it can be demonstrated through the Broadband Statement that it is not feasible. The level of detail required in the Broadband Statement should be proportionate to the scale of the development proposal.</p> <p>¹High speed or 'superfast' broadband is currently (at the time of this document's publication) defined by the UK Government as 24Mbps, and by Ofcom as 30Mbps. The definition of superfast is likely to evolve over the time period of this Local Plan, and a consideration of an up to date definition of 'superfast' will be made at the time of a planning application based on Government/Industry guidance.</p>

Ambition No.	Communication Community Ambitions
CA17: Forum	A West Bergholt communications forum will be established consisting of a mixture of age groups and skills to help ensure all groups within the community are represented.
CA18: Village Bulletin	The Village Bulletin publication will continue to be reviewed, and improvements made.
CA19: Feedback	Communications will be consistent, and opportunities made available for residents to feed their thoughts back to other organisations.
CA20: Means of Communication	The website will be developed as the principal means of day to day communication and information although printed information will be maintained via the Village Bulletin, periodic newsletters and traditional noticeboards as demand requires.
CA21: Information Pack	All new householders will receive an Information Pack to introduce them to the facilities and organisations available in the village.

20 TRANSPORT

20.1 Objectives

- To make getting around the parish and elsewhere by foot, bicycle, car and bus simple, more convenient and safer.
- To ensure critical infrastructure is provided for new developments.
- To enable wider transport infrastructure to be improved upon, especially to calm traffic, control parking and improve walking and cycling.

20.2 Background & Intent

The village has generally good main (B1508) and minor road connections to the A12, Colchester town centre, the rail station, Tollgate retail area and towards Sudbury and the rural Essex-Suffolk border area.

Bus services are provided by two companies, Chambers, providing an hourly service to Colchester and Sudbury, and First Bus that operates a 30-minute frequency peak and daytime service to the town centre via the Rail Station. On Sundays the frequency of buses drops to two hourly. School buses serve the main secondary schools whilst the Care Network. and Community bus services offer a bookable service for those unable to use conventional public transport easily. Footways are generally provided adjacent to the majority of roads and the area is covered by 30mph speed restrictions. There are no cycle ways although a signed cycle route to the rail station using the main road has been provided in recent years and similarly the National Cycle Network route 13 skirts the village providing a means of accessing the wider countryside.

20.3 Evidence

20.3.1 *Connectivity and Traffic Management*

Connectivity is reasonably good for the village and indeed across the parish area, although the highway infrastructure is by no means modern. Thus, links to the south west to the A12 and to retail parks on the edge of Colchester is via a narrow and winding lane – Argents Lane or via another country lane leading to a level crossing. This route draws in traffic not only from the village but from across the parish and indeed north Colchester. Whilst there is no desire to see this route upgraded there is a feeling that heavy goods traffic could be more controlled and prohibited, save for access. The main route through the village also attracts its fair share of through traffic including skip lorries from a nearby recycling company in a neighbouring parish. Since this road is the one that passes the favoured areas of development there will be a need to introduce traffic regulating facilities such as crossings and perhaps mini roundabouts to “calm” traffic speeds and intensity. Elsewhere in the more residential areas there is a strongly supported desire to regulate parking and introduce 20 mph streets or preferably 20 mph zones.

20.3.2 *Highways*

The main concerns with the infrastructure, aside from traffic circulation is the fabric of the main routes and residential side streets which are beginning to show their age. The intention with this issue is to establish a better dialogue with the County Council to enable inspection and maintenance regimes to be better understood and to receive better notification of when repairs and surfacing programmes will be carried out.

20.3.3 *Bus Services*

The main bus service to the railway station and the town centre is at 30-minute frequencies and information about arrivals and departures in real time is now available via Smartphones. Coupled with services provided by the other operator, this means that there are 3 services per hour, dropping to 1 in the evenings and 1 every two hours on Sundays. This should do much to improve the perception of service frequency and reliability and increase the numbers using the bus. It is considered vital to get information on frequency and real-time information out to all households rather than hoping that this information will naturally be passed on. Such an initiative is vital to establish sustainable travel patterns in any new developments that are built. Through the plan's implementation it is intended to work with bus companies on a range of incentives to use the bus including multi-operator tickets, books of multi-journey tickets and reduced price for family travel.

20.3.4 *Cycling*

Cycling should be far more prevalent than it is. Journeys to the railway station at Colchester are less than 3 miles in length but without a dedicated cycle route. Similarly, whilst journeys across the parish rarely take more than 10 minutes, there are few existing specific cycle routes and none that create a quiet circular route for youngsters to safely learn cycle craft. In addition, for recreational or health pursuits, cycling in the parish can be an absolute delight when riding on mostly lightly trafficked roads with great views over the Colne Valley or across towards Suffolk and Constable Country. The issue is normally lack of information coupled with the natural fear of traffic. A cycle user group that extols the virtues of cycling for leisure or utility journeys and which also establishes where physical infrastructure such as cycle ways or parking facilities could be introduced, is a possibility.

20.3.5 *Walking*

There is a good provision of footways (pavements) and footpaths but some facilities are missing. These include footways in New Church road leading to the school and in Nayland Road leading to one of the employment zones at

Patterns Yard. There is also a need for further crossings along Lexden Road and Colchester Road. Lastly, recreational walking guides would help publicise the public rights of way to the community to help encourage health and family circular walks.

20.4 Summary of SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compact main village with good accessibility on foot to many services. • Reasonably frequent bus services. • A B road affording access to Colchester, rail station and A12. • Local taxi company located in the village. • Community and Care Network transport for mobility impaired residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate on street real time information about bus service arrivals. • Lack of cycle ways and cycle parking. • Missing stretches of footway. • Poor residential road maintenance. • Lack of pedestrian crossings. • Poorly sited bus stops.

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe cycle ways. • Footways leading the school and to the rural outskirts of the village. • Traffic management improvements to reduce the dominant effect of traffic. • New development links to the school and village centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking spill-over onto narrow streets. • Traffic dominated streets. • Speeding traffic. • Intimidating pedestrian and cycle environment. • Further degradation of highway assets including signing, road and footway condition and PROW.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encouragement to use improved bus service.• A village mini-bus for community use.• 20 mph zones or streets.• School travel plan and cycle training.• Bus services to the hospital.• Improved PROW signing and information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Damage caused by agricultural machinery.
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20.5 The Plan's Approach

Although there has been some growth in the village there is nothing to suggest that major road infrastructure is required, rather it is likely to be the management of traffic and parking, together with the introduction of more bus services and the improvement of the walking and cycling environment that should be the focus.

As the objectives relate in part to the use and development of land and wider community aspirations both Planning Policies and Community Ambitions have been developed.



20.6 Policies and Community Ambitions

Policy No.	Transport, Highways & Infrastructure Planning Policies
PP20: Access	Development proposals demonstrating designs that incorporate safe pedestrian and vehicular access and adequate sight lines will be supported.
PP21: Traffic Congestion	Where development proposals are likely to add to traffic congestion in the village or encourage through or additional traffic on rural lanes causing significant harm, proposals that include sustainable measures to mitigate unacceptable traffic impact, or contribute funding towards appropriate sustainable village transport safety schemes, will be supported.
PP22: Cycle Storage	Development proposals for new developments incorporating designs to provide secure cycle storage and storage for mobility scooters where appropriate, minimising their visual impact through good design will be supported.
PP23: Sustainable Transport	Where appropriate and subject to viability, new development which offers contributions to encourage walking, cycling and public transport use, in mitigation commensurate with the scale and likely impact of the proposed development, will be supported.
PP24: Sustainable Transport Connections	Existing footpaths, cycleways and bridleways provide a high level of amenity value and will be protected. Development proposals which will enhance existing networks, create connections and provide new networks where appropriate, will be supported.

Ambition No.	Transport, Highways & Infrastructure Community Ambitions
CA22: Traffic Management	Traffic management will be introduced to control parking and to improve the environment for cycling and walking in residential streets.
CA23: Traffic Channeling	Traffic will be channeled towards principal roads, i.e. B1508 (Colchester Rd/Bures Rd), Lexden Rd, Chapel Rd, Argents Lane, Nayland Rd and Chitts Hill.
CA24: Cycling & Walking	Cycling and walking will be promoted and will be considered as part of all infrastructure projects.

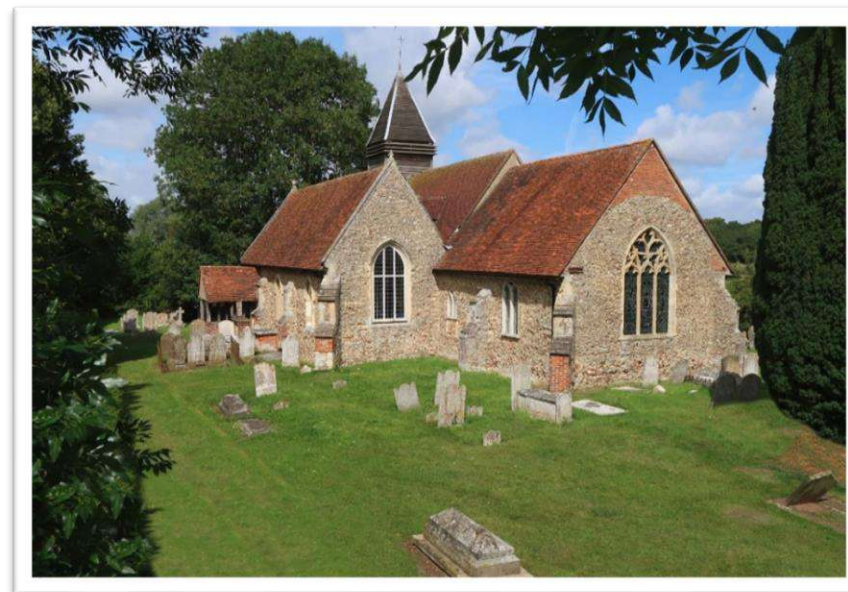
CA25: Bus Services	Parish bus services will be promoted, and improvements sought. New minibus services will be investigated and introduced where appropriate.
CA26: Highway Maintenance	A high standard of maintenance will be sought for roads and pavements, ditches & verges.
CA27: Infrastructure	Any planning applications for new development within the Neighbourhood Plan Area must demonstrate how they can contribute towards the delivery of infrastructure and other development projects prioritised by the community. This may be through planning conditions, via a section 106 agreement or through payment of any Community Infrastructure Levy.

21 MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Neighbourhood Plan is written to cover the period to 2033. It is recognised that planning is a dynamic process and over the lifetime of the Neighbourhood Plan, there may be a need to review the effectiveness of policies and the progress made on the Neighbourhood Plan's objectives. It is possible there may be changes as Colchester's Site Allocations process is not yet complete or adopted.

To ensure that the Plan continues to promote development and is appropriate for West Bergholt it will be reviewed by the Parish Council, or group specifically appointed for that purpose every five years, in conjunction with stakeholders and partners to include ECC, CBC and other specialist service providers.

An initial Action Plan has been produced and this is included in the supporting documents to the Plan (see Appendix 2); this is expected to evolve over the lifetime of the Plan. The initial ideas are based upon the many suggestions made by the community during the many consultations that have been held during the Plan's preparation. Additionally, an Infrastructure List has been assembled which potentially can be funded through new development, s106 or CIL contributions or other funding opportunities. This list is also in the supporting documents (see Appendix 2).



22 APPENDIX 1 – MAPS

Map PP4	Local Green Spaces
Map PP5	Character Area
Map CA7	Indicative Views
Map PP9/1	Settlement Boundary
Map PP9/2	Proposed Development Allocations
Map PP12	Coalescence

23 APPENDIX 2 – LIST OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

A	List of Planning Policies v.3 updated 2024
B	Schedule of Local Green Spaces v.2
C	Photos of views related to Map CA7 v.2
D	Deliverability letters relating to Sites A & B
E	Consultation Report on surveys carried out at key stages of the Neighbourhood Plan
F	CBC West Bergholt HRA Screening
G	CBC West Bergholt SEA Screening
H	Sports Site Analysis
I	Action Plan and List of Community Ambitions v.2
J	Infrastructure List
K	CBC Settlement Boundary Review
L	Report on the Assessment of Potential Housing Sites
M	West Bergholt Village Appraisal 1995
N	Parish Plan 2008
O	Village Design Statement 2011 removed as supporting document 2024
P	RCCE Community Profile of West Bergholt
Q	RCCE Housing Needs Survey
R	West Bergholt Position Statement
S	Consultation Statement 2018
T	Appendix D of Consultation Statement
U	Basic Conditions Statement 2018