



Settlement Boundary Review

Part of the evidence base for the new Local
Plan, April 2017 Update

1. Introduction

Colchester Borough Council is preparing a new Local Plan to meet the needs of current and future generations whilst also protecting and enhancing the environment and people's quality of life.

The Local Plan sets out a vision, strategy, objectives and policies for planning and delivery across the Borough. These are first set out at the strategic level in Part 1 of the plan, and then followed by more detailed information on Colchester in Part 2 of the plan. Taken together, these two parts of the plan combine to provide a spatial framework that brings together and co-ordinates a range of strategies prepared by the Council, its partners and other agencies and authorities. It includes policies for deciding development proposals. It takes account of projected changes in the economy, employment, housing need, transport demand, and seeks to maintain the quality of the natural and built environment as well as its historic environment. It provides the strategy and policies for shaping the Borough until 2033 and beyond.

The underlying principle of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and therefore the Local Plan is to support the principle of sustainable development. Sustainable development is at the heart of the Local Plan and it is important that the Borough's settlement boundaries and any new allocations for growth relate to sustainable locations. The Local Plan defines settlements which are "sustainable" and this is justified by this Settlement Boundary Review. By implication any other settlements (or parts of settlements currently defined by a settlement boundary) are unsustainable (or less sustainable).

This evidence base document begins by outlining the policy background and the methodology for this review. A review of each settlement is then presented; firstly for the sustainable settlements and then the other villages.

SLAA sites to discount

RSE03/RSE17 – These sites have been assessed as one and are promoted for a significantly higher number of dwellings than is considered appropriate for Rowhedge to accommodate, particularly when taking into account the committed development at Rowhedge Wharf. In 2016 a smaller part of the site was included in the Preferred Options, and a planning application was submitted for the whole site. Representations made in response to both raised a range of issues, which included concerns which relate specifically to the site location and potential coalescence with Old Heath, flood risk, landscape impact and potential impact on nearby residents. In the meantime Historic England have indicated that they intend to list Battleswick Farm itself, which would represent another constraint to development.

Summary

Rowhedge is a sustainable settlement with good transport links to Colchester. It has basic services and facilities to serve its population. The site at Rowhedge Business Park will help to improve healthcare facilities through the provision of land for a new GP surgery, which is supported by the North East Essex Clinical Care Commissioning Group. Any future growth would have to contribute to infrastructure improvements to mitigate the impact of new households on the village. Education capacity needs to be addressed and the redevelopment of the site will be phased to ensure that the impact on primary school places is properly mitigated before any additional residential development is built.

Tiptree

Settlement shape and form

Tiptree has a roughly triangular built form where development has grown up around key highway intersections; Kelvedon Road & Maldon Road to the west/north west, around Station Road and Church Road in the middle of the village, Factory Hill and Chapel Road to the south, Grove Road to the east and Colchester Road to the north/north east. Recently there has been new growth around Grange Road in the west of the village. A small separate area of development also exists around Tiptree Heath.

High level constraints (at settlement level)

- Expansion to the north east of Tiptree is constrained by Thurstable School and Warriors Rest (a sports facility).
- Development to the south east is constrained by Tiptree Jam Factory land and Birch Wood Local Wildlife Site. Development in this direction would reduce the green gap between Tiptree and Tolleshunt Knights and is also constrained by Layer Brook which is Flood Zone 2.
- The closest railway station is in Kelvedon approximately 5km from Tiptree.
- Tiptree health facility is at capacity and an allocation for new premises will need to be considered to accommodate proposed growth. This will need to be reflected in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

- Water supply and treatment and waste water management infrastructure is likely to be needed to serve additional development in Tiptree. Further discussion will be needed with Anglian Water as the Neighbourhood Plan develops proposed allocations.
- Although reasonably well served by public transport there is a need to improve bus routes within Tiptree.
- Future development will need to take account of road infrastructure in Kelvedon and Feering.

High level opportunities (at settlement level)

- Although there are some bus services to Maldon, Colchester and Essex University there is an opportunity to enhance them.
- The Neighbourhood Plan Group are keen to explore developing a community transport initiative to improve sustainable transport links between Tiptree, Kelvedon train station, schools and surrounding villages.
- Tiptree has 4 primary schools – Tiptree Heath, St Lukes, Mildene & Baynards.
- Tiptree has a secondary school (Thurstable) which has capacity.
- Hastoe's Housing Association is interested in providing affordable housing on a site in Tiptree – they have expressed an interest in site TIP15 which is located behind the Water Works.
- A Housing Needs Survey is being commissioned through the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan process. The Rural Community Council of Essex is also involved in this process.
- Tiptree has a good range of facilities – the major local employer is the Jam Factory, there are 2 supermarkets, a number of independent retailers and businesses.

Parish Council /Neighbourhood Plan group view

Tiptree Parish Council (PC) and the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan (NP) working group have expressed their preference for directing new development to the north west and west of Tiptree to prevent increasing traffic congestion in the centre of Tiptree.

They are also keen to allocate new employment land in North west Tiptree opposite Tower Business Park which is a Local Economic Area.

The Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan is expected to allocate sites – Colchester Borough Council, Tiptree Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan group will agree the extent of any revisions to the settlement boundary and housing numbers.

Discussion on appropriate growth

There are 3545 dwellings within Tiptree's current settlement boundary. The Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan group have indicated that they will plan for approximately 600 new houses as stated in their Mission Statement which has been agreed by the Parish Council and Borough Council. 600 new houses equates to a 16% increase in new dwellings.

Potential areas of search / settlement expansion following high level constraints and opportunities

Broad Area 1 - located to the north west/west Tiptree. This includes site TIP33 which has been promoted by Tiptree PC and sites, TIP08, TIP15 and TIP16, which have been promoted individually by the site owners. Hastoe's Housing Provider are interested in delivering an affordable housing scheme in Tiptree and they have expressed an interest in site TIP15. Sites TIP04 and TIP17 are also located within this area to the north of Tiptree village.

Broad Area 2 - located to the west/south west of Tiptree. This area includes sites TIP01, TIP03, TIP09, TIP12 and TIP27.

Broad Area 3 - includes sites TIP02, TIP10, TIP25 and TIP38 which are located on the southern boundary of Tiptree's settlement boundary. Site TIP25 was approved for enabling residential development as part of the expansion plans for Tiptree Jam factory but it has not been promoted through the Call for Sites.

Green/Amber SLAA sites (19)

TIP01	Peakes Maldon Road	200	Green
TIP02	Rowans Newbridge Road	5	Amber
TIP03	Pennsylvania Lane	284	Green
TIP04	Oak Road	65	Amber
TIP08	Kelvedon Road	39	Amber
TIP09	Maldon Road	200	Green
TIP10	Bull Lane	100	Amber
TIP12	Ship Field	80	Amber
TIP15	Water Works Grange Road	64	Amber
TIP16	Towerend Kelvedon Road	50	Amber
TIP17	Oak Road	60	Amber
TIP21	Pennsylvania Lane	17	Amber
TIP25	North Factory Hill	118	Amber
TIP27	North Maldon Road	12	Green
TIP33	North west Tiptree	516	Amber
TIP34	Pennsylvania Lane	31	Amber
TIP38	Newbridge Road	70	Amber

Sites at Station Road and Maypole Road (TIP28 and TIP 29 respectively) were both assessed in the SLAA as Red due to constraints linked to their availability.

The emerging Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan will make site allocations and as such will carry out detailed site assessments to inform this. For the purposes of the new Colchester Local Plan an indicative level and broad direction for growth are identified which have been agreed with the Neighbourhood Plan Group and the Parish Council. The assessment summary below is the Council's initial assessment through the SLAA which may inform future work of the Neighbourhood Plan Group and also help determine an appropriate level and direction for growth. The decision to allocate these

or other sites within the agreed broad direction will be one for the Neighbourhood Plan, rather than the Local Plan.

TIP01 Peakes Maldon Road could potentially deliver 200 dwellings and there is developer interest in the site. Access potentially off Maldon Road but needs further assessment by the Highway Authority. If site TIP09 is allocated and developed it may be possible to share access from this development into site TIP01.

TIP03 Pennsylvania Lane – has the potential to deliver 284 dwellings. This site is ecologically very rich and satisfies the criteria to be designated as a Local Wildlife Site. Parts of the site support extensive colonies of orchids with 6 different species recorded recently. This could constrain development altogether on this site or prevent development on certain parts of it. Further consideration and assessment is needed of the ecological value of this plot. There are potential access issues too as access has been proposed via Pennsylvania Lane. This is a narrow restricted byway and access to site TIP03 would not be straightforward.

TIP08 Kelvedon Road, TIP15 Water Works, Grange Road, TIP16 Tower End, Kelvedon Road - Individually, these sites may represent a piecemeal approach if they were to be developed separately. The sites fall within a larger site, TIP33, being promoted for development by Tiptree Parish Council. Further consideration for these to be delivered comprehensively should be explored.

TIP09 Maldon Road has the potential to deliver 200 dwellings. This is the only site with direct access to it from Maldon Road.

TIP12 Ship Lane – site could potentially deliver 80 dwellings. Tiptree Parish Council has concerns about this site being developed on highway safety grounds. The Neighbourhood Plan WG are of the opinion that this site offers potential but only if the highway problems on West End Road are resolved (if part of it could be used to provide a new road off West End/Maldon Road). Further discussion with the Highway Authority is required to consider the suitability of this site for development

TIP27 North of Maldon Road - this is a former SLAA site and is promoted by Tiptree Parish Council and supported by the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan Working Group. The site is located adjacent to the existing development boundary in Tiptree. In principle, if developed on its own it could form a logical extension to the Tiptree settlement boundary but it could also form a logical extension to the settlement boundary in conjunction with sites TIP01, TIP09 and TIP03. It is a sustainable location given its reasonable proximity to key services. There are however some issues to be addressed; connectivity between the site and village centre and key facilities could be improved.

TIP 2 & TIP29 are already within the settlement boundary therefore they could come forward for development anyway, without any need for specific allocations (18 dwellings).

This whole area has been proposed by Tiptree PC as site TIP33. These sites could potentially deliver all the housing needed (there is capacity for approximately 764 dwellings) reasonably close to Tiptree village centre while retaining the triangular built

form of Tiptree. While this is over 600, if favoured by the Neighbourhood Plan Group following further assessment, it builds in some flexibility if part of site TIP03 is excluded due to its potentially important ecological value. Further ecological assessment will be needed to assess this value more thoroughly. It also has the potential to release a reasonable amount of S106 /CIL to pay for infrastructure upgrades being sought in the Neighbourhood Plan.

If site TIP12 is allocated, it makes sense to retain the settlement boundary around Tiptree Heath. However, the suggested broad area of growth does not naturally include the area around Tiptree Heath and as such it is recommended in the Preferred Options Local Plan that the settlement boundary around Tiptree Heath be removed given its relative sustainability and the fact that it is separate from the core area of Tiptree.

TIP02 Rowans Newbridge Road & TIP38 - this site could deliver 75 houses. It is located to the south of Tiptree, outside of the area favoured for new growth by the parish council /neighbourhood plan group.

TIP04- Oak Road – Any proposed allocation of this site would need to ensure access can be provided adequately as it is considered that this access to this site could be difficult. It is however outside of the area of Tiptree favoured by the parish council/neighbourhood plan group.

TIP10 – this site has potential to deliver 100 houses and it could potentially form an extension to the settlement boundary, although it would extend built development into the countryside. Access to the site could be an issue which would need to be further considered if this site were to be considered for allocation. It is located to the south of Tiptree, outside of the area favoured for new growth by the parish council/neighbourhood plan group.

TIP17- Any proposed allocation of this site would need to ensure access can be provided adequately as it is considered that this access to this site could be difficult. It is however outside of the area of Tiptree the area favoured by the parish council/neighbourhood plan group.

TIP21- Any development proposed on this site must ensure adequate provision and capacity exists to accommodate growth as there are limited utilities on the site and access could also be difficult as it would have to be accessed off Pennsylvania Lane which is a restricted byway.

TIP 34 —Any development proposed on this site must ensure adequate provision and capacity exist to accommodate growth as there are limited utilities on the site and access could also be difficult as it would have to be accessed off Pennsylvania Lane which is a restricted byway.

Land opposite Tower Business Park - Tiptree PC & NP group are keen to allocate new employment land in north west Tiptree opposite Tower Business Park. The NP group will be consulting businesses as part of their NP to find out about their future business needs and scope to relocate. An aspiration of moving businesses out of the village centre to reduce HGV traffic levels, has been identified as an issue and the

proposal will also provide development opportunities in the village centre. This will be further explored through the Neighbourhood Plan.

TIP 25 North Factory Hill is already allocated in the Tiptree Jam Factory Plan and the current planning status of this site suggests there is an existing commitment to delivering development so would not be the subject of further consideration at this stage.

TIP08, TIP15, TIP16, - these sites together could be considered further for their suitability for allocation and should be explored comprehensively. Collectively they have the potential to deliver 150 units. Hastoe Housing Association has expressed interest in delivering affordable housing on site TIP15.

Summary

The Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan group have indicated they are willing to accept in the region of 600 new houses, which equates to a 16% increase in new dwellings.

Delivery of this level of development would also release a reasonable amount of S106 /CIL to pay for infrastructure upgrades being sought in the Neighbourhood Plan, bringing benefits to the existing community and providing the opportunity to deliver key objectives identified in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

West Bergholt

Settlement Shape and Form

West Bergholt is a medium scale nucleated village situated approximately 1km to the north-west of Colchester. The village is centred around a triangle of roads: the B1508 Colchester Road, Chapel Road and Lexden Road. West Bergholt is separated from Colchester by an area of open countryside and the valleys of St Botolph's Brook and the River Colne. The A12 bisects the open countryside between West Bergholt and Colchester.

The majority of the more recent new development has occurred on the northern side of Colchester Road, notably on the site of the old brewery. The old brewery buildings have been converted to flats and houses with additional housing built to the rear.

High Level Constraints (at settlement level)

- Maintain current settlement pattern around the three main roads with facilities located centrally where possible.
- Seek to prevent development further along Colchester Road towards Colchester. There is currently little inter-visibility between Colchester and West Bergholt, there is an almost continuous belt of arable fields from the A12 to the south-western edge of West Bergholt and the southern areas of the village are softened by mature hedgerows along field boundaries. However, the location of both settlements is such that there is a relatively high potential for visual coalescence of settlements. Any new built development on this land may