



Planning Application reference 190647

Demolition of existing buildings on the site and redevelopment to provide 150 residential dwellings with access, link road to allow for potential future connections, associated parking, private open space at Land adjoining The Gables, Kelvedon Road, Tiptree, Colchester, CO5 0LU.

### **Employment Policy Considerations**

This note has been prepared by Strutt & Parker on behalf of Marden Homes Limited to support the above planning application.

The application site is 5.1ha in total, and comprises and has been identified as a broad location for future growth in the emerging Colchester Local Plan. The majority of the site is white land, with a 1.04ha area allocated within the adopted Colchester Borough Council (CBC) Local Plan as a Local Employment Zone under Policy CE1. It is also proposed for allocation as a Local Economic Area in the emerging Plan, which reflect the existing allocation area. The designation forms part of a wider allocation of Tower Business Park, which accommodates a number of local business. Despite the allocation of this additional area of land for over 10 years, the site has never been developed for employment purposes.

The 1.04ha parcel is situated behind the residential dwellings that front Kelvedon Road, and thus is only accessible via the existing Business Park, which has been developed up to the existing park boundary. This undeveloped part of the allocation therefore has no means of access from the public highway. It also includes two land parcels which are in different ownerships.

#### Adopted Local Plan

We note the commentary provided by CBC Policy team which refers to the wider economic spatial strategy to which these policies relate, and that the CBC Policy team note that this is not entirely consistent with aspects of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and as such acknowledge that only limited weight can be applied to the policy.

#### Emerging Local Plan

Policy SG4 of the Emerging Local Plan has been considered by CBC Policy team to accord with the intentions of the NPPF and they therefore advise that it should be applied weight for decision-making in the Borough at the present moment in time.

In this respect, we have considered the requirements of the policy below:

- i) It can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable prospect of the site concerned being used for Class B purposes; and

*This part of the site has been allocated for employment purposes since the adoption of the 2008 Colchester Local Plan. In this time, the site has never been developed, and there is no realistic prospect of employment development coming forward.*

*The undeveloped part of the allocation falls within two separate ownerships and does not adjoin the main road being instead fronted by residential dwellings.*

*Access would therefore need to be taken from the developed part of the employment allocation – Tower Business Park. The adjoining parcel of land has been developed to have built form along the entirety of the adjacent boundary and therefore does not provide an opportunity for extended development or through-access.*

*There is therefore no reasonable prospect of the site being used for Class B purposes as part of the larger allocation as there is limited or no opportunity for suitable vehicular access.*

- ii) The supply, availability and variety of employment land is sufficient to meet Borough and local needs; and

*As part of the wider spatial strategy for the Borough, north Colchester and west Colchester (Tollgate) have been identified and developed as key areas for employment growth, alongside the town centre, and will therefore ensure the continued support for employment in the Borough. More locally, Tiptree provides a significant area of employment land uses at the developed portion of the allocation, as well as through Tiptree Jam Factory to the south of the town, and other local facilities and services throughout the village.*

*The draft Neighbourhood Plan also proposes the allocation of additional land for employment to the north of Kelvedon Road which, given its proximity to Tower End, appears to acknowledge the inability of the existing business park to expand in its current location. This additional allocation will allow for demand-responsive opportunities for new employment development over the life time of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.*

- iii) It can be demonstrated that the alternative use cannot be reasonably located elsewhere within the area it serves; and

*The site the subject of this planning application has been identified in the both the emerging Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan as a preferred area of growth for the village, in respect of its relationship to the village and existing facilities, and as a location where landscape impact would be limited.*

- iv) The proposal does not generate potential conflict with the existing proposed B class uses/activities on the site; and

*The site proposed for residential development presents flexibility which will allow for the delivery of residential dwellings without compromising existing uses on Tower Business Park through appropriate design and landscaping.*

- v) The use will not give rise to unacceptable traffic generation, noise, smells or vehicle parking; and

*The potential vehicle movements associated with the residential use of the site have been assessed and have been found to have no detrimental impact on the local highway network. The site can be designed to accommodate an appropriate level of parking and residential development is not considered to give rise to unacceptable noise or smells either.*

- vi) The proposal provides the opportunity to maximise the sites potential for economic growth and support the continued operation of existing employment uses within the economic area.

*The expansion of this village will ensure the continued vitality of Tiptree and its community. New residents will allow for the ongoing support of existing employment uses and potential for growth and expansion, both in terms of directly contributing to workforces, and also by increasing opportunities for the use of the services that these business provide.*

#### National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF confirms at Paragraph 118 that planning decisions should “*promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively*”.

Paragraph 120 also advises that “*where the local planning authority considered there to be no reasonably prospect of an application coming forward for the use allocated in a plan:*

- a) *They should, as part of plan updates, reallocate the land for a more deliverable use that can help to address identified needs (or, if appropriate, deallocate a site which is undeveloped); and*
- b) *In the interim, prior to updating the plan, applications for alternative uses on the land should be supported, where the proposed use would contribute to meeting an unmet need for development in the area.”*

Not only does this advise that the deliverability of the site should be considered before it is automatically reallocated in the new Local Plan, but that in the meantime, planning applications for alternative uses should be considered where there is an unmet need for development in the area.

The emerging Local Plan seeks to allocate sites for housing development in the Borough to ensure needs are met over the lifetime of the Plan and this application would go some way in meeting these needs in a sustainable location.

#### Emerging Neighbourhood Plan

Since the submission of the Colchester Borough Local Plan a full consultation draft of the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan has now been published. Within this Plan, the entire application site is proposed for allocation for residential use.

The draft Neighbourhood Plan also proposes the allocation of additional land for employment to the north of Kelvedon Road which, given its proximity to Tower End, appears to acknowledge the inability of the existing business park to expand in its current location.

We trust that the above additional information provides Colchester Borough Council with a level of clarification which enables the development of land adjacent to Tower Business Park for residential uses given the deliverability of the site for employment uses as it currently allocated for in both the adopted and emerging Local Plan.

*Strutt & Parker, July 2019*