

Colchester City Council Submission Draft Local Plan

Regulation 19 Consultation

August 2026



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Colchester is a diverse and growing City, with a vibrant centre, attractive villages and important distinctive landscapes. The Local Plan addresses the challenges of population growth and change, the climate emergency, evolving economic trends and the need for more sustainable and active travel opportunities to meet the needs of current and future generations whilst also protecting and enhancing the environment and people's quality of life.
- 1.2 The Local Plan sets out a vision, strategy, and policies for planning and delivery across the City including strategic policies, site allocations and development management policies for the City up to 2043.
- 1.3 The production of the Local Plan represents years of work, starting with extensive technical evidence, iterative themed public engagements, negotiation and co-operation from many partners and stakeholders including statutory consultees, developers, councillors, town and parish councils and local residents.

Local Plan: The Process

- 1.4 The City cannot be planned in isolation. The Local Plan has been developed in the context of a range of other plans and strategies operating at the national, county, and local levels.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 1.5 The Local Plan must reflect the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This has had several updates since it was first published in 2012. This Local Plan is examined under the 2024 NPPF and has had regard to the emerging NPPF (published for consultation in 2025). Further national guidance on planning policies is provided in Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The NPPF establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which applies to both plan making and decision taking. It is a statutory requirement for the Council to produce planning policies for the City. The policies must comply with national planning policy unless there is overwhelming evidence to demonstrate why this is not the case. The government sets out in paragraph 8 of the NPPF (2024) that the planning system should achieve sustainable development by achieving three overarching objectives:
 - a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
 - b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect

current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

County Level Plans

1.6 The following County level plans provide a relevant background to the Local Plan.

Essex Minerals Local Plan

- 1.7 Essex County Council is the Minerals Planning Authority (MPA) for Colchester and is responsible for preparing planning policies, and also for assessing applications for mineral development. The Essex Minerals Local Plan (MLP) (2014) is a statutory Development Plan and should be read alongside the Colchester Local Plan. The role of the MLP is to identify sites for the extraction of sufficient quantities of mineral within Essex to facilitate development over the plan period (2014-2029). A MLP Review has commenced to replace the current plan.
- 1.8 There are active quarry sites in Colchester as well as currently unworked sand and gravel and brick clay deposits which are subject to a Minerals Safeguarding policy within the MLP. The safeguarding policy requires the MPA – Essex County Council – to be consulted on development proposals covering 5 hectares or more within the sand and gravel minerals safeguarding area and greater than one dwelling for the brick clay safeguarded area. The Minerals Safeguarding Areas which apply within Colchester are highlighted on the relevant policies maps. Regard should be had to the requirements of the Minerals Local Plan where a development falls within a Minerals Safeguarding Area. Qualifying applications will be required to be accompanied by a Minerals Resource Assessment unless excluded by safeguarding policy.
- 1.9 The MLP also designates Mineral Consultation Areas at a distance of 250 metres around active quarries, mineral infrastructure and mineral deposits permitted for extraction. The MPA will be required to be consulted on all non-mineral related development within these areas, and all applications will require a Minerals Infrastructure Impact Assessment unless excluded by safeguarding policy. The extent of Mineral Consultation Areas are shown on the policies map. Essex County Council as the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority should be contacted for any queries in relation to the application of minerals safeguarding policy.

Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan

1.10 Essex County Council is also the Waste Planning Authority (WPA) for Colchester, and is responsible for preparing planning policies, and assessing

applications for waste development. The Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan (2017) (WLP) is a statutory Development Plan and should be read alongside the Colchester Local Plan. The role of the WLP is to identify sites for waste management to facilitate sustainable development over its Plan period.

- 1.11 The WLP sets out how Essex and Southend-on-Sea aim to manage waste and seeks to deal with waste more sustainably, encouraging recycling and reducing reliance on landfill as well as safeguarding waste facilities. All applications within 250m of existing, permitted and allocated waste facilities (extending to 400m for Water Recycling Centres) are required to be submitted with a Waste Infrastructure Impact Assessment unless excluded by safeguarding policy. The extent of Waste Consultation Areas are shown on the policies map. Essex County Council as the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority should be contacted for any queries in relation to the application of waste safeguarding policy.

Essex Local Transport Plan

- 1.12 The Local Transport Act 2008 requires Essex County Council (ECC) to develop a Local Transport Plan (LTP) that provides the overarching strategy and policy framework for transport across Essex, outlining the Council's vision and focusing on key themes and outcomes to manage, operate and improve transportation networks and services. This requirement is addressed by the Essex Transport Strategy that was formally adopted by ECC in 2011.
- 1.13 Given policy evolution since the adoption of LTP3, due consideration should be given to more recent documents such as Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral and the Transport East Transport Strategy, to ensure that greater emphasis is placed upon sustainable development, the provision and use of sustainable transport, and the decarbonisation of the transport network.
- 1.14 ECC consulted on 'A Better Connected Essex', the draft Local Transport Plan for Essex during summer 2025. A Better Connected Essex includes an update to the relevant transport strategy for Essex, a revised suite of transport policies, and includes a suite of Implementation Plans that bring the Colchester Future Transport Strategy within the formal structure of the LTP.
- 1.15 Transport East is the Sub Regional National Transport Body for the East of England and has an adopted Transport Strategy. The strategy is aligned with the Essex LTP and is seeking to deliver four priorities:
- creating a net zero carbon transport network
 - connecting our growing towns and cities
 - energising our coastal and rural communities
 - unlocking global gateways.

Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

- 1.16 Introduced in the Environment Act 2021, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) is a statutory requirement. It is part of Nature Recovery Network (NRN), which is made up of 48 Local Nature Recovery Strategies. The primary purpose

of the Essex LNRS is to find locations for the creation or improvement of habitat. It aims to identify the locations most likely to provide the greatest benefit for nature and the wider environment. Essex County Council are the Responsible Authority for delivering the LNRS for Greater Essex. The Essex LNRS outlines agreed biodiversity priorities for nature recovery in the county. It also outlines a series of proposed actions, known as potential measures, to achieve these priorities. The Essex LNRS proposes where actions could be carried out that will connect and expand existing spaces for nature.

- 1.17 Other strategies and guidance documents have a bearing on planning policy in Colchester and cover education, housing, and key infrastructure considerations such as early years and childcare, schools, social care and sustainable drainage. Separately, work is also undertaken jointly across Essex on a range of policy matters including on climate change, health and wellbeing and economic development, and as appropriate has been used to inform this plan.

City Strategies

- 1.18 The Local Plan is aligned with corporate priorities having been prepared having regard to a wide range of relevant Council strategies.

Recycling and Waste Strategy for Colchester 2025-2040

- 1.19 This Strategy outlines Colchester's plans to improve the way we manage waste over the next 15 years. It sets out the vision and aims of the Council in reducing waste, improving recycling, lowering carbon emissions and providing a simple-to-use service for our residents and businesses.

Three Year Plan 2023-2026: A City fit for the Future

- 1.20 The strategy emphasises sustainability, inclusivity and innovation aiming to position Colchester as a thriving forward looking city where people want to live, work and visit. The Strategy includes the Council's overarching priorities and has been taken into account throughout the development of the local plan.

Colchester Economic Development Strategy 2022 - 2025

- 1.21 This strategy aims to position Colchester as a dynamic and sustainable city, balancing economic growth with social inclusivity and environmental responsibility.

Housing Strategy 2022-2027

- 1.22 This strategy was developed by the Housing Strategy Partnership, including Colchester City Council and its partners, sets out a vision where all residents have access to safe and affordable homes that promote health and equality within sustainable communities.

Environmental Sustainability Strategy

- 1.23 This strategy brings together in one strategic document the issues around climate change; fuel poverty; depleting resources; energy security; as well as the environmental management of our own buildings, services and operations.

Colchester Future Transport Strategy (2022)

- 1.24 This strategy was prepared in partnership with Essex County Council as the Highway Authority and sets out the overall approach to current transport issues and opportunities. It provides a strategy to improve health and wellbeing and tackle climate issues at the centre of transport planning and the projects and initiatives undertaken. The strategy will assist in supporting future allocation and bidding for funding for transport projects in the city and will be incorporated into the Implementation Plan as part of LTP4.

Local Government Reform

- 1.25 While local government reform is ongoing and future governance arrangements will evolve, it is necessary to continue progressing the Colchester Local Plan to maintain an up-to-date development plan, positively prepared and justified in accordance with the NPPF, and capable of addressing Colchester's current strategic needs. Future iterations of the Local Plan will need to accord with the Greater Essex Spatial Development Strategy.

Duty to Cooperate

- 1.26 In preparing the Local Plan, the Council co-operates with a range of other bodies to ensure a co-ordinated approach in the development of its policies in line with national guidance, in the context of strategic cross-boundary matters. These bodies include Essex County Council, the neighbouring districts of Braintree, Tendring, Maldon and Babergh and Mid Suffolk, together with infrastructure providers including agencies responsible for transport, health and the environment. Whilst the statutory Duty to Cooperate has been withdrawn, the NPPF emphasises the importance of addressing strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries in a planned and coordinated way. The NPPF expects local planning authorities to engage constructively with neighbouring authorities and relevant bodies to ensure that strategic priorities, including housing, infrastructure, climate change and environmental matters, are considered effectively. The Statement of Cooperation and Statements of Common Ground demonstrate how strategic matters have been discussed, the areas of agreement and disagreement, and how any unresolved issues are being addressed. This ensures transparency, supports effective plan preparation, and provides evidence that strategic matters have been taken into account with our partners in accordance with national policy expectations.

Evidence Base

- 1.27 Policy development goes hand in hand with the development of an evidence base of research and information. The evidence base contains documents from local, county and national levels. National guidance is not listed to avoid repetition, given that the Local Plan has been produced in accordance with the NPPF. The evidence gathered covers topics including housing, economy, natural and built environment, net zero carbon buildings, transport, infrastructure and site-specific matters where relevant, has been employed in

the formulation of the spatial strategy and policies. Evidence is kept under review and updated where necessary with some evidence documents being 'live'. The evidence base can be viewed on the Council's website.

Sustainability Appraisal

1.28 Policy development has been carried out in the light of a Sustainability Appraisal, incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment. The Sustainability Appraisal tests the sustainability of the Plan options throughout the plan preparation process. It does this by considering how different policy choices perform against a range of sustainability objectives and assessment criteria. For example, it looks at whether policies or allocations would provide new jobs, make efficient use of land and help to improve health and wellbeing. The Sustainability Appraisal also helps to identify measures that could help to minimise any negative impacts identified and maximise the sustainability of the Local Plan. Sustainability Appraisal (SA) has been prepared iteratively throughout plan preparation and a SA report has been published alongside the Plan.

Habitat Regulations Assessment

1.29 A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) has been carried out and is published alongside the Plan. HRA refers to the several distinct stages of assessment which must be undertaken in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). All plans and projects (including planning applications) which are not directly connected with, or necessary for, the conservation management of a habitat site, require consideration of whether the plan or project is likely to have significant effects (screening). Where the potential for likely significant effects cannot be excluded, the Council must make an appropriate assessment of the implications of the plan or project for that site, in view of the site's conservation objectives. The competent authority may agree to the plan or project only after having ruled out adverse effects on the integrity of the habitats site. Where an adverse effect on site integrity cannot be ruled out, and where there are no alternative solutions, the plan or project can only proceed if there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest and if the necessary compensatory measures can be secured.

Development Plan

1.30 The Development Plan Documents for Colchester will comprise:

- The Colchester City Local Plan setting out the overarching spatial vision for development of the City to 2043; strategic policies; detailed site allocations for housing and employment growth; and criteria based non-strategic development management policies.
- Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community (Development Plan Document). A Joint Local Plan (Development Plan Document) with Tendring District Council which allocates land and includes policies for the design and

development of a Garden Community on the Colchester-Tendring border. The DPD provides relevant policy guidance, and sets out policies for the management of development, against which planning applications for the development and use of land will be considered.

- Neighbourhood Plans when adopted/made for different areas of Colchester will form part of the Development Plan and will guide new development in their areas.
- The Essex Minerals Local Plan and Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan, prepared by the County Council, apply to minerals and waste development matters.
- Tiptree Jam Factory DPD 2013.

1.31 The Local Plan is accompanied by a number of other planning documents that provide further guidance and information:

- Policies Maps which show where Local Plan policies apply to specific locations.
- Local Development Scheme (LDS) – this lists and describes all planning policy documents and the timetable for preparing them.
- Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) – sets out how we will consult the public in preparing planning policies.
- Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) - provides an annual summary of key statistics that monitor the effectiveness of the Local Plan.

Supplementary Planning Documents

1.32 The Council has adopted a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) over the years which relate to the Local Plan and provide additional policy guidance on a number of specific planning related topics and sites. There is no formal status afforded to SPDs in the new plan making system. It has therefore been necessary to consider whether there is detail from existing SPDs (which remain a material consideration in decision making until this Local Plan is adopted) which can be embedded in updated policies and whether there is the need for more detailed requirements to be included in future Supplementary Plans to be prepared once the updated Local Plan has been adopted. Guidance Notes will remain in place and represent Council policy and will be useful in providing detail to inform planning applications.

2. Vision and approach to Local Plan

Approach to the Local Plan

- 2.1 Section 19(1A) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local planning authorities to include in their Local Plans 'policies designed to secure that the development and use of land in the local planning authority's area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change'. This statutory requirement underpins the overall strategy for the Local Plan and aligns with national policy, which requires plans to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
- 2.2 The way places are planned, designed and built can have a significant influence on health and wellbeing. All development should be designed to provide opportunities for healthy lifestyles and contribute to the creation of healthy, inclusive communities, and help to reduce health inequalities for people of all ages and abilities through placemaking. The Council will continue to work with partners and health providers to improve and promote healthier and active lifestyles for our residents and communities. Health and wellbeing outcomes are embedded throughout the Local Plan and reflected in policies.
- 2.3 The Local Plan takes a holistic and integrated approach to achieving sustainable development, addressing the climate emergency, biodiversity and the environment, health and wellbeing and the cost of living crisis. All policies individually and cumulatively have been considered in this context.
- 2.4 The Environment Act 2021 introduces a strengthened statutory duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity. The Act establishes a strengthened biodiversity duty on public authorities, which states that public authorities must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity and have regard to Local Nature Recovery Strategies when creating local plans and making planning decisions.
- 2.5 Protecting and enhancing biodiversity, nature recovery and addressing the climate emergency are not stand-alone issues, they are intertwined and embedded in all aspects of planning. A key purpose of the Local Plan has been to enhance Colchester's green network and waterways and incorporate the numerous themes of the planning for a better environment agenda, such as air quality, biodiversity net gain, climate change adaptation and mitigation and net zero, flooding and coastal erosion, green and blue infrastructure, greenspace provision, Habitat Regulations, Local Nature Recovery Strategy, natural capital and environmental net gain, protected sites and species and water quality and resources.
- 2.6 The effects of climate change are already being experienced – more storms and heavy rainfall coupled with water stress, heatwaves and higher temperatures. The Local Plan therefore includes policy requirements to support the transition to net zero homes and buildings, alongside climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.

- 2.7 Essex is the most water stressed county in the country. The situation is expected to get worse due to climate change, population growth and the need to restore, protect and enhance the natural environment. Although Essex is one of the driest places in the country, there are also areas at very high flood risk from the sea, rivers and rainfall. In addition to this, water quality in Essex is below the national average as a result of storm overflows discharging sewage into the water supply; pollution from fertilisers and poor livestock management; and runoff from construction and traffic.
- 2.8 The climate emergency and ecological emergency are closely related. As the climate changes, nature changes. The State of Nature Report 2023 says that the UK, like most other countries worldwide, has seen significant loss of its plants, animals and fungi. The UK is now one of the most nature-depleted countries on Earth. Across the UK, species studied have declined on average by 19% since 1970, nearly one in six species are threatened with extinction from Great Britain, and 151 of 10,008 species assessed have already become extinct since 1500.
- 2.9 The Local Plan has been prepared alongside the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), which has provided evidence of the actions to reverse the current path of decline and bring about a recovery for nature. The LNRS identifies locations to create or improve habitat most likely to provide the greatest benefit for nature and the wider environment.
- 2.10 The Essex LNRS explains that 'Essex, like the whole of the UK, has suffered extreme biodiversity loss in the last 50 years, with many habitats and species now vulnerable or seriously threatened. Once common species in our county such as Turtle Doves, European Eels and Hedgehogs are now seriously depleted and at risk. Habitats are now left largely fragmented and isolated, causing significant declines in biodiversity and ecological quality. Human life, too, is affected by these changes.' The Local Plan aims to play a role in nature recovery across Colchester.
- 2.11 Nature contributes much value through natural capital. Ecosystem services provide a regulating, provisioning and cultural role. Over the long term, the economic costs of failing to address the climate emergency and biodiversity loss, will be higher through loss of natural capital than the costs of addressing them now.
- 2.12 The Essex Climate Action Commission recognise that the natural world is our best ally in reversing climate change – it is key to absorbing and storing carbon. Risks from already changing weather systems: more flooding, over-heating, soil degradation, subsidence and water shortage can be tackled by making space for open spaces and nurturing our natural world. Through declaring a climate emergency, it has become a priority of Colchester City Council to spur urgent action to reduce our carbon footprint and promote sustainable development. This priority is incorporated throughout the Local Plan.

- 2.13 The green network plays a critical role in delivering environmental, social and health benefits. The Essex LNRS includes a target to double the amount of natural greenspace in Essex. There is scientific research that demonstrates the positive impact that nature has on mental health and wellbeing. The green network (or open spaces) and waterways have long been recognised as an essential component of resilient, healthy and sustainable communities - communities that respond to the climate emergency, promote health and wellbeing and protect and help nature to recover.
- 2.14 Over the plan period, the City will face many challenges, such as population growth and change, the climate emergency, evolving economic trends and the need for more sustainable and active travel opportunities. The Local Plan seeks to address these challenges to deliver the level of growth required to meet the needs of current and future generations whilst also protecting and enhancing the environment and people's quality of life.
- 2.15 Colchester's Local Housing Needs Assessment (2024 and 2026 update) confirms that it is necessary to use the Standard Methodology for calculating housing need. The updated method results in a need to plan for 1,276 new homes per year. This equates to 21,692 new homes over the plan period. A key challenge for the Local Plan is ensuring that enough land is allocated for residential uses to accommodate the required level of housing need over the plan period. Colchester has a very good track record of regenerating previously developed land within its urban area and as a result the City has a limited and diminishing supply of brownfield sites that can contribute to accommodating new growth. Growth will be directed to the most sustainable locations, whilst avoiding unacceptable impacts on the environment and community and social infrastructure.
- 2.16 The NPPF provides overarching guidance on the Government's development aims and describes the Government's vision for building a strong, competitive economy. It emphasises that Local Plans and Employment Needs Assessments should present robust evidence to support clearly defined designations and allocations of land for employment uses. It sets out a series of recommendations which policymakers should follow to help create conditions in which businesses can invest. The Employment Land Needs Assessment (ELNA) demonstrates that Colchester has strong economic relationships with Braintree and Tendring. This is based on housing and property market areas, connectivity via the road and rail network, economic governance partnerships, and the local authorities representing key locations in relation to worker flows.
- 2.17 Growth in the working-age population is expected to outpace regional and national rates. This growth could increase labour supply, stimulate local businesses, and boost productivity as well as support infrastructure development, attract investment, and expand the pool of skilled workers. The ELNA looks at supply and demand based on the needs identified. The outcome of the comparison between employment land demand and available supply, based on the current portfolio of sites / allocations across the district, indicates

that taking into account pipeline sites, there is insufficient supply available to meet projected demand in Colchester district over the plan period. Planning for additional employment land is therefore required, adding additional flexibility as not all developments in the planning pipeline may come forward as envisaged or may be developed in different quantities by use class than has been consented. The ELNA demand assessment estimates that there is a net additional demand for 49.8ha of employment land across Colchester over the plan period.

- 2.18 The implementation of the Local Plan will make a significant contribution towards mitigating the challenges Colchester faces. A comprehensive plan led approach will support climate change mitigation and adaptation, enable nature recovery, and promote health and wellbeing - providing all policy requirements are implemented. The Local Plan is integrated, and its policies are inter-related and together will deliver the greatest positive impact. Improving health, wellbeing and quality of life will be central to all proposals in Colchester. Through implementation, the Local Plan will help create healthy, vibrant and diverse places that protect and enhance Colchester's special and diverse natural environment.
- 2.19 Ongoing partnership working between the Council, infrastructure providers, developers and communities will be essential to achieving these outcomes. The approach taken in the Local Plan responds to the need to deliver sustainable growth while addressing climate change, supporting biodiversity and improving quality of life, placing the planning for a better environment agenda at its core.

Vision

2.20 The purpose of the vision is to demonstrate the focus and direction of the Local Plan. The vision is important as a means of setting the wider context and detailing the Council's key aims and priorities over the plan period. The Vision, themes and objectives have been informed by outcomes of wide stakeholder engagement undertaken at the beginning of the plan making process. They describe the future the Plan is seeking to create building on the strengths and opportunities identified. It is ambitious yet achievable.

2.21 The vision for the Colchester Local Plan is:

Growth in Colchester is inevitable and brings with it change and opportunity. The Local Plan will embrace growth opportunities to meet the environmental, social and economic needs of the changing population and future generations. In doing so it will improve the quality of life for our communities, create a better environment and contribute to healthy lifestyles, by maximising the opportunities provided through well connected green networks. The Plan will also preserve and enhance Colchester's identity defined by its special diverse natural environment, green networks and waterways, prestigious heritage, varied arts and culture, and welcoming inclusive, vibrant and healthy communities.

2.22 The vision will be achieved through provision of new open spaces, biodiversity net gain and the creation of wildlife corridors to create better connections between habitats and people, supporting physical and mental wellbeing. Strategic green networks, wildlife corridors and multifunctional open spaces will enhance landscape character and biodiversity and help to manage surface water, reduce flood risk, alleviate urban heat, and improve access to nature. Healthy food environments will be promoted by enabling access to affordable nutritious food, supporting local food growing initiatives, and managing the density of unhealthy food outlets. Colchester will have a real sense of community and be welcoming and inclusive - a destination of choice. Sustainable and inclusive communities will be created with a focus on diversity of place and valuing what is unique to Colchester – the countryside, coast and city. Communities will have a varied mix of housing to meet the needs of all, including social and lower income households; and a range of jobs, including careers, that support a strong local economy and reduce the need for residents to commute outside of Colchester. Colchester's distinctive arts, culture, heritage and tourism will improve the quality of life for residents, foster life-long learning and boost the local economy. There will be enhanced public transport corridors and routes and an increase in active travel, reducing air pollution and promoting healthier lifestyles. By embedding nature-based solutions and future proofing infrastructure delivered where it is needed, the Local Plan seeks to ensure growth contributes positively to environmental recovery, increases resilience to climate change impacts, and supports healthier, more sustainable communities for current and future generations.

2.23 The Local Plan takes inspiration from early engagement with a range of stakeholders identifying what is unique about Colchester and embraces the bold new approaches that will help achieve this vision. There are four themes, which are supported by objectives. The following visual and bullet points shows the interaction between the themes and objectives of the Local Plan vision. The themes are in the centre of the visual with the objectives surrounding them.



Themes and Objectives

Healthy, vibrant and diverse places

- Protect, maintain and enhance the distinct character, heritage identity and setting of Colchester city.
- Protect stretches of undeveloped countryside, enhance the quality of natural environment creating net gains to biodiversity, contributing to local nature recovery priorities and the creation of better connected green networks and waterways.

- Contribute to national commitments to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, including the UK's ambition to protect at least 30% of land for nature by 2030.
- Encourage the redevelopment of brownfield land.
- Support Colchester's tourism role through the provision of additional high-quality facilities.
- Create healthier food environments by managing the location and concentration of unhealthy food outlets to tackle obesity and diet-related inequalities and support access to local food growing.
- Protect and enhance the environment to prioritise the prevention of ill-health and support mental and physical wellbeing.

Sustainable

- Improve existing facilities and deliver sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including a multifunctional green network and waterways, utilities, roads and schools.
- Access to high quality healthcare that is deliverable and where needed.
- Facilitate affordable clean secure energy through the delivery of sustainable energy to achieve radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.
- Ensure development helps Colchester to adapt and increase its resilience to the effects of climate change.
- Support the reduction of waste in line with the waste management hierarchy.

Welcoming inclusive communities

- Deliver high value jobs for local people and support a stronger local economy.
- Focus on art culture, heritage and tourism.
- Deliver high quality public realm and enhance infrastructure to attract inward investment.
- Varied mix of housing to meet the needs of all, including social and lower income households.
- Safe, inclusive and sustainable.
- Access to key services and facilities for all.

Well-connected

- Better public transport corridors to reduce congestion and air pollution and increase active travel making cycling and walking more attractive.
- Create communities which reduce the need to travel, particularly by car for most of their daily needs.

Strategic Priorities for the Development and Use of Land

2.24 In accordance with section 19(1B) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the following are the strategic priorities for the development and use of land in Colchester. These priorities are informed by the Vision, Themes and Objectives and are delivered through the Strategic Policies and other policies contained within this Local Plan.

1. Delivering sufficient homes to meet Colchester's housing needs, including affordable, specialist and accessible housing.
2. Supporting sustainable economic growth and providing sufficient employment land and opportunities.
3. Directing growth to the most sustainable locations through the spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy.
4. Delivering infrastructure, services and facilities alongside development.
5. Addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation.
6. Conserving and enhancing biodiversity, the green network and waterways and supporting nature recovery.
7. Protecting and enhancing landscape character, the coast and the historic environment.
8. Promoting healthy, inclusive and safe communities and reducing health inequalities.
9. Delivering high quality design and place-making that creates sustainable, resilient and attractive neighbourhoods.
10. Supporting sustainable transport, active travel and better connectivity.
11. Managing water resources, flood risk and environmental quality.

3. Strategic Policies

- 3.1 In accordance with national policy, this plan includes Strategic Policies which set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places and make sufficient provision for:
- a) homes (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development;
 - b) infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
 - c) community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and
 - d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- 3.2 Strategic Policies provide an overview that applies across the whole area, responding to the requirements of national policy and supported by more detailed topic development management and Place specific policies. In addition, neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in any development plan that covers their area. For the purposes of neighbourhood planning these are the strategic policies which will apply as required by national policy. Relevant Place policies will also apply to any neighbourhood plan prepared.
- 3.3 The Strategic Policies (Policies ST1–ST9) set out the overarching principles and priorities for development across Colchester and establish the strategic direction of the Local Plan. Detailed development management policies (including those relating to environment, green network and waterways, homes, economy, place and connectivity) provide the criteria against which development proposals will be assessed. Where policies address similar matters:
- Strategic Policies establish the principle and objective;
 - Development management policies provide the detailed requirements and assessment criteria; and
 - Place Policies set out site-specific requirements.
- 3.4 In the event of any overlap, the more strategic policy shall take precedence. Strategic Policies should not be interpreted as creating additional submission requirements where these are already addressed through development management and/or Place policies.

Policy ST1: Health and Wellbeing

The way places are planned, designed and built can have a significant influence over health and wellbeing.

All development should be designed to provide opportunities for healthy lifestyles and contribute to the creation of healthier and inclusive communities and help to reduce health inequalities for people of all ages and abilities through placemaking.

The Council will continue to work with partners and health providers to improve and promote healthier and active lifestyles for our residents and communities.

Health and wellbeing outcomes are embedded throughout the policies in the Plan. To achieve healthy and inclusive communities, all new development should:

- a) Promote healthy neighbourhood design, providing opportunities for healthy lifestyles for all by creating well-designed, safe and accessible places.
- b) Provide healthy and affordable homes that meet the needs of the community.
- c) Provide easy access to natural environments including green and blue infrastructure and open spaces.
- d) Promote active and sustainable environments and encourage active travel.
- e) Promote a healthy food environment.
- f) Provide opportunities for all to access health facilities and services, a range of employment opportunities, and community, sport and recreation facilities. Where appropriate new development will be expected to deliver and/or contribute to the provision of new or improved facilities.
- g) Seek environmental improvements, minimising exposure to potential sources of environmental harm including pollutants and noise and improving air quality.
- h) Minimise, manage and mitigate against the effects of climate change.

In addition, and where appropriate, new development should support the provision of healthcare infrastructure to accommodate needs, in accessible locations, in line with the requirements outlined in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and set out in Place policies.

A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) will be required for all residential development of 50 dwellings or more, non-residential development of 1,000sqm or more, all development in C2 use class (residential institutions) and hot food takeaways and fast food outlets in accordance with Policy PC1, in order to demonstrate that the development would have an acceptable impact on health and wellbeing. The scope and detail of the HIA should be proportionate to the size of development and should be agreed prior to commencement of the assessment with development management and public health officers. The Council will require Health Impact Assessments to be prepared having regard to the most up to date advice and best practice for such assessments,

responding to the latest local public health data and insight from the community. The purpose of the Health Impact Assessment will be to identify the potential health consequences of a proposal and should be undertaken at an early stage of the development process, with evidence that the assessment has informed the design of the proposal

The assessment should include recommendations on how positive health benefits can be maximised and how negative impacts on health and inequalities can be avoided or mitigated. Where a development has a significant adverse impact on health and wellbeing, the Council will require applicants to provide for the mitigation of such impacts. Developments which will have an unacceptable significant adverse impact on health and wellbeing which cannot be mitigated, or that fail to offer reasonable provisions, will not be permitted.

Justification

- 3.5 The purpose of this strategic policy is to ensure that all proposals support the health and wellbeing of all our communities. In line with national policy, Policy ST1 aims to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places, enabling and supporting healthy lives and reducing health inequalities.
- 3.6 Health and wellbeing objectives are established at a strategic level in the Vision and Strategic Policy ST1. Subsequent placemaking, design and place policies are intended to support delivery of these objectives and should not be read as introducing additional or standalone requirements unless explicitly stated.
- 3.7 The policy acknowledges the interconnection between health and wellbeing and the climate, the environment, and place-making and design. Healthy lifestyles can be supported and improved through high quality inclusive design and planning, providing healthy homes, increasing inclusivity and providing access to local services; encouraging access to natural environments and encouraging active travel to enable communities to be physically active; and promoting access to healthy food. These principles, along with further information and guidance on their implementation can be found in the Essex Design Guide.
- 3.8 To ensure health and wellbeing is supported, promoted and improved through new development, and any impacts on health are identified, a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) will be required in line with current best practice advice. The scope of the HIA will vary depending on the scale of the development proposal. Early engagement and consultation with the Council's and Essex County Council's public health officers is important prior to commencement of an HIA to help ensure that the HIA can inform proposals effectively. The scope of the HIA should be agreed prior to commencement of the assessment with the Council and public health officers. Further information can be found in the [latest Healthy Places guidance](#) and [Health Impact Assessment checklist](#) (and any successor documents) produced by the Essex Planning Officers Association.

Policy ST2: Environment and the Green Network and Waterways

All proposals must conserve and enhance Colchester's natural and historic environment, including the protection and enhancement of sites of international, national, regional, and local importance. Development should protect and respond positively to the landscape character of Colchester informed by its biodiversity, geology, green network and waterways, history, archaeology and settlement identity, including sense of separation. The Council will support the use of Natural England's Environmental Benefits from Nature tool.

Proposals must have regard to the strategic aims and objectives of the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy, including habitat creation in strategic opportunity areas and enhancement of ecological connectivity, and the Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) or any relevant successor documents.

Strategic areas with enhanced potential for habitat creation and ecological connectivity are shown on the policies maps as 'strategic biodiversity areas'. These strategic biodiversity areas will be safeguarded from inappropriate development having regard to the policy context of the local plan and opportunities to strengthen and enhance habitat connectivity will be supported.

Detailed requirements relating to biodiversity net gain, ecological assessment and mitigation, green network provision, open space standards, and long-term management and maintenance are set out in Policies EN2, EN3 and GN1, and relevant Place policies.

Justification

- 3.9 The purpose of this strategic policy is to ensure that all proposals conserve and enhance the natural and historic environment and that major residential proposals deliver contextually responsive, high quality open spaces. The key purpose of this strategic policy and all policies in the Environment chapter, is to respond to the creating a better environment agenda by halting overall biodiversity loss, supporting healthy well-functioning ecosystems, and supporting and establishing coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people. Detailed requirements for biodiversity net gain, ecological assessment, mitigation and protection of biodiversity are set out in Policies EN2 and EN3.
- 3.10 The Local Plan evidence base includes evidence that is relevant to this strategic policy and the Environment and Green Network policies that follow, such as the Habitats Regulations Assessment, Biodiversity Protection and BNG Study, Strategic Biodiversity Assessment, Landscape Character Assessment, Local Wildlife Site Review and Colchester's Green Network and Waterways Guiding Principles.
- 3.11 Planning reforms, the Environment Act, and the Environmental Improvement Plan, provide significant opportunities for planning to play a key role in creating

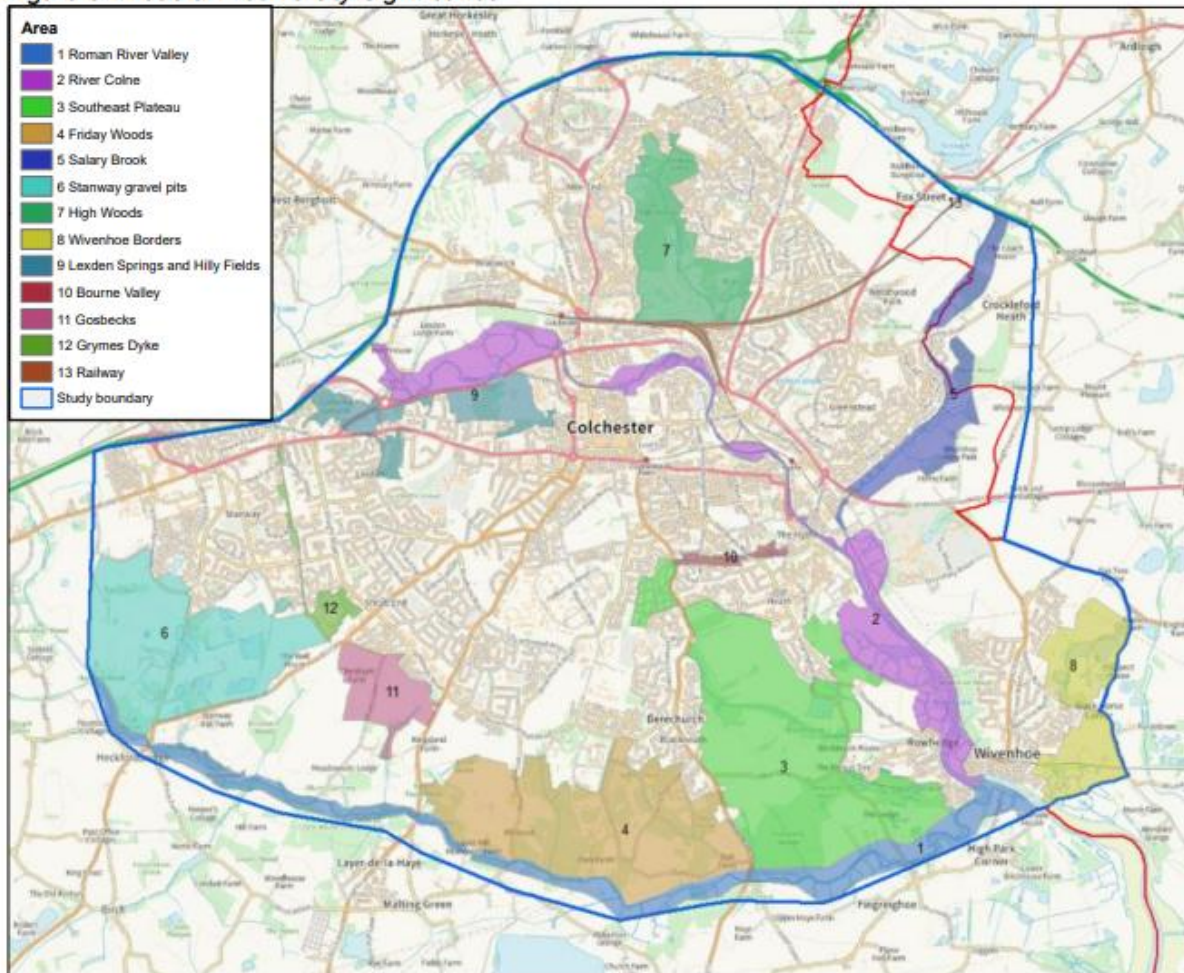
a better environment for future generations. Responding to the increasing environmental agenda in plan making requires a coherent and streamlined approach which complements the complex environmental agenda requiring integrated, coordinated approaches to achieve multifunctional benefits from the use of land.

- 3.12 Nature in Essex has suffered significantly over the last century, and continues to suffer, from species loss, habitat loss and increased habitat erosion and fragmentation. There are multiple causes to this loss and increased isolation of habitats across the landscape, including land use change, invasive species, pollution, overexploitation and climate change. It is crucial that nature recovery is at the centre of future action for the environment, to create new habitats and recover and enhance space for nature that has been lost or degraded.
- 3.13 The Council was a Supporting Authority in the development of the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). The role of LNRS' is to provide a county-wide, practical solution to driving action for nature recovery on the ground. The primary purpose of the Essex LNRS is to identify locations to create or improve habitat most likely to provide the greatest benefit for nature and the wider environment. The Council has had regard to the Essex LNRS throughout plan preparation.
- 3.14 The presence of clusters of designated sites and, in some cases, older landscapes that aren't designated but that have the potential to make a significant contribution to biodiversity, has been used to identify areas of significance for the conservation of biodiversity. These strategic biodiversity areas present the best opportunities for habitat creation and enhancement aimed at improving biodiversity. Each of the strategic biodiversity areas has an inherent degree of coherence and connectivity. Strategic biodiversity areas are shown on the policies map and are shown for context in the map below.
- 3.15 Enhancing ecological connections as a priority is aimed at improving the robustness of species populations by increasing gene flow between nearby populations, allowing colonisation of new sites, and facilitating re-colonisation of sites where populations may be lost by adverse impacts. With climate change impacting on environmental conditions in a profound way, these connections also offer a chance for species to find somewhere better suited to their needs if necessary.
- 3.16 Such connections also serve to improve the general ecological condition of the wider landscape, serving as a reservoir of biodiversity that can then permeate the whole landscape, including those areas of residential development to which they are connected.
- 3.17 Development within strategic opportunity areas must ensure that it is appropriate and considers opportunities for habitat creation and enhancement aimed at improving biodiversity. Protecting, strengthening and enhancing habitats and corridors within the strategic biodiversity areas can be achieved through broadening connections and improving the condition of the habitats, as

well as creating more links with nearby LoWS through the design of green infrastructure and mitigation habitats within development sites as well as through compensation measures and biodiversity net gain in the wider landscape.

Strategic biodiversity areas

Figure 3. Areas of Biodiversity Significance



3.18 The Colchester Orbital is an established and evolving strategic recreational and active travel route which forms a key component of the City's green network. It provides opportunities to enhance connectivity between urban areas and the countryside, supporting active travel, health and wellbeing, and ecological connectivity. Development should, where appropriate, contribute to the delivery and enhancement of the Orbital through improved links, access points and improved supporting infrastructure and associated green infrastructure.

Policy ST3: Spatial Strategy

Development will be directed to the most sustainable locations in Colchester district in accordance with the spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy to deliver the scale of growth identified in Policies ST5 and ST6. Growth will be infrastructure-led, ensuring that development is aligned with the timely provision of infrastructure necessary to support sustainable communities.

Proposals for development will be supported where they are located in accordance with the following sequential approach:

- Colchester Urban Area (including City Centre) as the principal focus of growth through redevelopment of previously developed land, high density development and regeneration.
- Growth and Opportunity Areas to deliver strategic scale growth, regeneration and supporting infrastructure in accordance with Place Policies and any adopted masterplans and DPDs.
- Large Settlements where development will be supported at a scale proportionate to their role, services and environmental constraints.
- Medium Settlements where development will be supported at a scale proportionate to the size and function of the settlement and its connectivity and supports local services and responds positively to infrastructure constraints.
- Small Settlements where small scale and infill development will be supported where it is proportionate and appropriate to the settlement, and respects local character and constraints.
- Areas outside of defined settlements or growth areas are classed as countryside and development will be restricted to uses appropriate to a rural location.

Development in locations well related to key transport corridors, particularly with access to the rail network, will be supported where it maximises sustainable travel opportunities and there is, or can be, sufficient capacity on the network and/or appropriate mitigation to support any enhancement required.

The re-use of previously developed land and higher density development (particularly in the Urban Area of Colchester) will be supported where it accords with design, character and infrastructure capacity considerations.

Proposals will be assessed in accordance with the settlement hierarchy below and relevant Place and development management policies. Proposals will be supported where they are consistent with the nature, role and function of the settlement having regard to cumulative impacts and the scale of growth over the plan period.

Settlement Hierarchy

Colchester Urban Area including City Centre
Growth and Opportunity Areas Hythe Opportunity Areas Magdalen Street Opportunity Area Marks Tey Growth Area Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community Growth Area University of Essex and Knowledge Gateway
Large Settlements Tiptree West Mersea Wivenhoe
Medium Settlements Abberton and Langenhoe Boxted Chappel and Wakes Colne Copford Dedham and Dedham Heath Eight Ash Green Fordham Great Horkesley Great Tey Langham Layer de la Haye Rowhedge West Bergholt
Small Settlements Aldham Birch and Layer Breton Copford Green Easthorpe East Mersea Fingringhoe Great Wigborough Little Horkesley Messing Mount Bures Peldon Salcott Wormingford
Countryside

KEY DIAGRAM



Justification

3.19 The spatial strategy establishes the overall distribution of development across Colchester district to 2043. The strategy provides the framework for the delivery of Colchester's identified housing, employment and infrastructure needs over

the plan period, taking into account the unique characteristics of areas across the City consistent with the presumption in favour of sustainable development in national policy. The settlement hierarchy forms part of the spatial strategy. The spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy recognise the relationship between the urban area of Colchester, growth and opportunity areas within and outside of the urban area [Marks Tey and Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community (TCBGC)], and the larger settlements of Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe. It also recognises the role that medium and small settlements play in creating diverse places across Colchester district, as well as the importance of the countryside that should be protected. The spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy are informed by the evidence base, including assessments of accessibility, environmental constraints, infrastructure capacity and the sustainability of settlements. The key diagram illustrates the spatial strategy.

- 3.20 In the first instance, development is directed to Colchester Urban Area, including the City Centre. This reflects its role as the main centre for jobs, services, culture and transport. Prioritising development in the urban area supports the efficient use of land, including re-use of previously developed land and higher density development, in line with national policy.
- 3.21 The next tier in the settlement hierarchy is growth and opportunity areas. A number of sites are allocated for residential, employment / mixed use development within the urban area of the City. The Hythe which has seen significant changes over the years, notably through recently approved and built student accommodation, is identified as an opportunity area where there are opportunities for wider regeneration. This area is an established regeneration area that seeks to deliver sustainable, mixed-use neighbourhoods, identifying the River Colne as a feature and respecting the historic character of the area. Magdalen Street, where regeneration could help deliver a new and improved gateway to the City Centre, is also identified as an opportunity area. There are a number of older commercial buildings suitable for reuse and or redevelopment to enhance this area. This tier in the hierarchy also includes the University of Essex and Knowledge Gateway.
- 3.22 Marks Tey is identified in this tier as a growth area, recognising potential opportunities for strategic scale growth and potential for improvements to infrastructure and placemaking. Its strategic location along with the benefits the railway station brings, support the potential for expansion. However, there is also recognition that infrastructure improvements will be required in order to support development at the scale promoted. It is recognised that growth at Marks Tey will benefit from a masterplanned approach considering the opportunities and constraints holistically. TCBGC is established and defined in a separate adopted Development Plan Document (DPD). It continues to form an integral part of how this area of North Essex will develop up to 2043 and beyond. In recognition of the contribution it will make to towards the supply in this plan period for Colchester it is defined as a growth area in the hierarchy.

- 3.23 The strategy recognises the role of larger settlements (Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe). These larger settlements have the most facilities, services and opportunities. These settlements also have some of the largest populations of Colchester. Growth in these settlements not only reflects their size but also considers the opportunities and constraints that apply to each location.
- 3.24 The spatial strategy supports development along key transport corridors recognising their function and connectivity and potential to support growth and modal shift. Transport corridors typically comprise strategic roads, rail lines and high-frequency public transport routes that provide high levels of accessibility to jobs, services and facilities.
- 3.25 Medium and small settlements will accommodate growth appropriate to the size and location of the settlement and its constraints. Growth is not directed to all of the small settlements as appropriate land for growth was not identified for every small settlement.
- 3.26 The spatial strategy recognises that some medium settlements are particularly well located in relation to key transport corridors and are therefore capable of accommodating a greater scale of growth than would be expected under a purely proportionate approach. In particular, Langham and Great Horkesley benefit from their proximity to the A12 corridor and Marks Tey also in respect of the railway network, providing strong connectivity to Colchester and the wider region. In line with the transport corridor approach set out in the spatial strategy, higher levels of growth in these locations support sustainable travel patterns, make efficient use of accessible locations and enable the delivery of infrastructure and community benefits, whilst remaining consistent with the overall strategy of directing development to the most sustainable locations.
- 3.27 It is important to consider the cumulative impacts on local infrastructure, landscape character and biodiversity of multiple development proposals to ensure that the cumulative impacts of growth does not harm the nature, role and function of the settlement taking into account development proposed over the plan period.
- 3.28 The spatial strategy recognises the importance of the countryside, which will be protected from inappropriate development. Environmental and infrastructure considerations are integral to the spatial strategy and Policies ST2, ST7 and ST7a and the policies in the Environment chapter are relevant.
- 3.29 The effectiveness of the spatial strategy will be monitored through, for example, the delivery of housing and employment, the reuse of previously developed land and the provision of supporting infrastructure.

Policy ST4: Development in the Countryside

Proposals in the countryside must demonstrate functional and locational justification for a countryside setting while supporting the vitality of rural communities. This will be balanced against ensuring development does not have an adverse impact on the different roles and relationships between

settlements and their separate identities, valued landscapes, the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and visual amenity.

The intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside will be recognised and assessed, and development will only be permitted where it would not adversely affect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Proposals must consider the role the landscape plays as an open buffer between settlements or areas of a settlement, and the resulting sense of separation and distinctive identity.

Within valued landscapes, development will only be permitted where it would not impact adversely and would protect and enhance the factors that contribute to valued landscapes.

Proposals for sustainable rural businesses will be supported if they are of an appropriate scale, meet a local employment need, minimise negative environmental impacts, and harmonise with the local character and surrounding countryside where they are being proposed.

Proposals for the delivery and operation of essential utilities infrastructure, where there is a proven need and a countryside location is essential for the delivery of those utilities, will be supported where they accord with other policies in the development plan.

Where residential proposals are located outside defined settlement boundaries or growth areas, there should be consideration of the physical and functional connection to the defined settlement in the first instance. The scale of development should be proportionate to the size and function of the settlement and avoid cumulative impacts on local infrastructure, landscape character, and biodiversity. Residential proposals in the countryside should conserve and enhance the character and quality of the landscape, and it must be proven that they will protect and reinforce the rural character of the areas where development is proposed. Proposals will need to demonstrate that the scheme respects the character and appearance of landscapes and the built environment and preserves or enhances the historic environment and biodiversity in line with policies in this Plan. Proposals should demonstrate how they contribute to sustainable development, including access to services, active travel and public transport options, where available.

Justification

3.30 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. National Policy recognises that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. Settlement boundaries and defined growth areas are an essential tool for the management of development and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development by preventing the encroachment of development into the

countryside, protecting rural character. The spatial strategy (Policy ST3) directs development to the most sustainable locations across Colchester.

- 3.31 Areas outside of settlement boundaries and growth areas are defined as 'Countryside'. Within the countryside, there are a number of very small villages and hamlets and isolated clusters of dwellings which lack any community facilities or access to services or public transport and rely on nearby larger settlements to meet their daily needs. It is essential that development is restricted in the countryside to protect landscape character and quality.
- 3.32 Development within the countryside will accordingly be limited to activities that either require a rural location or help sustain a rural community and local economy and which help protect the rural character of the areas where a development is being delivered.
- 3.33 National Policy includes examples of exceptions whereby proposals for isolated dwellings in the countryside may be acceptable. The Council's interpretation of 'isolated' are sites that are physically isolated relative to existing settlements, and sites that are functionally isolated relative to services and facilities.

Provision for Homes and Jobs

- 3.34 Paragraph 61 of the NPPF states that a key objective of the Government is to boost the supply of homes. It stresses the importance of providing a sufficient amount and variety of land which can come forward where it is needed. In accordance with Paragraph 62 of the NPPF the Council commissioned a Local Housing Needs Assessment which used the standard method as set out in national planning practice guidance (December 2024, updated August 2026), to consider the overall need for housing in Colchester. This identifies the need for different types of homes, and needs of different groups within the local community. The Council has engaged with Tendring District throughout the plan making process as it shares a housing market area.
- 3.35 The Local Housing Needs Assessment update August 2026 confirms that using the Standard Methodology for calculating housing need, there is a need for 1276 new homes per year. This equates to 21,692 new homes over the plan period to 2043. In accordance with the NPPF December 2024, this is a mandatory target which must be planned for.
- 3.36 In the last financial year (April 2025 to March 2026) 924 new homes were delivered in Colchester. There are also a number of sites that have already been granted planning permission or are committed and supported by with evidence to support their early delivery. These are forecast to deliver 5,588 new homes in the plan period as outlined in Policy ST5.
- 3.37 The Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community will deliver circa 7,500 new homes in the longer term. A total of 3,750 new homes will be delivered up to 2043, with the number of new homes to be divided equally between Tendring and Colchester. As a result, 1,875 new homes from the Garden Community will make a contribution to the housing needs of Colchester within the plan period.
- 3.38 Based on past delivery records, windfall sites will also make an important contribution to Colchester's housing need. Windfall sites are defined as sites that are not allocated in the Local Plan. Assessing past contributions from windfall sites in Colchester, has demonstrated that an average of 238 homes per annum have been delivered on windfall sites (from 2016/17 to 2025/26). As a result, a windfall allowance of 220 new homes a year for the later 11 years of the plan period and a lower allowance in earlier years which reflects any known windfalls, is considered a robust and justified contribution to the overall housing supply. 2,985 homes are anticipated to be delivered through windfall sites by 2043.
- 3.39 Taking all the above into account, during the remainder of the plan period, the Council need to plan for a minimum of 11,400 new homes in order to meet the housing needs for Colchester.
- 3.40 Colchester has an excellent track record of housing delivery. Since 2001/02 it has overseen the delivery of over 23,000 new homes at an average rate of 928 new homes per year. Over the previous plan period to date (2017 – 2026) the Council exceeded its cumulative housing target by over 200 dwellings.

Therefore, at the beginning of the new plan period the Council is not in a position where it needs to make up any previous shortfall in housing delivery.

- 3.41 The methodology for planning for employment growth is less rigid than that for housing, although the NPPF requires plans to identify a future supply of land which is suitable, available and achievable for economic development uses over the Local Plan period
- 3.42 The Employment Land needs assessment has considered the approach, existing supply and demand to arrive at a need of 49.8 hectares of employment land up to 2041. This is based on the preferred scenario (Labour Supply) which is based on population projections, linked to housing growth projections, it represents an approach which seeks to maximise the opportunities for the economically active population in the Local Authority Area. This represents the most optimistic scenario for employment growth to align with wider corporate objectives for economic growth.
- 3.43 The Employment Study identifies key sectors likely to influence demand for employment space over the plan period including the digital, creative and tech and financial and business service sectors, and key sectors likely to influence demand for industrial space include advanced manufacturing, construction, transport and logistics and green energy. Proposals which support these sectors will particularly be encouraged in line with the requirements of the Policy and are set out in the relevant Place Policy.

Policy ST5: Colchester's Housing Need

The Council will plan, monitor and manage the delivery of at least 21,692 new homes in Colchester City between 2026 and 2043.

The annual housing requirement for Colchester is 1,276, as identified by the Standard Methodology.

Table ST5.1: Housing Supply

Housing Supply as at 31 March 2026	Net New Homes
Existing Commitments (sites with planning permission)	5,488
Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community	1,875
Windfall Allowance	2,985
Local Plan Allocations	12,208
TOTAL SUPPLY	22,556

The Council will maintain a sufficient supply of deliverable and developable sites to provide for at least five years' worth of housing on a rolling basis, plus an appropriate buffer in accordance with national policy.

The overall distribution of new housing across Colchester is guided by Spatial Strategy (Policy ST3).

TABLE ST5.2 Local Plan Housing Allocations

Location	Number of New Homes	Policy Reference
Brittania Car Park	100	PP1
Vineyard Gate	100	PP2
Runwald St Car Park	40	PP3
Braiswick	30	PP4
Land at Chesterwell	50	PP5
Land at Colchester Station	250	PP6
Land off Bakers Lane	120	PP7
Land off Lakelands Crescent	5	PP8
Northeast Colchester	2,000	PP9
Land South of Berechurch Hall Road	875	PP10
Europit Site	40	PP11
Gas Works and Hythe Scrap Yard Site	200	PP14
Hawkins Road	50	PP15
King Edward Quay Opportunity Area	200	OA1
Land East of Hawkins Road Opportunity Area	150	OA2
Magdalen Street Opportunity Area	85	OA3
Marks Tey Growth Area	2500	OA5

Location	Number of New Homes	Policy Reference
Land North of Oak Road, Tiptree	650	PP19
Land at Bonnie Blue Oak, Tiptree	30	PP20
Highlands, Kelvedon Road, Tiptree	10	PP21
Former Telephone Exchange, Station Road, Tiptree	5	PP22
Land at New Park Cottage, Tiptree	25	PP22b
Land East of Dawes Lane, West Mersea	300	PP23
Land Northwest of the Fire Station, Wivenhoe	200	PP24
View Park, Abberton and Langenhoe	50	PP25
Land North of Boxted Straight Road	150	PP26
Swan Grove, Chappel	35	PP27
Land West of Station Road, Wakes Colne	200	PP28
Land East of School Road, Copford	300	PP29a
Land South of Copford Village Hall, Copford	50	PP29b
Queensbury Avenue, Copford	70	PP29c
Land South of Long Road, Dedham	15	PP30
Land North of Halstead Road West of Fiddlers Wood, Eight Ash Green	250	PP32
Land South of Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green	250	PP32a
Land East of Plummers, Fordham	25	PP33
Land North of Coach Road, Great Horkesley	800	PP34
The Old School, Great Horkesley	13	PP35
Land at Earls Colne Road, Great Tey	150	PP36
Land East of Brook Road Great Tey	50	PP36a
Land North of Park Lane, Langham	850	PP37
Land opposite Wick Road, Langham	10	PP38
Land at The Furze, Layer de la Haye	10	PP39
Land West of The Folley, Layer de la Haye	75	PP40
Maltings Green Lane Layer De La Haye	30	PP40a
Rowhedge Business Park, Rowhedge	50	PP41
Land at White Hart Lane, West Bergholt	185	PP42
Land North of Colchester Road, West Bergholt	185	PP43
Land off New Road, Aldham	15	PP45
Land at Birch Green, Birch	15	PP46
Land at Picketts Farm, Fingringhoe	5	PP47
Kelvedon Road, Messing	25	PP48
Land South of Mersea Road, Peldon	25	PP49a
Land West of Maltings Road Peldon	5	PP49b
Cowdray Avenue (BT site), Colchester	40	PP50
Former Land Rover site, Cowdray Avenue, Colchester	25	PP51
Car park, Guildford Road (BT Repeater Station), Colchester	25	PP52

Location	Number of New Homes	Policy Reference
Land at Chapmans Farm, Colchester	35	PP53
Land at Sheepen Place, Colchester	100	PP54
Land adjacent Lethe Grove, Colchester	75	PP55
TOTAL	12,208	

Justification

- 3.44 To plan for Colchester's housing need, the Council needs to ensure enough land is allocated for residential uses to accommodate the predicted level of housing growth over the plan period. The land required to accommodate this housing growth is known as the housing land supply. The NPPF requires policies to identify sufficient sites to deliver the required housing supply over the plan period. The housing land supply comprises existing commitments and new allocations.
- 3.45 The standard method for assessing local housing need produces a figure that is subject to change as its inputs are updated periodically by Government and the Office for National Statistics. Throughout the plan preparation process, the resulting local housing need figure for Colchester has fluctuated between 1,276 and 1300 dwellings per annum. To ensure a robust and consistent housing requirement throughout the plan period, the Council has identified a small surplus, providing a prudent allowance for future variations in the standard method whilst supporting the Plan's objective of maintaining an adequate supply of homes.
- 3.46 Through the previous Local Plan, the principle of development of a Garden Community on the Tendring and Colchester border was established. Colchester City Council, Tendring District Council and Essex County Council have worked together to prepare a Development Plan Document which provides a framework to guide the development of the Garden Community. Circa 7,500 new homes will be delivered at the Garden Community upon completion, with delivery through the plan period contributing to Colchester's supply by 1875.
- 3.47 Existing commitments are residential sites with planning permission or where the granting of planning permission is considered to be imminent. Many of these sites, were allocated for residential use in the current Adopted Local Plan. Existing commitments also includes allocations from made Neighbourhood Plans
- 3.48 Due to historic trends of windfall within the City, the Council will be applying a windfall allowance in line with paragraph 73(d) of the NPPF. The Council's criteria for a site to be considered windfall is that it should not form part of a current allocation. There is no one approach to a windfall allowance methodology, but it is reasonable to consider past windfall rates as a basis for the expectation of the levels of windfall that will come forward in the future. This approach is widely used and can aid in considering the likely windfall that will come forward in the future.
- 3.49 Allocations are sites which are proposed for residential uses as part of the preparation of this Local Plan. Colchester has a very good track record of

regenerating previously developed land within its urban area and as a result the City has a limited and diminishing supply of brownfield sites that can contribute to accommodating new growth. Accordingly, allocations within this Submission Local Plan include a high level of new greenfield sites. These sites have been subject to thorough assessment to determine their sustainability and suitability for residential uses. The same assessment has been undertaken for allocations in the current Adopted Local Plan which have not yet been implemented. All allocations have also been subject to discussions with stakeholders to ensure sites have been selected based on their availability, achievability and deliverability. This is important to ensure the plan can seek to deliver policy compliant schemes.

The Place Policies in this Local Plan provide detail on specific new allocations along with further information on infrastructure improvements and mitigation measures required to address site constraints and opportunities at each location. Allocations will provide approximately 12,208 new homes. All allocations are set out in their respective Place Policies.

- 3.50 Ensuring the quality of new housing development is of equal importance to ensuring its quantity. The Council will actively work with landowners, planning agents and housebuilders to bring forward those allocated sites that accord with the overall spatial strategy and relevant policies in the Plan.

Policy ST6: Colchester's Employment Needs

The Council will plan, monitor and manage the delivery of at least 49.8ha of employment land in Colchester City to meet the projected demand up to 2043. Employment uses will be provided on a range of sites including allocations, sites with planning permission and through intensification or redevelopment within existing employment areas, including but not limited to, the sites identified in Table ST6.1 below to ensure jobs are accessible to new and existing communities across Colchester.

Table ST6.1: Local Plan Employment Provision

Location	Employment Land (approx. ha)	Policy Reference
Land north of Axial Way, Northern Gateway, North Colchester	3.4ha	OA4
Colchester Business Park	2.4ha	PEP1
Knowledge Gateway	4.5ha	PEP2
Coal Yard Site	0.9ha	PEP13
Maldon Road	0.7ha	PEP4
Marks Tey	18ha	OA5
Anderson's Site, Marks Tey	3.2ha	PEP6
Highlands Nursery, Tiptree	1.1ha	PEP7
Land South of Factory Hill, Tiptree	4.7ha	PEP8
Land at Tower Business Park, Tiptree	0.5ha	PEP16
Bullbanks Farm, Eight Ash Green	0.8ha	PEP9
Lodge Lane, Langham	1ha	PEP10
Land at Pattens Yard, West Bergholt	2ha	PEP11
Land at Wakes Hall Business Centre	0.9ha	PEP12
Land at Former Mill Race Nursery, Aldham	1.1ha	PEP15
Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community	4.6ha	ST9
TOTAL	49.8ha	

Proposals for new employment uses within existing and defined employment areas will be supported. Employment uses for the purposes of this policy are

defined as Use Classes E(g), B2, and B8. Alternative economic class uses may contribute to the provision of jobs providing flexibility and securing delivery of additional jobs. Suitable alternative economic uses will be supported within existing and defined areas where they are in accordance with all relevant policies in the plan, including impact assessments where these alternative uses are for town centre uses and the threshold applies.

Lorry parking facilities and associated overnight layover facilities in appropriate locations within close proximity to the strategic road network will be supported where they are in accordance with relevant national and local guidance and all relevant policies in this Plan.

Justification

- 3.51 National Policy requires that planning decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. They should support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. Decisions should also allow an area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses, and address any challenges in the future. Planning policies should set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth. National Policy states that Councils should identify a future supply of land which is suitable, available and achievable for economic development uses over the Local Plan period.
- 3.52 To plan for Colchester's employment needs, the Council needs to ensure that enough land is allocated, and sufficient policy approaches adopted to deliver sustainable economic growth across Colchester. The Colchester Employment Land Needs Assessment provides an assessment of the balance of supply and demand in the context of changing employment needs, trends and challenges. The Employment Study demand assessment estimates that there is a net additional demand for 49.8ha of employment land across Colchester over the plan period.
- 3.53 The purpose of the policy is to ensure that land is allocated and safeguarded for employment purposes that meet the needs of Use Classes E(g), B2 and B8 as defined by the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended), in sustainable locations and in line with recommendations set out in the Colchester Employment Land Needs Assessment. The policy identifies land that, in addition to existing approved permissions within the planning pipeline, will meet the projected demand for additional good quality, well-located employment sites. Some of these sites are employment allocations that have been carried forward from the adopted Local Plan or allocations contained in adopted Neighbourhood Plans.
- 3.54 The Place Employment Policies provide detail on specific new allocations along with further information on infrastructure improvements and mitigation measures required to address site constraints and opportunities at each location. An Employment and Skills Plan will be required in line with ECC

guidance. This must be prepared collaboratively with the Council and relevant stakeholders.

- 3.55 In addition to land allocated for employment uses as set out in Table ST6.1, employment uses will also be delivered through opportunity areas and mixed use and larger residential allocations as set out in the relevant Place Policy.
- 3.56 Existing fit for purpose employment sites are protected for employment uses through other policies in the plan including Policy E1.
- 3.57 Further detail on employment provision in the Colchester Tendring Borders Garden Community can be found in Policy ST9.
- 3.58 The importance of providing appropriate lorry parking facilities and related driver amenities to support the strategic road network is recognised. The Council will work with partners to ensure that where required and appropriate, adequate lorry parking and associated facilities are provided.

Policy ST7: Infrastructure Delivery and Impact Mitigation

All development must be supported by infrastructure, services and facilities that are identified as being needed to serve the needs arising from the development. Permission will only be granted if it can be demonstrated that there is sufficient and appropriate infrastructure capacity to support the development or that such capacity will be delivered by the proposal. It must further be demonstrated that all necessary infrastructure will be delivered at an appropriate time to meet the requirements of the development, and that such capacity will prove sustainable over time in physical and financial terms.

Where a development proposal requires additional infrastructure capacity to be deemed acceptable, mitigation measures must be agreed with the Council and the appropriate infrastructure provider. Such measures may include:

Financial contributions towards new or expanded facilities and the maintenance thereof;

- on-site provision of new facilities (which may include building works);
- off-site capacity improvement works; and/or
- the provision of land.

Developers will be expected to contribute towards the delivery of relevant infrastructure as required and supported by up-to-date evidence from appropriate sources including the Infrastructure Audit & Delivery Plan (IADP) and any subsequent updated evidence, along with information from local sources including parish and town councils. All development will be required to either make direct provision or to contribute towards the provision of local and strategic infrastructure required by the development which will include (but not be limited to) contributions to the following where relevant;

- Transport Infrastructure / Highways improvements
- Active Travel, Public Transport, Electric Vehicle infrastructure, Park&Ride/Choose
- Education Secondary, Primary, Early Years and Childcare,
- Sport and Leisure, Open Spaces,
- Community Facilities
- Healthcare
- Police, Fire and Rescue and Ambulance Services)
- Green Infrastructure /SANG
- Utilities

In addition, there are a number of strategic infrastructure requirements that all new development will be expected to contribute to;

- Upgrades to the strategic road network

- Traffic management measures which improve the Colchester wide traffic flow across the local and strategic network including dynamic traffic management. Specific projects to mitigate wider impacts include;
 - Dynamic traffic management across the network
 - Maldon Road/Warren Lane junction
 - Improvements at A12/A120 Junction 29
 - Greenstead roundabout and Wivenhoe Park corner junction co-ordinated with rapid transit system priority crossings
 - Improvements / alterations A12/A120(W) Junction 25 including Marks Tey Roundabout and Prince of Wales Roundabout
 - Improvements at A12 Junction 26
 - A12 Junction 27 signalisation
 - Improvements to A133 including Clingoe Hill Greenstead Roundabout, Lower Harwich /Ipswich Roads
 - Aldham and Eight Ash Green Halstead Road Junction Improvements
- Improvements to Colchester hospital
- Enlarged swimming pool provision
- New emergency services hub

This policy will apply to all development proposals. Location specific infrastructure requirements are also contained within the relevant site allocation policies. Where the mitigation requires onsite delivery the Place Policies identify site specific requirements which includes the provision of sufficient land where appropriate.

At the time of adoption, every allocation will be considered to be viable, based on information provided to the Council. Where an applicant/developer is seeking an exception to this policy later in the plan period, it will only be considered when all of the following criterion are met:

- a) A fully transparent open book viability assessment has proven that full mitigation cannot be afforded, allowing only for the minimum level of developer profit and landowner receipt necessary for the development to proceed; and
- b) It is proven that the public benefit of the development proceeding without full mitigation outweighs the collective harm; and
- c) Full and thorough investigation has been undertaken to find innovative solutions to issues and all possible steps have been taken to minimise the residual level of unmitigated impacts; and
- d) Obligations are entered into by the developer that provide for appropriate mitigation in the event that viability improves prior to completion of the development. In such cases the Council may seek a staged review of the viability of a scheme with the aim of achieving policy compliance over time. This may include securing a review mechanism by legal agreement specifying trigger points for undertaking a review such as later phases of a scheme or reserved matters applications.

The Council is intending to introduce a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and will implement such for areas and/or development types where a viable charging schedule would best mitigate the impacts of growth. Section 106 will operate alongside CIL and will remain the appropriate mechanism for securing land and works, affordable housing and financial contributions where a sum for the necessary infrastructure is not secured via CIL.

Provision for education use that forms part of extant planning permissions will be safeguarded.

New streets should seek to be built to adoptable design standards in adherence with current guidance and standards. Where streets are not built to an adoptable standard, there must be a substantive place making benefit.

Justification

- 3.59 The sustainable delivery of new homes and jobs needs to be supported by the provision of appropriate new and upgraded infrastructure, including transport, community facilities and utilities. New development can place additional demand on existing infrastructure. Therefore, new development proposals must contribute to improvements in infrastructure to cater for the additional needs that they generate.
- 3.60 The NPPF requires that all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to 'align growth and infrastructure'. The NPPF requires that strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design of places and make sufficient provision for infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat); community facilities (such as health, police, fire and rescue and ambulance, education and cultural infrastructure); and green infrastructure. It also requires that plans should set out the contributions expected from development, including infrastructure.
- 3.61 The purpose of the policy is to ensure that provision of infrastructure is aligned with growth. The policy identifies items of strategic infrastructure necessary to serve new development during the Plan period. All developments may be required to contribute to the provision of these projects. Site allocation policies in the plan will identify essential site-specific infrastructure relevant to the allocation.
- 3.62 An Infrastructure Audit and Delivery Plan (IADP) supports the Local Plan. This has been developed with infrastructure service providers and partner organisations to determine where additional infrastructure is necessary. The IADP will sit alongside the Plan and provide specific detail on the main items of infrastructure required, when they are likely to be required, and who will provide them. The IADP will be supplemented by updated evidence over the lifetime of the plan which will inform the infrastructure to be provided in relation to individual developments.

3.63 The broad categories of necessary infrastructure included in the IADP include:

- Social Infrastructure (Education, Early Years and Childcare, Sport and Leisure, Open Spaces, Green Infrastructure, Community Facilities, Primary Healthcare, Health Services and Police, Fire and Rescue and Ambulance Services)
- Transport Infrastructure (Active Travel, Public Transport, Roads, Electric Vehicle infrastructure)
- Utilities, Waste and Water (Utilities, Telecommunications, Water, Wastewater, Flood Defence, Surface Water Management, Water Resource Management)

3.64 The Council will seek contributions from developers to fund new facilities and improvements to existing infrastructure and the environment where it is necessary to mitigate the impact of new development. Local communities should be involved in the setting of policies for contributions expected from new development and policies in the Place section of this Plan reflect that. Site-specific infrastructure requirements are identified in relevant Place Policies.

3.65 The Local Plan has been informed by evidence of infrastructure and affordable housing need, and a proportionate assessment of viability that considers all relevant policies, and local and national standards. Accordingly, allocations will be made based on evidence that they are viable.

3.66 Planning obligations will be secured through section 106 agreements, unilateral undertakings and section 278 agreements. Contributions may also be made through the Community Infrastructure Levy (once adopted), which applies a standard charge to developers to fund supporting infrastructure such as transport, schools, community facilities and health facilities,

3.67 The Council continues to work with relevant government departments, infrastructure providers, developers and other partners to determine and facilitate the delivery of the wide range of infrastructure required to support development.

3.68 Further details on the Councils approach to infrastructure delivery, developer contributions and the charges that will apply are contained within Guidance Notes on the Councils website.

3.69 Provision for education needs including as part of extant planning permissions is secured. This includes land at Chesterwell, in North Colchester; London Road, Stanway; and Barbrook Lane, in Tiptree. All such land should meet criteria set out in the relevant guidance and facilitate delivery in line with Essex School Design Guidance.

Policy ST7a: Sustainable Transport and Connectivity

To achieve the vision to create well connected communities and increase sustainable and active travel, development will be required to focus on delivering connectivity and providing better access to sustainable transport to provide a genuine choice of travel options.

New development must be planned and designed to promote the use of sustainable travel, through a vision led approach, creating places that maximise opportunities for sustainable travel for all and support healthy and active lifestyles.

Proposals for development should support the provision of infrastructure to encourage sustainable and active modes of travel in line with other policies in this Plan. Development should seek to connect to and enhance strategic active travel routes, including the Colchester Orbital, where these are relevant to the site and its context.

Developers will be required to submit a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment, in line with thresholds set out in the latest guidance to assess the potential transport impacts of the development. The Transport Statement or Assessment must demonstrate how the development will encourage active and sustainable transport, demonstrating how opportunities for active and sustainable measures have been maximised and how a modal shift to active and sustainable modes of travel will be achieved, and mitigate traffic impacts in terms of capacity and safety, to the satisfaction of the Highway Authority.

Development proposals will be required to produce a Travel Plan in line with thresholds and guidelines set out in the latest published guidance. Any Travel Plan should include an Action Plan setting out specific actions, timelines and targets to be monitored and reviewed.

All development proposals should demonstrate safe and suitable access to required highway design standards. The point of vehicle access should be agreed with the Highway Authority and demonstrate that the proposal would not be detrimental to highway capacity or safety.

Justification

- 3.70 Active and sustainable travel are key elements of sustainable development. The Local Plan's strategy for growth is to start with the most sustainable and accessible locations in the urban area or close to transport corridors and existing centres, where there tends to be a range of employment opportunities, facilities, services and travel choices for future communities.
- 3.71 National policy requires transport issues to be considered from the earliest stages of plan making and development proposals using a vision-led approach to identify transport solutions. It requires the planning system to focus significant development on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to

travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health.

- 3.72 The purpose of this policy is to maximise opportunities for active and sustainable travel within all new development and ensure that development proposals support active and sustainable travel opportunities. The policy is supported by the Local Plan evidence base which has identified a vision-based approach to transport mitigation measures required to mitigate the impacts of planned growth across the Local Plan area and plan period.
- 3.73 The Essex Local Transport Plan (LTP) sets out Essex County Council's transport vision and priorities for Essex. Development proposals should align with the proposed Essex LTP4, prioritising active and sustainable travel and demand management measures to reduce car dependency.
- 3.74 Travel Plans are essential to inform residents and employees of the travel choices available and to encourage them to make use of sustainable and active travel infrastructure. Travel Plans should set measures to promote and encourage sustainable travel, including active modes, and be integrated into the design and occupation of a new development rather than retrofitted after occupation. Travel Plans should incorporate ambitious but achievable mode share targets and contain details of the monitoring process and what further measures will be required if the targets are not met.
- 3.75 The Essex County Council Developers Guide to Infrastructure Contributions, or any subsequent updated guidance, should be used for guidance on Transport Assessments, Transport Statements and Travel Plans.

Policy ST8: Place Shaping Principles

All new development must meet high standards of urban and architectural design. Development frameworks, masterplans, design codes and other design guidance documents will be prepared in consultation with stakeholders where they are needed to support this objective. Any adopted design documents must be taken into account and will be a material consideration in decision making, including the National Design Guide and the Essex Design Guide.

All new development should reflect the following placemaking principles, where relevant:

- a) Protect and enhance the natural environment and secure net gains for biodiversity.**
- b) Provide integrated green and blue infrastructure.**
- c) Support climate change mitigation and adaptation, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions while ensuring development is safe and resilient to risk and supporting opportunities for renewable and low carbon energy including decentralised energy and heating systems.**
- d) Include measures to support water management, including water efficiency and flood mitigation.**
- e) Provide high quality design that responds to local character and context, contributing to the quality of existing places and their environs.**
- f) Protect and, where appropriate, enhance assets of historical value.**
- g) Create well-connected and sustainable patterns of movement prioritising walking, cycling and public transport.**
- h) Provide mixed and well-designed neighbourhoods with a balance of uses, densities and spaces.**
- i) Enhance the quality of the public realm and sense of place.**
- j) Ensure development is well located and supports access to public transport and key interchanges/connections.**
- k) Provide safe, accessible and active streets and shared spaces.**
- l) Include parking facilities that are well integrated and are adaptable over time.**
- m) Protect the amenity of existing and future residents.**

Justification

3.76 This strategic placemaking policy is designed to guide the development of Colchester and contribute to the creation of vibrant, sustainable, connected, resilient and inclusive communities. It emphasises the importance of creating spaces that enhance social interaction, support local economies, and respect the unique character, natural environment and rich heritage of Colchester.

Policy ST9: The Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community

Land identified in the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community Development Plan Document and shown on the Policies Map is allocated for the development of the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community.

The Development Plan Document (DPD) (adopted May 2025) allocates or protects land for the following uses:

- a) delivery of circa 7,500 new homes with a range of shops, jobs, services and community facilities, including education and health and wellbeing provision;**
- b) a new ‘Salary Brook Country Park’ incorporating land and woodland at and around the Salary Brook Local Nature Reserve in Colchester;**
- c) a ‘Wivenhoe Strategic Green Gap’ incorporating land north of Brightlingsea Road and west of Elmstead Road;**
- d) an ‘Elmstead Strategic Green Gap’ east of the new A120-A133 Link Road;**
- e) a Sports and Leisure Park to serve the local community and for the expansion of sports facilities for the University of Essex;**
- f) approximately 25 hectares of employment land in the form of a new Business Park and a ‘Knowledge-Based Employment’ site;**
- g) provision for the Rapid Transit System;**
- h) a Gypsy and Traveller Site; and**
- i) a Park and Choose Facility.**

Proposals for development within the Site Allocation Boundary (as defined by the DPD Policies Map) will be determined in line with the policies and requirements set out in the DPD which itself will be the subject of a five-yearly review.

Decisions on planning applications for the Garden Community will be made by a Joint Committee containing representatives of Colchester City Council, Tendring District Council and Essex County Council. Any proposed development within the Site Allocation Boundary that might prejudice the delivery or integrity of the Garden Community will be refused.

Within the Local Plan period up to 2043, the Garden Community is expected to deliver approximately 3,750 of the total 7,500 homes – with development continuing longer-term, beyond 2043, to completion. For this Local Plan period up to 2043, market and affordable housing delivery and employment land delivery from the Garden Community, irrespective of its actual location, will be distributed equally between Tendring District Council and Colchester City Council for the purposes of meeting respective housing and employment land requirements. Delivery of employment provision will also contribute to the supply for each of the Council’s requirements. The delivery of 18 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers will also count equally, 9 pitches each, towards Tendring

District Council and Colchester City Council's respective requirements. If, after taking into account its share of delivery from the Garden Community, if either of the authorities has a shortfall in delivery against the housing or Gypsy and Traveller pitch requirement for its area, it will need to make up the shortfall within its own area. It may not use the other authority's share of delivery from the Garden Community to make up the shortfall.

Throughout the delivery of the Garden Community, Colchester City Council, Tendring District Council, and Essex County Council will continue to work together with developers and transport providers to maximise the potential opportunities and the reach of the Rapid Transit System and associated transport provision to serve communities in Colchester and Tendring.

Policies SP8 and SP9 of the North Essex Authorities Shared Strategic Section One Plan (Adopted February 2021) appended to this Plan will be saved and continue to apply to the Garden Community where appropriate. All other policies are replaced.

Justification

- 3.77 The Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community will be developed over the next thirty or so years. This community will eventually feature circa 7,500 homes, as well as employment spaces to accommodate new businesses and jobs.
- 3.78 The community will include all the services and facilities that people will need, including new early years, primary and secondary schools, health facilities, and community facilities, including sports and leisure. It will need to be carefully designed to fit into the existing landscape, protecting the things that are important, whilst also providing new and improved green spaces, parks and areas for play.
- 3.79 The principal of the Garden Community is established through the Section 1 Local Plan and more detailed policies on the design and development of the Garden Community are included in the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community Development Plan Document. This policy provides a summary of what will be included in the Garden Community and reference to housing numbers and the decision-making process. Decisions on planning applications for the Garden Community will be made by a Joint Committee containing representatives of Colchester City Council, Tendring District Council and Essex County Council or any future arrangement that may be agreed following potential reorganization of local government.

4. Environment

- 4.1 Colchester's countryside and coastline is extremely diverse and important in terms of its natural and historic environment, including biodiversity, landscape character, archaeology and cultural heritage. The natural and historic environment contributes to what is unique and special about Colchester. The countryside provides the attractive landscape setting that defines and characterises the villages and rural communities of Colchester. The countryside and coastal areas also provide important agricultural, tourism and recreational opportunities that support local economies and communities.
- 4.2 The policies in this chapter seek to conserve and enhance these environmental assets. In addition to protection, they support opportunities for enhancement, restoration and measurable biodiversity net gain, including measures which contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Policies also address the sustainable management of natural resources and seek to protect important heritage assets and manage / mitigate any impacts where necessary. Collectively, these policies contribute to the theme in the vision of healthy, vibrant and diverse places by protecting, maintaining and enhancing the distinct character, heritage identity and setting of Colchester city and protecting stretches of undeveloped countryside, enhancing the quality of the natural environment creating net gains to biodiversity.
- 4.3 These policies are supported by national policy, including the NPPF and government's Environmental Improvement Plan, the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the Council's evidence base such as the Colchester Biodiversity Protection and BNG Study, Colchester Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Heritage Impact Assessment.
- 4.4 Biodiversity and nature recovery are addressed through several complementary policies:
- Policy EN2: mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements;
 - Policy EN3: assessment, protection and mitigation of biodiversity and geodiversity impacts; and
 - Policy GN2: strategic delivery of habitat creation and nature recovery.
- These policies should be read together and applied proportionately to ensure that development avoids harm, secures appropriate mitigation and contributes to wider ecological networks.

Policy EN1: Nature Conservation Designated Sites

Development proposals that would be likely to have an adverse effect on the integrity of a habitats site, either alone or in combination, will only be permitted where the requirements of the Habitats Regulations are met.

Development likely to cause an adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest will not be supported unless the benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh the impacts and any necessary mitigation is secured.

Contributions will be secured from qualifying residential development, within the Zones of Influence as defined in the adopted Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS, or brand name Bird Aware Essex Coast), towards avoidance and mitigation measures identified in the adopted strategy and any updates to the strategy or successor strategy. If an applicant pursues an alternative approach to mitigation, information to support the Council in preparing a Habitats Regulations Assessment will be required, including support from Natural England on the effectiveness of the proposed bespoke mitigation.

Reference to Bird Aware Essex Coast must be included on any signage or interpretation that relates to a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) required in accordance with the Habitats Regulations Assessment. Signage and interpretation boards should explain the natural features of the open space and include places to rest within and throughout the SANG.

Nature-based welcome packs will be required for new homeowners for schemes of 100 or more dwellings where identified as necessary to mitigate recreational impacts on designated sites.

Justification

- 4.5 Policy EN1 provides the local planning framework for protecting designated nature conservation sites and supporting compliance with national policy and the Habitats Regulations.
- 4.6 The purpose of the policy is to protect designated nature conservation sites. The policy recognises and reflects the hierarchy of sites in accordance with national policy, which requires plans to distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites. Reference to the need to contribute towards the Essex Coast RAMS or alternative bespoke approach is included in the policy to ensure compliance with the Habitats Regulations.
- 4.7 The whole of Colchester district is within the Essex Coast RAMS Zone of Influence. The Essex Coast RAMS partners encourage mitigation to be secured via the strategic approach and prefer developer contributions towards the RAMS. This approach will help to ensure planning applications are quicker and simpler to process and the adequate and timely delivery of effective mitigation at the habitats sites. It is also likely to be more cost effective for applicants. As an alternative, applicants may choose to conduct their own visitor surveys and provide information to support the Council in preparing project level Habitats

Regulations Assessments (HRA) and secure the bespoke mitigation specified within. Where applicants choose to pursue this option, they will need to consult Natural England on the effectiveness of the mitigation proposed.

Policy EN2: Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Environmental Net Gain

Development proposals must deliver a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) in accordance with national legislation. Proposals seeking to deliver above this statutory minimum will be supported where appropriate, in the context of the wider planning balance.

Proposals for habitat creation, enhancement and BNG should have regard to the Colchester City Strategic Biodiversity Assessment.

Following the biodiversity gain hierarchy, priority will be given to achieving BNG onsite where practical and where this would deliver meaningful ecological outcomes. Where onsite delivery would be significantly constrained, offsite delivery will be supported, with preference for delivery in strategically significant locations identified in the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) in close proximity to the development site. BNG proposals should consider opportunities to enhance connectivity and access to green spaces through links to the PRow network where appropriate, subject to ensuring the primary aim of biodiversity and ecological benefits are not compromised.

The Essex LNRS contains strategic opportunity maps, which show the habitats and locations which have been identified as having ‘strategic significance’. Only the LNRS strategic opportunities can be assigned a score of high in the strategic significance category in the Biodiversity Metric where the proposed habitat intervention is consistent with the mapped potential measure in the LNRS.

The Council will support development proposals that seek to demonstrate environmental net gain.

Justification

- 4.8 The purpose of the policy is to support how BNG can be delivered within new development. National legislation identifies that the majority of new development must deliver minimum 10% BNG. A viability assessment for achieving higher BNG delivery within new developments across Essex was conducted and found that achieving 20% BNG did not materially affect viability for many development proposals, acknowledging the greatest costs for delivering BNG are seen when achieving the initial 10% uplift. Therefore, the Council encourages development proposals to seek to deliver above the 10% minimum BNG where possible, particularly on strategic allocations which provide greater opportunity for delivering BNG given their large scale and greenfield location which can contribute to delivering ecological outcomes that link effectively with the surrounding environment.
- 4.9 Policy EN2 aligns with national legislation which details a biodiversity gain hierarchy which outlines that once avoidance and minimisation of impacts on biodiversity have been undertaken then BNG should seek to be delivered onsite in the first instance and only where this cannot be achieved then offsite units can be delivered. Where available offsite units cannot be sourced,

then purchasing statutory credits from the Government is the last resort option.

- 4.10 For onsite delivery, applicants should explore the best opportunities for achieving BNG, or any other environmental obligations. Depending on the location, that might be creating new green infrastructure, buffering an adjacent LoWS, planting street trees, incorporating biodiverse roofs or other onsite measures. Consideration should be given to where the best gains can be achieved in each case and what measures would provide the most added value to the existing biodiversity resource on the site, alongside opportunities for linkages with existing green infrastructure and providing and/or maintaining public access where appropriate.
- 4.11 Offsite BNG delivery should equally seek to deliver the best opportunities for achieving BNG, contributing to positive outcomes for biodiversity. The Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy identifies locations that form 'strategic opportunities' which represent sites that can deliver the most positive outcomes for nature recovery. Therefore, the policy encourages applicants to deliver offsite BNG at these 'strategically significant' locations. Delivering BNG at these locations enables a score of high to be assigned in the strategic significance category in the Biodiversity Metric. In most cases, it is preferable for offsite BNG to be delivered as close to the development site as possible and therefore applicants should explore opportunities for doing this.
- 4.12 Environmental net gain is supported and encouraged. Environmental net gain goes further than biodiversity net gain and results in gains to ecosystem services, which are services provided by the natural environment that benefit people. For example, food, fibre and fuel provision, cultural services, regulation of the climate, the purification of air and water, flood protection, soil formation and nutrient cycling. Natural England has developed an Environmental Benefits from Nature Tool, which builds on the BNG Metric, to measure environmental gain.

Policy EN3: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

For all proposals, development will only be supported where it:

- a) In the case of major applications, is submitted with a completed Essex biodiversity validation checklist where proportionate to the nature, scale and location of development.
- b) Is supported, where necessary, with appropriate ecological surveys by a suitably qualified person. Where a preliminary ecological appraisal indicates the need for further surveys, these must be completed and submitted prior to determination, including details of any mitigation measures.
- c) Where there is reason to suspect the presence of a protected species (and impact to), or Species/Habitats of Principal Importance, or locally important Species/Habitats, surveys must be carried out at the appropriate time of year and taking into account appropriate weather conditions, assessing their presence and, if present, the proposal must make provision for mitigation measures.
- d) Demonstrates, through the design of the proposal, that the mitigation hierarchy has been followed with respect to ecological impacts. Where impacts on habitats and species cannot be avoided, a clear explanation of why alternative sites are not feasible and what proposed mitigation measures are necessary to address all likely significant effects.
- e) Responds appropriately to the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy by avoiding harm to identified priority habitats, species and ecological networks, and by informing mitigation and compensation measures where ecological impacts are identified.
- f) Demonstrates that significant harm to brownfield sites of high biodiversity value is avoided and fragmentation of habitats is minimised.
- g) Focuses habitat creation and enhancement measures on the habitats that are already present in the area and retaining existing communities and species populations that have been recognised as having significance and having regard to species selection that considers future climate projections.
- h) Where development is proposed adjacent to, or including, a LoWS, the creation of new habitat to buffer it should be a priority of design and masterplanning.

In accordance with relevant national policy and legislation, proposals for development that would cause significant direct or indirect adverse harm to nationally designated sites or other designated areas, protected species, Habitats and Species of Principal Importance and local importance, will not be permitted unless:

- a) They cannot be located on alternative sites that would cause less harm; and
- b) The benefits of the development clearly outweigh the impacts on the features of the site and the wider network of natural habitats; and
- c) Satisfactory mitigation, or as a last resort, compensation measures are provided.

The Council will take a precautionary approach where insufficient information is provided about avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures and will require that this information is submitted prior to determination. Mitigation and compensation measures will be secured through planning conditions/obligations where necessary.

A Construction Environment Management Plan, which includes details of all necessary ecological mitigation measures including protection of retained habitats and requirements for ecological supervision during works on site using a suitably experienced Ecological Clerk of Works, will be required by condition where necessary and proportionate.

Justification

- 4.13 Policy EN3 ensures that the biodiversity value of sites is understood and taken into account in the planning process. It ensures that applications are supported by appropriate ecological surveys which clearly identify likely impacts and any required mitigation and compensation measures. The policy works alongside but does not duplicate mandatory BNG requirements.
- 4.14 National policy requires planning policies and decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural environment by protecting and enhancing biodiversity, minimising impacts, and securing measurable net gains where possible. A key principle is the mitigation hierarchy, whereby impacts should first be avoided, then mitigated, and only as a last resort compensated. This policy reflects that approach and requires it to be demonstrated through the design and assessment of development proposals.
- 4.15 The policy recognises the importance of all sites, including local wildlife sites, and habitats and species of national (Priority habitats and species) and local importance. The policy recognises that brownfield land can support habitats of high biodiversity value, particularly for invertebrates, and such sites should be retained and enhanced where possible.
- 4.16 Colchester supports important populations of priority species, including invertebrates and bird species such as swifts. Buglife have identified Important Invertebrate Areas, supporting some of Britain's rarest species and possessing unique assemblages of invertebrates. Incorporating appropriate measures within development, such as nesting features like swift bricks and habitat enhancements, can help to support these populations and contribute to wider biodiversity objectives. Guidance is available on wildlife friendly features, including the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code which illustrate how well-designed places can support rich and varied biodiversity by facilitating habitats and routes for wildlife.
- 4.17 Appropriate ecological information is essential to inform decision making. Early survey work is essential and should inform the design of development. Where external expertise is required to review and validate ecological survey reports, applicants may be requested to reimburse the Council to cover the cost.

associated with any expert advice required, arrangements will be discussed at the pre-application stage.

Policy EN4: Irreplaceable Habitats

Proposals that would result in the loss of irreplaceable habitats [as defined in The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024] will not be permitted unless there are wholly exceptional reasons. Where exceptional reasons are demonstrated, a suitable compensation strategy, to the satisfaction of the Council, after consultation with relevant stakeholders, will be required.

Proposals predicted to result in adverse impacts upon irreplaceable habitats must be accompanied by detailed survey information and clear evidence to support the exceptional reasons that justify such a loss. The compensation strategy must include contribution to the enhancement and management of the habitat and consider future climate projections.

Proposals close to ancient woodland must include a buffer zone informed by the most up to date Standing Advice on Ancient Woodland and be proportionate to the nature, scale, and potential impacts of the development. Where surveys show that additional impacts to root damage are likely, a larger buffer zone will be required.

Justification

- 4.18 Irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland, are habitats of high environmental, cultural and historical value that cannot be recreated. Ancient woodland is an irreplaceable resource of great importance for its wildlife, soils, recreation, cultural value, historical and archaeological significance, and the contribution it makes to our diverse landscapes. It is a scarce and threatened resource, covering only 2.5% of England's land area, and has a high level of protection in planning policy.
- 4.19 This policy ensures the protection of irreplaceable habitats and that any loss is only allowed in exceptional circumstances and where that loss is justified, compensation is provided. This reflects national policy, which states that development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused. Irreplaceable habitats are exempt from BNG requirements recognising that their ecological value cannot be offset through standard habitat creation or enhancement. Where the exceptional loss of an irreplaceable habitat is justified the required compensation is additional to BNG requirements.
- 4.20 Natural England and the Forestry Commission's Standing Advice on Ancient Woodland states that proposals should have a buffer zone of at least 15 metres from the boundary of ancient woodlands to avoid root damage. However, the Standing Advice and the recommended buffer zones are currently under review and are likely to be updated recommending that the minimum buffer requirement will be increased. While a 15 metre buffer may be appropriate in some cases, for larger developments, a buffer of 30-50 metres may be more appropriate.

4.21 Buffer zones must be designed to address the full range of potential impacts. Buffers may need to be significantly larger than the minimum depending on multiple factors such as development type, the sensitivity of the ancient woodland and the nature and extent of the impacts. Ancient woodlands can be affected by impacts such as noise disturbance, light pollution, domestic pet predation and recreational disturbance. Climate change is expected to exacerbate pressures on irreplaceable habitats through increased drought, storm events and temperature extremes. Proposals that are exceptionally permitted will therefore need to demonstrate how management and compensation measures take account of future climate conditions to support the long-term resilience of affected habitats.

Policy EN5: Canopy Cover and New and Existing Trees

A Tree Canopy Cover Assessment will be required for all major applications. Development proposals should seek, where appropriate, to increase the level of canopy cover on site by a minimum of 10%. For sites where the baseline canopy cover is below 10% of the total site area, applicants must secure a minimum canopy coverage of 10% across the site area.

In circumstances where the tree canopy cover requirement is not possible or desirable, having regard to site constraints, viability and design considerations, compensatory provision should be identified and secured through a legal obligation. Compensatory provision will need to be discussed with the case officer on a case-by-case basis and could include provision of an additional or larger open space or tree planting elsewhere.

Proposals for major development must consider the opportunities for new tree planting, including street trees, alongside and in addition to the requirement for an increase in tree canopy cover. Proposals should consider planting trees that, upon maturity, would be of a scale and form that have the potential to form positive focal points or a landmark.

The Council will support proposals that create pocket forests (also called Miyawaki forests) by planting native trees and shrubs together, to create a compact, biodiversity rich, and ultra-dense environment, where appropriate.

Consideration must be given to the possible conflict between new trees and built form and be compatible with highway considerations, parking areas and underground utilities. Tree species must reflect local conditions and management objectives of the specific site. Native planting should be used but consideration given to the inclusion of some non-native non-invasive species that could be suited to changing, warmer conditions. The maintenance of new trees must be included within any landscape management plan and landscape maintenance schedule for the site for an agreed period to ensure establishment.

Proposals should ensure that existing trees are not damaged and are retained wherever possible. Consideration must be given to the potential for future pressure to prune or fell existing trees and the design of development must mitigate this.

Tree survey information proportionate to the scale and nature of development must be submitted where trees are present on site and could be affected by development. The tree survey information must include protection, mitigation, management and maintenance measures.

In some instances, trees can cause damage to property or infrastructure requiring significant pruning or even removal. In these cases, a fair and balanced judgement will be made based on the suitability and benefits of retaining a tree against the potential risks it may pose.

Where the loss of trees is essential to allow for appropriate development, an appropriate species and number of replacement trees must be provided. Any replacement trees should be provided as close as possible to the new development and should be supported by a suitable management and maintenance scheme.

Justification

- 4.22 Trees, including tree canopy cover, make an important contribution to the character, quality and function of urban environments. They play an important role in mitigating and adapting to climate change by providing shade, evaporative cooling, rainwater interception and reducing the urban heat island effect. Trees contribute to improved air quality, biodiversity, energy efficiency, and have positive impacts on human health and mental wellbeing.
- 4.23 The policy supports national policy that new streets should be tree-lined, opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments, appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly planted trees, and existing trees are retained wherever possible.
- 4.24 The principal objective of the tree canopy cover assessment is to help understand the urban forest resource, specifically the amount of tree canopy that exists on an individual site at present. Canopy cover assessments provide a more accurate representation than simply counting the number of trees. Represented as a percentage of the area in total it is then much more accurate to show changes in the cover (increase or decrease). Increasing canopy cover is a key mechanism for delivering wider climate resilience and environmental benefits in urban areas.
- 4.25 Well-designed tree planting can enhance habitat connectivity and species diversity. Where relevant, tree planting and canopy cover proposals should be designed to complement and, where possible, contribute to meeting BNG requirements.
- 4.26 Species selection should follow the principle of 'right tree, right place', prioritising native species and climate resilient species. Trees should be embedded as integral elements of site design, with adequate rooting space and measures to avoid future conflicts with built form and highways, ensuring they function as focal points and contribute to sense of place.
- 4.27 It is important to consider the maintenance issues associated with street tree planting and the need to work with highways officers to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places, and solutions are found that are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users consistent with national policy. Regard should be had to the Essex Design Guide: Highways Technical Manual - Planting in sight splays.
- 4.28 For trees to thrive they need space for root development in the underlying soil, which must be of sufficient capacity to accommodate the rooting habits of the particular species, without impacting on the functioning of underground utilities. A sewer or lateral drain should not be located closer to trees/bushes/shrubs than the canopy width at mature height, except where special protection measures are provided such as use of appropriate barriers to resist root ingress to the sewer system. The strategy should consider both the growth of tree roots and increased heave and ground movement due to climate change. A tree should not be planted directly over sewers or where excavation onto the sewer

would require removal of the tree. To minimise the risk of root damage, tree planting should provide good growing conditions. Guidance can be found in 'Trees in Hard Landscapes: A Guide for Delivery'.

Policy EN6: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Development that will lead to harm to the significance of a heritage asset (including its setting) will be assessed having regard to whether the asset is designated or non-designated. Great weight will be given to the conservation of heritage assets. Any harm must be clearly and convincingly justified.

For designated heritage assets, substantial harm to or total loss of significance will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, or wholly exceptional circumstances where the asset is of highest significance (Grade I, II* and Scheduled Monuments) and where it can be demonstrated that the harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm. Where a proposal would result in less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, this harm will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

For non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be applied, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset.

Development proposals should seek to avoid or minimise harm to heritage assets through site layout, design, scale, massing and orientation, including the use of buffers, open space, landscaping and the retention of key features.

Development affecting the historic environment should conserve and enhance the significance of the heritage asset and any features of specific historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest. There should be importance attributed to preserving the setting of the heritage assets acknowledging the relationship between the asset and its surroundings.

In all cases there will be an expectation that any new development will enhance the historic environment or better reveal the significance of the heritage asset unless there are no identifiable opportunities available.

Within designated Conservation Areas, proposals must preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area in accordance with the statutory duty to consider these aspects under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Development should complement the form, materials, and architectural style of existing buildings and spaces.

Demolition of unlisted buildings or structures within a Conservation Area will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the building or structure harms or contributes little to the character or appearance of the area. In all cases, detailed justification, including an assessment of alternatives, will be required.

Applicants for proposals within Conservation Areas should engage with the local community and stakeholders, including local historical societies, to ensure that the local significance of the area is recognised and respected in any proposed development.

The adaptive reuse of heritage assets, including listed buildings, non-designated heritage assets, and buildings within Conservation Areas, is

encouraged, provided that the proposed changes do not harm the significance of the asset. The preservation of key features, materials, and architectural elements should be a priority, and any alterations should be sympathetic to the asset's character.

In assessing proposals for development affecting heritage assets, consideration will be given to the broader public benefits that the development may bring, including providing access to heritage sites, educational opportunities, and enhancing public understanding of Colchester's historic environment.

All development proposals should promote the adaptive reuse of buildings and the role of heritage in sustainable development (such as retrofitting for energy efficiency or considering climate change in heritage management).

Heritage Impact Assessments will be required for proposals related to or impacting on the setting of heritage assets so that sufficient information is provided to understand the significance of the heritage assets and to assess the impacts of development on historic assets, together with any proposed mitigation measures.

The cumulative impact of development on the historic environment, including effects on settlement pattern, landscape character and the setting of heritage assets, will be taken into account.

Justification

- 4.29 The Council will conserve and where appropriate enhance the historic environment recognising the positive contribution made to the character and distinctiveness of Colchester through the diversity and quality of heritage assets. This includes wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits.
- 4.30 Colchester's importance as a historic City warrants a policy detailing and reinforcing the need to conserve and enhance the historic environment. The policy focuses on the protection and preservation of both designated and non-designated heritage assets, as outlined in the Council's Local List, which includes 847 recorded heritage assets (as of June 2026). The goal is to prevent or minimise harm to these assets and to assess any potential harm in relation to the loss of their significance. In cases where harm is deemed unavoidable, efforts should be made to retain some element of significance. Additionally, the Council may refer to national policy when deciding whether an asset qualifies as a non-designated heritage asset for the purposes of a planning application.
- 4.31 The Council will promote heritage partnership agreements where appropriate, to support the long-term management and conservation of heritage assets, particularly those 'at risk' or in need of significant investment.

- 4.32 The Council will work proactively to identify heritage assets at risk of decay or neglect and will support initiatives aimed at securing their long-term survival. This may include offering advice on repair, restoration, or funding opportunities, in collaboration with heritage bodies such as Historic England.
- 4.33 In instances where existing features have a negative impact on the historic environment, as identified through character appraisals (or other method of identification of historic assets), the Council will request the removal of the features that undermine the historic environment as part of any proposed development. The Council will request the provision of creative and accessible interpretations of heritage assets impacted by development.
- 4.34 There will be a presumption in favour of the physical preservation in situ of nationally important archaeological remains (whether scheduled or not). The more important the asset, the greater the weight will be for preservation in situ. In accordance with national legislation, preservation of remains may require the refusal of development that could be detrimental.

Policy EN7: Archaeology

All development proposals that may affect archaeological sites or areas of archaeological potential must include a desk-based study and, where necessary, an archaeological field evaluation to assess the impact on below-ground heritage assets. The level of assessment should be proportionate to the significance of any heritage assets affected and the scale and nature of the proposal and should take into account the potential for previously unidentified archaeological remains.

Where appropriate, a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) will be required to outline the methodology for archaeological investigation, excavation, or preservation in situ, as appropriate.

The results of the archaeological assessments and evaluations should inform the design, layout and mitigation strategy of development proposals. Development proposals should seek to avoid harm to archaeological remains through site design and layout wherever possible.

In cases where archaeological remains are likely to be impacted, the preferred approach, particularly where remains are of high significance, is to preserve the remains in situ. However, where this is not feasible, and where the significance of the remains justifies such an approach, appropriate recording, excavation and publication will be required before any development can proceed. Results of such investigations should be appropriately analysed, reported and disseminated, including deposition with the Historic Environment Record (HER) and made publicly available.

Justification

- 4.35 As with the Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment policy, the purpose of this policy is to conserve and where appropriate enhance the historic environment – specifically archaeological sites or areas, recognising the positive contribution made to the character and distinctiveness of Colchester.
- 4.36 National Policy states that where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

Policy EN8: Flood Risk

Development should be directed away from land at risk of flooding in accordance with national policy and Planning Practice Guidance.

Planning permission will only be granted where it has been demonstrated that:

- a) The site will remain safe from all types of flooding throughout the lifetime of the development and provides a safe means of escape or can suitably manage risk to occupants/users through other means;**
- b) The most vulnerable development is located in areas of the site at lowest flood risk unless there are overriding reasons for not doing so;**
- c) Flood risk will not increase on or off site as a result of the development; and**
- d) The site has passed the Sequential Test and Exception test (where applicable).**

The sequential and exception tests will be applied to all proposals in Flood Zones 2 and 3. Development will be avoided in Flood Zone 3b.

Proposals which have to be located in areas of flood risk, either now or in future, must include measures to enhance their flood resistance and resilience so that they can be quickly brought back into use without significant refurbishment in the event of a flood. This is a requirement for both new or renovated buildings whether in areas with a history of local flooding or in areas shown by the Colchester Level 1 or 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment to be at risk of flooding, either now or in future.

Where buildings have been demolished within the functional floodplain (Flood Zone 3b) for more than 1 year the land should be reverted back to functional floodplain and consequently, development should be avoided within these areas. Where a building(s) is already located in the functional floodplain, any proposals to regenerate or replace such building(s) must not increase the existing footprint of the building.

Development must conserve and enhance the natural flood storage value of the water environment, including watercourse corridors and catchments. Proposals that open up culverted watercourses, where it is safe and practicable, will be supported.

In order to ensure access to repair and maintain watercourses and flood management infrastructure, development proposals must:

- a) Not build within 8m from the edge of the bank of any Ordinary Watercourse.**
- b) Not build within 8m from the edge of the bank of any Main River in accordance with the Environmental Permitting Regulations (2016).**
- c) Not build within 16m of the foot of the landward side of any sea defences or between the low water mark of medium tides and the seaward side of any sea defence.**
- d) Seek opportunities on a site-by-site basis to increase these buffer distances to 'make space for water', allowing additional capacity to accommodate climate change and enhance the natural flood storage value of the water environment.**

The Colchester Surface Water Management Plan identifies Critical Drainage Areas. New developments within Critical Drainage Areas will be required to provide or contribute towards the provision of flood mitigation options via CIL/S106 contributions, as identified in the Colchester Surface Water Management Plan (and its successor). This is to reduce or mitigate the risk of flooding to existing properties located within the Critical Drainage Area and to accommodate the drainage needs of new developments.

Where a site specific flood risk assessment is required in accordance with national policy this should be prepared in accordance with the Colchester Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and in a format that reflects the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) template guidance provided on the planning portal. A Sustainable Drainage Strategy should also be submitted as part of a planning application where a site specific flood risk assessment is required. Any Sustainable Drainage Strategy should be developed having regard to the latest guidance including the CIRIA SuDS Manual, Environment Agency's approach to groundwater protection, Government National standards for sustainable drainage systems, Essex SuDS Design Guide, Essex Green Infrastructure Strategy and Colchester's Green Network and Waterways Guiding Principles (and their successors).

Where sites are at risk of groundwater flooding, the Flood Risk Assessment submitted with the planning application should include a commitment to conduct construction phase groundwater monitoring during periods of high groundwater (October – March) to inform the design and any mitigation measures, unless adequate justification can be provided by the applicant to exempt the proposed development from this requirement.

All new development will be required to incorporate water management measures to reduce surface water run-off and adverse impact to water quality, to ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Nature-based solutions are a priority for flood and water management. Surface water should be managed in accordance with the drainage hierarchy and be managed close to its source, at the surface and mimic natural drainage as much as possible.

Justification

4.37 The overall aims of this policy are to steer development to land with the lowest risk from flooding of all types and ensure its safety of the lifetime of the development considering current and future impacts of climate change.

4.38 The Colchester Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (January 2025), provided an overview of the risk of flooding from all sources across the Local Plan area, taking into account the impacts of climate change and land use changes. The Assessment also identifies opportunities to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding and a range of measures that could be considered as part of development to manage and mitigate flood risk. A Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment was carried out to provide detailed flood risk information of site allocations in the plan determined to be at a higher flood risk.

- 4.39 Within the Hythe regeneration area, the flood risk sequential test will be applied within the regeneration area rather than district wide. In 2008, as part of work on the Colchester Core Strategy, the Council, Environment Agency and the Department of Communities and Local Government agreed that sites coming forward for development within the East Colchester Regeneration Area could be sequentially tested within the regeneration area boundary rather than a borough wide consideration of alternative sites within a lower flood risk zone. This approach was agreed on wider sustainable development grounds to ensure that regeneration in East Colchester/Hythe, which had commenced in 2001, was able to continue. Continuation of this approach was agreed by the Environment Agency in 2017 for the adopted Local Plan to allow regeneration to continue and this approach will continue in this plan period.
- 4.40 The Colchester Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) identifies 12 Critical Drainage Areas across Colchester. These delineate the areas where the impact of surface water flooding is expected to be greatest within Colchester. It is acknowledged that Critical Drainage Areas do not account for all the areas that could be affected by surface water flooding. It is therefore important that the policy seeks to reduce the risk from surface water flooding throughout the whole of the Local Plan area and that sustainable drainage systems should be designed to mitigate onsite and downstream flooding.
- 4.41 The Water Strategy for Essex (2024) outlines the current water challenges faced in Essex including future demand, access and provision of water resources, water quality, impacts from climate change including flood risk and water scarcity. The strategy identifies 30 actions that will contribute to addressing the water issues in Essex over the next five years, relating to the themes of reducing demand, change land use and developing alternative supply.
- 4.42 Conserving and enhancing the natural flood storage value of the water environment, including watercourse corridors and catchments, and opening up culverted watercourses, where it is safe and practicable, will support ecological improvements and create assets that are of benefit to local community, such as for recreation. Where any work is undertaken on a watercourse Section 23 consent should be sought.
- 4.43 Where drainage and wastewater requirements are also addressed through Policy NZ3 or Place policies, those provisions shall be read together and applied in a coordinated manner. The Council will not require multiple drainage strategies where a single, comprehensive approach demonstrates policy compliance.

Policy EN8a: Sustainable Drainage Systems

All surface and foul water flows should be separated. No surface water is to be discharged to a foul sewer or a combined sewer via a new connection. Existing connections to a combined sewer through redevelopment of a brownfield site, should provide betterment in terms of reduced flows to the combined sewer network.

All development proposals should incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and consider a range of measures as appropriate such as:

- a) Natural flood management at a catchment scale, including watercourses and coastal areas, and nature-based solutions;**
- b) Existing drainage features such as ditches and ponds to be retained and incorporated into developments proposals where possible;**
- c) Developments close to rivers should consider the opportunity to improve and enhance the river environment;**
- d) Prioritisation for soft landscaped features;**
- e) Inclusion of grey and rainwater reuse systems;**
- f) Inclusion of multifunctional Sustainable Drainage Systems that enhance biodiversity and provide aesthetic and amenity value, and safe public access to be incorporated into site landscape strategies;**
- g) Inclusion of permeable paving for driveways, paths and roads;**
- h) The management and maintenance of all Sustainable Drainage Systems for the lifetime of the development including responsibility and that these remain economically proportionate.**

SuDS should be designed to be multifunctional, however this should not undermine their function, and these features should not be considered as making a site's entire contribution for open space as required by Policy GN1. They should only be classified as part of open space, if they meet standards for open space and mitigating flood risk. SuDS can also contribute to delivering BNG, and where they do so they must do so in line with Policy EN2.

Justification

- 4.44 The policy seeks to ensure that SuDS are designed and implemented to enable the management of surface water flood risk through nature-based solutions which can also create and enhance green infrastructure.**
- 4.45 The Water Cycle Study has identified several nature based solution (NBS) opportunities, including runoff attenuation features, floodplain reconnection potential, and floodplain and riparian woodland potential. Developers are encouraged to contribute towards NBS opportunities and incorporate similar NBS in their site as part of SuDS delivery.**
- 4.46 The use of SuDS to manage water run-off is an important tool in minimising flooding by increasing the provision of permeable surfaces in an area that allows water to seep gradually into the ground, rather than running directly into a drainage network, reducing the risk of overloading the system. SuDS can also**

improve water quality by enabling water treatment before water reaches its final outfall. Surface water discharge from developments should be at the 1 in 1 Greenfield rate.

- 4.47 The design of SuDS should follow the Drainage Hierarchy, which seeks to manage water via infiltration in the first instance, with connection to a sewer being the last resort. They should be designed to mimic natural drainage processes where possible. New developments should look for ways to harvest rainwater for re-use and move away from the use of foul and combined sewers to discharge surface water. Where brownfield sites have previously discharged to the foul network they should look for an alternative option for discharge of surface water to alleviate the stress on the foul network.
- 4.48 The use of infiltration SuDS is not appropriate on all sites and in all locations. Infiltration SuDS should only be used where it can be demonstrated that they will not pose a risk to controlled waters. Sites with potential contamination issues or located in source protection zones need to ensure that any SuDS designed are done so with consideration to policy EN8a and EN9.
- 4.49 The design of SuDS should be considered early in the planning application process to enable the greatest benefits to be sought. Developers should enter into early discussions with the Environment Agency and the Lead Local Flood Authority to support good design. This should also include consideration of amenity value, maintenance and long-term adoption responsibilities. Anglian Water has published Surface Water Risk Management Guidance that provides a comprehensive approach to how they assess different site typologies in terms of surface water connections.

Policy EN9: Pollution and Contaminated Land

Proposals must not result in an unacceptable risk to public health or safety, the environment, general amenity, or existing uses due to the potential of air pollution, light pollution, noise nuisance, surface / ground water sources or land pollution. High quality open spaces that meet the Council's Guiding Principles for the green network and waterways must be incorporated into development proposals to minimise environmental impacts and contribute to improved environmental quality through the consideration of the selection of species (e.g. trees) and planting design to address air quality, soil erosion, noise and light pollution.

Proposals that include outdoor lighting must follow best practice design principles to reduce light pollution and its impact on dark skies. Where a Lighting Plan is submitted in support of an application, it should contain information to show how the lighting is justified, what luminaires are used and where, how it complies with relevant standards and how it considers wider landscape and biodiversity considerations.

Proposals for developments within designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) or where development within a nearby locality may impact on an AQMA are required, firstly, to be located in such a way as to reduce emissions overall, and secondly to reduce the direct impacts of those developments. Applicants shall, prepare and submit with their application a relevant assessment, taking into account guidance current at the time of the application, which must be to the satisfaction of the Council. Permission will only be granted where the Council is satisfied that after selection of appropriate mitigation the development will not have an unacceptable significant adverse impact on air quality and health and wellbeing.

Proposals for developments emitting air pollutants which would impact habitats sites and SSSIs should consider measures to avoid and minimise air pollution impacts within the design of the development, including during construction and once occupied. This could include considering the development location, layout, distribution of buildings, on-site activities, location of amenity spaces and infrastructure, sustainable travel infrastructure, vehicle access and levels of congestion on roads nearby to the protected sites.

Development proposals adjacent to contaminated land, or where there is reason to suspect contamination, must include a contamination risk assessment of the extent of contamination and any possible risks. Where necessary this should provide any additional environmental protection and mitigation measures, such as landfill gas and leachate migration management, post remediation and management regimes for former landfill sites. The onus is on the applicant to demonstrate that there is no likely risk to health or the environment due to contamination. Where planning permission is granted, conditions may be imposed requiring the execution of any necessary remedial works. Where a site is affected by land contamination, responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or landowner, who will be required to

carry out the above. After remediation, as a minimum, land should not be capable of being designated as contaminated land under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Development proposals on contaminated land provides an opportunity to improve sites through remediation and preventing ongoing contamination.

Developers should consider materials management at an early stage. Excavated materials recovered on a development site via a treatment operation can be re-used on-site under the CL:AIRE Definition of Waste Development Industry Code of Practice (DoWCoP) subject to certain conditions being met.

For sites that include watercourses or waterbodies, construction activities must be managed to minimise pollution risks from runoff and other pathways.

Development proposals located adjacent to existing businesses or community facilities will need to demonstrate that the proposal provides suitable mitigation against any adverse effects produced from the existing uses (e.g. lighting, noise, odour) and does not impact on the continued operation of these uses, in line with the agent of change principle.

Justification

- 4.50 Land and air pollution are subject to regulatory controls under Environmental Health Legislation including the Environmental Protection Act 1990, Pollution Prevention Act 1999 and the Environment Act 1995. There is some overlap with planning in considering proposals for new development, with the need to ensure that in granting planning permission for something it does not create any unacceptable pollution, or worsen an existing issue, and where necessary implements mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate the problem.
- 4.51 It is recognised that air pollutants can pose threats to human health as well as that of the environment. Increased traffic from new developments will be a key contributor to air pollution, and therefore in line with other policies development should seek to promote active travel opportunities and support for use of electric vehicles.
- 4.52 The Strategic Road Network is a significant source of air and noise pollution. The Council's Environmental Health team will be consulted on applications which significantly increase traffic on the strategic road network to identify if any mitigation and/or monitoring is required.
- 4.53 National Policy states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that development does not contribute to and is not adversely affected by or put at unacceptable risk from soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. It also promotes that development, where possible, should support the improvement of local environmental conditions including air and water quality taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans. The remediation of contaminated or derelict land is also encouraged and should also take place where appropriate. However, national policy outlines

that planning policies should determine whether a proposed development is an acceptable use of the land in a given location, rather than controlling emissions from development.

- 4.54 Developers should consider ways to minimise light pollution from developments by considering opportunities for using motion or daylight sensor lighting, provision of shielding to minimise light spillage and glare, light dimming and others. The Planning Practice Guidance on light pollution should be referred to when considering outdoor lighting design.
- 4.55 Developers should review the Environment Agency's Land Contamination Technical guidance, specifically the Land Contamination Risk Management guidance when considering approaches to assessing and managing the risks from contamination. Development proposals on brownfield land are encouraged as it can help remediate contaminated land as justified in national policy.

5. Green Network and Waterways

- 5.1 Green and blue infrastructure is the term frequently used in planning to describe the green network and waterways. However, green and blue infrastructure is not always understood by the public and so the Local Plan uses the term green network and waterways. To be clear, this encompasses the national definition of green infrastructure in the NPPF, which is: A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity.
- 5.2 This chapter includes policies on open space. The definition of open space is wide ranging. The national planning practice guidance for open space, sports and recreation facilities states that open space includes all open space of public value and can take many forms, from formal sports pitches to open areas within a development, linear corridors and country parks. Open space can have an ecological and recreational value as well as being an important part of the landscape and setting of built development.
- 5.3 The green network and waterways are multifunctional and have many benefits across planning. The policies in this chapter will contribute towards all the themes in the vision and promote health and wellbeing. Policies will contribute towards creating healthy, vibrant and diverse places; climate change resilience and adaptation; the creation of welcoming, inclusive communities with high quality public realm; and the creation of well-connected communities with reduced congestion and an increase in active travel.
- 5.4 Various Council teams have worked together to create Guiding Principles for Colchester City's green network and waterways, which are reflected in this chapter. The Guiding Principles were developed through an audit of the city's green network and waterways baseline; public engagement on the condition of the green network and waterways and opportunities to improve the network; and a review of Natural England's Green Infrastructure Principles, Essex Green Infrastructure Standards, the objectives of the Colchester Woodland and Biodiversity Project and open space and playing pitch strategies.

Policy GN1: Open Space and Green Network and Waterways Principles

Major residential development proposals must demonstrate, in a Green Network and Waterways Plan, that new multifunctional open space(s) constituting at least 10% of the gross site area is included in the proposals, subject to site characteristics and design. The open space(s) must meet any relevant criteria in Place policies, be informed by an appraisal of local context and have regard to the following guiding principles for open spaces:

- a) They will be multifunctional and help to create greener, beautiful, healthier, and more prosperous neighbourhoods, with a thriving nature network.
- b) Support sustainable drainage and help places adapt to climate change;
- c) Address gaps in provision to create a coherent green network.
- d) Include a varied mix of types and sizes that can provide a range of functions and benefits and, where appropriate, include 'play on the way' features/trails.
- e) Enable people to experience and connect with nature, and seek to offer access to good quality parks, green spaces, recreational, walking and cycling routes, including the Colchester Orbital where appropriate, that are inclusive, safe, welcoming, well-managed, accessible and encourage active travel.
- f) Are designed to be accessible and inclusive to a wide range of ages and abilities appropriate to the nature and status of the site.
- g) Respond to the area's character so that it contributes to the conservation, enhancement and/or restoration of the historic environment and landscapes and creates new high-quality landscapes and a strong place identity to which local people feel connected.
- h) Where appropriate, support physical activity through the provision of supporting infrastructure such as seating, toilets and cycle parking etc.
- i) Demonstrate how the green space will be managed, maintained and monitored for a minimum of 30 years.

Where residential allocations are identified to provide for 'Enhanced Open Space' as indicated in the Place Policies (and shown on the Policies Map), substantively in excess of 10% of the allocation area must be provided as open space. This should include at least one area of strategic open space and multiple areas of less formal and more incidental open space.

Justification

5.5 Open spaces are important for the health and wellbeing of communities and can deliver wider benefits such as benefits for nature, reduction in the causes and impacts of flooding and supporting efforts to address climate change. The purpose of the policy is to ensure the delivery of high-quality multifunctional

open spaces that deliver multiple benefits and comply with the Council's Green Network and Waterways Guiding Principles (2024). The requirement for major applications to submit a Green Network and Waterways Plan will demonstrate compliance with this policy and other relevant policies. Where a Green Network and Waterways Plan is required, a single plan may be submitted to address the requirements of Policies ST2 and GN1. The Plan does not have to be a stand-alone document and may be incorporated within a Design and Access Statement or masterplan document.

- 5.6 The 10% gross site area open space requirement has been consistently applied in Colchester over many years. It represents a proportionate, flexible and deliverable approach to securing on-site open space across a wide range of development types. Some of the Place policies in this Plan introduce a requirement for 'Enhanced Open Space' as shown on the policies map. For these sites it is considered that the location and amount of development allocated would only be acceptable with the enhanced open space provision.
- 5.7 SuDS and other related requirements such as SANG and BNG can contribute towards the open space provision (referred to as layering) providing that the open space demonstrates multifunctionality and meets the principles, size and quality standards of all elements. Open spaces should not be dominated by SuDS provision, particularly deep basins that lack other functions.
- 5.8 There are plentiful green and open spaces and waterways throughout Colchester with linkages, corridors, and connections between them. There are opportunities through the Council's various workstreams, including the Local Plan, and work of the Parks and Open Spaces team, to improve linkages, corridors and connections and follow Lawton's principles of bigger, better, more, and better connected.
- 5.9 The vision in Colchester's Green Network and Waterways Guiding Principles is that Colchester's special and diverse green network and waterways will form a coherent, high quality network providing connections for people and for wildlife. Colchester's green network will be multifunctional and provide benefits for nature, health and wellbeing, prosperity, water management and climate resilience. The existing network will be protected, developed, and enhanced and gaps in provision will be addressed. The Council will work to improve what we have where we can, to ensure that Colchester remains a sustainable, thriving, and greener city for future generations. Colchester is a unique place with a rich heritage and diverse environment and character that includes the city, countryside, and coast. The green network and waterways enables Colchester to be a healthy, vibrant, green and diverse place where people can live active lifestyles.
- 5.10 Access to green space should aim to be maximised, incorporating features such as rest points, appropriate lighting, passive surveillance, clear wayfinding and step free routes where appropriate. Integrating or connecting green space

along active travel routes is also important to create healthy environments that encourage people to travel sustainably.

Policy GN2: Strategic Green Spaces and Nature Recovery

The Council will support the delivery of large scale strategic open spaces, habitat creation and restoration of wildlife rich habitats that deliver the strategic opportunities outlined in the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). The Council will work with landowners and other stakeholders to support the delivery of the Essex LNRS.

All proposals should have regard to achieving the Essex LNRS principles for restoring and enhancing biodiverse and well-functioning ecological networks designed to deliver multiple benefits based on identified need and contribute towards creating and restoring habitats in strategic opportunity areas. Within the LNRS strategic opportunity areas, proposals should demonstrate a positive contribution to LNRS priorities.

Proposals for a Roman River corridor nature recovery area, as shown on the policies map, will be supported. Any proposals within this area that are not principally related to nature recovery must demonstrate that they will not prevent nature recovery coming forward in the strategic opportunity areas identified in the Essex LNRS and how they will contribute to delivering habitat creation in accordance with the Essex LNRS.

Justification

5.11 Policy GN2 provides a spatial framework for directing and supporting nature recovery. It does not alter the biodiversity assessment or net gain requirements set out in Policies EN2 and EN3. The purpose of the policy is to support the delivery of the Essex LNRS and encourage delivery of the strategic opportunity areas. Nature in Essex has suffered significantly over the last century, and continues to suffer from species loss, habitat loss and increased habitat fragmentation. It is crucial that nature recovery is at the centre of future action for the environment, to create new habitats and recover and enhance space for nature that has been lost or degraded. The role of the LNRS is to provide a county-wide, practical solution to driving action for nature recovery on the ground. The primary purpose of the LNRS is to identify locations to create or improve habitat most likely to provide the greatest benefit for nature and the wider environment.

5.12 The Essex LNRS includes areas of particular importance for biodiversity, which includes national conservation sites; local nature reserves; and other areas of particular importance for biodiversity. The key for nature recovery, and the essence of the LNRS, is to provide more space for nature and ensure it is better connected – ‘bigger, better and more joined up’, as Professor John Lawton has called it. The LNRS contains opportunity maps, showing where and how to deliver the Lawton principles for our most important habitats. The strategic creation opportunity maps highlight the top locations for nature recovery, indicating where efforts will be most beneficial for nature and the wider environment. These areas are evidence led and intended to guide and inform decision making rather than act as policy designations. The Essex LNRS

interactive webmap is available to view on Essex County Council's website: Greater Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

- 5.13 The Roman River corridor nature recovery area is specifically referred to in Policy GN2 and shown on the policies map. This area is identified in the Essex LNRS as a strategic opportunity area for woodland, grassland, freshwater standing water and freshwater river buffers. A multi-parish nature green space / local nature recovery corridor is promoted by Aldham, Great Tey and Marks Tey Parish Councils. The corridor includes mature hedgerows and trees, pastureland, floodplain, a reservoir and some arable land. Much of the Roman River is followed by a public right of way. Just to the north of the river is the 'Gainsborough Line', also a linear habitat, with trees the length of it. Marks Tey Brick Pit SSSI, local wildlife sites and ancient woodland are located within the corridor. Marks Tey's Neighbourhood Plan includes a 'green corridor' which brings in the Roman River.

Policy GN3: Local Green Spaces

The following areas, which are shown on the policies map, are designated as Local Green Space. These are green spaces that are demonstrably special to the local community and hold a particular local significance.

- a) Land at Middlewick Ranges
- b) Mount Bures village green

Local Green Spaces are also designated in neighbourhood plans and are shown on the policies map. Neighbourhood Plan Local Green Space designations have the same policy status as Local Plan policies once the Neighbourhood Plan is made.

Development within Local Green Spaces will be assessed in a manner consistent with Green Belt policy in the NPPF. Development will not be approved except in very exceptional circumstances.

Justification

5.14 The purpose of the policy is to designate green spaces of particular importance to communities as Local Green Space which complies with the requirements of the NPPF. This affords a high level of protection consistent with that for Green Belt.

5.15 The policy also draws attention to the Local Green Spaces designated in some of Colchester's adopted neighbourhood plans. Future neighbourhood plans may designate new Local Green Space. The following Local Green Spaces are designated in neighbourhood plans, with justification included in the relevant neighbourhood plan:

- Lorkin Daniell Field, West Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan
- Poors Land, West Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan
- Marks Tey Parish Council Recreation Ground, Marks Tey Neighbourhood Plan
- Colne Park Estate Play Area and Recreation Ground, Marks Tey Neighbourhood Plan
- Pond and seating area by Little Tey Church, Marks Tey Neighbourhood Plan
- Park Lane Local Nature Reserve & Amenity Land, Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan
- Grove Road Playing Field, Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan
- Grove Lake, Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan
- Windmill Green, Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan
- Birch Wood, Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan
- Ferry Marsh, Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan
- Land opposite Millfields primary school, Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan

- 5.16 Land at Middlewick Ranges is in close proximity to the community it serves, being surrounded on three sides by housing; local in character and not an extensive tract of land; and demonstrably special to the local community with a particular local significance because of its recreational and wildlife value. Middlewick Ranges is also part of the Southeast Plateau strategic biodiversity area, protected through Policy ST2. Within strategic biodiversity areas, opportunities to strengthen and enhance habitat connectivity will be supported.
- 5.17 Mount Bures village green lies predominantly within the settlement boundary adjacent to a number of houses and within 400 metres of all the houses in the settlement. The presence and beauty of the green was a central element of the settlement's success in winning merit awards in the Essex Best Small Village competition in a number of years. The green remains a central and much appreciated feature of the settlement.

Policy GN5: Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace

Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) must be provided where a Habitats Regulations Assessment identifies a need for it to provide alternative greenspace to divert visitors from visiting sensitive sites such as the Colne and Blackwater Estuaries Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation (SAC). For developments of 500 dwellings or more SANG must be provided.

All SANGs that are required should meet the Natural England standard of a minimum of 8 hectares per 1,000 head of new population and comply with the latest Natural England or local SANG guidance.

Justification

- 5.18 The purpose of the policy is to ensure that the provision of SANG follows Natural England's guidance and meets the Natural England standard of a minimum of 8 hectares per 1000 head of new population. The role of SANG is to provide alternative green space to divert visitors from visiting habitats sites. The effectiveness of SANG as mitigation will depend upon the location and design.
- 5.19 SANG are intended to provide avoidance/mitigation measures for the potential impact of residential development on habitats sites by preventing an increase in visitor pressure. SANG avoid/mitigate the 'alone' effects but there is still a need to avoid and mitigate the 'in-combination' effects, which can be avoided/mitigated through contribution to the Essex Coast RAMS.
- 5.20 Natural England advises that strategic sites of 500 or more dwellings and smaller developments close to habitats sites will require SANG. SANG may be delivered in a range of forms, including on-site provision, off-site provision, or a combination of both. Where off-site provision is relied upon, this may comprise enhancements to existing green spaces, subject to demonstrating sufficient capacity through visitor surveys or data analysis, or the conversion of land in alternative uses, such as agricultural or private land, supported by appropriate design, change of use, and secured long-term management arrangements.
- 5.21 Natural England has created SANG guidance for the Thames Basin Heaths Planning Zone, which is applicable to SANGs for other habitats sites. The policy requires compliance with this guidance and any future updates or successor SANG guidance, which could include local SANG guidance developed for Essex. Applicants should consult Natural England via their pre-application service for bespoke advice on SANG proposals.

Policy GN6: Retention of Open Space

Policy GN6 applies solely to proposals involving the loss, reduction or change of use of existing open space. Requirements for the provision, quality and management of new open space are set out in Policy GN1.

Development, including change of use, of any existing or proposed open space (regardless of whether it is in private or public ownership), including allotments, will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that:

- a) Alternative and improved provision will be created in a location well related to the functional requirements of the relocated use and accessible to its existing and future users; and**
- b) The proposal would not result in the loss of an area important for its amenity or contribution to the green network or to the character of the area in general.**

Development proposals resulting in a loss of open space must additionally demonstrate that:

- c) There is an identified excess provision within the catchment of the facility, and no likely shortfall is expected within the plan period; or**
- d) Alternative and improved provision will be supplied in a location well related to the functional requirements of the relocated use and its existing and future users and will be delivered within an acceptable timeframe to be agreed with the Council.**

In all cases, development will not be permitted that would result in any deficiencies in open space requirements or increase existing deficiencies in the area either at the time of the proposal or be likely to result in a shortfall within the plan period.

Additionally, development that would result in the loss of any small incidental areas of open space, not specifically identified on the policies map but which contribute to amenity value and the character of existing residential neighbourhoods, and any registered common, heathland or village green, which contribute to Colchester's green network will not be permitted.

Justification

5.22 The purpose of Policy GN6 is to ensure the protection of existing and proposed open spaces. The policy sets out the criteria that must be met for proposals that would result in the loss of open space, consistent with national policy. The NPPF defines open space as any open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

- 5.23 Whilst open space is often interpreted to include outdoor sports facilities, especially playing fields, proposals affecting outdoor sports facilities including playing fields will be assessed against Policy CS4: Sports Provision.
- 5.24 The impact of loss of open space will not be solely assessed on the quantity lost. Other considerations including the accessibility of the space for multiple users, biodiversity that is present, the space's connection to others in the wider green network will be taken into account in decision-making.

6. Landscape and Coast

- 6.1 This chapter on Landscape and Coast outlines the importance of conserving and enhancing the natural environment, focusing on the landscapes and coastal areas that contribute to Colchester's environmental quality, local identity and the health and wellbeing of our residents. These areas not only provide vital habitats for wildlife and support biodiversity, but also serve as areas for recreation, relaxation, and connection with nature. They also make a key contribution to shaping landscape character, seascape, sense of place and visual amenity. This chapter also recognises the highest level of protection afforded to designated landscapes, with a policy reflecting the national importance of the Dedham Vale National Landscape.
- 6.2 The plan supports a balanced relationship between development and environmental stewardship, ensuring that change is appropriately located, designed and mitigated so that Colchester's landscapes and coasts continue to enrich the lives of current and future generations while contributing to a sustainable, thriving community. The plan promotes a landscape led approach to design requiring that any impacts are avoided, minimised or mitigated.
- 6.3 Colchester's landscapes and coastline are extremely diverse and important in terms of their natural and historic environment, including biodiversity, landscape character, archaeology and cultural heritage. The policies in this chapter aim to manage growth sustainably and ensure that the inherent character and qualities of the landscape can continue to be appreciated, guiding positive change that conserves, protects, enhances, restores, or creates local character.
- 6.4 It is important to acknowledge though that the uniqueness of many landscapes in Colchester can provide challenges for some of the smaller, more isolated villages that sit within them. One of these is the access routes into these villages, with some only having one road access in and out which can make them more vulnerable to climate induced hazards such as wildfires or flooding which could breach a road and restrict evacuation. The policies map identifies areas of Colchester that only have one access in and out to highlight this as a key consideration for the design, and impact, of new development close to these locations.
- 6.5 Understanding the character of place and evaluating an area's defining characteristics is a key component in achieving the policy aims and ensuring that any change or development does not undermine features that are valued or characteristics in a particular landscape. The Colchester Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) (November 2024) is a comprehensive and up to date strategic-scale landscape evidence base to assist in the planning process. The LCA can be used to consider landscape character when considering any type of change and provides a framework for landscape studies, sensitivity assessments and baseline evidence for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments. This includes opportunities for conserving existing character and

strengthening and enhancing character, as well as opportunities to create new character.

- 6.6 The LCA focuses primarily on rural and urban-fringe landscape and does not include the principal urban conurbations of Colchester, Tiptree, Wivenhoe and West Mersea. Where development proposals relate to these urban areas, applicants should apply the same character-led principles using relevant urban design, townscape and seascape evidence as appropriate to ensure development responds positively to local context.

Policy LC1: Landscape

All proposals and associated land use change or land management must demonstrate that they are informed by, and are sympathetic to, the landscape character and qualities of the locality through evidence-based assessment. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) or proportionate Landscape Appraisal will be required where appropriate, having regard to the scale, nature and sensitivity of the proposal. A LVIA is required for major applications and development in sensitive landscapes and must be prepared in accordance with Landscape Institute guidelines.

In considering development proposals, the Council will take every opportunity to reinforce, restore, conserve, strengthen or enhance, as appropriate, the landscape character of the area in which development is proposed.

Development must comply with all the following criteria:

- a) Development must demonstrate, through proportionate landscape evidence, that it safeguards or strengthens, key features, patterns and important views that contribute to the landscape character and local distinctiveness of the area. Proposals should also protect rural openness and sense of place, including settlement edge character and the relationship between settlements and the countryside, where these contribute to the identified landscape character and are supported by the Colchester Landscape Character Assessment (2024) or other relevant evidence. Natural landscape features should be protected where they contribute to the historic environment.**
- b) The scale, design, materials (including colour and finish), lighting and landscaping measures are appropriate and would seek to conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the character of the landscape including protection of skylines, visual receptors and key public views.**
- c) Proposals must consider ecological and geological features, identifying areas suitable for habitat creation, and incorporate measures in the landscape plan with details of management and maintenance.**
- d) Development must assess and mitigate cumulative and indirect effects on landscape character, including visual coalescence, incremental change, infrastructure impacts, and effects on the water and coastal environment where relevant.**

All development should take into account the sensitivity of the particular landscape to accommodate change demonstrated through recognised landscape assessment methodologies. Development proposals will be assessed having regard to their effects on landscape character, with priority given to avoiding significant adverse impacts and appropriately mitigating any residual harm. The creation of new character will only be supported where it is justified by the context of the site, such as within allocated development areas, and where it demonstrably responds to and integrates with the surrounding landscape and settlement pattern.

Development must have regard to National Character Area Profiles and the Colchester Landscape Character Assessment (2024) to identify the character areas and features of the affected landscape. Development must take into account the general guidelines and landscape character area specific guidelines.

Areas identified through the Colchester Landscape Character Assessment (2024) as having higher sensitivity or particular landscape qualities will be afforded appropriate weight in decision-making. Development proposals must demonstrate how they respond positively to the identified character, qualities and sensitivities of the landscape. Where a landscape is demonstrably valued based on its physical attributes and supported by evidence, development proposals should protect and enhance the characteristics which contribute to that value.

Development should avoid reduction of and encourage traditional farming practices (including traditional orchards), retaining and enhancing sense of place whilst recognising the need to adapt to and mitigate against the effects of climate change.

Justification

- 6.7 The policy guides development that is sympathetic to local character and the qualities of the landscape through a proportionate, evidence-based approach, ensuring that landscape character, visual amenity and sense of place are conserved and enhanced whilst accommodating appropriate and sustainable growth. The Colchester Landscape Character Assessment (November 2024) provides a comprehensive and up to date strategic-scale landscape evidence base to assist in the planning process. The document can be used to consider landscape character when considering any type of change and provides a framework for landscape studies, sensitivity assessments and baseline evidence for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments. This includes opportunities for conserving existing character and strengthening and enhancing character, as well as opportunities to create new character. The study focuses entirely on rural and urban-fringe landscapes and does not include the principal urban conurbations of Colchester, Tiptree, Wivenhoe and West Mersea. In these locations, the same character-led principles should be applied using appropriate urban design and townscape evidence.
- 6.8 National policy seeks to ensure policies and decisions contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes. The Colchester Landscape Character Assessment identifies areas of varying sensitivity and landscape qualities. These will be used to inform the weight given to potential impacts in decision-making, alongside consideration of whether landscapes can be demonstrated to be valued based on their physical attributes and supporting evidence.
- 6.9 The policy also reflects the need to consider cumulative and indirect effects of development on landscape character, including incremental change and the combined effects of multiple developments over time. A proportionate approach

to assessment is supported, ensuring that the level of detail required reflects the scale, nature and sensitivity of the proposal. Where adverse impacts are identified, proposals should demonstrate how these are avoided, minimised and mitigated, and where appropriate, compensated for.

Policy LC2: Dedham Vale National Landscape

Development proposals within the Dedham Vale National Landscape must conserve and enhance its natural beauty, special qualities and statutory purpose. Development proposals within the setting of the National Landscape must be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on its natural beauty, special qualities, accessibility and setting.

To achieve this, development proposals must demonstrate that they:

- a) Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, special qualities, and statutory purpose of the National Landscape, demonstrating a positive contribution through proportionate and evidence-based assessment; and**
- b) Avoid significant adverse effects on the tranquillity of the National Landscape and good quality night/dark skies, taking account of guidance in the Dedham Vale National Landscape Lighting Design Guide (2023) and avoiding unnecessary artificial lighting; and**
- c) Avoid significant adverse effects on the character, quality of views within, into and out of the National Landscape, and distinctiveness of the National Landscape or threaten public enjoyment of these areas, including by increased motorised vehicle movement and adverse impacts to water resources or through cumulative effects of development; and**
- d) Support the wider environmental, social and economic objectives as set out in the relevant adopted Management Plan for the Dedham Vale National Landscape and Stour Valley (including successor management plans), and associated guidance; and**
- e) Meet the statutory duty to further the purpose of the National Landscape, as defined by Section 245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023.**

Where Policy LC2 applies, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) or other proportionate landscape assessment must be provided, having regard to the nature and sensitivity of the proposal, and evidence provided by that assessment and any evidence and/or advice provided by the Dedham Vale National Landscape Partnership in determining whether the development meets the requirement of criteria (a)-(e).

Applications for major development within the boundary of, or affecting the setting of, with regards to visual, landscape and experiential impacts, the Dedham Vale National Landscape, will be refused other than in exceptional circumstances, as set out in national policy. Where such circumstances are demonstrated, the proposal must be shown to be in the public interest. This includes consideration of the need for the development, alternative options, and the extent of any detrimental impacts on the landscape and its setting, including visual, landscape and experiential effects.

Where exceptional development is suitable, all reasonable steps must be taken to avoid harm. Where this is not possible, impacts must be minimised and mitigated. Compensation will only be considered as a last resort where residual

impacts remain and must demonstrably contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the National Landscape.

Proposals within the setting of the National Landscape should incorporate sensitive siting and design of infrastructure, including undergrounding of new electrical and communication equipment to conserve and enhance the natural beauty and special qualities of the area.

Justification

- 6.10 National Landscapes (also referred to as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) are designated by the Government for the purpose of ensuring that the natural beauty of the finest landscapes in England and Wales are conserved and enhanced. The statutory purpose of this designation is to conserve and enhance the Dedham Vale National Landscape. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that development conserves and enhances the natural beauty, special qualities and statutory purpose of the Dedham Vale National Landscape, including its setting, through a robust and evidence-based approach.
- 6.11 In December 2023, a new duty came into force in Section 245 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act (2023) stating that ‘relevant authorities must seek to further the purposes’ of the designated landscape. This overrides and strengthens the previous duty to ‘have regard’ to the purposes. This policy reflects that strengthened duty by requiring development proposals to clearly demonstrate how they further the purpose of the National Landscape.
- 6.12 The Dedham Vale National Landscape has been designated for its national importance in terms of landscape and scenic quality, biodiversity and cultural heritage and is further enhanced through its close association with the works of artist John Constable. The quality of the landscape is defined by its natural beauty and special qualities and the integration of the man-made elements within it, and the primary aim of the designation is to conserve and enhance its natural beauty. The policy therefore requires that development proposals conserve and enhance the natural beauty and special qualities of the National Landscape, including tranquillity, landscape character, visual amenity, and public enjoyment.
- 6.13 Potential impacts on the National Landscape will be considered in relation to their individual and cumulative effects, including incremental change arising from multiple developments over time.
- 6.14 As a typically rural landscape, the skies above are of regional importance to residents within and surrounding the landscape. The protection of dark skies and tranquillity is a key characteristic of the National Landscape, and development should avoid unnecessary artificial lighting and minimise light pollution, having regard to relevant guidance including the Dedham Vale National Landscape Lighting Design Guide (2023). In addition, it is important to protect skies that could qualify for International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) accreditation at a later date.

6.15 The Council will consult and have regard to advice from the Dedham Vale National Landscape Partnership where development proposals are located within, or have the potential to affect the setting of, the National Landscape. The Partnership has specialist knowledge of the area's natural beauty, character, and special qualities, and provides guidance through the Dedham Vale National Landscape and Stour Valley Management Plan and associated documents.

Coast Policy LC3: Coastal Areas

Planning proposals within Colchester's coastal, estuarine, intertidal and tidal environment, should be informed by the South East Inshore Marine Plan (June 2021) and successor documents as well as relevant shoreline management approaches, including the South Suffolk and Essex Shoreline Management Plan.

Within the Coastal Protection Belt, an integrated approach to coastal management will be promoted and development (with the exception of householder applications) will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that it:

- a) Will be safe from flooding and coastal erosion over its planned lifetime, including allowing for climate change, sea level rise and coastal change, follows a sequential approach by directing development away from areas at highest risk where possible and will not have an unacceptable impact on coastal processes; and
- b) Will be compatible with the surroundings in terms of use, location, scale and design, and not have a significant adverse impact on the landscape and seascape character of the coast, nature conservation designations, heritage assets, and maritime uses including through cumulative effects; and
- c) Will deliver or sustain social and economic sustainability benefits considered important to the wellbeing of the coastal communities, including the provision of appropriate infrastructure and facilities to support residents and visitors; and
- d) Will not hinder access to and the maintenance of the King Charles III England Coast Path and, where appropriate, will enhance public access and connectivity.

Houseboats:

Proposals for new moorings for permanent residential houseboats will not be permitted in coastal areas, including Coast Road West Mersea, because of their landscape and environmental impact on habitats sites. Houseboat proposals for new moorings on historical vacant sites or houseboats of historical maritime significance, may be acceptable, subject to:

- a) Detailed method statement demonstrating no adverse impacts on designated habitats (including saltmarsh, mudflats and oysterbeds); and
- b) Compliance with all other policy criteria.

Applications for infrastructure to support existing houseboats including jetties, sheds, platforms and fences, and for replacement houseboats or houseboat alterations considered to result in material alterations will be considered on the basis of their scale and impact on surrounding amenity, environment and landscape.

Justification

- 6.16 The purpose of this policy is to protect Colchester's rural and undeveloped coastline from inappropriate development that would adversely affect its rural, undeveloped and open character and its ecological landscape and seascape value, while recognising that some development may be necessary to support coastal communities and requires a coastal location. The policy promotes a balanced approach, ensuring that development both conserves and enhances the natural environment and delivers social and economic benefits where appropriate.
- 6.17 Colchester's coastline lies within the plan area of the South East (Inshore) Marine Plan¹ developed by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) (June 2021). The South East Marine Plan introduces a more integrated approach to management, ensuring that the right activities happen in the right place and in the right way. Development proposals should also take account of Shoreline Management Plans and other relevant coastal strategies, ensuring a coordinated approach to coastal change, flood risk and erosion management. Any construction work or development extending below Mean High Water will need to be carried out in consultation with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and any development with the potential to impact the Marine Protected Areas network will need to be implemented in line with The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and The Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (Marine Conservation Zones). Development will need to comply with intertidal Biodiversity Net Gain where practical and feasible in accordance with national guidance and demonstrate no adverse impact on the integrity of designated habitats, including through nutrient loading, water quality and disturbance.
- 6.18 The vision for the south east marine plan area in 2041 is a thriving maritime gateway with nationally significant ports and industries driving long-term, sustainable economic growth. Cultural heritage and environmental assets are more valued and resilient to climate and coastal change. Marine biodiversity plays a key role in climate mitigation, supported by a profitable, sustainable fisheries sector. Decisions are guided by an ecosystem approach and natural capital principles, achieving Good Environmental Status and enhancing biodiversity through well-managed marine protected areas. The plan fosters good governance, resolving conflicts through coordinated, plan-led decisions and awareness and integration with local planning authorities is strong. The policy reflects this vision by requiring development to consider climate change impacts including sea level rise, coastal erosion and tidal flooding, and to ensure that proposals are resilient over their lifetime.

¹South East Inshore Marine Plan (publishing.service.gov.uk)

- 6.19 Particular attention is given to protecting designated habitats and coastal ecosystems, including avoiding adverse effects from water quality impacts such as nutrient enrichment, in line with environmental legislation.
- 6.20 The Council will apply a precautionary approach in sensitive coastal locations, taking into account cumulative and indirect impacts of development. Proposals should demonstrate how adverse impacts are avoided, minimised and mitigated. Where relevant, site-specific assessments, including flood risk assessments and Habitats Regulations Assessments, will be required to support development proposals.
- 6.21 Development proposals must take account of coastal change, including flood risk and coastal erosion, over their lifetime. Where relevant, areas at risk will be identified and managed in line with national policy. Colchester does not have any Coastal Change Management Areas but if any are identified in the future, development proposals will be required to have regard to them. Site-specific flood risk and coastal change assessments will be required where appropriate.

Policy LC4: Islands

- a) All proposals for major development on Mersea Island must demonstrate how the design of the proposal recognises the uniqueness of the island location and island constraints such as access and environmental designations.**
- b) Proposals must demonstrate that safe and suitable access can be achieved and maintained having regard to the island's tidal access constraints, including the potential for isolation during high tides. Proposals should set out appropriate emergency access arrangements and consider the implications for residents, emergency services and service delivery.**
- c) Proposals must demonstrate how they respond to the island's heightened vulnerability to flood risk and climate change, including safe evacuation where appropriate, and residual risk associated with tidal flooding, in accordance with Policy EN8.**
- d) Proposals must demonstrate that recreational and environmental impacts arising from the island location, including on habitats sites, can be avoided or adequately mitigated in accordance with Policies EN1 and GN5.**
- e) Development proposals within, adjacent to, or with potential pathways of impact with the Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) (i.e. how a proposed development could physically or functionally affect the MCZ) must undertake a MCZ screening assessment and, where indicated, a Stage 1 or Stage 2 MCZ Assessment in line with Marine Management Organisation (MMO) guidance. Where impacts cannot be avoided or adequately mitigated, development will not be supported, consistent with national policy and the wider objective of sustaining an ecologically coherent UK Marine Protected Area network that protects marine biodiversity and ecosystem processes. Assessments must take into account the cumulative effects of any development proposals.**
- f) Proposals for new or extended holiday parks on Mersea Island must comply with Policy PP23a (Mersea Island Caravan Parks) and demonstrate that proposals will not harm the EU designated coastal bathing water quality.**
- g) Proposals for the removal of touring caravan/camping sites to be replaced with static caravan sites will only be supported where the proposal can demonstrate landscape enhancement and a material reduction in the intensity of the use.**
- h) Planning applications in West Mersea that would result in the conversion of single storey or 1½ storey dwellings to two or more storey dwellings will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated, through proportionate evidence, that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the character of the vicinity and the amenity of nearby residents by way of overlooking and loss of light.**
- i) Proposals that support the retention of the fishing and oyster industries, sailing and boating activities around Coast Road, the waterside and**

harbour in West Mersea will be supported subject to compliance with other relevant policies.

Justification

- 6.22 There are several islands within the Colchester district. Mersea Island, which is the only inhabited island, and Ray Island (lying just north of Mersea Island in the South West Pyefleet Channel), Packing Marsh Island (southwest of Mersea Island), Cobmarsh Island (southwest of Mersea Island), Pewit Island (lying in the Pyefleet West Channel north of East Mersea) and Rat Island (lying in Geedon Creek off the Colne North of East Mersea) which are small, tidal, uninhabited estuarine islands.
- 6.23 The purpose of this islands policy is to protect Colchester's rural and undeveloped islands from inappropriate development that would adversely affect the rural, undeveloped and open character and irreplaceable assets and help protect the character of the coastal environment by preventing urban sprawl into the more open and undeveloped stretches of Colchester's coastline. The policy recognises exceptions where development requires a coastal location or is needed to help sustain the socio-economic base of the coastal area or serves the needs of the local Island community. The policy requires proposals to demonstrate how they respond to the specific constraints of an island location, including tidal access, flood risk, environmental capacity, and infrastructure provision. Proposals should clearly set out how these matters have informed the scale, design and deliverability of development.
- 6.24 Mersea Island has restricted access due to its single tidal road, The Strood. The island includes the parishes of West Mersea and East Mersea. The whole island lies within the Coastal Protection Belt and includes numerous heritage assets. Mersea Island is ecologically sensitive, bounded by the Blackwater and Colne estuaries – both Special Protection Areas, Ramsar sites, National Nature Reserve (NNR) and part of the Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation, supporting internationally important estuarine habitats, including saltmarshes, mudflats, and shingle beaches.
- 6.25 The Blackwater, Crouch, Roach and Colne Estuaries Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) forms one of the most ecologically significant coastal and estuarine environments in Essex, protecting nationally important habitats and species. Designated features include estuarine habitats, subtidal sediments, and associated marine biodiversity, all of which are subject to conservation objectives requiring their maintenance or recovery to favourable condition. Given Mersea Island's location within this estuarine system and its functional links to the MCZ's hydrodynamic and ecological processes, development pressures on or around the island must be carefully managed. MCZ assessments are commonly produced for projects requiring marine licenses or infrastructure consent. The duty falls on the applicant to provide an MCZ Screening and, if required, a Stage 1 or Stage 2 assessment taking into account any direct and cumulative effects of all development.

- 6.26 The islands form part of the potential East Coast Flyway Natural World Heritage Site (from the Humber to the Thames). The East Coast Flyway is globally important for migratory waterbirds and for its nearly contiguous complex of ecologically connected and immensely variable coastal wetlands.
- 6.27 Parts of West Mersea are characterised by a distinct low-rise form of development, with bungalows and 1½ storey dwellings contributing to its coastal townscape and openness. While national policy encourages efficient use of land, on the island the upward extension of such properties can result in disproportionate impacts on local character and neighbouring amenity, particularly in terms of overlooking and loss of light. Bungalows also form an important part of the local housing mix, supporting the needs of an ageing population in a physically constrained island location. This policy therefore ensures that proposals for additional storeys are carefully considered and only supported where these impacts can be demonstrated to be acceptable.
- 6.28 As an island, Policy LC3 (Coastal Areas) is relevant to proposals on Mersea. Policy LC3 restricts proposals for new moorings for permanent residential houseboats because of their landscape and environmental impact on designated habitats sites. All new or replacement houseboats need to be connected (via pump outs and/or holding tanks) to the main wastewater system.

7. Net Zero Homes and Buildings, Renewable Energy and Water

Policy NZ1: Operational Energy and Carbon in Homes and Buildings

All proposals for new residential development should aim to be built to net zero standards, focussing on a fabric first approach to design that delivers high levels of energy efficiency before maximising renewable energy provision on site.

Proposals for all development that accord with national Building Regulations will be supported, provided that they demonstrate how building design has incorporated considerations for how heating and cooling demand can be reduced through orientation of the building, the location of windows, thermal mass and shading to provide adequate light, heat and ventilation to the building. Development designed to Passivhaus Classic or higher standards are also encouraged.

Justification

- 7.1 The need for local plans to include policies to secure development that mitigates and adapts to climate change is recognised in primary legislation and national policy. The proposed Future Homes Standard 2026, which will become the national Building Regulations, will contribute to reduced carbon emissions through greater levels of energy efficiency and provision of renewable generation and low carbon heating and will help ensure that homes are zero carbon ready.
- 7.2 Whilst this is beneficial, the Council seeks to take a proactive approach to climate change in line with the objectives and provisions of the Climate Change Act. It is recognised that an extensive evidence base prepared by Essex County Council's Built Environment Planning Unit demonstrates that building to net zero standards can be technically feasible, financially viable and legally justified. Therefore, the policy encourages development proposals to go beyond building regulations and deliver to net zero standards. This will not only contribute to reducing emissions from housing but also support the creation of healthy, efficient homes that reduce energy bills for residents. However, this will need to be balanced with overall viability.
- 7.3 New homes must be built with fossil fuel free heating systems. These systems could incorporate a variety of technologies including heat networks, air source and ground source heat pumps. The Environment Agency regulates ground source heating and cooling systems, and these may require an abstraction licence and environmental permit although exemptions may apply. Further guidance on this can be found on ground source [open](#) and [closed loop](#) systems.

7.4 It is also important to consider how buildings can be designed to be resilient to a changing climate. This includes the increased risk of overheating. Overheating can be mitigated through a range of design features such as use of green infrastructure, shading, ventilation and proportion of glazing. The Good Homes Alliance have produced a useful tool and guidance to help design teams to identify and mitigate overheating risks at an early stage. Overheating risk in new residential buildings has been addressed to some extent by amendment to the Building Regulations in June 2022 (Part O: Overheating Mitigation). Since the compliance tools for Building Regulations are not intended to accurately evaluate overheating in every case (in particular if buildings take the 'simplified method' route permitted within Part O as opposed to the 'dynamic thermal modelling method'), major development proposals are therefore encouraged to use the CIBSE (Chartered Institute of Building Service Engineers) standards TM52 for non-residential development and TM59 for residential development.

Policy NZ2: Embodied Carbon and Circular Economy in Homes and Buildings

All development proposals must demonstrate the measures taken to minimise embodied carbon (subject to meeting Policy NZ1 requirements first) and how circular economy principles have been embedded into the design. In doing so:

- a) Priority should be given to re-using, renovating or retrofitting existing buildings and/or structures on a site. Any demolition will only be acceptable where justified to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.
- b) Proposals for all new residential and non-residential buildings must demonstrate that upfront embodied carbon* has been considered and reduced as far as possible through lean design, sustainable material procurement and waste minimisation.
- c) Proposals for major residential and non-residential development are required to achieve the following set limits for upfront embodied carbon. This must be demonstrated through an embodied carbon assessment using a RICS and/or nationally recognised methodology which should be submitted at the same time as the full or reserved matters planning application (and with the outline planning application for residential schemes of 100 dwellings or more, and non-residential schemes of 5000m² or more):
 - Low rise residential (up to 11m): ≤500 kgCO₂e/m² (GIA**) or subsequent update;
 - Mid and high rise residential (over 11m) - ≤500 kgCO₂e/m² (GIA) or follow NZCBS*** limits when available;
 - Non-domestic buildings: offices ≤600 kgCO₂e/m² (GIA); education ≤500 kgCO₂e/m² (GIA); and retail ≤550 kgCO₂e/m² (GIA) or follow NZCBS limits when available; and
 - For building services, meet the global warming potential refrigerant limits set out in NZCBS when available.

**Upfront Embodied Carbon = emissions associated with the Building Life Cycle Stages A1-A5 and RIBA stages 2/3, 4 and 6)*

***GIA = Gross internal floor area*

****NZCBS = UK Net Zero Carbon Building Standards (pilot launched September 2024).*

Justification

7.5 Embodied carbon accounts for a significant proportion of a buildings' whole life carbon and addressing embodied carbon is important to meet local and national climate targets. Currently, embodied carbon is not covered by Building

Regulations and there is no government policy requiring the assessment or control of embodied carbon emissions from buildings. The Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) reported to Parliament in 2022 on this issue. The EAC highlighted that as a result, no progress has been made in reducing these emissions within the built environment. They go on to advise that the UK is slipping behind comparator countries in Europe in monitoring and controlling the embodied carbon in construction and that if this continues the UK will not meet net zero or its carbon budgets.

- 7.6 Councils are mandating Whole Life-Cycle Carbon (WLC) assessments of their own accord through the planning system. The EAC reported that evidence so far shows that the policy is achievable and is working, with few barriers to its introduction (EAC Report, Paragraph 73). The EAC encourages Councils to include embodied carbon assessments in their Local Plans ahead of the introduction of national planning requirements.
- 7.7 The Embodied Carbon Policy Study for Essex is available to view [here](#). The study provides the technical evidence base and cost analysis to support a recommended policy approach towards minimising carbon emissions that are embodied in the materials and construction of new homes and buildings, also known as 'upfront embodied carbon'.

Policy NZ3: Wastewater and Water Supply

The Council will work with Anglian Water Services, Affinity Water, the Environment Agency and developers to ensure that there is sufficient capacity in the water supply and wastewater infrastructure to serve new development.

Where necessary, improvements to water supply infrastructure, wastewater treatment and off-site drainage should be made ahead of the occupation of dwellings to ensure compliance with environmental legislation.

Developers are required to engage early with Anglian Water Services to confirm water supply availability and wastewater capacity. Developers should safeguard suitable access for the maintenance of existing water supply and sewerage infrastructure when considering the design and layout of development proposals.

Water Resources and Sustainable Growth

Development proposals should demonstrate that a water supply connection can be provided. To achieve greater water efficiencies and support demand management, all development must demonstrate water efficient design. Residential development must be designed to utilise no more than 85 litres per person per day of mains supplied water / potable water per person per day (l/p/d). Proposals should submit a water efficiency calculator report to demonstrate compliance and include clear evidence on the approach to water conservation.

New, extended or redeveloped non-household buildings* should aim to achieve full credits within the four water categories (WAT01, WAT02, WAT03, and WAT04) for BREAAAM standard within a minimum score of 3 credits within WAT01 Water Consumption issue category, or an equivalent standard set out in any future update to BREAAAM. Applicants will be required to justify and evidence why full credits is not possible/viable for the development.

Major non-residential development that requires significant non-domestic water use will be required to undertake early discussions with Anglian Water Services to ascertain water availability and feasibility of the scheme and demonstrate innovative solutions to reduce water demands with a focus on rainwater harvesting as the primary source (unless it can be demonstrated that reuse is not viable).

A Water Efficient Design Statement (WEDS) must be submitted with the application at the earliest stage to demonstrate how policy requirements have been met and will be maintained in relation to water efficient design. The statement shall provide, as a minimum, the following:

- a) baseline information relating to existing water use within a development site; and
- b) full calculations relating to expected water use within a proposed development (such as water efficient fixtures and fittings, rainwater/stormwater harvesting or reuse).

Prior to the first occupation of development, a completion certificate shall be submitted to the Council confirming the design standard has been verified and fully implemented.

If government policy or legislation relating to water efficiency standards is more stringent or at significant variance with the above policy requirements after the adoption of this plan, the most stringent standard will be adopted.

Wastewater management

Sewer network

- a) All development proposals that would create an increase to flows, must demonstrate that there is capacity available in the sewerage network to accommodate a new connection to it to accept wastewater flows from the site. Where there is insufficient capacity at the receiving Water Recycling Centre or within the associated sewerage network, development will only be supported when the necessary infrastructure improvements have been demonstrated to be deliverable and will be completed prior to occupation of the development.
- b) A foul drainage strategy should be prepared and agreed with Anglian Water to show capacity is available and a point of connection.

Water Recycling Centres

- a) All development proposals that would create an increase to flows, must demonstrate that there is capacity available at the receiving Water Recycling Centre to accommodate wastewater flows from the site for treatment and discharge.
- b) Where insufficient treatment capacity is available to serve the full scale of development at the point of anticipated connection, then appropriate phasing triggers to support development will be considered.
- c) Where acceptable permanent solutions are not possible to handle wastewater flows from development, development proposals will not be supported.

All development proposals must follow the drainage hierarchy for discharge of surface water as outlined in EN8 and EN8a.

Land is allocated as an extension to Anglian Water Services Colchester Water Recycling Centre. Proposals must demonstrate how Hythe Lagoons LoWS has been protected and enhanced.

Non-mains drainage

- a) Developments are expected to follow the wastewater drainage hierarchy for discharge of wastewater, with presumption in favour of connection to the public sewer in the first instance.
- b) Proposed developments should only include non-mains drainage if it can be demonstrated that a mains connection is not feasible, financially

or practically, with a priority to be given in all cases to utilise mains drainage.

***Non-household buildings mean all development except residential dwellings**

Justification

- 7.8 Clean and sustainable supply of water is essential for growth and nature recovery. However, the entire Eastern England region is classified as seriously water stressed. It is important for the Council to work with water companies, the Environment Agency and developers to ensure sufficient capacity and provision of an adequate water supply, foul drainage and wastewater treatment to deliver sustainable and resilient communities, whilst ensuring water of sufficient amount and quality remains in the environment to support nature recovery. This will be particularly important as water supplies continue to be threatened by climate change and pressures from continuing growth and to ensure compliance with the requirement of the Environment Act, Water Framework Directive, Habitats Regulations and Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations. Land has been allocated for an extension to Colchester Water Recycling Centre, and potential investment in the centre will be important in providing increased capacity to treat wastewater demand as a result of growth within the Local Plan.
- 7.9 In June 2025, Shared Standards in Water Efficiency for Local Plans was published. This guidance supports Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) in Eastern England to adopt more stringent water efficiency policies in their Local Plans. It is a collaborative effort by Anglian Water, Cambridge Water, Essex & Suffolk Water, Affinity Water, the Environment Agency, and Natural England, endorsed by Water Resources East (WRE).
- 7.10 LPAs are encouraged to:
- Set tighter water efficiency standards for new residential developments, aiming for up to 85 litres/person/day (l/p/d).
 - Require non-domestic developments to achieve full credits in the BREEAM water calculator and include water-saving and reuse measures.
 - Use Water Cycle Studies (WCS) to justify policies and monitor effectiveness.
 - Submit Water Efficient Design Statements and completion certificates to verify compliance.
- 7.11 These standards are shown to be justified, feasible and supported by policy and legislation.
- 7.12 A Water Cycle Study (WCS) has been prepared to support the plan and identify any constraints on planned housing and employment growth that may be imposed by the water cycle, including handling the treatment of water and wastewater. The WCS was jointly prepared with Tendring District Council. It identifies constraints at a set time but will be kept as a 'living document' to ensure the position on constraints is reflected as and when growth and

development occur and when factors such as wastewater treatment capacity alters.

- 7.13 The WCS has found that in the catchments of the following WRCs: Colchester, Copford, Tiptree, Eight Ash Green and West Bergholt, additional connections to sewer systems which have existing capacity would result in sewer flooding risk or sewer overflow spill frequencies. Additional surface water into these sewer networks could exacerbate either of these issues. Therefore, developments in the WRC drainage catchments of Copford, Tiptree, Eight Ash Green and West Bergholt must not discharge surface water to the foul sewer network. Development in the Colchester WRC drainage catchment must discharge attenuated surface water to a receiving waterbody and not to the combined sewer network unless it can be demonstrated that there is no other option. However, all development proposals must follow the drainage hierarchy and new connections to the foul or combined sewer are not permitted, as outlined in EN8. Phasing of development to align with future potential investment plans may be appropriate to help with this issue over the plan period.
- 7.14 Developments are expected to connect to public mains sewer unless exceptional circumstances indicate this is not possible. Connection to the mains sewer is considered potentially feasible where the distance from the (domestic) development site to the sewer is less than the number of properties multiplied by 30 metres. This is known as the general binding rules with further information available [online](#). Developments proposing not to connect to the public mains sewer must justify why it is not feasible to do so, alongside completing a FDA1 form to request a permit.
- 7.15 The WCS has also identified several WRCs that have limited or no treatment capacity for treating wastewater flows from development, including that outlined in the Local Plan. These include the Water Recycling Centres of Dedham, Fingringhoe, Great Tey, Langham, West Bergholt and Colchester. However, treatment capacity at other WRCs may become constrained throughout the plan period, and therefore developers should conduct early engagement with Anglian Water Services to determine suitable capacity at the WRC catchment where development is proposed.

Policy NZ4: Renewable Energy

Planning applications for renewable energy schemes in appropriate locations will be supported by the Council in principle, providing that they do not cause unacceptable impacts, including cumulative and cross- boundary impacts, on:

- a) Landscape and sensitive views;
- b) Biodiversity and geodiversity, including irreplaceable habitats, protected habitats and species, and ecological networks;
- c) Water quality and flood risk;
- d) The availability of grade 1 agricultural land.
- e) The historic environment (including archaeological remains) and the setting of heritage assets;
- f) Aviation apparatus and air traffic safety;
- g) Highways safety, and the safety of active transport infrastructure and rail movements;
- h) Residential amenity, including potential impacts caused by noise, vibration, dust, odour, light pollution, air quality and shadow flicker; and
- i) The operation of military defence assets or sites.

Proposals involving the provision of solar PV panels and canopies on existing buildings or above car parks will be strongly supported where they do not conflict with other policies in the plan.

All applications for renewable energy schemes should be located and designed in such a way to minimise increases in ambient noise levels. Landscape and visual impacts should be mitigated through good design, careful siting and layout and landscaping measures. Schemes should be considered in relation to impacts upon the historic environment. Transport Assessments covering the construction, operation and decommissioning of any wind farm or solar farm proposal will be required and should be produced at the pre-application stage so acceptability can be determined and mitigation measures identified. A condition will be attached to planning consents for wind turbines and solar farm proposals to ensure that the site is restored when the turbines or panels are taken out of service.

The mitigation measures identified in the Environmental Statement, required for large scale renewable energy schemes, must be incorporated into the design of the scheme or secured via condition.

To maximise environmental benefits, the Council encourages all solar farm proposals to deliver biodiversity net gain of at least 50% and an increase in tree canopy cover of at least 50%.

Community Led Energy

The positive benefits of community energy schemes will be a material consideration in assessing renewable energy development proposals. The

preference is for schemes that are led by and directly meet the needs of local communities, in line with the hierarchy and project attributes below:

- a) Project part or fully owned by a local community group or social enterprise.**
- b) Local community members have a governance stake in the project or organisation e.g. with voting rights.**
- c) Applicants demonstrate any benefits of the project to host communities and how these will be secured and distributed.**

Justification

- 7.16 Renewable energy schemes play a major role in reducing carbon emissions across the city, contributing to the climate emergency and supporting the sustainable development objectives in national policy, and will be supported in principle. Whilst the climate emergency declaration of net zero emissions by 2030 relates to the Council as an organisation, the Council in declaring a climate emergency in July 2019, acknowledged that urgent action is needed to limit the environmental impacts produced by the climate crisis.
- 7.17 Essex has great potential to realise the benefits of renewable energy, and this is recognised in the Essex Local Area Energy Plan. The Plan identifies a pathway for decarbonising the whole energy system in Greater Essex, identifying potential for growth of various renewable energy technologies alongside other measures. Colchester is identified as having potential to support a range of renewable energies including rooftop solar, solar farms and onshore wind in particular areas and proposals should have regard to this and any further studies that outline potentially suitable areas for renewable energy proposals.
- 7.18 Community energy projects involve groups of people coming together to purchase, manage, generate, or reduce consumption of energy. This includes (but is not limited to), solar panels, wind farms, hydro power, rural heat networks, battery storage, electric vehicle charging points, car clubs and fuel poverty alleviation schemes. Programmes are usually not-for-profit, and profits raised from projects are reinvested back into the communities which they power.
- 7.19 Proposals for renewable energy projects should be mindful of their potential impact on the natural environment. Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) have the potential to cause negative environmental impacts through chemical leaks into watercourses and fire risks. Applicants should assess risks to groundwater and surface water in their application, identifying how the risks will be mitigated alongside engaging early with Essex County Fire and Rescue Service to ensure siting and location of BESS are appropriate.

8. Homes

- 8.1 This chapter on Homes addresses the need for a balanced approach to meet the housing requirements of Colchester's growing community in line with national policy. The aim is to create vibrant, inclusive neighbourhoods that support both the health and wellbeing of individuals and the long-term sustainability of the area, providing a range of high-quality, well-designed, healthy homes that meet the diverse needs of residents and can be delivered effectively over the plan period.
- 8.2 The government sets housing targets for all local authorities to meet the national demand for additional homes. The Colchester Local Housing Needs Assessment (2024 and update 2026) has been used to inform the Local Plan policies and considers the overall need for housing in the city, as well as the need for different types of homes and the needs of different groups within the local community. The Council will also have regard to the most up-to-date evidence available at the time of decision-making.
- 8.3 All housing developments in Colchester should be inclusive, adaptable and accommodate a diverse range of households and housing need to create mixed communities. Housing developments must provide a range of housing types that can accommodate a range of different households, including families, single persons, older persons, those with care and/or supported needs, students, service families, gypsy and travellers, those wishing to build their own home and low-income households.
- 8.4 There is an important relationship between housing diversity, density and the accessibility of the location. City Centre locations, for example, are highly accessible and can support high density development including flats, but they also need to accommodate a range of household sizes to support a balanced community. Suburban locations have moderate access and should accommodate a range of housing types and household sizes. Rural locations have lower accessibility and will suit lower density development but should still contribute to meeting identified local needs, including smaller and more affordable homes where appropriate, in a manner that supports the vitality of rural communities.
- 8.5 The need for affordable housing is high across Colchester, as it is elsewhere in the Eastern region and nationally. The Council expects affordable housing to be delivered on site as part of the development proposal in accordance with national policy. Off-site provision or financial contributions may be accepted in exceptional circumstances where it can be robustly justified and the approach would not undermine the delivery of mixed and balanced communities, in accordance with national policy.

Policy H1: Housing Mix

New residential developments should assist in the creation of sustainable, inclusive and adaptable communities by providing an appropriate mix of dwellings in terms of size, type and tenure having regard to up-to-date evidence of housing need, site characteristics and local context.

Residential development proposals will be supported where the housing mix is informed by:

- a) The most up-to-date evidence of housing need, including the Colchester Local Housing Needs Assessment reports. The housing mix set out in Table H1.1 provides an indicative guide based on current evidence and will be used as a starting point for determining planning applications.

	1- bedroom	2-bedrooms	3-bedrooms	4+- bedrooms
Market	5%	35%	40%	20%
Affordable home ownership	20%	45%	25%	10%
Affordable housing (rented)	25%	35%	30%	10%

- b) Existing housing stock and character of the local area to avoid over concentration of a single size of homes where this would undermine the achievement of creating mixed and balanced communities.

All development proposals should provide accessible and adaptable homes in accordance with Building Regulations. In addition, development proposals should provide at least 5% of homes to meet Building Regulations Part M4(3) wheelchair user standards, subject to site-specific considerations, including the type of development and viability.

Where an alternative housing mix is proposed, it must be evidenced why this is considered a more appropriate mix having regard to up-to-date evidence, site-specific circumstances and local housing needs.

Viability will only be considered as a reason to vary the housing mix, where a planning application is supported by a viability assessment and independently assessed and agreed by the Council.

Neighbourhood Plans may set out a different approach to housing type and mix specific to the local area, where this is clearly demonstrated and supported by up-to-date evidence and aligned with the overall strategic approach to housing delivery.

Justification

- 8.6 National policy sets out the need to provide an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community. The Colchester Local Housing Needs Assessment has identified the need for a different housing mix dependent upon tenure. This takes into account future demographic changes, household changes and the ageing population. Regarding the affordable housing sector, regard has also been had to the current mix of housing by tenure and size requirements as identified on the Housing Register.
- 8.7 Overall, there is a particular need for 2 and 3-bedroom accommodation with varying proportions of 1 and 4+ bedroom homes. For general rented affordable housing there is a clear need for a range of different sizes of homes particularly 1-, 2-and 3-bedroom homes.
- 8.8 The Council acknowledge that evidence is continually updated, and where there is more up to date evidence than the Colchester Local Housing Needs Assessment, which has informed the housing mix set out in Policy H1, this updated evidence will be considered when determining planning applications on a case-by-case basis. The housing mix table is evidence based albeit a snapshot of need at a point in time. It is expected to remain up to date for a period of time and proposals will be assessed on the basis of this. When evidence is updated, it will be used in determining planning applications, to ensure that development remains deliverable and responsive to local circumstances.
- 8.9 The Local Housing Needs Assessment identifies a substantial and increasing need for accessible and adaptable housing, reflecting an ageing population and increasing prevalence of mobility impairment. The evidence indicates that the Council could consider requiring all dwellings to meet M4(2) standards, with around 5% of homes meeting M4(3) wheelchair user standards. The Supported and Specialist Housing and Accommodation Needs Assessment (2025) further reinforces the importance of providing a range of accessible housing options to support independence and reduce reliance on specialist accommodation. Providing accessible homes will enable residents to remain in their homes for longer, reduce pressure on care services and contribute to inclusive communities.
- 8.10 Where a Viability Assessment is submitted to vary the housing mix, in accordance with national policy, all viability assessments will be made publicly available via the Council's planning portal as part of the documents submitted in support of a planning application. The assessment will be scrutinised by the Council's approved viability assessor, at a cost to be borne by the applicant, and form part of the decision-making process in accordance with national planning policy and guidance.

Policy H2: Affordable Housing

The Council is committed to improving housing affordability in Colchester. 30% of new dwellings will be provided as affordable housing for developments of:

- a) 10 or more dwellings or a site area of 0.5 ha or more in urban areas;**
- b) 5 dwellings or more in designated rural areas.**

Affordable dwellings should be delivered on site. In exceptional circumstances, off site provision or a financial contribution in lieu may be accepted where this would not undermine the creation of mixed and balanced communities. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Where it is considered that a site forms part of a larger development area, affordable housing will be apportioned with reference to the site area as a whole.

The Colchester Local Housing Needs Assessment identifies a clear and acute need for affordable housing, particularly social rent. Accordingly, this should be prioritised, while allowing flexibility to deliver a range of affordable housing tenures, including intermediate products, in response to site-specific circumstances, delivery mechanisms and evidenced need. As a starting point, the Council will seek a tenure mix of approximately 80% social rented housing and 20% intermediate affordable housing, unless an alternative mix is justified by up-to-date evidence, site-specific circumstances, delivery mechanisms or viability considerations

Proposals should be designed tenure blind, demonstrating no distinctly different design characteristics between affordable and market homes. To promote mixed and balanced communities, affordable housing should be well integrated throughout developments, with layouts and design that support this approach, unless justified by site-specific circumstances including management, delivery or operational requirements.

In exceptional circumstances, where high development costs undermine the viability of housing delivery on site, developers will be expected to demonstrate an alternative affordable housing provision.

Strategic sites often have to address a number of infrastructure burdens which are required to support development. Whilst 30% affordable housing is still expected on these sites it is accepted that viability may be a challenge as a result of on-site and off-site infrastructure costs. In such instances the maximum level of affordable housing should be provided, which will be no less than 20%, and will be subject to viability testing. In order to deliver a viable scheme an alternative tenure mix maybe considered acceptable in order to maximise the delivery of affordable units.

For sites where an alternative level of affordable housing is proposed below the requirement, it will need to be supported by evidence in the form of a viability

appraisal. Where appropriate, the Council may seek a review of viability over the lifetime of a scheme in accordance with national policy and guidance, to support the delivery of affordable housing where viability improves. This may include securing a review mechanism by legal agreement specifying trigger points for undertaking a review such as later phases of a scheme or reserved matters applications with the aim of achieving policy compliance and improving the affordable housing contributions. Such review mechanisms will be applied proportionately having regard to site circumstances. Affordable housing should meet the accessibility requirements set out in Policy H1, including provision for wheelchair user dwellings.

Affordable housing proposals should incorporate appropriate measures to promote safety and security, contributing to the creation of safe and inclusive communities.

Rural Exception Sites

Affordable housing development in villages will be supported on rural exception sites where:

- a) adjacent or continuous to village settlement boundaries or where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities; and
- b) meeting a local need that is evidenced by an approved Local Housing Needs Survey by the relevant Town or Parish Council on behalf of their residents.

Where it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council that a proportion of market housing is essential to cross subsidise the delivery of affordable housing on rural exception sites:

- a) the proportion of market housing must not exceed 50%; and
- b) the market and affordable housing must not be distinguishable in design quality and standards.

At the scheme level, the number of open market units on the rural exception site will be strictly limited to only the number of units required to facilitate the provision of significant affordable housing units on a rural exception site. The number of affordable units and total floorspace on a site should always be greater than the number of open market units or floorspace. The actual number will be determined on local circumstances, evidence of local need and the overall viability of the scheme.

Justification

8.11 The need for affordable housing is high across Colchester, as it is elsewhere in the Eastern region and nationally. The policy seeks to maximise delivery of affordable housing while ensuring that development remains viable and deliverable.

- 8.12 The Local Housing Needs Assessment identified that the provision of new affordable housing is an important and pressing issue. The report identified a need in September 2024 for 941 affordable homes per annum (based on the Standard method using 1290pa). The August 2026 update does not further quantify the need but confirms a continued acute need and requirement for the Plan to maximise delivery to help address this need. The greatest need is for social rented housing. The evidence supports a preferred affordable housing tenure split of approximately 80% social rented housing and 20% intermediate housing. This tenure split has informed the Council's approach to affordable housing delivery and will be used as a starting point when considering planning applications. Flexibility will be maintained where justified by updated evidence, site-specific circumstances, Registered Provider requirements or viability considerations.
- 8.13 The whole plan Viability Assessment supports a target of 30% affordable housing in new developments across the whole plan. There may however be instances on strategic size sites, (those over 300 units and / or those where abnormal infrastructure burdens may apply) in lower value areas where the cost of delivering essential supporting infrastructure, both on and off site, is prohibitive. In such cases, the Council will expect to maximise affordable housing within the scheme but may allow a relaxation in the amount or tenure, subject to viability appraisal. In all cases no less than 20% affordable housing will be permitted. It is recognised that the provision of some intermediate products may support viability as well as helping develop mixed and balanced communities by offering a wider range of products.
- 8.14 Affordable housing should contribute to the creation of mixed and balanced communities. While integration across developments is encouraged, flexibility may be required in layout and clustering to support effective management and delivery by Registered Providers. Only in exceptional circumstances will delivery off site or a financial contribution be accepted. Further details about the delivery of affordable housing is contained in the Local Housing Needs Assessment and Council guidance which will replace the existing Supplementary Planning Document.
- 8.15 In instances where the level of affordable housing to be provided is disputed or challenged, the Council will expect developers to meet the Council's reasonable costs associated with viability appraisals. A review mechanism may be required in such cases in accordance with national guidance. Review mechanisms are not a tool to protect a return to the developer, but to strengthen local authorities' ability to seek compliance with relevant policies over the lifetime of the project.
- 8.16 In circumstances where the Council accepts that the provision of affordable housing cannot be provided on site and an alternative site is not available or acceptable to the Council, the applicant will be required to pay a commuted sum (financial contribution) to the Council to be spent to provide affordable housing elsewhere in the Council's administrative area. The level of payment in

the form of a commuted sum will be based on the difference between the open market value for a similar size and type of property in the same area; and the capital value of the dwelling as an affordable home. This is established on a case-by-case basis using indicative figures put forward by Registered Providers, developers viability reports and sales data produced by Rightmove and other agents. When calculating the appropriate commuted sum, the mix, ratio and type of dwellings will also be taken into account as if the units were to be provided on site to ensure that this as far as possible accurately replicates the cost of provision on site. Example below correct as of 2026.

Dwelling Type	Open Market Value	Capital Value	Commuted Sum
Three bed house	£325,000	£169,713	£155,287

- 8.17 In instances where the provision of affordable housing is supported by the delivery of some open market units on a rural exception site, it will be essential to ensure that the number of open market units never dominates a particular scheme. In determining the number of open market units required to facilitate the delivery of affordable units, the Council will expect applicants to demonstrate viability calculations starting with 100% affordable housing. The same calculations should then be applied with the introduction of one open market unit at a time until a point is reached where the delivery of the rural exception site becomes viable. The number of open market units on a rural exception site should be less than the number of affordable units delivered. Further information is contained within national policy and guidance and the Councils Affordable Housing Guidance Note.

Policy H3: Student Accommodation

Planning permission will be granted for purpose-built student accommodation where the proposal:

- a) Meets an identified need evidenced to the satisfaction of the Council.**
- b) Provides a mix of cluster flats and studio accommodation that reflects the needs of the student population and supports a range of living arrangements.**
- c) Is located in and around the University with good access to public transport.**
- d) Will not result in an excessive concentration of student accommodation in any one locality, proposals should demonstrate, having regard to the existing balance of uses, local character and amenity, that the cumulative impact of student accommodation would not lead to an overconcentration that would harm the character of the area, residential amenity, or community cohesion.**
- e) Provides adequate amenity space for residents.**
- f) Incorporates appropriate measures to promote safety and security, including consideration of safe public realm design and sustainable travel routes.**

A management and maintenance plan must be prepared for multi-occupancy buildings and implemented via planning conditions, which should include measures to ensure on going safety and security and effective management of the building and external areas.

Purpose Built Student Accommodation should be designed to be adaptable and capable of conversion to other residential uses in the event that the need for student accommodation reduces in the future.

Policy H4: Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and Co-Living Housing

Where planning permission is required for HMOs, proposals will be supported where they:

- a) Do not result in unacceptable adverse impacts on local character or residential amenity, including through noise, disturbance, overlooking or overconcentration of activity;
- b) Provide adequate internal and external amenity space, having regard to the number of occupants;
- c) Provide adequate refuse and recycling storage and services;
- d) Provide an appropriate level of vehicle and cycle parking informed by the Essex Parking Guidance;
- e) Incorporate appropriate measures for safety and security;
- f) Would not result in an overconcentration of HMOs that would demonstrably harm the character, balance or function of the area; and
- g) Are designed to high standard of accommodation including meeting as a minimum the Essex HMO Amenity Standards and informed by the Nationally Described Space Standard (NDSS), achieving equivalent or improved standards where practicable.

The Council will also support alternative forms of communal living providing it does not result in sub-standard accommodation creating unacceptable living conditions for future residents. Proposals should meet the criteria set out above and be clearly designed to enable and promote a communal lifestyle. Proposals should ensure private amenity space is incorporated.

The Essex HMO Amenity Standards represent minimum licensing requirements. The Council will seek higher standards through the planning process to ensure good quality living environments and to avoid substandard accommodation. Given that the Nationally Described Space Standard does not directly address shared housing formats, it will be used as a benchmark to inform appropriate internal space provision.

A management and maintenance plan must be prepared for multi-occupancy buildings and implemented via planning conditions to ensure the future maintenance of the building and external spaces.

Policy H5: Supported and Specialist Housing

The Council will support proposals for supported and specialist housing which includes the following:

- a) residential care homes;
- b) nursing homes;
- c) extra care housing (as defined by C2 Use Class);
- d) retirement living or sheltered housing (housing with support);
- e) supported living for people with disabilities or mental health needs);
- f) other housing for people with care needs (as defined as C3(b) Use Class and other vulnerable people.

New development proposals for supported and specialist housing will be supported where they:

- a) Meet an identified need (supported by evidence including the Local Housing Needs Assessment and Essex County Council Housing Lin Study);
- b) Are located within settlements;
- c) Are close to local facilities;
- d) Are accessible by public transport where appropriate;
- e) Integrate with the existing community;
- f) Provide adequate amenity space;
- g) Can demonstrate that the development has been designed to provide the most appropriate type and level of support to its intended residents, including consideration of inclusive design, accessibility and sensory requirements where relevant;
- h) Have regard to the capacity of local services and infrastructure, including primary healthcare provision, and demonstrate that impacts can be appropriately mitigated where necessary;
- i) Have support from the relevant public services and agencies required to support the housing provision having regard to the scale and nature of the proposal; and
- j) Include a business case, which demonstrates the long term viability of the business, where specific care needs are provided.

All proposals for 500 dwellings or more, should seek to include a mix of housing to meet a range of needs. This should include supported and specialist housing (sheltered/retirement housing, housing with care or nursing and residential care homes) at a scale appropriate to the development and having regard to the minimum viable size of such schemes.

Neighbourhood Plans should continue to identify opportunities for meeting supported and specialist housing needs and for accessible and adaptable general needs housing within the local communities.

The Council will also support development proposals for hospices through expansion of existing sites or development of new sites that are located within settlements.

Supported and specialist housing should meet the accessibility requirements set out in Policy H1, including provision for wheelchair user dwellings.

Proposals to convert from the C3 to C2 use class, will only be supported where it is demonstrated this will not result in unacceptable or adverse harm to local amenity.

Policy H6: Self and Custom Build

The Council will support proposals for self and custom build housing, to meet demand as indicated by registrations on the Council's self build register and other relevant evidence of need, taking a flexible and evidence-led approach to delivery allowing requirements to be adjusted based on demand identified through the Self-Build Register, monitoring of delivery, and site-specific considerations including viability.

On developments of 100 dwellings or more, proposals will be expected to provide a minimum 5% of dwellings as serviced plots for self build or custom build homes, unless it can be robustly demonstrated that this would be unviable or otherwise inappropriate. Where justified by evidence of local demand, the Council may seek a higher proportion of serviced plots or alternative forms of delivery. All plots must meet the definition of a serviced plot as per national policy

Proposals for self and custom build housing should demonstrate high quality design including consideration of inclusivity, adaptability, accessibility and safety in accordance with relevant design policies, contribute positively to the character, design quality and placemaking objectives of the wider development and provide flexibility for occupiers to influence the design and layout of their homes. This should be supported by design codes, plot passports, or parameter plans where appropriate.

To ensure effective delivery, proposals must demonstrate how serviced plots will be marketed which should include being made available to households on the Self-Build Register for a period of 6 months. If after that time, plots have not been purchased or reserved by those on the Council's Self Build Register, they may remain on the open market as self-build plots for a further 6 months before being built out as market housing.

Justification

8.18 The Council will seek to secure a range of different housing types and tenures on developments across Colchester in order to create inclusive and sustainable communities. Housing developments should provide a mix of housing types to suit a range of different households having regards to the most up-to-date evidence of housing need, including that identified in the Local Housing Needs Assessment.

8.19 Where appropriate, applications proposing specialist or non-standard forms of housing should be supported by evidence demonstrating how the proposal responds to identified need.

8.20 Where a proposal is meeting a specific housing need, a planning condition or legal agreement will be used where necessary to secure this.

- 8.21 The University of Essex is in the process of developing a new strategic framework. The University has experienced reduced student numbers in recent years and therefore has plenty of capacity within its existing facilities on the campus to incorporate recovery of student numbers in the period ahead. Given the current pipeline provision of student accommodation through facilities on campus, purpose built student accommodation and HMOs in Colchester, there are sufficient bedspaces available to meet the future need to at least 2030, and likely for a longer period thereafter.
- 8.22 The Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community Development Plan Document set out the expectations for new homes within the Garden Community, including student accommodation, if needed. This will ensure any future growth ambitions of the University of Essex will be met. Therefore, there is no unmet need for student accommodation during the plan period.
- 8.23 A house in multiple occupation (HMO) is a property rented out by at least 3 people who are not from 1 household but share facilities such as a bathroom and kitchen. This can also be referred to a house share. The Council estimates there are approximately 2,000 HMOs across Colchester. These are an important housing type to offer choice to renters and provide an affordable option for certain groups, including for students. The Council will seek to ensure that HMOs are appropriately located and managed to support balanced and sustainable communities.
- 8.24 National policy is clear that the Government want more people to have the opportunity to build their own homes. Self and custom build projects are a way of achieving this. The Self and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 places a duty on the Council to grant sufficient planning permissions to meet the demand identified on the Council's Self Build Register. The Council will take a proportionate and flexible approach to delivery, ensuring that the provision of self and custom build plots reflects both the level of demand and the suitability of sites.
- 8.25 Provision of serviced plots on large sites will be guided by up-to-date evidence on demand, including the Self Build Register, and consideration of site characteristics and deliverability, to ensure that plots are provided in appropriate and marketable locations. Requiring a proportion of serviced plots on major sites reflects established practice in other authorities, where policies typically secure around 5% provision on larger schemes, helping to embed delivery without undermining viability. To ensure plots are genuinely deliverable, it is important that they are properly serviced, marketed, and supported by appropriate design frameworks such as plot passports. Without these mechanisms, there is a risk that provision does not translate into actual delivery.
- 8.26 The NPPF defines older people as people over or approaching retirement age whose housing needs can include accessible, adaptable general housing to retirement and specialist housing for those with support or care needs.

8.27 With an aging population, the overarching aim is for people to remain in their own homes for as long as possible through the provision of suitable and adaptable housing. However, it is acknowledged that there may come a time when additional or specific needs can no longer be accommodated within a traditional setting. The Council is therefore supportive of development proposals which provide additional care needs and support.

8.28 The Local Housing Needs Assessment has identified the following specific housing needs for older and disabled persons in the plan period:

- 1,800 housing units with support (sheltered/retirement housing)
- 1,000 housing units with care
- 900 nursing and residential care bedspaces
- 800 dwellings for wheelchair users (meeting building standard M4(3)).

8.29 When determining applications for specialist housing proposals, the Council will have regard to the latest available evidence on need including the Colchester Local Housing Needs Assessment and Essex Housing LIN Research on Specialist and Supported Housing and Accommodation Needs and Assessment. Additional information to consider includes the Essex Developers Guide to Infrastructure Contributions for specific local and design requirements by cohorts of specialist and supported housing and market provision statements to establish the current level of provision.

Policy H7: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

The Council will identify sufficient, deliverable and developable sites to meet the established needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople.

There is an overall need for 15 pitches up to 2041, this includes 6 pitches for households who meet the planning definition and 9 pitches for undetermined households. There is no current need identified for accommodation for travelling showpeople.

Table H7.1: Gypsy and Travellers Housing Need 2024 to 2041

	Year			
	2024 to 2028	2029 to 2033	2034 to 2038	2039 to 2041
Number of pitches	5	3	2	5

The Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community will provide a total of 18 pitches which will count equally (9 pitches respectively) towards Tendring and Colchester's need for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation subject to delivery within the plan period and supported by robust phasing and infrastructure provision.

The remaining need of 6 pitches to 2041 will be met through:

- Expansion of the existing site at Severalls Lane. The existing site has successfully operated since 2012 and is considered a sustainable location for small scale expansion.
- Strategic allocations to be finalised through masterplanning, where provision for pitches will be clearly identified within agreed masterplans or parameter plans and delivered alongside supporting infrastructure as appropriate.

In the event that delivery of the pitches as outlined above is delayed, proposals for new gypsy and travellers sites will be considered on a case-by-case basis to endure a supply of deliverable sites in accordance with national policy.

Proposals for new gypsy and travellers sites will be supported where they:

- a) Meet an identified need;
- b) Are located within close proximity to existing settlements and provide good access to key services, including healthcare facilities, education and shops, particularly where this would assist communities experiencing health deprivation;
- c) Are located outside areas identified by the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment or the Flood Map for Planning, as being at high risk of flooding both now and in future;

- d) Provide access to a range of services such as shops, education, health and community facilities;
- e) Provide adequate space for vehicles on site;
- f) Have suitable and safe highways access;
- g) Ensure the amenity of the Gypsy and Traveller community and the settled community is managed appropriately and that proposals are designed to achieve safe and integrated relationships with neighbouring uses;
- h) Have appropriate and sufficient drainage, water supply and other necessary utility services; and
- i) Provide a connection to a main sewer system where feasible, or otherwise demonstrate that alternative foul drainage solutions are safe, suitable and in accordance with environmental policy requirements.

Planning permission will be refused for the change of use of all Gypsy and Traveller sites pitches identified in the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment unless acceptable replacement accommodation can be provided, or it can be demonstrated that the site is no longer required to meet any identified needs.

Justification

8.31 The overarching aim of the National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites is to ensure fair and equal treatment of the travelling community, in a way that facilitates their traditional and nomadic way of life while respecting the interests of the settled community. As part of this, the Council is required to proactively plan to meet the housing needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in the District through the identification of deliverable and developable sites over the plan period.

8.32 The Colchester Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment sets out the overall need of 15 pitches to 2041. Policy H7 identifies how these needs will be met across the plan area and plan period including through strategic allocations, existing site expansion and, where necessary, windfall provision to ensure supply is maintained. Whilst no update has been provided up to 2043, any increase in need is expected to be minimal if the projections to 2041 are projected forward. Any such additional need is capable of being met through the provisions of Policy H7.

8.33 Access to key services, including healthcare, is an important consideration in site selection, particularly in addressing existing patterns of health inequality within Gypsy and Traveller communities.

8.34 No current need has been identified for accommodation for travelling showpeople, however any need that arises over the life of the plan will also be addressed using the criteria based policy approach. There is also a need for 5

pitches for those who do not meet the planning definition of a Gypsy and Traveller, the criteria based policy approach will also be used in this instance.

Policy H8: Rural Workers Dwellings

Permanent Rural Workers Dwellings

Planning permission will be granted for new rural workers' dwellings as part of existing businesses where the following criteria are satisfied:

- a) Evidence is provided to show that there is an essential functional need for a permanent dwelling, including a requirement for a worker to be present at or near the site at most times;
- b) The need is related to a full-time worker who is primarily employed in a rural based business and a temporary rural workers dwelling has previously been granted or evidence is provided to justify why a temporary rural workers dwelling has not been required;
- c) The proposed dwelling is sensitively designed, landscaped and located to fit in with its surroundings and of a scale that reflects its functional role to support the rural business;
- d) The business has been established for at least 3 years, has been profitable for at least one of them, is financially viable and is likely to remain so in the future;
- e) The functional need cannot be met by another suitable and available dwelling in the local area, having regard to the nature of the business, the need for on-site or nearby presence, and the availability of suitable accommodation;
- f) Evidence is provided to show the reuse, extension or conversion of an existing building on site has been considered; and
- g) The proposed development is not located in an area of high flood risk.

Temporary Rural Workers Dwellings

Where a new dwelling is essential to support a new business, temporary accommodation in the form of a caravan/mobile home will be supported for a period of up to three years where all the following information is provided:

- a) Evidence of a firm intention and ability to develop the business;
- b) Demonstration that the business can sustain a full-time worker;
- c) Evidence that the proposed business has been planned on a sound financial basis. The evidence should include a business plan of at least 3 years duration, which provides sufficient detail on the proposed enterprise, including financial forecasts, labour requirements, and how the business will be established and sustained;
- d) Evidence to show that there is an essential functional need for a rural worker dwelling;
- e) The functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling, reuse, extension or conversion on an existing building on site or any other existing accommodation in the local area; and
- f) The proposed temporary accommodation is not located in an area of high flood risk unless it can be demonstrated that the accommodation

would be safe for its lifetime and would not increase flood risk elsewhere.

If permission for temporary accommodation is granted, permission for a permanent dwelling is unlikely to be granted within 3 years. If after 3 years, a permanent dwelling is approved, the temporary dwelling must be removed from the site.

Conditions will be attached to all permissions granted for new rural workers dwellings (permanent or temporary) to remove permitted development rights and restrict the occupancy to that required for the rural business concerned or other agricultural/rural uses nearby.

Existing Rural Workers Dwellings

Where a rural workers dwelling is no longer needed to support a rural business, applications to remove the occupancy restrictions will need to submit evidence demonstrating that an essential functional need no longer exists for the property and is unlikely to in the foreseeable future supported by evidence such as changes in the nature of the business, long-term business trends, or lack of demand for such accommodation in the locality. The applicant will be expected to provide evidence demonstrating that:

- a) The property has been continuously marketed for rent and sale for at least 12 months to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority and advertised in that period at a price reflecting the occupancy condition;
- b) Confirmation of a lack of interest from marketing efforts; and
- c) The property has been offered both for sale and to rent on the same basis to all farmers, horticulturalists and other rural businesses in the local area where a functional need for such accommodation could reasonably arise.

Justification

8.35 National policy states that one of the few circumstances where a new dwelling within the countryside may be justified is where there is an essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside. Rural workers are defined as those working in agriculture, forestry, horticulture or other rural land based enterprises where the nature of the work creates an essential need to live at or near the place of employment.

8.36 While the Council's preference is for such workers to live in nearby settlements or suitable existing dwellings to avoid new and potentially intrusive development in the countryside, it acknowledges that there will be some instances where the nature and demands of certain rural businesses will make it essential for one or more people engaged in the enterprise to live at, or very close to, their place of work. Such a need however must be essential to the successful operation of the rural business.

- 8.37 Given the restrictions on the delivery of new dwellings in the countryside, the scale and design of any proposals for rural workers' dwellings should reflect their countryside location and their function as housing for a rural worker. While many people work in rural areas e.g. in offices, schools, workshops, garages and garden centres, it is unlikely that they will have an essential need to live permanently at or near their place of work. Being employed in a rural location is not considered sufficient justification to qualify as a rural worker with an essential housing need.
- 8.38 Changes in the scale and character of agricultural and forestry businesses have the potential to affect the longer-term requirement for dwellings in the countryside particularly where these had an "agricultural worker occupancy" condition attached when planning permission was granted. In such cases, the Local Planning Authority recognises that it would fulfil no purpose to keep such dwellings vacant, or that existing occupiers should be obliged to remain in occupation simply by virtue of a planning condition that has outlived its usefulness.
- 8.39 Nevertheless, the Council will expect applications for the removal of an occupancy condition to demonstrate convincingly that there is no long-term need for an agricultural dwelling in the locality. Such dwellings could be used by other agricultural and rural workers seeking accommodation within the wider surrounding area, therefore it will need to be demonstrated to the Council that the dwelling tied to an occupancy condition has been effectively marketed to likely interested parties in the area concerned, over a period of time, and that no genuine interest has been shown regarding the purchase or rental of the dwelling for a rural worker with an essential need to live in the local community. The Council will make a judgement on the adequacy of the marketing exercise on a case-by-case basis.
- 8.40 The policy includes circumstances where temporary or permanent rural workers dwellings would be supported. Where an established business has existed for at least 3 years and an essential functional need exists for the dwelling, a request for a permanent rural dwelling can be made immediately without having to initially go through an application for a temporary rural dwelling prior.

9. Economy

- 9.1 National policy requires significant weight to be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity. It requires planning policies to address potential barriers to investment and identify strategic sites for development which meet anticipated needs over the plan period. Policies are also required to support a prosperous rural economy. National policy requires planning policies to support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities.
- 9.2 This chapter covers a range of policies to enable Colchester to meet economic opportunities and challenges to 2043 and beyond and contribute towards the creation of mixed, balanced and sustainable communities. Policies cover Protection of Employment Land, Economic Development in Rural Areas and the Countryside, Agricultural Development and Diversification, Retail and Centres and land safeguarded for the potential expansion of Colchester Zoo. The overall employment need for Colchester for the plan period is set out in Policy ST6 in Chapter 3.
- 9.3 The policies in this chapter reflect local circumstances and are based on evidence gathered in the Employment Study and the Retail, Leisure and Town Centre Study.
- 9.4 The policies in this chapter will contribute to the themes of the vision of 'Welcoming Inclusive Communities' and 'Healthy Vibrant and Diverse Places' by delivering high value jobs for local people, protecting and maintaining the distinct character, identity and setting of Colchester city and supporting Colchester's tourism role through the provision of additional high-quality facilities.

Policy E1: Protection of Employment

Land and premises currently in employment use, and employment provision as defined on the policies maps and listed in policy ST6, will be safeguarded primarily for E(g), B2 and B8 Use Classes where appropriate to provide, protect and enhance employment provision in a range of locations across the Colchester area to enable balanced job and housing growth. Planning permission will be granted for the redevelopment or change of use where:

- a) It can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable prospect of the site concerned being used for Class B2, B8 or E(g) purposes. Evidence of marketing of the site / premises for at least 12 months will need to be submitted with the planning application which demonstrates, to the satisfaction of the Council, that genuine attempts to sell / let the site / premises for employment use and no alternative business / occupier has been found; and
- b) The supply, availability and variety of B or E(g) use class employment land is sufficient to meet identified needs for Colchester; and
- c) It can be demonstrated that the alternative use cannot be reasonably located elsewhere within the area it serves; and
- d) The proposal does not generate potential conflict with the existing proposed B or E(g) class uses / activities on the site; and
- e) The use will not give rise to unacceptable traffic generation, noise, smells or vehicle parking; and
- f) 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.

Proposals which promote development or reuse of vacant sites located within existing employment areas for employment uses will be supported subject to compliance with other relevant policies in the Plan. Opportunities to enhance and renew more dated buildings within employment areas, will be supported when proposals are promoted for improvements to existing operations or for new operations where the use and scale is appropriate and they comply with other relevant policies in the plan.

Justification

- 9.5 The purpose of this policy is to protect and enhance employment land and premises in Colchester. This policy aims to strike a balance between protecting vital employment land and accommodating necessary change, ensuring that Colchester's economic and community needs are met in a sustainable and dynamic way. National policy requires significant weight to be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

- 9.6 Evidence in the Colchester Employment Study recommends safeguarding existing suitable employment sites to ensure there is a ready supply of premises and that the vacant land and intensification opportunities can potentially be realised. The Employment Study recognises however that protecting employment land requires a flexible approach that considers the merits of each individual site, and which use it is best suited for.
- 9.7 Where a site no longer has reasonable prospect of being used for employment purposes, applicants will be expected to demonstrate that the site is no longer viable for its present, or any other realistic and suitable, employment use. The sites potential contribution to the local and wider economy must be considered, recognising the economic cycle and the likely future needs of the economy.
- 9.8 The changes to the Use Classes Order in 2020 replaced the former class B1 with a new commercial, business and service use class E. This combines a variety of uses into a single use class. Class B2 and class B8 remained unchanged. These changes, along with others to permitted development rights allow more flexibility between the uses.
- 9.9 The loss of employment land could adversely affect the Council's ability to meet its identified employment needs. Employment uses for the purposes of this policy are defined as Use Classes E, B2, and B8. Proposals which are not class E, B2 and B8 uses will need to be accompanied by evidence to demonstrate there is no reasonable prospect of the site being used for those uses. The evidence required will depend on the scale of the proposal.
- 9.10 The Employment Study recommends that the Council support occupiers and landlords in addressing the retrofitting challenge to enable existing employment space to meet energy efficiency standards above those met by the existing stock.
- 9.11 This policy supports sustainable economic growth and balanced development by:
- Prioritising the retention of land and premises for employment purposes to meet current and future economic needs, ensuring a balanced approach to job creation and housing growth.
 - Promoting the renewal and improvement of older employment sites to support modern business needs and maximise their economic potential.
 - Allowing redevelopment or alternative uses of employment land where it is demonstrated that the site is no longer viable for employment purposes and there is no adverse impact on the supply, availability, or variety of employment land.
 - Ensuring that new or alternative uses of employment land do not conflict with existing or proposed employment uses, or cause adverse effects such as traffic congestion, noise, or environmental harm.
 - Facilitating economic development in a way that aligns with the needs of local communities and the overall goals of the Colchester area.

Policy E2: Economic Development in Rural Areas and the Countryside

The Council will protect existing and proposed Employment Areas in rural Colchester that provide an economic function both on allocated sites shown on the policies maps and at other rural locations that provide a similar function.

Sites and premises currently used or allocated for employment purposes in rural parts of Colchester and rural sites providing an economic function will be safeguarded for appropriate economic uses to ensure local residents have access to local job opportunities to reduce the need to travel. Proposals for alternative uses will be supported where they comply with other relevant policies in the plan.

Within allocated rural Employment Areas and on rural sites providing an economic function, the following uses are considered appropriate in principle:

- a) Offices to carry out any operational or administrative functions - E(g)(i); Research and development of products or processes - E(g)(ii); Industrial processes - E(g)(iii), general industrial (B2), storage and distribution (B8);
- b) Repair and storage of vehicles and vehicle parts, including cars, boats and caravans; and
- c) Other employment-generating uses, such as those related to rural recreation and tourism, which meet local needs and/or promote rural enterprise.

Development should be prioritised on brownfield and/or areas with dilapidated buildings. Where appropriate, development will be required to remediate any previous contamination where found.

Proposals should demonstrate how they support sustainable transport objectives, including access by walking, cycling or public transport, ensuring opportunities for improving safety are delivered, where feasible. Proposals which would result in large numbers of visitors may not be considered appropriate in rural areas, especially when there are few options for sustainable travel. Conditions will be used where necessary to restrict changes of use and ensure uses remain appropriate to their surroundings.

The following additional considerations will also be taken into account where relevant:

(A) Conversion and re-use of existing rural buildings:

Proposals for acceptable uses, as detailed above, will only be supported where the building is capable of re-use without significant rebuilding, and the building is deemed to be desirable for retention. In the case of former agricultural or forestry buildings of recent construction (less than 10 years), it will also need to be demonstrated that the original need for the building was genuine and that it is no longer required for agricultural or forestry purposes.

(B) Extension of existing rural employment buildings:

Proposals for extensions will be supported where they are demonstrated to be beneficial to the operation of an established business. All extensions shall be accommodated satisfactorily in terms of design, scale and appearance within the existing employment site boundary.

(C) Replacement rural employment buildings:

Replacement buildings will only be supported where the existing development is visually intrusive or otherwise inappropriate in its context and/or a substantial improvement in the landscape and surroundings will be secured through replacement. New buildings should be of sympathetic design and not significantly increase the scale, height and built form of the original building. There is a presumption that heritage assets will be retained rather than replaced.

(D) New rural employment buildings:

Proposals will be supported where they are of an acceptable scale and meet a local employment need and a business need has been adequately demonstrated through submission of a business case or similar. The applicant will need to submit evidence, with the planning application, which demonstrates that there are no appropriate existing buildings, or employment land available in the locality of site/area. Proposals must minimise negative environmental impacts and harmonise with the local character and surrounding countryside where they are being proposed.

(E) Expansion of an existing business:

Proposals to expand an existing employment use into the countryside will be supported where there is no space for the required use on the existing site, the need has been adequately demonstrated, and the proposals are essential to the operation of an established business on the site. Consideration must be given to the relocation of the business to available land within an allocated or established Employment Area with available suitable vacant land.

In all cases, any new development will be expected to have adequate landscape mitigation to compensate for any additional impact upon the surrounding countryside.

Proposals in close proximity to a habitats site must demonstrate through HRA screening that the scheme will not lead to likely significant effects to the integrity of the habitats site. Where this cannot be ruled out a full appropriate assessment will be required to be undertaken. Additionally, any planning application within 400 metres of a habitats site must provide mechanisms to prevent the introduction of invasive species.

Proposals should also ensure existing systems and processes for protecting the environment and limiting pollution are upgraded or replaced to support the proposed use where required.

Justification

9.12 National policy requires that planning policies support a prosperous rural economy by enabling sustainable growth and expansion of all types of businesses in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, new buildings.

9.13 The Employment Study recommends that the Council should support flexibility in the rural economy to respond to opportunities to re-use or adapt land and buildings no longer in productive agricultural use.

9.14 The purpose of this policy is to safeguard and promote employment in rural Colchester, ensuring their role in supporting the local economy and providing job opportunities for residents. By protecting existing and proposed employment sites, the policy aims to:

- Encourage sustainable economic activity by preserving land and premises designated for employment purposes in rural areas.
- Provide local job opportunities to rural residents, minimising the necessity for travel and contributing to a balanced, sustainable rural economy.
- Identify and support specific employment-generating activities including office functions, industrial processes, vehicle repair, and rural enterprise that are appropriate for rural contexts.
- Ensure that any new, converted, extended, or replaced buildings for employment use are designed and scaled to harmonise with the rural character, minimise environmental impact, and align with the principles of sustainability.
- Incorporate adequate safeguards to protect local landscapes, biodiversity, and heritage assets, ensuring that new developments enhance, rather than detract from, the rural environment.
- Support the expansion of existing businesses and the development of new rural employment buildings, provided they address demonstrated business needs, lack viable alternatives, and meet high environmental and design standards.

9.15 This policy emphasises the dual objectives of economic growth and environmental stewardship, creating a framework that supports rural enterprise while preserving Colchester's rural character and natural heritage.

Policy E3: Agricultural Development and Diversification

The Council will support and encourage appropriate farm diversification proposals where they help support the rural economy, are compatible with the rural environment and help to sustain the existing agricultural enterprise.

All proposals must be accompanied by a satisfactory diversification plan according to the scale of proposals, which describes how it will assist in retaining the viability of the farm and how it links with any other short or long-term business plans for the farm.

Proposals for farm shops as part of a farm diversification scheme must identify the products produced on site or locally and demonstrate that the location of farm-based retailing is necessary to assure farm income where their needs cannot be met within a nearby settlement or district or local centre.

Proposals, that are likely to have an adverse impact on the integrity of habitats sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or the Dedham Vale National Landscape will not be supported.

Proposals for renewable energy generation will be supported unless it has a materially negative impact on, or reduces the availability of, Grade 1 land. Proposals for other uses should avoid impacts on land used for food growing where possible, unless it can be demonstrated that there is a justified need and a landscape strategy, which would compensate for the loss or harm, is secured or where there are overriding public benefits arising from the development.

Proposals for farm diversification schemes will be supported where they meet the following criteria:

- a) Existing buildings are re-used wherever possible. Schemes involving the re-use of historic farm buildings shall maintain and enhance the historic environment; including the character of the built heritage; or
- b) The development is well-related to existing buildings if no suitable buildings are available for re-use; and
- c) The development is secondary to the main agricultural use of the farm (secondary use will be assessed based on the proportion of land, buildings, and operational activity dedicated to the agricultural enterprise relative to the diversified use); and
- d) The applicant can confirm in writing that the proposal will not be likely to require new dwellings within the rural area to support the enterprise either at the time of first submission or at any future date.

Where new buildings are proposed, the development should incorporate the removal of any redundant, under-used, unsightly or otherwise harmful buildings elsewhere within a site as part of the compensatory mitigation for the additional development being proposed.

In all cases, any new development will be expected to have adequate landscape mitigation to compensate for any additional impact upon the surrounding countryside in accordance with policy LC1.

New agricultural buildings requiring planning permission will be responsive to their setting and guided to locations on the farm where any impacts are capable of mitigation.

Justification

- 9.16 National policy requires that planning policies support a prosperous rural economy by enabling the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses. The agricultural economy in Colchester is changing, as increasingly farmers are seeking to diversify in order to retain farming.
- 9.17 The Employment Study recommends that the Council should support flexibility in the rural economy to respond to opportunities to re-use or adapt land and buildings no longer in productive agricultural use. The Study acknowledges that the rural economy in Colchester could provide significant economic opportunities for local people but notes that policies to support economic opportunities should ensure the sustainability of the agricultural sector is not compromised.
- 9.18 This policy ensures that farm diversification supports the rural economy in a manner compatible with environmental preservation, agricultural sustainability, and the unique character of Colchester's rural landscapes.

Policy E4: Retail and Centres

Hierarchy of Centres

The Council will continue to promote the role and function of its town, district and local centres to positively contribute towards their viability and vitality. In accordance with the NPPF, the hierarchy of centres in Colchester is defined below:

City Centre: Colchester City Centre is at the top of the hierarchy, reflecting its role as the principal focus for shopping, services, culture, leisure and other commercial activity in Colchester.

District Centres: provide an important role principally serving the convenience-based and wider shopping needs of their catchments.

- Highwoods
- Tollgate
- Turner Rise
- Tiptree
- West Mersea
- Wivenhoe

Local Centres: provide an essential role providing a range of small shops and services to meet the basic needs of local communities, serving a small catchment.

- Local centres defined on the Policies Map

City Centres, District Centres and Primary Shopping Areas

The Colchester City Centre boundary is defined on the Policies Map and reflects the core city centre area defined in the Colchester City Centre Masterplan. To help strengthen its position at the top of the hierarchy, a mix of appropriate and complementary main town centre uses and residential development will be supported in the city centre, subject to compliance with other policies in the plan. Policy CC1 requires development proposals within the City Centre to make a positive contribution to levels of footfall, activity and vibrancy and support the City Centre's role and function as the cultural epicentre of Colchester.

The District Centres identified in the hierarchy, and as defined on the Policies Map, each have their own characteristics and functions serving the day-to-day needs of the local community as well as providing access to shops and services for neighbouring areas, but not to a comparable level with Colchester City Centre.

Primary Shopping Areas are defined and shown on the Policies Map for:

- Colchester City Centre

- Highwoods District Centre
- Tollgate District Centre
- Turner Rise District Centre
- Tiptree District Centre
- West Mersea District Centre
- Wivenhoe District Centre

To ensure the vitality and viability of the centres identified in the hierarchy, these will be the preferred location for main town centre uses (as defined in the NPPF) as appropriate to their role and function. Within the defined Primary Shopping Area boundary, support will be given to proposals for retail and other main town centre uses, and commercial, business and service uses falling within Use Class E. A balance between retail and complimentary town centre uses such as upper floor residential areas will be sought where appropriate to secure the vitality and viability of the Primary Shopping Areas. Proposals which make a positive contribution to footfall and levels of activity at various times of the day will be supported.

Support will be given for proposals that seek to promote urban greening within centres, recognising that this can contribute to creating attractive, climate-resilient and healthy environments which in turn support creating vibrant retail environments.

Sequential Test

Proposals for main town centre uses that are not within a defined centre and are not in accordance with this Plan, including proposals for a change or intensification of use, or variation of a planning condition, will need to demonstrate that a sequential approach has been undertaken to site selection as required by national policy. A ‘town centre first’ approach will be applied to retail and other main town centre uses, to continue to strengthen the role of Colchester City Centre and other centres in accordance with the hierarchy.

Applicants should demonstrate flexibility on issues such as format and scale. Only when in-centre sites are not suitable and available, should edge and then out of centre sites be considered.

The scope of the sequential assessment should be agreed with the Council.

In cases where the Council is satisfied that the sequential test has been met, proposals will be supported where they also comply with each of the requirements set out in criteria a - c below.

- a) Proposals for main town centre uses on the edge of centres are of a type, proportion and scale appropriate to the role and function of the centre and would not threaten the primacy of Colchester City Centre at the apex of the centre hierarchy, either individually or cumulatively with other committed proposals; and

- b) Proposals for main town centre uses on the edge of centres are suitable to the town/district centre function and maintains or adds to its vitality and enhances the diversity of the centre without changing the provision of the centre within the overall hierarchy; and
- c) Proposals would not give rise to a detrimental effect, individually or cumulatively, on the character or amenity of the area through smell, litter, noise or traffic problems

Impact Assessment

Proposals for retail and leisure development within edge-of-centre or out-of-centre locations which are not in accordance with this plan will require an impact assessment if the development is over 280sqm (or 350sqm gross). The impact assessment will need to demonstrate that the proposal would not have a significant adverse impact on:

- a) the vitality and viability of Colchester City Centre and/or any other defined centre individually or cumulatively with other proposals; and
- b) committed and/or planned public or private investment in Colchester City Centre and/or any other defined centre either individually or cumulatively with other committed proposals.

Impact assessments should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the retail and/or leisure development proposed. The scope of the assessment should be agreed with the Council.

Local Centres

Local Centres, identified on the Policies Map, will be protected to provide shops and community services and facilities.

Proposals for change of use or new development within designated local centres will need to demonstrate that it will support the retail offer, leisure or service role in providing for the day-to-day needs of the area and local community and improve the centres' vitality and viability.

Proposals to expand a local centre will be considered favourably where it can be demonstrated that the use is small scale, proportionate to the role and function of such centres and will serve the basic needs of local communities. Proposals outside of local centres will be assessed in accordance with the sequential test. Proposals will be required to demonstrate that they will not adversely affect residential amenity, particularly in terms of car parking, noise and hours of operation. Proposals should take every opportunity to promote active and sustainable travel.

New strategic residential sites should incorporate local centres at accessible locations within the site where appropriate to provide for the needs of new communities.

Justification

- 9.20 National policy states that planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play and should promote the long-term vitality and viability of centres. National policy provides advice on the hierarchy of centres.
- 9.21 National policy outlines that town centres are those areas that are defined on a local authority's policies map which are predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area. Colchester City Centre is at the top of the centre hierarchy for Colchester, the reference to "town centre first" reflects the generic definition of "town centres" in national policy.
- 9.22 Main town centre uses include retail, leisure, entertainment, offices, and arts, culture and tourism development.
- 9.23 National policy outlines that planning policies should define the boundary of centres and primary shopping areas, outlining what uses are permitted in each. The extent of a centres primary shopping area determines whether a proposal should be considered in-centre, edge of centre or out of centre and is therefore key to the application of the sequential and impact tests set out in the national policy. The purpose of this policy is to set the framework for supporting the role and function of centres in Colchester in providing services and facilities for the local communities. The Policies Map defines the extent of Colchester City Centre and the Primary Shopping Areas.
- 9.24 The Retail, Leisure and Town Centre Study recommends defining Colchester City Centre at the apex of the hierarchy of centres, reflecting its role as the principal focus for shopping, services, culture, leisure and other commercial activity in Colchester. The Centres of Tiptree, West Mersea, Wivenhoe, Tollgate, Turner Rise and Highwoods are varied in their scale and character but they each have an important role principally serving the convenience based needs of their local catchments and are therefore defined as District Centres in the policy.
- 9.25 The policy supports a positive approach to the Centres growth, management and adaption. It sets out how proposals outside the town, district and local centres will be considered.

Policy E5: Colchester Zoo

The Council recognises the importance of Colchester Zoo as a visitor attraction and as a contributor to the local economy. The Council will work in partnership with the Zoo to maximise the social and economic benefits associated with its operation and development while ensuring any development proposals have regard to the environmentally sensitive location.

The area shown on the policies map defined as the core zoo and expansion area will be safeguarded for potential further expansion of Colchester Zoo to provide additional facilities associated with the Zoo's vision for growth. Development for zoo purposes outside of the area defined will not ordinarily be supported.

A comprehensive masterplanned approach to growth at the Zoo is required to ensure the Zoo's Vision for growth can be delivered with appropriate consideration and mitigation having regard to key considerations including:

- a) Impacts on the Scheduled Ancient Monument and archaeological resource within the site;
- b) Impacts on the landscape character and setting. Any application will need to demonstrate that the proposal will conserve and restore the wooded river valley landscape by managing and protecting ancient woodland, promoting natural regeneration to extend woodland areas where appropriate, and protecting and extending areas of lowland meadow on the valley floor;
- c) Impacts on biodiversity including Local Wildlife Sites. Any application will require a site-wide and site-specific ecological strategy that specifies protection, enhancement and restoration of the river corridor;
- d) Impacts on the Highway network including the wider strategic and local network. A comprehensive transport assessment will be required and proposals will need to ensure any necessary highway improvements are secured and delivered before expansion takes place. Contributions towards improvements at the Maldon Road/Warren Lane junction will be required;
- e) Provision for safe access to the site via Maldon Road, existing public rights of way and accessibility by sustainable transport modes;
- f) Provision of a linked off-road /multi-user route should be provided linking the Zoo with Gosbecks Archaeological Park to facilitate sustainable modes of travel;
- g) Provision for an appropriate SuDS for managing surface water runoff within the overall design and layout of the site;
- h) The extent of any development ancillary to the zoo, such as additional retail, hotel, and food and drink outlets (defined as town centre uses) will need to be proportionate and related to the function of the zoo and assessed against potential cumulative impacts on the defined Centres where relevant thresholds are met (as defined in Policy E4).

All proposals for new development within the area defined on the policies map for Zoo expansion will need to be considered in the context of the Zoo's wider vision for growth to ensure possible cumulative impacts are appropriately

considered and mitigated. Any proposals must comply with and not prejudice the delivery of an agreed masterplan. It will need to be demonstrated in sufficient detail that any proposals, when considered both alone and in combination with other planned development for the Zoo (whether such proposals currently benefit from planning consent or not), will not give rise to unacceptable impacts, including, but not necessarily limited to, the key considerations outlined above. Where possible adverse impacts are identified when considering any proposal, either alone or in combination with other planned development for the Zoo, adequate mitigation will need to be provided.

Any proposals must comply with the Essex Minerals Local Plan and the developer will be required to submit a Minerals Resource Assessment as part of any planning application.

Should the viability of minerals extraction be proven at any time, the Council has no in principle objections to minerals workings in the area defined for zoo expansion, subject to adequate consideration of relevant impacts. Any such proposals would, however, be required to satisfactorily evidence that any minerals workings will not prejudice the future expansion of the Zoo.

Before granting planning consent for masterplanned growth, wintering bird surveys will be undertaken to identify any offsite functional habitat. Wintering bird surveys should comprise two winter seasons, and both diurnal and nocturnal surveys. Natural England should be contacted for advice on how to determine whether mitigation is required based on the strength of the functional link. In the unlikely event that significant numbers are identified, development must firstly avoid impacts. Where this is not possible, development must be phased to deliver habitat creation and management either on or off-site to mitigate any significant impacts. Any such habitat must be provided and fully functional before any development takes place which would affect significant numbers of SPA birds.

Justification

9.27 Colchester Zoo is an important visitor attraction and has operated successfully in its current location for over 50 years. The Council recognises that tourist attractions require constant updating and the policy is intended to safeguard land for the potential further expansion of the zoo, whilst having regard to its sensitive location. Any proposals for expansion of the zoo will be required to be undertaken through a Masterplan approach.

9.28 It is recognised that the zoo attracts customers from a large geographical area and many visitors travel by car. Over the years the zoo has attracted more visitors and there have been unintended consequences on the local road network, resulting in unacceptable congestion at certain times. The current Maldon Road/Warren Lane junction layout presents challenges for traffic flow, safety and accessibility which will deteriorate further if it is expected to accommodate additional vehicular movements and improvements will therefore be required to support any expansion plans at the zoo.

9.29 The zoo is located close to the Strategic Biodiversity Area and the Ram Plantation Local Wildlife Site along the Roman River as identified on the Policies Map. Within the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), the local wildlife site is identified as an 'area of particular importance for biodiversity' (APIB). It is important that expansion plans for the zoo recognise these features and look to conserve and enhance biodiversity, particularly along the river corridor.

10. Community and Social Infrastructure

10.1 Community and Social Infrastructure is needed to support existing and new communities. Appropriate provision, retention and management of the right social and community infrastructure in the right place makes a significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of our communities and creating and maintaining healthy places. In this chapter policies cover a range of social and community infrastructure including:

- Community Facilities
- Sports Provision (Open space is covered under Chapter 5 Green Networks and Waterways)
- Education
- Health Provision
- Police, Fire and Rescue, and Ambulance Services
- Cultural / Civic Provision

10.2 The policies within the Plan are designed to align with the Council's overarching vision of creating healthy, vibrant, and sustainable communities. This vision prioritises health and wellbeing, environmental protection, and inclusivity, ensuring that all proposals contribute positively to improving the quality of life for residents while safeguarding the city's unique natural and cultural assets.

10.3 The community and social infrastructure policies are designed to ensure the retention, enhancement, and provision of essential community infrastructure. The policies encompass a range of priorities, including the protection of existing community facilities, community safety, investment in education, and the development of sports, leisure, arts, and cultural, tourism and heritage opportunities. Together, these policies aim to foster a well-rounded, inclusive environment where residents and visitors alike can thrive.

Policy CS1: Retention of Community Facilities

The Council will seek the retention of all existing community and social infrastructure and will support proposals for such uses where they meet, or will meet, an identified local need.

Any proposal that would result in the loss of a site or building currently or last used for, or allocated for, the provision of community or social infrastructure including community facilities, services, leisure or cultural activities that benefit the community, will only be supported in cases where the Council is satisfied that:

- a) An alternative, equivalent community facility to meet local needs and serve existing and future communities is, or will be, provided in an equally or more accessible location; or**
- b) It has been proven to the satisfaction of the Council that there is no longer a proven need for the community facility; and**
- c) It has been proven to the satisfaction of the Council based on written evidence including marketing, submitted with the planning application, that it would not be economically viable and that there is no interest to retain the site/building for the existing or an alternative community use either by the current occupier or by any alternative occupier.**

Where healthcare facilities are formally declared surplus to the operational healthcare requirements of the NHS or identified as part of a published estates strategy or service transformation plan, the requirements listed under (a) to (c) above will not apply.

To satisfy the requirements for (b) and (c) above, the applicant must provide:

- a) evidence that it has been offered on the open market as a whole (parts having not been identified for separate sale) and at a realistic market value, reflective of the current use. This should be for a period of not less than six months by a competent agent;**
- b) Evidence should include sales literature, details of approaches, and details of offers; and**
- c) Evidence that the local community has been notified in writing of the intention to close the facility and has not, within a period of six months come forward with a realistic proposal to assume operation of the facility, including its proposals to finance and operate the facility.**

Applicants proposing to redevelop or convert social and community facilities serving local communities will be expected to consult with those communities about the relative importance of the facilities which could be lost and submit evidence of that engagement with a planning application. This should also show evidence of consideration as to whether remaining community facilities

could satisfactorily meet the needs of the local community, including any potential for combining or rationalising facilities where appropriate. This must be informed by the most up to date relevant evidence and include anticipated levels of population growth.

Policy CS2: Enhancement of and Provision for Community Facilities

The provision and enhancement of community facilities and services will be supported where they contribute to the quality of community life and the maintenance of cohesive and sustainable communities.

Where necessary to mitigate the impacts of the development, the Council will require developers of residential schemes to provide or contribute towards the provision or enhancement of community facilities including education, to meet the needs of new and expanded communities and mitigate impacts on existing communities. These will be secured through the use of planning conditions and by Section 106 contributions or CIL/equivalent infrastructure levy. Contributions may be pooled towards larger community infrastructure projects to cumulatively contribute towards provision on a larger scale where a need has been identified.

Where existing facilities can be enhanced to serve new development, the Council will work with developers and local partners to audit existing facilities and deliver any requirements for such facilities to deliver comprehensive provision of services to serve these extended communities.

All new or enhanced community facilities must demonstrate safe, inclusive access by active and sustainable modes of travel in line with other relevant policies in this Plan.

Policy CS3: Education Provision

Sites that are in private or public education use or have recently ceased to be used for education purposes will be protected for that use.

Where in whole or in part educational use of a site is demonstrated to be redundant (supported by appropriate evidence which confirms the facility or site is genuinely redundant) or proposals for alternative use are put forward, re-development of buildings and/or the grounds will be supported where the local community is and will remain adequately served by alternative provision and receipts from the sale of land will be invested in improved or expanded education facilities. Proposals should be considered in relation to the scale and quality of any replacement facility and its location and accessibility within the area.

Where the proposal involves a state funded school which is seeking to relocate into new buildings or sell assets to fund improved education this will be supported in principle subject to meeting other relevant requirements of this plan.

Proposals for alternative uses affecting sports facilities on education sites will also need to meet the requirements of Policy CS4.

The Council will respond positively to appropriate and well-designed applications regarding the creation of new school and education facilities. As expressed in the NPPF, the Council will use a presumption in favour of the development of schools and educational uses including early years and post 16 provision. The Council will engage in pre-application discussions with promoters to develop a collaborative approach to suitable applications. New facilities should be designed to support community use outside of school hours.

All new or enhanced community facilities must demonstrate safe, inclusive access by active and sustainable modes of travel in line with other relevant policies in this Plan.

Justification

10.4 The purpose of these policies is to safeguard, enhance, and promote the development of educational and community facilities to meet the evolving needs of local communities. The policies ensure that such facilities are prioritised, protected, and sustainably developed to support well-being, cohesion, and growth.

10.5 Community facilities and services may include shops, pubs, post offices, health care facilities, provision for police, fire and rescue and ambulance services, community centres, village halls, places of worship, cemeteries, schools and other educational establishments. Proposals affecting sports facilities will be assessed against Policy CS4: Sports Provision.

- 10.6 The retention of existing education facilities is an important objective of the Local Plan. The University, colleges, schools and early years provide education provision to the whole community and contribute significantly to the local economy.
- 10.7 The plan seeks to preserve these community assets and prevent unnecessary loss by supporting the retention of existing community facilities and infrastructure where they serve an identified local need whilst restricting the loss of facilities unless equivalent alternative provision is made in an accessible location, or evidence demonstrates that the facility is no longer needed or viable. Applicants would require robust evidence for proposing redevelopment or conversion of community facilities.
- 10.8 In accordance with national policy and guidance, the plan also seeks to ensure that the impact of new development can be mitigated. Developers of residential schemes will be required to address the needs of expanding or new communities by contributing to or providing community facilities and services, including education, as part of their proposals.
- 10.9 The policies seek to secure funding for community infrastructure through planning conditions, Section 106 agreements, or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) mechanisms, including pooling contributions for larger-scale projects where needed.
- 10.10 New community facilities should be accessible by active and sustainable modes of transport, providing links to the surrounding walking and cycle networks and where appropriate mobility hubs. Public transport links should be close to the site and provide an adequate service. Any measures to reduce car dependency will be supported. All new or enhanced community facilities should also look to incorporate electric vehicle charging infrastructure in accordance with relevant policies in this Plan and the latest guidance.
- 10.11 The Education Authority is responsible for planning early years and school places. This involves identifying the demand for educational places and assessing any surpluses or shortages through a 10-Year Plan for School Places, which currently spans 2025 to 2034. The 10-Year Plan covers primary and secondary schools, but there are equivalent assessments for early years and SEND provision. Decisions regarding whether the change of use or redevelopment of independent schools is surplus to educational needs will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- 10.12 The policy framework prioritises the preservation, development, and enhancement of educational and community facilities. By aligning with national policy and fostering collaboration, it supports sustainable growth, ensures transparency in decision-making, and maintains the well-being and cohesion of local communities.
- 10.13 Indoor and outdoor sports facilities on education sites make a significant contribution to meeting the community's sporting needs in Colchester. In scenarios where educational sites are demonstrated to be redundant from an

educational needs perspective this does not mean that their sports facilities are also redundant or surplus to requirements in terms of meeting community needs. Proposals for alternative uses affecting sports facilities on education sites will also need to meet the requirements of Policy CS4.

- 10.14 New school and education facilities should be centrally located and within easy reach of homes and should be designed to support community use outside of school hours. The completion of community use agreements would be expected to secure community access over a long-term period.

Policy CS4: Sports Provision

The Council will work proactively with the Colchester Sports Facilities Delivery Group, Sport England, Active Essex and national governing bodies with local (sports) clubs, private operators and community organisations, across the city, to plan positively for the protection, enhancement and delivery of a diverse network of indoor and outdoor sports and physical activity infrastructure, in order to support active lifestyles, increase participation and improve health and wellbeing. New developments will be expected to contribute to the enhancement of existing facilities or delivery of new facilities to meet the needs of new residents, where there is a proven need.

Protection of Sports Facilities and Infrastructure

All existing sports and recreation facilities, including indoor and outdoor sports facilities (such as playing fields, sports halls, swimming pools, artificial pitches, multi-use games areas, courts and specialist facilities), will be protected.

Development resulting in the loss of such facilities will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that one of the following criteria is met:

- a) A carefully quantified and documented assessment has been undertaken which clearly demonstrates that the facility is surplus to requirements, having regard to current and future needs and its contribution to the quantity, quality and accessibility of provision to the satisfaction of Sport England and the Council;
- b) The proposed development is for ancillary facilities supporting the principal use of the site as a playing field and does not affect the quantity and quality of playing pitches or otherwise adversely affect their use;
- c) The lost provision would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility, in a suitable location and made available for use prior to the loss and commencement of development, with appropriate long-term management arrangements; or
- d) The proposed development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the existing facility.

Enhancement and Growth of Sports Facilities and Infrastructure

The Council will proactively support the delivery of new and improved sports and physical activity infrastructure to meet identified needs and address deficiencies in provision, that should be equitably distributed and accessible across the city by:

- a) Seeking to provide a wide range of formal and informal sports and physical activities, including traditional pitch sports and emerging and flexible activities (such as exercise studios, padel, and outdoor or informal exercise spaces) that are safe, inclusive and accessible; meeting the needs of all users including women and girls, disabled people and underrepresented groups;

- b) Enhancing, modernising and intensifying existing facilities, including improved ancillary provision and use of all-weather or multi-functional surfaces where appropriate;**
- c) Supporting proposals from public, private, voluntary and community sector providers which expand access to sport and physical activity;**
- d) Addressing geographical deficiencies in provision, including areas with limited access to facilities or where future demand will increase as a result of growth;**
- e) The identification and delivery of new or enhanced facilities in areas of existing or projected deficiency, where justified by evidence;**
- f) Maximising the use of schools, community hubs and underutilised spaces to provide multi-functional sports and activity infrastructure;**
- g) Integrating sports provision within new and existing communities, ensuring it is accessible by walking, cycling and public transport.**

New Development Provision

All major residential development proposals must:

- a) Assess the demand for new sports and recreation provision arising from the development, informed by the most up to date Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy and Indoor and Built Facilities Strategy and any other relevant evidence, taking into account the planned growth;**
- b) Provide on-site sports and physical activity infrastructure where this is justified by the scale and nature of the development;**
- c) Where on-site provision is not appropriate, make proportionate financial contributions towards the enhancement or delivery of off-site facilities that are accessible to future residents. Discussions should take place with the Council to determine what should be provided and how it should be managed and maintained. All new sports facilities and pitches must have community use agreements in place and be supported by long-term management and maintenance arrangements to ensure sustainability;**
- d) Ensure provision is phased appropriately alongside the development to meet the needs of new communities.**

Smaller scale developments will also be expected to contribute to the expansion or provision of sport facilities where existing provision cannot meet the increased demand arising from new additional residents.

Justification

10.15 The purpose of the policy is to protect existing playing fields and sports sites and ensure new provision where it is required. The Colchester Playing Pitch Strategy shows that all existing playing field and outdoor sport sites cannot be deemed surplus to requirements because of shortfalls now and in the future. As such, all provision requires protection or replacement until all identified shortfalls have been overcome. There are a wide range of organisations currently delivering sport and leisure facilities within Colchester and the Sports

Facilities Delivery Group has been established to ensure that the delivery of sports and leisure facilities is planned and delivered in a coherent way.

Policy CS5: Tourism, Leisure, Arts, Culture and Heritage

a) Development of new and extended visitor attractions, leisure, cultural and heritage facilities along with visitor accommodation (including hotels, bed and breakfast accommodation, self-catering accommodation, holiday lodges, static and touring caravans and camping sites) will be supported in suitable locations subject to meeting other policy requirements and minimising their impact on, and demonstrating how the development will make a positive contribution to neighbouring areas, respect the settings of heritage assets and incorporate biodiversity enhancements and wider environmental improvements, which complement mandatory BNG requirements, where appropriate. Proposals will be supported in locations consistent with the spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy, with preference given to sites within or adjacent to existing settlements or existing tourism and leisure facilities. Any new visitor attractions of a scale likely to generate significant visitor movements should be in line with the spatial strategy.

b) Proposals for tourism, leisure, arts, culture and heritage facilities should be appropriate in scale and function to the surrounding area and existing uses in the immediate vicinity; be accessible by a choice of means of transport proportionate to the scale and location of the proposal and promote active travel; and not cause significant harm to the amenity of people living and working nearby.

c) Proposals in the countryside should help to support existing communities and facilities. Proposals must be compatible with the landscape character of the surrounding area and avoid harm to the open nature of the countryside and biodiversity. Where accessibility is poor, proposals should be small scale and/or involve the change of use of existing buildings or small-scale extension to existing tourist facilities.

e) In locations where residential use would be inappropriate, developments of visitor accommodation, where supported, will be limited by condition or legal agreement to holiday use only and/or certain periods of the year in order to prevent permanent or long-term occupation.

Justification

10.16 Colchester has a rich historic environment and diverse landscapes, which provide the basis for an important tourism sector which contributes to the local economy, creates jobs and provides facilities, attractions and environments for visitors that also enhance the quality of life for local residents. The purpose of this policy is to provide support for the tourism sector whilst ensuring that proposals do not detract from the settings and features that make visitor destinations attractive and distinctive.

10.17 Where a seasonal restriction is unnecessary and would hinder the operation of the visitor accommodation, a condition may be attached requiring the applicant to keep an up-to-date register at the visitor accommodation and to be made available for inspection by the Council upon request.

11. Place and Connectivity

- 11.1 Places that are sustainable, inclusive, attractive and safe contribute to the health and wellbeing of our communities. High quality placemaking and design therefore plays an essential role in making places healthier. Good design helps reduce and mitigate the impacts of climate change, promote healthier lifestyles and create safer and more accessible places for people to live in or use.
- 11.2 The quality of public realm plays a central role in creating well-connected, inclusive and safe places. The design of our neighbourhoods including in and around the home, public spaces and access to services, can influence physical activity levels, the food we eat, travel patterns, and health and wellbeing outcomes.
- 11.3 National policy requires planning policies to aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which promote social interaction, are safe and accessible, and enable and support healthy lives. This chapter covers a range of policies to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places. Policies cover Healthier Food Environments, Active and Sustainable Travel, Parking Standards, Development Density, Domestic Development, Design and Amenity, Residential Schemes on Greenfield Sites, Private Amenity Space and Play and Child Friendly Places.
- 11.4 The policies in this chapter will contribute towards all the themes of the vision by creating healthy, vibrant and diverse places that are sustainable, inclusive and well connected.

Policy PC1: Healthier Food Environments

The Council will support development that contributes to a healthier food environment and improves access to healthy, affordable and sustainably produced food. This will contribute to promoting healthy lifestyles by providing access to, healthy, fresh and locally produced food, food growing opportunities and for exercise and recreation.

Access to food growing

- a) Development proposals must safeguard existing allotments, orchards, community gardens, food growing spaces and food markets unless it can be demonstrated that:
 - i. the facility is no longer required; or
 - ii. equivalent or better provision will be secured in an accessible location.
- b) Major development should, where appropriate and proportionate to the scale and nature of development, incorporate new or enhanced opportunities for food growing, including allotments, orchards, community gardens, edible landscaping and spaces for local food markets.
- c) Allotments and other food growing spaces must be located so they are accessible to the communities they are intended to serve, including by walking, wheeling and cycling, and should provide inclusive access for all users.

Hot Food Takeaways and Fast-Food Outlets

Some locations are more suited than others for fast food outlets and takeaways. All proposals for these uses need to consider the following factors, and should reflect the relevant evidence, to inform the planning decision:

Impact on children and young people:

- d) The Council will refuse proposals for new hot food takeaways and fast-food outlets within 400m walking distance of the main entrance or exits of:
 - i. nurseries;
 - ii. primary schools;
 - iii. secondary schools and colleges;
 - iv. playgrounds;
 - v. youth facilities; and
 - vi. other places where children and young people frequent unless the location is within a designated centre
- e) Within designated centres, proposals for hot food takeaways and fast-food outlets will be supported unless there is evidence that the impacts of clustering or cumulative impact resulting from an over concentration of such uses is having an adverse impact on:
 - i. public health and wellbeing;
 - ii. amenity;
 - iii. air quality and pollution;

- iv. crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour;

Concentration of takeaways

- f) To avoid excessive concentrations of hot food takeaways and fast-food outlets, proposals for these uses that fall within sui generis use class will be supported where the applicant can demonstrate that the following thresholds are not exceeded:
 - i. Within local centres comprising nine units or less, no more than 15% of the existing shop units (or more than one unit) comprise hot food takeaways and fast food outlets;
 - ii. Within local or district centres comprising ten units or above, no more than 10% of the existing shop units comprise hot food takeaways and fast food outlets; and
- g) All proposals for hot food takeaways and fast-food outlets will require a proportionate Health Impact Assessment in order to appropriately consider the impacts of such uses on local health, pollution or anti-social behaviour, either individually or cumulatively. Proposals will be refused where impacts are shown as having an adverse impact, on communities / catchments they are intended to serve, unless they can be satisfactorily mitigated.

In considering proposals applying to criteria (e) and (g), evidence will need to include indicators such as:

- i. local obesity and healthy weight data;
- ii. levels of deprivation;
- iii. local health indicators associated with diet-related ill health;
- iv. concentration and accessibility of existing hot food takeaways and fast food outlets;
- v. evidence relating to air quality and pollution;
- vi. evidence of crime, disorder or anti-social behaviour;

Where necessary to make development acceptable, conditions may be used to regulate opening hours where this is appropriate and supported by relevant evidence.

Justification

11.5 Planning has an important role in shaping healthy communities. Allotments and community gardens provide physical, mental and social health benefits as well as reducing household food costs.

11.6 Hot food takeaways can provide a service to local people and add to the vitality and viability of centres but can also have negative impacts on health and wellbeing.

11.7 Improving health, wellbeing and happiness is a key theme of the Council's Strategic Plan. The Essex Healthy Weight Strategy (2024 – 2034) priorities addressing factors that influence the food environment, ensuring that the environment in Essex supports and enables people to maintain a healthy weight and minimises the risks of excess weight.

- 11.8 The Local Plan supports the delivery of these strategies, with the Council's Local Plan vision outlining how it aims to contribute to healthier lifestyles with Policy ST1 demonstrating how new development needs to contribute to delivering a set of health outcomes, including to 'promote a healthy food environment'. This policy sets out in more detail about how healthier food environments can be created.
- 11.9 The policy aligns with and supports national public health and planning policy that seeks to ensure communities live in an environment which enables and promotes healthier lifestyles, the Government's National Obesity Strategy highlights that eating out can contribute towards obesity through the consumption of more calories.
- 11.10 It outlines how the Council will seek to prevent a concentration of hot food takeaways, especially in areas where children and young people tend to spend time or congregate, to avoid clustering of such uses and to avoid adverse impacts on existing communities. One of these impacts is on people's health.
- 11.11 In England, average obesity levels are 10.5% for reception age children and 22.2% for Year 6 children based on 2024/25 national data shown in the Essex Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). The Essex JSNA also shows that obesity for adults in Colchester is higher than the national average and slightly lower for children in year 6 and reception. However, there are wards in Colchester where the national average obesity levels of year 6 and reception age children are exceeded. This demonstrates that there are several parts of Colchester where serious health issues exist and this problem could worsen. Obese children are more likely than children of a healthy weight to be obese adults and have an increased risk of developing chronic diseases in adulthood. It is therefore necessary to ensure that the mix of uses, and the way in which buildings and spaces in town centres and community spaces are designed to promote active lifestyles and a healthy food environment.
- 11.12 National policy requires that local planning authorities should refuse applications for hot food takeaways and fast-food outlets within walking distance of schools and other places where young children and young people congregate, unless the location is within a designated town centre; or in locations where there is evidence that a concentration of such uses is having an adverse impact on local health, pollution or anti-social behaviour.
- 11.13 Aligning with this, this policy outlines how proposals for new fast food outlets and hot food takeaways will be refused in line with criterion a. In assessing whether a proposal for a new takeaway or fast food outlet would be acceptable, its distance from the settings identified in criterion a) will be measured according to realistic walking routes, relevant to the location and accessibility which applies to the proposal.
- 11.14 Criterion b goes on to outline that proposals in specific designated centres will be supported unless evidence exists that shows it could adversely impact on local health, amongst other factors. One piece of evidence linked to this will

include existing obesity levels in Colchester. Therefore, in order to contribute to promoting healthier lifestyles, in addition to refusing planning permission for hot food takeaways and fast food outlets in line with policy criterion a, the Council will seek to refuse permission for new hot food takeaways and fast food outlets in wards where more than 15% of Year 6 children and 10% of reception age children are obese unless the application can sufficiently outline how the proposal will mitigate its impact on health outcomes. An applicant proposing a new hot food takeaway or fast food outlet will need to evidence relevant weight data for the ward, showing this is below the required threshold. Mitigation actions to make a development acceptable may include restricting opening hours at lunchtimes and school closing times or promoting healthier food options on menus.

- 11.15 Another piece of evidence influencing use of hot food takeaways and fast food outlets, and thus the health of people is the concentration of units within a given area. If unhealthy food is convenient and easy to access, it is more likely to be consumed. This is influenced not only by the distance of hot food takeaways and fast food outlets, but also the concentration of them in an area.
- 11.16 In England, there is an average of 100 hot food takeaways per 100,000 of population as of July 2026. In Colchester there are 81 hot food takeaways per 100,000 of population, but there are some lower super output areas (LSOAs) where the concentration of takeaways measures above this national average. It is recognised that in areas which overlap with the city centre or local or district centres, this average is more likely to be exceeded. However, to avoid an overconcentration of hot food takeaways and fast food outlets in certain areas, applicants will need to demonstrate mitigating steps to reduce impacts on health outcomes where new hot food takeaways are proposed in LSOAs where the number of hot food takeaways is above the national average.
- 11.17 Specifically within local or district centres, the Council will seek to prevent an overconcentration, or clustering, of takeaways. An overconcentration of takeaways is considered to be where hot food takeaways and fast-food outlets constitute 10% or more of the total number of units within local or district centres comprising 9 units or less or 15% of existing units in local or district centres comprising 10 units or above. Therefore, the Council would refuse permission for new hot food takeaway or fast food outlet proposals in local or district centres where these percentages would be exceeded unless the applicant can unless the application can sufficiently outline how the proposal will mitigate its impact on health outcomes.
- 11.18 A Health Impact Assessment will be required to appropriately consider the impacts of new proposals. Health Impact Assessments are a useful tool in ensuring that the wellbeing of the community is considered as part of the design process and will be required to ensure that proposals for development selling hot food takeaway contribute to the creation of a healthy food environment.

Policy PC2: Active and Sustainable Travel

To create places that maximise opportunities for active and sustainable travel for all and support healthy lifestyles, development should be planned around a network of safe and accessible active travel routes, appropriate to the scale of development and its location.

Proposals for development are required to:

- a) Give priority to the movement of people walking and cycling.
- b) Create safe, secure, convenient, well designed and attractive layouts that are permeable for active travel modes, prioritise desire lines and are inclusive and accessible for all.
- c) Ensure that cycling infrastructure is designed having regard to the latest best practice (LTN 1/20 or subsequent updated guidance).
- d) Protect, and where appropriate take opportunities to enhance, existing pedestrian and cycle routes, Public Rights of Way, and sustainable travel infrastructure.
- e) Link the development to the surrounding walking, cycling and public transport networks, having regard to the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, and improve connectivity to adjoining areas and key destinations.
- f) Where appropriate, facilitate access to high quality public transport.
- g) Where appropriate, facilitate direct safe routes for active travel to appropriate local education and childcare provision; and include school frontages, streets and zones around new education and childcare facilities so that the external spaces they front onto are car free, having regard to the latest guidance.
- h) Promote the use of car clubs and provide the required infrastructure where appropriate.
- i) Promote the use of shared micromobility and provide the required infrastructure where appropriate.
- j) Where relevant, and in accordance with latest best practice and guidance, development should incorporate mobility hubs of appropriate scale and in accessible locations, into designs at an early stage.
- k) Incorporate infrastructure provision for charging electric vehicles in line with the latest guidance and standards.
- l) Accommodate the efficient delivery of goods and services.

Justification

11.19 Active and sustainable travel are key elements of sustainable development.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that development proposals support and maximise opportunities for active and sustainable travel through the provision of high quality active and sustainable travel infrastructure.

11.20 National policy requires applications for development to give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements; and second to facilitating access to high

quality public transport. It requires planning policies to provide for attractive and well-designed walking and cycling networks.

11.21 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs), as set out in the Governments Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy, are a strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements required at the local level. Essex County Council has prepared an LCWIP for Colchester, which identifies and prioritises cycling and walking improvements. The latest LCWIP Plan for Colchester was published in September 2024. This policy requires new development to link to the strategic LCWIP network and other existing walking and cycle routes where appropriate.

11.22 The design of active travel routes and infrastructure is key to facilitating their use. If the routes between origins and destinations are safe, continuous, direct and attractive to use, this will encourage more people to consider using them. This should be achieved by ensuring all new active travel infrastructure is:

- Accessible for all – coherent; direct, where possible following desire lines; continuous; and inclusive.
- Safe and Secure – routes should be designed to encourage natural surveillance, and where appropriate lighting should be considered; well-designed routing and personal security.
- Comfortable – constructed to appropriate widths, considering comfort for any users; adequate surfacing and well maintained.
- Attractive – attractive public realm will encourage use.

Cycling infrastructure should be designed having regard to the latest best practice (LTN 1/20 or subsequent updated guidance).

11.23 Routes within a development should link with existing and proposed pedestrian and cycle routes outside of the development area, including where appropriate those routes shown on the Colchester Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and any refresh of this plan, therefore providing onward connections to key destinations. It is also important that the existing active travel network is safeguarded and that any gaps in provision or improvements to the network are, where appropriate, delivered as part of new development proposals to create a coherent network linking the development to key local destinations.

11.24 Where a school is proposed as part of development, the location of the school should be considered to ensure that it is accessible and central to the local community. New schools should be centrally located and within easy reach of homes and facilities to ensure ease of travel to school and to facilitate active travel. School sites should prioritise strong connections to active travel networks and public transport to promote sustainable travel and reduce reliance on cars. All schools will need to front a well-landscaped car-free street primarily for pedestrians and cyclists. Regard should be had to the Essex Design Guide Schools Design Guidance or subsequent updated guidance.

- 11.25 Mobility hubs and halts provide connected places that facilitate convenient access to public, shared and active travel modes. A Mobility Hubs and Integrated Transport Halts: Implementation Guide (2024) has been produced by Essex County Council which provides guidance on the creation of new of improved mobility hubs and halts. Regard should be had to this, or any subsequent guidance, in the planning and design of mobility hubs.
- 11.26 Car clubs can be an attractive alternative to private car ownership and can reduce the parking impact of private cars. Electric car clubs can also provide access to low emission vehicles. Development proposals will be required to promote the use of car clubs and provide the required infrastructure where appropriate having regard to any relevant guidance.
- 11.27 Shared micromobility offers convenient and cost-effective access to electric cycles for active travel for short journeys. Development proposals will be required to promote the use of shared micromobility and provide the required infrastructure, where appropriate, having regard to the latest guidance.
- 11.28 Electric Vehicle charging provision should be informed by relevant up to date guidance, including the Essex Parking Guidance (2024).

Policy PC3: Parking Standards

The Council will have regard to the parking standards set out in the Essex Planning Officers Association Parking Guidance and any locally set parking guidance or subsequent updated guidance, when determining planning applications.

The amount of car parking should take account of the following factors:

- a) Levels of local accessibility.**
- b) The size, type, tenure and location of any dwellings.**
- c) The appropriate mix of parking types including opportunities for car sharing (e.g. unallocated, on-street, visitor, and car club parking).**

A more flexible approach to the parking standards will only be considered if supported by evidence detailing the local circumstances that justify the approach.

Infrastructure provision for charging electric vehicles should be incorporated in line with the latest guidance and standards.

Parking for staff, visitors and operational uses on non-residential development should be managed as part of a Travel Plan. Where opportunities arise, for example on mixed use sites, shared parking and car sharing will be encouraged as part of an agreed Travel Plan, to make efficient use of land and to support place making.

Secure cycle parking should be incorporated into all development proposals and should be accessible, convenient to use, well laid out and used exclusively for cycle parking. In the case of flats and shared accommodation, secure cycle parking should be incorporated into development proposals and located near the entrance to the building. All cycle parking should be designed in accordance with LTN 1/20 and the Essex Parking Guidance or subsequent updated guidance.

Applications for new or expanded car parking provision will be considered on an individual basis in relation to evidence and need. The existing car parking availability, current usage and, where appropriate, the existence of a Travel Plan and the current use of non-car modes, should all be demonstrated. New car parks should include electric charging points and provision of accessible parking bays for disabled users, in accordance with relevant guidance / standards.

Where possible, large car parks, for example serving both city centres and out of town retail, leisure and business parks, should be stacked and/or underground to facilitate improved place making, provide town centre equality, and result in more compact forms of development which use less land and prioritise sustainable transport. Redevelopment of existing car parking will also be considered to make efficient use of land, improve townscape and support regeneration.

The use of Park and Ride and Rapid Transit System will be encouraged for trips in the city centre and other major destinations along the route of the service.

Justification

- 11.29 Parking directly and indirectly impacts on the environment, communities and the economy. The lack of, or poor planning of, parking provision can have a negative impact on the public realm and the local highway network and can restrict the accessibility and mobility needs of people and businesses. Over provision and poor management can lead to the inefficient use of land and can also discourage greater use of more sustainable modes of transport. The purpose of the policy is to achieve an appropriate balance to help achieve a reduced reliance on the private car while making provision for travel by all modes in a way that does not prejudice the safety or the quality of new development.
- 11.30 The Essex Parking Guidance has been updated (2024). The Guidance aims to support the assessment of planning applications by ensuring proposals include an appropriate level of cycle parking, car parking and electric vehicle parking provision, and that parking designs and arrangements operate effectively and safely. The updated parking standards reflect changes in national policy.
- 11.31 The updated Essex Parking Guidance recognises that the level of parking required for a development is dependant not only on the land use type, but also the level of connectivity to the site and it incorporates a zonal approach to parking standards recommending that a lower provision of vehicle parking may be appropriate in highly connected locations where there is good access to facilities via public transport, walking and cycling.
- 11.32 The Essex Parking Guidance is considered appropriate guidance to inform levels of parking and parking standards in Colchester. The Council however recognises that there needs to be flexibility to provide appropriate parking based on local circumstances. Proposals which provide levels of parking below these standards should be supported by evidence detailing the local circumstances that justify this. Any locally set parking guidance or updated guidance will need to be taken into account where relevant.
- 11.33 Electric Vehicle charging provision should be informed by relevant guidance and standards. The Essex Parking Guidance (2024) sets out requirements for electric vehicle charging provision as part of new development. Essex County Council has also prepared an Electric Vehicle Charge Point Strategy to deliver 'the Right Charger in the Right Place' (2023/24).

Policy PC4: Development Density

The Council will support development densities that make efficient use of land, are design-led and respond to the specific opportunities and constraints of proposed development sites. The suitability of a development's density will be considered in the context of potential impacts on residential amenity in the surrounding areas. Sites located in the City Centre, the urban and the larger site allocations (including allocations in North East Colchester, Berechurch Hall Road, Great Horkesley and Langham) should be mindful their context and the opportunity to provide higher densities and compact forms of development that ensure an efficient use of land.

Proposals with development densities that encourage sustainable transport and help sustain local amenities will be supported.

All residential development will need to be at an appropriate density and massing, having regard to:

- a) The character of the site and its immediate surroundings, as well as the wider locality, including where applicable the setting of designated heritage assets;
- b) The adequacy of the access and the local road network to accommodate the traffic likely to be generated by the proposed development (supported by evidence) as well as the scope to enhance walking and cycling access to local amenities and public transport;
- c) The existing landscaping, trees and hedgerows on the site and the need for further landscaping;
- d) The provision of appropriate on-site amenities to serve the development in accordance with Policy PC6 and any relevant adopted guidance including the provision of open space and sustainable drainage facilities where suitable;
- e) Ensuring that development achieves an appropriate balance between private and publicly accessible space. Where higher net densities are proposed, particularly in accessible locations, priority should be given to the provision of high-quality, publicly accessible spaces over excessive private space, provided this results in a high standard of residential amenity, parking provision and place-making;
- f) An adequate standard of residential accommodation being provided for future occupants in accordance with policy PC5;
- g) An appropriate mix, size and type of housing as informed by the various housing policies.

Higher density development that exceeds surrounding densities will be supported where it is appropriately located, makes efficient use of land and demonstrates a high standard of design and placemaking. Any adverse impacts arising from the increased density should be adequately mitigated.

Justification

- 11.34 The density of new developments can have significant implications for sustainability, local character, travel behaviour, the efficient use of land and residential amenity. In practice many factors will have a moderating effect on densities including the provision of on-site facilities such as the provision of public open space, vehicular access, sustainable drainage systems, vehicle parking and cycle storage facilities.
- 11.35 Where development is proposed in highly accessible locations, it is important to optimise capacity through the use of higher densities. For example, locations with good accessibility to services and sustainable transport, such as the City Centre, are more suited to higher density development than areas with poor accessibility to services and sustainable transport. Higher densities in accessible locations can accommodate more people and allow residents to easily access their needs by walking and cycling as well as providing a sufficient threshold of demand to support public transport provision which in turn supports the viability of local businesses, and other forms of key economic and social infrastructure.
- 11.36 However, it is important that the Council has a flexible approach to housing densities in order to reflect site-specific considerations such as local character and townscape because development that is poorly located or poorly designed can have adverse impacts on the quality of life of both existing and future residents. It is therefore vital that high density developments are well designed and have regard to the provision of adequate open spaces and a high-quality public realm whilst also enhancing heritage and biodiversity conservation.
- 11.37 Densities therefore may need to be moderated at less accessible locations and to reflect local character. The provision of open space, parking and a mix of housing will also have moderating effect on densities. The density of developments also needs to be informed by the provision of open space, parking, the character of the area and the mix of housing.
- 11.38 In areas where there is a need for affordable homes, higher density development may be considered to increase the supply of housing. However, this must still be balanced with ensuring that the development is of high quality, with suitable infrastructure and amenities.
- 11.39 Comparing net and gross densities can highlight the efficiency of land use. Gross density helps address overall land-use balance in large-scale developments to ensure new developments align with broader spatial strategies. Net density focuses on maximising housing delivery on residential land.

Policy PC5: Domestic Development

Residential alterations, extensions and outbuildings

Residential alterations, extensions and outbuildings will be permitted, provided the proposal meets all the following criteria:

- a) The proposal is compatible with the scale, appearance and character of the original dwelling including taking into account the cumulative impact of such development;**
- b) The proposal does not result in harmful over-development of the site, and demonstrates design in scale with its surroundings, taking into account the footprint of the existing dwelling and the relationship to neighbouring site boundaries;**
- c) Proposals for extensions and outbuildings result in an appropriate composition, achieving a high standard of design and retaining the legibility of the original dwelling in terms of design and setting;**
- d) The proposal will not result in unacceptable adverse impacts on the amenities of neighbouring residential properties, including on privacy, overbearing impact, overshadowing or loss of light; and**
- e) The proposal will not result in adverse impact to the appearance of the street scene and character of the area.**

Residential annexes

Residential annexes will be supported where the need for additional space cannot be met within an existing dwelling, an extension to the dwelling or a building conversion within the site, provided the proposal meets all of the following criteria:

- a) The proposal is physically attached or closely related to the main dwelling so that it cannot be subdivided from the main dwelling;**
- b) The proposal retains some form of demonstrable dependence on the main dwelling, such as shared access (including both vehicular access and doorways) and communal amenity spaces (the use of annexes as a separate dwelling will not be permitted and the desire for annexed occupants to be independent from existing residents will not be considered as adequate justification to allow self-contained dwellings in annexes);**
- c) The proposal respects and enhances both the character of the original dwelling and the context of the surrounding area through high quality design; and**
- d) The proposal does not result in the loss of amenity to neighbouring properties.**

Flat conversions

Proposals for the conversion and sub-division of existing residential premises into flats and other self-contained residential units will be considered having regard to the intensity of the use proposed and the sustainability of the location in respect of the proximity of the site to key services and public transport provision.

In addition, proposals for the conversion and sub-division of existing residential premises and, conversions of non-residential buildings where planning permission is required, will only be supported where they meet the following criteria:

- a) The proposal does not result in detrimental effects to the appearance of the building by reason of unsympathetic additions or alterations, either in isolation or due to cumulative impact;
- b) Opportunities are taken for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions;
- c) Appropriate provision is made for parking, private amenity space, cycle storage and refuse storage facilities, in a visually acceptable manner;
- d) The internal layout minimises possible noise disturbance and/or overlooking to the immediate neighbours; and
- e) Overall, the proposal will not result in an unsatisfactory living environment for prospective occupiers.

Replacement dwellings in the countryside

Replacement dwellings in the countryside within existing curtilages will be supported, provided the proposal meets the following criteria:

- a) It is on a one-for-one basis and the property to be demolished is a permanent lawful dwelling;
- b) It is of a high quality design that is appropriate to the rural area in scale and character and preserves or enhances access, siting and dwelling orientation;
- c) It is of a scale appropriate to the size of the existing plot;
- d) It provides high quality landscaping, where necessary, to integrate the new dwelling into the wider rural context with no greater adverse impacts than the existing dwelling;
- e) There is a presumption against the demolition of properties considered to be heritage assets and/or properties which positively contribute to the character of a rural conservation area. Note: there is a presumption in favour of retaining properties considered to be heritage assets and/or properties which positively contribute to the character of a rural conservation area; and
- f) The flood risk sequential test will have to be applied.

Justification

- 11.40 Permitted Development Rights enable some small-scale changes to domestic properties without requiring planning permission. However, there are a number of scenarios where planning permission is still required including residential alterations, extension and annexes and flat conversions. Domestic development proposals represent a large number of planning applications received by the Council.
- 11.41 This policy sets out the criteria which are to be applied when assessing these planning applications, alongside other relevant policies in the Local Plan.
- 11.42 The Council wishes to retain and promote a balanced mix of dwelling types and sizes across Colchester and avoid the loss of smaller and more affordable units. Therefore, extensions and annexes should always be compatible and subordinate to the original dwelling and not result in the over-development of residential plots.
- 11.43 The Council also wishes to ensure that dwellings do not incrementally grow by a succession of small extensions which cumulatively can alter the scale and character of the original dwelling. Therefore, the cumulative impact of proposals will be taken into account when determining applications for domestic alterations. For the purposes of this policy, the 'original' dwelling is defined as the building as it existed on 1st July 1948, or as it was originally built, if later than this date.
- 11.44 The Council recognises the important contribution flat conversions make to the provision of smaller and more affordable dwellings, particularly in urban areas where demand for such units are at their highest. However flat conversions will only be permitted where they are sympathetic to the original dwelling and make appropriate provision for amenity, storage and parking. Importantly flat conversions should not result in unsatisfactory living conditions for future residents.
- 11.45 This policy allows householders the freedom to develop their property in a manner they choose whilst ensuring that proposals do not adversely affect the original dwelling or the surrounding area or residential amenity.
- 11.46 In order to retain the availability of smaller and more affordable dwellings in the countryside, it will be appropriate to require replacement dwellings to be of an appropriate scale. Extensions to and replacement dwellings in the countryside should respect their rural setting and not result in any greater adverse impacts than the original dwelling.
- 11.47 In order to protect the countryside, proposals for extensions of domestic gardens into the open countryside will not be permitted if they result in an adverse impact on the surrounding countryside; result in the loss of good quality agricultural land; or set a precedent for unacceptable extensions to gardens at one or more neighbouring properties. Where planning permission is

granted, applicants may be expected to relinquish their permitted development rights over the new area of garden.

Policy PC6: Design and Amenity

All development, where relevant and proportionate including new build, extensions and alterations, must be designed to a high standard, positively respond to its context, achieve good standards of amenity and demonstrate social, economic and environmental sustainability. Development proposals should be design-led, reflect the local distinctiveness of Colchester and the immediate locality, contribute to placemaking and support the transition to a low-carbon, inclusive and climate resilient future. Great weight will be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help raise the standard of design more generally in the area. Poor design will be refused including that which fails to take the opportunity for good design or improving the local area.

The Council will use and/or promote a range of planning processes and tools to help achieve high quality design, including design review and design codes. In addition to the requirements of Policy ST8, development proposals must demonstrate that they and any ancillary activities associated with them will, where relevant and proportionate:

- a) Respect and, wherever possible, enhance the character of the site, its context and surroundings in terms of its layout, architectural approach, height, scale, form, massing, density, proportions, materials, townscape and/or landscape qualities and detailed design features. Wherever possible development should positively enhance and integrate the existing built environment and other, heritage, biodiversity, arboricultural and landscape assets, including trees, hedgerows and watercourses, removing problems or barriers as part of the overall development process;**
- b) Promote visually attractive, functional, coherent and distinctive environments and encourage the co-location of community facilities to establish a strong sense of place for living, working and visiting, supported by high quality architecture and landscaping;**
- c) Promote and sustain an appropriate mix and density of uses which are well located and integrated, optimise the efficient use of land (including sharing of land), contribute to inclusive communities, and support retail centres and active and sustainable transport networks;**
- d) Provide attractive, well connected and legible streets and public spaces, which prioritise walking, cycling, public transport and community vitality, whilst adequately integrating safe vehicle access and encouraging vibrant community activity;**
- e) Safeguard public and residential amenity, particularly with regard to privacy, overlooking, security, noise and disturbance, pollution (including light and odour pollution), and access to daylight and sunlight in all habitable rooms with no single aspect north-facing homes;**
- f) Create a safe, resilient and secure environment, which supports community cohesion, resilience and pride of place, whilst reducing vulnerability to neglect or crime;**

- g) Provide functional, robust and adaptable designs, which contribute to the long-term quality of the area and as appropriate, can facilitate alternative activities, alterations and can accommodate evolving community needs and possible future development;**
- h) Minimise carbon emissions and energy use through sustainable design solutions such as orientation, massing, natural ventilation, heat resilient materials and tree planting. Incorporate water efficiency measures, sustainable drainage systems and biodiversity enhancements to contribute to climate resilience;**
- i) Incorporate an accessible refuse and recycling storage area, external drying areas and any necessary infrastructure and services including utilities, recycling and waste facilities to meet current collection requirements, highways and parking. This should be sensitively integrated to promote successful placemaking;**
- j) Demonstrate an appreciation of the views of those directly affected and explain the design response adopted. Proposals that can demonstrate this inclusive approach will be looked on more favourably;**
- k) Integrate principles of Active Design to encourage physical activity through layout, design and access to open spaces by providing facilities for walking, cycling, play and outdoor recreation;**
- l) Incorporate a network of multifunctional green infrastructure, open space and landscape as part of the design of the development to reflect the importance of these networks to biodiversity, climate change mitigation, healthy living and creating beautiful places. For the purpose of this policy, ancillary activities associated with development will be considered to include vehicle movement;**
- m) All major developments should integrate full-fibre and 5G-ready infrastructure to support digital inclusion and smart mobility;**
- n) Consider flood risk at an early stage when deciding the layout and design of a site and take opportunities to make space for water;**
- o) All new build will be expected to comply with internal space standards demonstrated to be in accordance with the National Described Space Standards (DCLG, 2015) or any future replacement of this. The only exceptions are likely to be housing used for a temporary period, i.e. student accommodation;**
- p) All new applications for accommodation, with a top storey above 11m (about 4 storeys) in height, are required in accordance with Building Regulations to provide sprinkler systems. Consideration should also be given to the inclusion of sprinklers in houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), care homes and sheltered accommodation;**
- q) For applications relating to 'relevant buildings' as defined by Development Management Procedure Order 2015 and associated regulations, a Fire Statement must be submitted demonstrating how fire safety has been considered and integrated into the design of the**

development, including access for fire and rescue services and evacuation arrangements.

Development proposals must demonstrate that they, and any ancillary activities associated with them will be in accordance with submitted Masterplans and Design Codes for specific sites and areas, ensuring coordinated, high quality design outcomes. The Council may also implement Design Briefs and Design Codes for smaller developments. These documents along with existing guidance on Backland and Infill, External Materials, Landscaping, and Public Realm, should be taken into account in preparing plans for submission.

Justification

11.48 Good design is integral to good planning and a fundamental requirement of national policy for achieving sustainable development. High quality design creates desirable, functional and efficient places, benefitting residents, businesses and visitors while fostering improved amenities, inclusive communities, economic activity and reduced environmental impact. This is particularly critical for Colchester, where good design can generate local support for planned growth, complement the City's heritage assets and ensure regeneration activities leave a lasting placemaking legacy.

11.49 All new residential development proposals must clearly demonstrate how opportunities for crime and antisocial behaviour have been minimised. This should be evidenced through supporting documentation such as Design and Access Statements and, where relevant, Health Impact Assessments. Where appropriate, development proposals should seek to achieve a 'Secured by Design' award to support meeting this objective. Incorporating these measures contributes to the delivery of sustainable communities by promoting safety, strengthening social cohesion, and fostering a sense of place.

11.50 In Colchester, as elsewhere in the UK, there is a need to deliver high quality design, whilst still ensuring sustainable development is viable and deliverable. As a result, there requires clear and practical guidance that reflects best practices and provides flexibility to respond to site specific challenges and opportunities.

11.51 The promotion of design excellence in Colchester will be achieved through the adoption of effective processes, tools and guidance, including:

- Good design team selection, including ecologists and landscape architects and encouraging early engagement through pre-application dialogue, planning performance agreements, consultation with key stakeholders and the community;
- Design guidance (e.g. masterplans, design codes, development briefs and neighbourhood plans) for priority growth and regeneration areas. These might be produced by the Council or other key stakeholders as appropriate;

- Site and context analysis required through analysis to identify opportunities and constraints and the design response needed to enhance local character and address site specific needs;
- Alternative options to encourage the exploration of multiple design approaches to identify the best possible outcome;
- Independent Design Review for significant or complex proposals to provide objective, expert feedback on appropriate schemes;
- Supporting well designed self and community led development; and
- Ensuring applicants provide sufficient design material to allow accurate assessment of their proposals.

11.52 Requests by the Council for information in relation to applicant's design proposals will be reasonable and proportionate to the nature and scale of the proposal to avoid unnecessary burdens on applicants. Some of the adopted neighbourhood plans include design policies. National policy highlights the importance of plan-led development through to detailing, especially on larger scale developments. This can be achieved by following the principles of Garden Cities (TCPA publication) or those of other potentially appropriate urban design models, such as urban, village and arcadian case studies outlined in the Essex Design Guide.

11.53 The Council has published a number of Guidance Notes, which will replace Supplementary Planning Documents in time, and are intended to be used to assist in the preparation of planning applications. These provide detailed information on a number of design related matters and will be used to help inform decision making.

Policy PC7: Residential Schemes on Greenfield Sites

Major residential developments on greenfield sites must comply with the following requirements:

- a) The primary public open space should be positioned so as to optimise accessibility and usability for future residents. This space should not be dominated by large water attenuation infrastructure, adjacent parking provision or vehicular movement.**
- b) Include informal areas of incidental public open space within the built up areas of the site, in addition to areas of more strategic or larger public open space. These areas should include both multifunctional green and blue infrastructure, which should consist of a network of integrated features.**
- c) Areas of public open space should be fronted by units in order to ensure good levels of activity and natural surveillance. Similarly, units should front boundaries with existing adjacent roads and countryside edges to avoid domination of the streetscape and wider landscape views by rear boundary treatments. The layout should also avoid these sensitive edges being dominated by parking and vehicular movements.**
- d) Built form should establish a site wide positive and coherent identity. This identity should respond to the sites context and reinforce or enhance the local vernacular. This can be achieved through a historic/traditional approach or through the adoption of a contemporary design solution; both options are valid, but whichever approach is adopted, the detailing must be of a high quality.**
- e) The layout of the development and positioning of elements of landscape and built environment should create a series of distinct spaces and take the opportunity to create character areas within the development. Character areas can be established through the hierarchy of streets, the grain of the development, the spatial enclosure of the street, the definition between the public and private domain as well as through landscaping, materials, and the design of the buildings. Distinct and legible character areas within the site should contribute to an overall distinct sense of place for the wider site.**
- f) A variety of vehicular parking treatments should be adopted across the site. Vehicular parking must be well-designed, landscaped and sensitively integrated into the built form so that it does not dominate the development or the street scene. Car parking areas should incorporate green infrastructure, including trees, to soften the visual impact of cars, help improve air quality and contribute to biodiversity enhancement. Car parking areas must be secure and overlooked.**
- g) A clear and legible street hierarchy should be established and reinforced utilising materiality, landscaping and spatial treatments appropriate to their function and movement role.**

- h) Sites should support modal shift, incorporating prioritised routes and enhanced connectivity, both within and beyond the site for active travel modes, including, where appropriate through filtered permeability for vehicular movements.**
- i) Back-to-back distances should comply with adopted guidance to ensure appropriate levels of amenity for existing and future occupants. Where reduced provision is proposed this should be weighed against subsequent placemaking enhancements within the wider scheme.**
- j) Focal/nodal buildings should be included where appropriate to enhance legibility and wayfinding within the site.**
- k) Brick walls should be used to enclose boundaries that address public/semi-public realm, including parking courts.**
- l) Design features should be applied consistently across all elevations of built environment, variations in materiality, fenestration of detailing should respond to the composition of the architecture.**
- m) Meter housing and service intakes, and rainwater goods, should be located out of public view or should be purposefully designed into the treatment of the building's façade, so as to not cause detriment to the standard of design achieved.**

Justification

11.54 The purpose of this policy is to guide the design and layout of major residential developments on greenfield sites to ensure they are well-integrated, sustainable, and responsive to their context. It seeks to achieve the following:

- Ensure that public open spaces are centrally located and accessible, creating opportunities for recreation, social interaction, and community engagement while minimising disruption from parking and vehicular movement.
- Promote the incorporation of natural elements, such as planting and water features, into the urban fabric to enhance biodiversity, improve environmental quality, and support community well-being.
- Require buildings to front public spaces and boundaries to enhance safety, activity, and aesthetic integration with the surrounding environment.
- Encourage developments to establish a distinctive and high-quality identity that respects Colchester's architectural styles and vernacular, whether through traditional or contemporary design approaches.
- Foster a sense of place by creating distinct character areas within the site using thoughtful design elements, such as street hierarchy, landscaping, and architectural detailing, contributing to a unique and cohesive community identity.
- Promote well-integrated, landscaped parking areas that minimise visual impact, enhance air quality, and contribute to biodiversity while maintaining security and accessibility.

- Ensure developments feature clear street hierarchies and prioritise active travel routes, supporting modal shifts and enhanced connectivity within and beyond the site.
- Maintain appropriate separation distances and design layouts to balance amenity and placemaking considerations for current and future occupants.
- Include focal buildings and consistent architectural detailing to enhance legibility, orientation, and visual appeal across the site.
- Ensure functional elements like boundary treatments, meter housing, and rainwater goods are carefully integrated into the design to uphold overall quality and visual harmony.

11.55 Overall, this policy aims to ensure that new residential developments on greenfield sites are sustainable, attractive, and contribute positively to their surroundings and the wider community.

Policy PC8: Private Amenity Space

All residential proposals must provide direct and convenient access from the dwelling to an area of private amenity space, provided either individually or communally. The level and typology of private amenity space provision should be informed by its context and the needs of its intended users. Private amenity space must be designed to a high standard for day-to-day domestic use to optimise its use, to meet the recreational needs of intended users and promote health and wellbeing. The siting, orientation, size and layout must create a secure and usable space that functions well, which has an inviting appearance for residents and is appropriate to the surrounding context. Environmental factors that may affect its usability such as sunlight and shade, noise, pollution and drainage must be considered, see Environment policies EN8, EN8a and EN9. All private amenity spaces must be designed to achieve an appropriate degree of privacy. Some degree of overlooking may be acceptable in higher density areas, where this does not result in material harm

The following standards shall apply:

All new residential development shall provide adequate outdoor amenity space at a minimum standard of 25m² per bedroom for houses and maisonettes, or 25m² per flat, with a minimum of 50m² for any individual or shared private amenity space. This may be delivered either as private amenity space or shared communal provision or combination of the two (where balconies are provided the space provided may be taken off the communal requirement).

The minimum standards above should normally be met. In exceptional cases a reduced quantum may be acceptable where the proposal demonstrates high levels of accessibility to an area of strategic open space and facilitates high quality and enhanced design outcomes. A larger amount of private amenity space may be required for small infill (including backland) schemes to reflect the character of the surrounding area. Proposals for infill development will not be permitted if they unacceptably reduce the level of existing private amenity space provision for existing dwellings.

For proposals in highly accessible and sustainable locations such as the city centre, where higher densities may be appropriate, reduced private amenity space for houses and flats may be acceptable where this reflects the sites context, facilitates appropriate densities and delivers high quality and enhanced design

Communal private amenity space should have regard to the design criteria for private communal space included in the Essex Design Guide.

Justification

11.56 Policy PC8 ensures that all residential development provides sufficient amount of outdoor space for residents. For houses and maisonettes, standards are

proportionate to the number of bedrooms, reflecting a greater need for larger private outdoor space associated with family living. For flats, provision is typically made through communal amenity space with a minimum of 25m² per flat. This can be made up of a combination of private, through balconies or terrace and communal space. This means that as the number of units increases, the total amount of amenity space required increases accordingly.

- 11.57 All residential development must provide new residents with access to private and/or communal amenity space, in addition to public open space requirements. At least 25m² per dwelling of private/communal open space will be sought for flats and maisonettes, whilst houses should provide larger private gardens. The National Design Guide recognises that well-designed homes and buildings include the provision of good quality external environments, promoting health and wellbeing; and relate positively to the private, shared and public spaces around them, contributing to social interaction and inclusion.
- 11.58 Private amenity space can add significantly to the quality of life of residents of all ages through the provision of access to daylight, fresh air, space to dry washing, socialise, play, enjoy wildlife and a place to grow plants/vegetables. The Council considers that private amenity space is essential for the creation of good quality homes that promote health and wellbeing and will continue to apply a policy of minimum standards for private amenity space. The Essex Design Guide provides design guidance on how the design of private amenity space can best be achieved.

Policy PC9: Play and Child-Friendly Places

All major development should contribute to the creation of healthy, inclusive and safe places for play, providing a variety of play opportunities that support the needs of all children and young people.

Development proposals will be supported where they incorporate the following principles in the design of play where appropriate and as proportionate to the size of the development:

- a) Provide opportunities for play as an integral part of the design and layout of development, including formal, informal and natural play, and are not reliant solely on designated equipped play areas;**
- b) Incorporate opportunities for incidental play within streets, routes and public realm, supporting a ‘play on the way’ approach and enabling play as part of everyday movement and activity;**
- c) Provide a range of play opportunities appropriate to different ages and abilities, including opportunities for physical activity, social interaction and informal recreation, and where appropriate include provision for older children and teenagers;**
- d) Are safe, inclusive and accessible to all, supporting independent mobility and ensuring that play opportunities are welcoming to children and young people of all abilities and backgrounds;**
- e) Integrate play provision within the green network and waterways, open spaces and the wider public realm, contributing to multifunctional spaces, biodiversity and sense of place; and**
- f) Are designed as part of a comprehensive approach to placemaking, ensuring that play contributes positively to the character, function and quality of development.**

Justification

11.59 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that development contributes to the creation of child-friendly and playable neighbourhoods. Play is an important component of health and wellbeing and supports physical activity, social interaction and the development of children and young people.

11.60 Play is not limited to formal equipped play spaces, but also occurs within streets, routes and informal spaces as part of everyday life. Development should therefore create playable spaces where opportunities for play are embedded within the built and natural environments and public realm. In assessing play provision and child friendly spaces, the Council will have regard to the Fields In Trust Standards: Creating Great Spaces for All, which sets out a proportionate range of play spaces according to its scale, from informal play spaces in smaller developments through to a full hierarchy of play provision for all ages and abilities in larger developments. E.g. (Developments up to 20 homes should provide informal play spaces, between 21 and 100 homes

should provide Local Areas of Play (LAPs) and informal play spaces; between 100 and 500 homes should provide Local Equipped Areas of Play (LEAPs), Local Areas of Play (LAPs) and informal play spaces; of more than 500 homes should provide all types of play spaces for all ages and abilities including Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAPs). Additional information on creating space for play is included in Sport England's Active Design Guidance.

11.61 This policy should be read alongside Policies GN1, ST1, ST8, PC1 and PC6, which set out detailed requirements for open space, design and placemaking.

12. Place Policies

12.1 The Local Plan uses a consistent template for Place Policies to clearly set out site-specific requirements for each allocation that are in addition to the requirements of the strategic and development management policies in this plan. Place Policies are designed to provide clarity and certainty for applicants, decision-makers and local communities by setting out the key site-specific requirements that apply to individual sites. Place policies do not repeat the detailed requirements of strategic and development management policies, which apply across all sites, but instead focus on key site-specific issues necessary to ensure deliverable and sustainable development.

12.2 Whilst all planning applications are determined in accordance with the development plan as a whole, the following list of key considerations highlight the main strategic and development management policies that are most likely to be relevant to residential and mixed use proposals. The list is intended to assist applicants and decision makers and does not introduce additional policy requirements. This approach supports effective development management and avoids reliance on cross-referencing for every Place policy.

- a) The design and layout of development proposals is expected to support health and wellbeing, including access to green space, opportunities for active travel, and a high-quality living environment consistent with Policy ST1.
- b) In accordance with PC9, play provision should be designed into the layout and masterplanning of development as an integral component of placemaking, rather than as isolated or residual spaces.
- c) In accordance with Policies ST7a and PC2, development proposals should be designed to prioritise walking, cycling and public transport through safe, inclusive and permeable layouts that follow best practice guidance (including LTN 1/20), connect effectively to existing networks, and protect and enhance active travel routes including LCWIP. Masterplanning should identify opportunities to connect to and enhance strategic routes and corridors, including the Colchester Orbital where relevant to the site's location and context. Proposals should incorporate appropriate supporting infrastructure, such as public transport access, EV charging, and servicing, while ensuring high-quality, accessible environments around key destinations including schools.
- d) All development proposals will need to demonstrate safe and suitable site access to required highway design standards in accordance with Policy ST7a, with the point of vehicle access to be agreed with the Highway Authority and demonstrate that the proposal would not be detrimental to highway capacity or safety. Proposals will need to demonstrate that a safe pedestrian access can be provided to ensure connectivity within and beyond the site to link to existing footways, Public Rights of Way and local facilities, including the Colchester Orbital where appropriate.
- e) In accordance with Policy LC1, development proposals are expected to be sympathetic to landscape character, qualities of the locality and sense of

place. Screening comprising locally appropriate tree belts and/or hedgerows may be required along site boundaries and consideration given to the retention of mature trees and hedgerows within each site.

- f) In accordance with Policy EN6, applicants will need to demonstrate that development proposals conserve, and where appropriate, enhance the significance of heritage assets, including any contribution made by their settings. Proposals should take into account the findings of the Colchester Local Plan Stage 2 Heritage Impact Assessment and incorporate the recommended mitigation measures into the design of the proposal.
- g) In accordance with Policy ST7, development proposals are expected to address both strategic and site-specific infrastructure requirements as informed by the IADP and local evidence. This is likely to include education provision, highway mitigation, water and wastewater, Police, Fire & Rescue and Ambulance facilities provision/funding, and specific community / open space provision.
- h) Development proposals will need to demonstrate a coordinated approach to foul and surface water management, demonstrating that:
 - adequate wastewater treatment capacity is available or can be made available in line with agreed phasing in accordance with Policy NZ3; and
 - surface water is managed in accordance with Policy EN9, including the use of SuDS, and discharged to a receiving waterbody rather than the combined sewer network.
- i) Proposals will need to demonstrate the measures included to support water efficiency and reduce impacts on water infrastructure, proportionate to the scale and nature of development, informed by Policies EN8, EN9 and NZ3.
- j) In accordance with Policy GN5, provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) for proposals over 500 dwellings or small proposals that are close to sensitive habitats.

12.3 Not all of the above is relevant to employment sites. The list below is intended to assist applicants and decision makers regarding proposals for employment sites. As with the list for residential and mixed use sites, it does not introduce additional policy requirements and avoids reliance on cross-referencing for every employment allocation policy.

- a) In accordance with Policy ST7a and PC2, development proposals should be designed to prioritise walking, cycling and public transport through safe, inclusive and permeable layouts that follow best practice guidance (including LTN 1/20), connect effectively to existing networks, and protect and enhance active travel routes including LCWIP. Proposals should incorporate appropriate supporting infrastructure, such as EV charging, public transport access, and servicing.
- b) In accordance with Policy ST7a all development proposals will need to demonstrate safe and suitable site access to required highway design standards with the point of vehicle access to be agreed with the Highway Authority and demonstrate that the proposal would not be detrimental to

highway capacity or safety. Proposals will need to demonstrate that a safe pedestrian access can be provided to ensure connectivity within and beyond the site to link to existing footways, Public Rights of Way and local facilities, including the Colchester Orbital where appropriate.

- c) In accordance with Policy EN6, applicants will need to demonstrate that development proposals conserve, and where appropriate, enhance the significance of heritage assets, including any contribution made by their settings. Proposals should take into account the findings of the Colchester Local Plan Stage 2 Heritage Impact Assessment and incorporate the recommended mitigation measures into the design of the proposal.
- d) Development proposals will need to demonstrate a coordinated approach to foul and surface water management, demonstrating that:
 - adequate wastewater treatment capacity is available or can be made available in line with agreed phasing; and
 - surface water is managed in accordance with Policy EN9, including the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems, and discharged to a receiving waterbody rather than the combined sewer network.
- e) Proposals will need to demonstrate the measures included to support water efficiency and reduce impacts on water infrastructure, proportionate to the scale and nature of development, informed by Policies EN8, EN9 and NZ3.

Colchester

- 12.4 Within the Colchester urban area and city centre, there is a wide range of employment opportunities, facilities, services and transport choices available to support future communities. As the district's principal centre, Colchester performs the highest-order role within the settlement hierarchy and represents the most sustainable location for growth.
- 12.5 The spatial strategy therefore directs development to the urban area in the first instance, reflecting its accessibility, concentration of services, and ability to accommodate growth in a coordinated way. Focusing development in Colchester supports sustainable travel patterns, maximises the use of existing infrastructure, and enables the effective delivery of new infrastructure and services.
- 12.6 This approach aligns with the overarching strategy of directing growth to the most sustainable and accessible locations, while ensuring that development is proportionate elsewhere in the hierarchy, having regard to the role, function and constraints of the district's settlements.
- 12.7 Where a proposed development has minerals and waste safeguarding implications, it is requested that these are highlighted with the site promoter at the earliest opportunity, including at the pre-application stage. Addressing such implications could materially impact on the design of the proposed development and therefore it is important that the conclusions of safeguarding assessments can iteratively feed back into project design.
- 12.8 At the time of preparing the Local Plan, there is ongoing uncertainty regarding the available wastewater treatment capacity within the Colchester Wastewater Recycling Centre catchment. Whilst this is expected to be a temporary issue and work is underway by the relevant bodies to resolve it, developers should engage with Anglian Water Services at the earliest opportunity, including through the pre-application process, to establish infrastructure capacity and any requirements necessary to support the proposed development.
- 12.9 Development proposals in Colchester will be expected to demonstrate that adequate wastewater infrastructure capacity is available, or can be provided in a timely manner, without unacceptable impacts on existing communities or the environment. Early engagement with Anglian Water Services will help identify any reinforcement works, phasing requirements or sustainable points of connection to the water supply and wastewater networks that may be required to facilitate development.

Policy CC1: City Centre

The City Centre is defined by the boundary shown on the policies map and is the principal focus for retail, food and drink, cultural, leisure, community and other business uses in Colchester. As such the City Centre is at the top of the Centre Hierarchy as indicated in Policy E4. Development proposals within the City Centre will be supported where they make a positive contribution to levels of footfall, activity and vibrancy and support the City Centres role and function as the cultural epicentre of Colchester, including supporting a vibrant and diverse evening and night-time economy where compatible with the amenity of surrounding uses. Accordingly, proposals should be mindful to ensure high levels of equality and accessibility in contributing toward a provision that serves the wider population of Colchester in its entirety. All proposals must have regard to the City Centre Masterplan, including consideration for the location of a future Colchester transport interchange within the boundary of the area of search in the city centre as shown on the Policies Map.

Within the City Centre, proposed uses should contribute toward creating a diverse mix of uses that support the vitality and viability of the centre. Proposed uses must provide active street frontages and ground floor uses should primarily fall within Use Class E (as defined by the Use Classes Order).

Proposals which complement the role and function of the City Centre will also be supported, where the proposed use would increase footfall and encourage visitors to enjoy the City Centre for longer by facilitating multiple user events/activities within the centre per visit. These include, (but are not limited to): residential, leisure and cultural uses, creche, day nursery, medical and health services, sport and recreation provision, open space, and offices, as well as retail and food and drink uses. Proposals that retain and enhance existing or deliver new elements of green infrastructure that provide benefits in terms of enhancement of the public realm, active travel, climate change resilience and/or habitat connectivity will be supported.

Within the Primary Shopping Area, the majority of street frontage should be dedicated to active retail frontages. Non-retail uses will be supported within the Primary Shopping Area where the proposed use will provide a service directly compatible with the function of the Primary Shopping Area and help to secure its long-term vitality and viability. Non-retail uses will not be supported where an over-concentration of said uses would detract from the established retail character in the locality, and such impacts should be considered accumulatively.

The role and benefit of upper floors to premises in the City Centre in providing residential uses is recognised, as is the role that residential development can play in the vitality of centres. As a result, in addition to the identified residential redevelopment sites allocated within the City Centre, proposals for residential development within the City Centre will be supported where they complement the mix of uses in the locality. Higher densities should be promoted and will be supported within the City Centre, where it can be demonstrated that any adverse

impacts satisfactorily mitigated and can be outweighed by substantive public benefits. Residential uses should primarily be accommodated on upper floors and will not be supported on ground floor street frontages within the Primary Shopping Area.

Development proposals within the City Centre will be required to deliver the highest standard of design and placemaking, given the cultural significance of the City Centre and the emphasis this places on its streetscapes and public spaces. Proposals should secure improved streetscapes via minimising street clutter; use of high-quality materials; well-designed street furniture; public art and interpretation; retention of important spaces and key views; enhancement of street frontages; and use of sympathetic shopfronts and signage (in accordance with adopted guidance). Development proposals will not only need to protect and enhance the character of the conservation area, listed buildings, heritage assets and their setting including where appropriate the Scheduled Ancient Monument (Town Walls), but also must protect the City Centre's cultural significance, along with the distinct positive elements of its skyline.

In the longer term, as the catchment area population increases and new development proposals emerge, there may be additional demand for commercial leisure facilities, in which case any such provision should be directed to the 'town centres first' in accordance with the sequential approach to strengthen their diversity of uses and overall vitality.

Policy PP1: Britannia Car Park, Colchester

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 100 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of the surrounding development;
- b) Proposals must have regard to the Britannia Yard Design Framework in the Colchester City Centre Masterplan;
- c) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:
 - i. the protection of key views (east from St Botolph's Church Walk and south of the site);
 - ii. provision of an appropriate western and north-western buffer to the Scheduled Monument, as well as retention of and enhancement of boundary trees;
 - iii. the layout and access should respect the historic street patterns;
 - iv. avoid dense and uniform layouts; and
 - v. establish principles over treatment of setting and archaeological evaluation and management.
- d) Safeguard suitable access for the maintenance of existing sewage infrastructure on the site.
- e) Contributions will be required towards:
 - i. Colchester Town Mobility Hub;
 - ii. Improvements to relevant LCWIP routes;
 - iii. Flood risk solutions, in accordance with Policy EN8, EN8a and the Colchester Surface Water Management Plan recommendations for Critical Drainage Area COL 003 (Abbey Gate);
 - iv. New bus station and interchange and St Botolph's Circus Roundabout improvements.

Policy PP2: Vineyard Gate, Colchester

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP, and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 100 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development;**
- b) Proposals must have regard to the Vineyard Gate Design Framework in the Colchester City Centre Masterplan;**
- c) Safe and suitable vehicle access to the site to be off Osborne Street and Stanwell Street to be agreed with the Highway Authority;**
- d) Provide pedestrian connections directly to / from Lion Walk;**
- e) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:**
 - i. preservation and enhancement of the Scheduled and Listed Town Walls and their setting, with any works affecting the SAM and listed building requiring consent.**
 - ii. a buffer of green space should be used to south of SAM and listed Town Wall to the northwest and east of the site;**
 - iii. public access should be maintained with appropriate signage to promote understanding;**
 - iv. the layout of streets within the site should form view corridors, including extending the view of St Botolph's Church to the east by extending the line of St Botolph's Church Walk within the site;**
 - v. retention and reinforcement of historic street patterns and connections to maintain its historical connections;**
 - vi. refurbishment of buildings that contribute positively to the Conservation Area;**
 - vii. removal or redevelopment of features that detract from the area's significance; and**
 - viii. sensitive building heights and massing that preserve the historic skyline.**
- f) Safeguard suitable access for the maintenance of existing water supply and sewage infrastructure on the site.**
- g) Contributions will be required towards;**
 - i. Colchester Town Mobility Hub;**
 - ii. Improvements to relevant LCWIP routes**
 - iii. Flood risk solutions, in accordance with Policy EN8, EN8a and the Colchester Surface Water Management Plan Recommendations for Critical Drainage Area CDA COL 003 (Abbey Gate);**
 - iv. A new bus station and interchange, and a new gateway at Vineyard Street.**

Policy PP3: St Runwald Street Car Park, Colchester

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 40 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development;**
- b) Proposals must have regard to the Colchester City Centre Masterplan;**
- c) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (updated July 2026) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site, including but not limited to:**
 - i. the layout to reflect the historic form and evolution of the site, including the former Cups Hotel and associated outbuildings;**
 - ii. Respecting the character and appearance of the Colchester Area 1 Conservation Area;**
 - iii. the protection of key views (Town Hall, St Peter's Church and Jumbo) through appropriate building heights;**
 - iv. respecting the historical street patterns, avoiding excessive street clutter and**
 - v. establishing principles over treatment of setting and archaeological evaluation and management.**
- d) Prior to the submission of a planning application the developer will be required to undertake and fund further archaeological evaluation and recording to fully characterise the archaeological potential of the site and identify and archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary;**
- e) Development must safeguard suitable access for the maintenance of existing sewage infrastructure on the site.**
- f) Contributions will be required towards:**
 - i. Colchester Town Mobility Hub;**
 - ii. Improvements to relevant LCWIP routes;**
 - iii. Flood risk solutions, in accordance with Policy EN8, EN8a and the Colchester Surface Water Management Plan Recommendations for Critical Drainage Area CDA COL 012 (Balkerne Hill Roundabout);**
 - iv. A new bus station and interchange.**

Policy PEP1: Colchester Business Park

Land north of The Crescent, as shown on the policies map, is allocated for employment uses in accordance with Policy E1 and proposals for employment uses will be supported subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this Plan and provide the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7.

All development proposals within Myland and Braiswick Neighbourhood Plan Area will also be determined against the policies in the Myland and Braiswick Neighbourhood Plan Review (Adopted October 2023) where they are up to date and relevant.

Policy PP4: Braiswick, Colchester

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 30 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development and to incorporate a landscape buffer along the northern boundary.**
- b) Maximise opportunities for the site for wildlife including:**
 - i delivery of BNG in accordance with Policy EN2 and informed by site specific ecological assessment, with opportunities for the retention and enhancement of the condition of existing grassland and scrub;**
 - ii Potential opportunities including retention of mature trees with veteran features along the north boundary, woodland retention and management, grassland management and potential for wildflower-rich grassland creation.**
 - iii Seek to avoid / minimise the potential threat of habitat loss and fragmentation associated with development, and the threat of disturbance and degradation associated with its long-term occupation (as identified in the LoWS Review 2026).**
- c) Contributions will be required towards:**
 - i. active travel links to include connections and improvements to Bakers Lane, LCWIP (Walking and Cycling) Routes; and**
 - ii. North Station Mobility Hub.**

All development proposals within Myland and Braiswick Neighbourhood Plan Area, will also be determined against the policies in the Myland and Braiswick Neighbourhood Plan (Adopted October 2023) where they are up to date and relevant.

Policy PP5: Land at Chesterwell, Colchester

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 50 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development.**
- b) Delivery of BNG in accordance with Policy EN2 and informed by site specific ecological assessment, with opportunities for the following onsite habitat: restoration of the previous line of the watercourse and creation of higher distinctiveness grassland in the north of the site.**
- c) In accordance with Policy EN6, development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:**
 - i. maintaining a physical buffer to Braiswick Farmhouse in the north;**
 - ii. limits on building heights;**
 - iii. the use of green space (especially in the north);**
 - iv. keeping access away from the area of the listed building;**
 - v. further work of archaeological evaluation is recommended in order to reduce and/or offset any adverse impacts from any development.**
- d) Contributions will be required towards:**
 - i. North Station Mobility Hub;**
 - ii. Relevant LCWIP routes.**

All development proposals within Myland and Braiswick Neighbourhood Plan Area, will also be determined against the policies in the Myland and Braiswick Neighbourhood Plan (Adopted October 2023) where they are up to date and relevant.

Policy PP6: Land at Colchester Station, Colchester

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 250 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development.**
- b) Commercial floorspace to serve commuters and the surrounding community.**
- c) Priority route for active travel through the site from east to west linking with existing active travel routes. A pedestrian connection should be provided to the underpass to Charter Wood, and the railway underpass upgraded through lighting, CCTV or murals to make it user friendly and safe.**
- d) Priority interchange facilities and shared mobility hub to support active travel modes.**
- e) Enhancements to the station as a transport / mobility hub and the associated sense of arrival and enhanced public realm including considering the context and relationship of the built form to the wider landscape through townscape analysis.**
- f) Consolidated parking provision for the station with no net loss of parking capacity.**
- g) Servicing needs to avoid conflicts between pedestrian and car borne station users.**
- h) Solutions to address the risk of surface water and groundwater flooding across the entire site.**
- i) Safeguard suitable access for the maintenance of existing sewage infrastructure on the site.**
- j) Contributions will be required towards:**
 - i. active travel links to include connections and improvements to LCWIP (Walking and Cycling) Routes to the station and city centre, and**
 - ii. North Station Mobility Hub.**

All development proposals within Myland and Braiswick Neighbourhood Plan Area, will also be determined against the policies in the Myland and Braiswick Neighbourhood Plan (Adopted October 2023) where they are up to date and relevant.

Policy PP7: Land at Bakers Lane, Colchester

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 120 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development.**
- b) Provide a safe and direct pedestrian connection to an existing footway within close proximity to the site and ensure connectivity with existing Public Rights of Way.**
- c) Maximise opportunities for the site for wildlife including:**
 - i Delivery of BNG in accordance with Policy EN2 and informed by site specific ecological assessment, with opportunities including for the following onsite habitat: buffering and expanding Co94 Lexden Dyke LoWS and woodland habitat with new planting including structured edge habitat and retaining and enhancing the condition of existing grassland and scrub;**
 - ii Retain and create woodland edge around Lexden Dyke LoWS and Priority habitat.**
- d) In accordance with Policy EN6, development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:**
 - i. the preservation and enhancement of the Scheduled Monument and associated archaeological remains, any works will require Scheduled Monument consent;**
 - ii. protection of Moat Farm Dyke ancient woodland through appropriate buffer;**
 - iii. retention and enhancement of trees, hedgerows and other landscape features in and around the site;**
 - iv. a layout that reflects the historic field patterns and landscape character;**
 - v. the use of green infrastructure to break up built form and avoid large, uniform blocks of development;**
 - vi. protection of views and the setting of nearby heritage assets;**
 - vii. site access to be located to the north-west away from the area of ancient woodland;**
 - viii. establish principles over treatment of setting and archaeological evaluation and management.**
- e) Development will need to protect and enhance the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM), with no built development within the SAM. Proposals must demonstrate how the SAM will be protected during and after development. A significant buffer will be required, which could form part of the open space provision. The full extent of this buffer**

should be agreed with Historic England. No groundworks should be carried out within the area of the SAM without Scheduled Monument Consent from Historic England.

f) Contributions will be required towards:

- i. active travel links to include connections and improvements to LCWIP (Walking and Cycling) Routes and a walking route access to bus stop on Bakers Lane;**
- ii. North Station Mobility Hub;**
- iii. Improvements to A12 including junction 27.**

All development proposals within Myland and Braiswick Neighbourhood Plan Area, will also be determined against the policies in the Myland and Braiswick Neighbourhood Plan (Adopted October 2023) where they are up to date and relevant.

Proposals for the allocated site will only be supported where they accord with a comprehensive masterplan in relation to the entire allocation, that has been agreed with the Council prior to submission of any planning application. The masterplan must be of sufficient detail to ensure optimal placemaking and housing delivery outcomes for the allocation and should be informed by an appropriate evidence base. The masterplan should be developed in collaboration with the Council, and relevant infrastructure providers and consultees including Historic England, it should incorporate engagement with the local community and be informed by use of design review. Where appropriate and necessary, the masterplan shall be supported by parameter plans, design codes and/or guidance.

12.10 Land at Bakers Lane presents an opportunity to contribute towards housing delivery in a sustainable location on the edge of Colchester. Development will need to address environmental, landscape and heritage considerations. The site contains and adjoins assets of national significance, including the Moat Farm Dyke Scheduled Monument and areas of ancient woodland, and retains a rural character which contributes positively to the significance and setting of those assets.

12.11 Policy PP7 therefore adopts a landscape-led and heritage-informed approach to development. The extent, layout and form of new development will need to respond positively to the site's constraints and opportunities, with the most sensitive areas retained as open land and incorporated within a comprehensive green infrastructure framework. Development proposals should be informed by the findings of the Heritage Impact Assessment and any subsequent archaeological investigations, ensuring that the significance of heritage assets and their settings is conserved and, where possible, better revealed.

12.12 Careful consideration should also be given to the site's topography, existing vegetation, historic field pattern and wider landscape setting. The retention and enhancement of existing trees, woodland and hedgerows, together with the provision

of appropriate green buffers and open spaces, will be important in integrating development into the landscape and maintaining the character of the area.

- 12.13 The allocation is under multiple ownerships and early engagement between landowners, developers, infrastructure providers and the Council is encouraged. A coordinated approach to design and infrastructure delivery can help maximise opportunities for landscape enhancement, heritage conservation, connectivity and high-quality placemaking across the site.

Policy PP8: Land at Lakelands Crescent, Colchester

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 5 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development;**
- b) Safe and suitable site access to required highway design standards to be taken from Wren Close and agreed with the Highway Authority.**

Policy PEP4: Maldon Road, Colchester

Land west of the Colchester Recycling Centre, Maldon Road, as shown on the policies map, is allocated for employment uses in accordance with Policy E1 and proposals for employment uses, and where appropriate opportunities for intensification, will be supported subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this Plan. In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:
 - i. preserve the association of the site with Brickwall Farmhouse and the isolated character of the building, avoiding development in the south-western part of the site;
 - ii. preserve the rural character of the area, especially the western end of the site, avoiding large buildings here;
 - iii. tree lines to the north, east and south of the site should be preserved and enhanced to maintain visual screening for nearby heritage assets;
Access should be located to the north-east in order to reduce traffic and visual intrusions;
 - iv. prior to the submission of a planning application the developer will be required to undertake and fund further archaeological evaluation and recording to fully characterise the archaeological potential of the site and identify and archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary;
- b) The site is within a Waste Consultation Area (WCA). Applications made within WCAs are required to include a Waste Infrastructure Impact Assessment (WIIA) as part of its evidence base. Please liaise with the Minerals and Waste Planning authority for further information with regards to the scope and content of WIIA given proximity to Shrub End Recycling Centre for Household Waste.
- c) Contributions will be required towards improvements to Warren Lane/ Maldon Road Junction.

Policy PP9: North-East Colchester

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver a comprehensive, high quality and co-ordinated development that provides for the following site-specific requirements:

- a) A predominantly residential development including community infrastructure, strategic open space and approximately 2,000 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development. The number of new dwellings could be lower if the requirements below result in less developable land.
- b) 'Enhanced Open Space' as shown on the Policies Map substantively in excess of 10% of the allocation area must be provided as open space. Open space shall protect and reinforce existing landscape structure, maximise the width of the undeveloped corridor between Colchester and the proposed Garden Community, retain and enhance existing Public Rights of Way, and provide opportunities for habitat creation, informal recreation, active travel and contributions to on-site SANG.
- c) Provision of a new local centre to serve the new and existing local community. This may include provision of retail, commercial and community facilities at an appropriate scale, relevant to the role and function of a local centre and the communities it is intended to serve.
- d) An active travel plan to be agreed with the Council which ensures site wide active travel connectivity including a connection across the railway line, links within and beyond the site and provides a connected network of multifunctional green infrastructure incorporating retained Public Rights of Way, connections and enhancements to the Colchester Orbital, new circular walking routes, green corridors and accessible strategic open spaces, maintaining attractive recreational links both within the site and to the surrounding countryside, which may contribute to the provision for SANG.
- e) Sufficient ecological surveys must be conducted across the site by the applicant to inform how the threat of habitat loss, fragmentation and impacts on biodiversity can be avoided and minimised. To avoid and mitigate impacts to biodiversity, the proposal must:
 - i. Include protection from recreational disturbance to, and enhance ecological connectivity between, Bullock Wood SSSI, Welsh Wood LoWS, Walls Wood LoWS and the Salary Brook Strategic Biodiversity Area through the use of buffers around the SSSI and LoWS' and creation of habitat corridors;
 - ii. ensure an arboricultural consultant with VETcert certification determines the location of any veteran trees on site and prepares a management plan to ensure any veteran trees are retained and impacts on them mitigated;
 - iii. include a minimum 50 metre buffer to Bullock Wood SSSI, which could form part of on-site SANG provision. Any variation will need

- to be justified by evidence to demonstrate the use of a greater or lesser buffer. A hydrological impact assessment must also be undertaken to inform the layout and scale of the buffer, alongside design of any water reuse/drainage features, to ensure development does not impact on the movement of water in a way that could cause habitat deterioration. The contribution of the ancient woodland to landscape character, settlement setting and visual containment should also be recognised. The extent of the buffer must be agreed through consultation with Natural England;
- iv. determine if parts of the site could meet LoWS criteria through presence of notable bird population such as skylark and existing hedgerow with trees forming a wildlife corridor having regard to information in the Colchester LoWS report (2026). Where part of the site may meet LoWS selection criteria, ensure appropriate mitigation and compensation measures incorporated into the design of the proposal including potential for a wildlife corridor and bird corridor.
 - f) The Salary Brook watercourse present within the site must be protected and buffered, with water quality protected and the biodiversity value conserved and enhanced.
 - g) Demonstrate that there is capacity available in the sewerage network and at the receiving Water Recycling Centre to accommodate wastewater flows from the proposal for treatment and discharge. Where insufficient capacity is available to serve the proposal at the point of anticipated connection, development will be required to be phased, or otherwise appropriately managed, to ensure that connections do not take place until the necessary infrastructure capacity is available.
 - h) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:
 - i. the protection of ancient woodland and its setting through the provision of appropriate buffers to the north-west and south-east of the site;
 - ii. utilising areas of green space to break up areas of development and allow views between areas of woodland;
 - iii. utilising areas of woodland planting to maintain connections with the surrounding rural landscape;
 - iv. building heights and massing that respect the site's heritage and landscape context;
 - v. a plan and layout informed by the surviving post-medieval historic field pattern;
 - vi. Prior to the submission of a planning application the developer will be required to undertake and fund further archaeological evaluation and recording to fully characterise the archaeological potential of the site and identify any archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary. These additional works will be secured through the use of conditions and legal agreements;
 - i) Development proposals within a Mineral Safeguarding Area will require a Mineral Resource Assessment (MRA). This applies to all planning

applications for development on a site located within an MSA that is 5ha or more for sand and gravel, 3ha or more for chalk and greater than 1 dwelling for brickearth or brick clay. Please liaise with the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority for further information with regards to the scope of the MRA.

- j) Before granting planning consent, wintering bird surveys will be undertaken to identify any offsite functional habitat. Wintering bird surveys should comprise two winter seasons, and both diurnal and nocturnal surveys. Natural England should be contacted for advice on how to determine whether mitigation is required based on the strength of the functional link. In the unlikely event that significant numbers are identified, development must firstly avoid impacts. Where this is not possible, development must be phased to deliver habitat creation and management either on or off-site to mitigate any significant impacts. Any such habitat must be provided and fully functional before any development takes place which would affect significant numbers of SPA birds.
- k) In addition to any relevant requirements under Policy ST7 the development will need to provide:
 - i. A two form entry primary school co-located with early years within the site on a parcel of land measuring 2.2ha;
 - ii. additional clinical capacity at Highwoods GP or alternative increased GP provision in the local area;
 - iii. Formal and informal sport and leisure provision should be provided on site aligned with an approved masterplan and informed by an open space, sport and recreation strategy which responds to evidence of local need which may form part of the on-site Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG);
- l) Financial contributions will be required towards:
 - iv. LCWIP (Walking and Cycling) routes, links within and beyond the site and provides a connected network of incorporating including connections and enhancements to the Colchester Orbital and existing Public Rights of Way.
 - v. Improvements to Parsons Heath/ Harwich Road/ Bromley Road junction;
 - vi. Improvements to Ipswich Road / Severalls Lane junction
 - vii. Improvements to St Johns Road / Parsons Heath junction
 - viii. Mobility Hubs including Bromley Road Schools Hub, Ipswich Road/Severalls Lane Hub and City Centre Bus interchange

Proposals for the allocated site will only be supported where they accord with a comprehensive masterplan in relation to the entire allocation, that has been agreed with the Council prior to submission of any planning application. The masterplan must be of sufficient detail to ensure optimal placemaking and housing delivery outcomes for the allocation and should be informed by an appropriate evidence base. The masterplan should be developed in collaboration with the Council, and relevant infrastructure providers, it should incorporate engagement with the local community and be informed by use of

design review. Where appropriate and necessary, the masterplan shall be supported by parameter plans, design codes and/or guidance.

- 12.14 The North-East Colchester allocation is located on the outskirts of the urban edge of Colchester and presents an opportunity to deliver a co-ordinated approach to growth in a sustainable location. There are parts of the site which are more ecologically valuable and sensitive, notably the areas of ancient woodland alongside those holding landscape value at a community and district level such as the Salary Brook valley.
- 12.15 PP9 therefore outlines an approach to development informed by key landscape and ecological evidence. The policy seeks to protect ecologically valuable and sensitive areas through using appropriate buffers around ancient woodland or identifying land as open space that is not to be used for built development. The policy also outlines how ecological connectivity throughout the site will be required, whilst also providing opportunity for residents to enjoy and travel through the area's green networks. This approach to protecting ecology also supports the need to protect and reinforce the areas of higher landscape value, which is also required through ensuring the site design responds to its historic context.
- 12.16 The allocation is under multiple ownerships and early engagement between landowners, developers, infrastructure providers and the Council is encouraged. A coordinated approach to design and infrastructure delivery can help maximise opportunities for landscape and ecological enhancement, connectivity and high-quality placemaking across the site. Sustainable connectivity across the railway line will be important to achieve sustainable development and successful place making. A comprehensive masterplanned approach is required by Policy PP9.
- 12.17 For strategic sites of 500 dwellings or more, early and ongoing collaboration between developers, the Council and Anglian Water Services will be essential to ensure that wastewater infrastructure is planned and delivered in a coordinated, timely and environmentally sustainable manner, particularly where there are constraints within the existing foul drainage network and/or wastewater recycling centre capacity.
- 12.18 A comprehensive site-wide foul drainage strategy should be prepared and agreed at an early stage of the development process. This should identify the preferred long-term solution, including a single sustainable point of connection to the public sewerage network, and demonstrate how the necessary wastewater infrastructure will be secured and delivered alongside development.
- 12.19 Where temporary drainage arrangements are required to facilitate early phases of development, these must be appropriately controlled, time-limited and linked to clearly defined triggers for the delivery and operation of permanent infrastructure. Development phasing should be aligned with the timely provision of wastewater infrastructure to avoid adverse impacts on network performance, receiving watercourses and the environment.

- 12.20 Close partnership working between developers, the Council and Anglian Water Services will be required throughout the planning, delivery and occupation of the site to ensure that growth is supported by adequate wastewater infrastructure capacity and integrated with longer-term investment programmes, thereby facilitating sustainable development and environmental protection.
- 12.21 The Water Cycle Study has identified significant potential for nature-based solutions (NBS) as the site borders the Salary Brook. Applicants are encouraged to contribute towards NBS opportunities and incorporate similar NBS in their site as part of SuDS delivery.

Policy PP10: Land South of Berechurch Hall Road, Colchester

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver a comprehensive, high quality and co-ordinated development that provides for the following site-specific requirements:

- a) A predominantly residential development including community infrastructure, strategic open space and approximately 875 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development**
- b) Safe and suitable site access to required highway design standards with access via the adjoining development off Berechurch Hall Road and off Layer Road, to be agreed with the Highway Authority.**
- c) An active travel plan to be agreed with the Council which ensures site wide active travel connectivity including links beyond the site. This should include incorporating off road walking and cycling routes, and links to Public Rights of Way including bridleways, to enable connections to Gosbecks and Friday Woods and the existing Public Rights of Way Network.**
- d) Provision of bus stops to serve the development proposal to be agreed with the Highway Authority.**
- e) Provision of a new local centre to serve the new and existing local community. This may include provision of retail, commercial and community facilities at an appropriate scale, relevant to the role and function of a local centre and the communities it is intended to serve. The location of the centre should be informed by Masterplanning and should recognise the need for a community centre in this location.**
- f) Enhancement of the quality and value of Camulodonum Way open space.**
- g) Delivery of BNG in accordance with Policy EN2 and informed by site specific ecological assessment, with opportunities for the following onsite habitat: improving east to west connectivity between Gosbecks to the west and Friday Woods to the east (which are strategic priority areas for biodiversity).**
- h) Measures to mitigate the impacts of recreational disturbance to the Roman River Valley SSSI.**
- i) Demonstrate that there is capacity available in the sewerage network and at the receiving Water Recycling Centre to accommodate wastewater flows from the proposal for treatment and discharge. Where insufficient capacity is available to serve the proposal at the point of anticipated connection, development will be required to be phased, or otherwise appropriately managed, to ensure that connections do not take place until the necessary infrastructure capacity is available.**
- j) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025 and 2026 update) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:**

- i. the retention and enhancement of planting around the edges of the site to provide natural screening between heritage assets and new development;
 - ii. A gradual increase in density and scale of development, particularly from the western edge;
 - iii. the use of green space in the west and east of the site to provide buffers;
 - iv. limits on building heights; and
 - v. establish principles over treatment of setting, and archaeological evaluation and management.
- j) Contributions will be required towards:
 - i. improvements to public transport including provision of new bus stop(s) Berechurch Hall Road / Layer Road;
 - ii. Relevant LCWIP routes
- k) Before granting planning consent, wintering bird surveys will be undertaken to identify any offsite functional habitat. Wintering bird surveys should comprise two winter seasons, and both diurnal and nocturnal surveys. Natural England should be contacted for advice on how to determine whether mitigation is required based on the strength of the functional link. In the unlikely event that significant numbers are identified, development must firstly avoid impacts. Where this is not possible, development must be phased to deliver habitat creation and management either on or off-site to mitigate any significant impacts. Any such habitat must be provided and fully functional before any development takes place which would affect significant numbers of SPA birds.
- l) Development proposals within a Mineral Safeguarding Area will require a Mineral Resource Assessment (MRA). This applies to all planning applications for development on a site located within an MSA that is 5ha or more for sand and gravel, 3ha or more for chalk and greater than 1 dwelling for brickearth or brick clay. Please liaise with the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority for further information with regards to the scope of the MRA.

Proposals for the allocated site will only be supported where they accord with a comprehensive masterplan in relation to the entire allocation, that has been agreed with the Council prior to submission of any planning application. The masterplan must be of sufficient detail to ensure optimal placemaking and housing delivery outcomes for the allocation and should be informed by an appropriate evidence base. The masterplan should be developed in collaboration with the Council, and relevant infrastructure providers, it should incorporate engagement with the local community and be informed by use of design review. Where appropriate and necessary, the masterplan shall be supported by parameter plans, design codes and/or guidance.

12.22 For strategic sites of 500 dwellings or more, early and ongoing collaboration between developers, the Council and Anglian Water Services will be essential to ensure that wastewater infrastructure is planned and delivered in a coordinated, timely and environmentally sustainable manner, particularly where

there are constraints within the existing foul drainage network and/or wastewater recycling centre capacity.

- 12.23 A comprehensive site-wide foul drainage strategy should be prepared and agreed at an early stage of the development process. This should identify the preferred long-term solution, including a single sustainable point of connection to the public sewerage network, and demonstrate how the necessary wastewater infrastructure will be secured and delivered alongside development.
- 12.24 Where temporary drainage arrangements are required to facilitate early phases of development, these must be appropriately controlled, time-limited and linked to clearly defined triggers for the delivery and operation of permanent infrastructure. Development phasing should be aligned with the timely provision of wastewater infrastructure to avoid adverse impacts on network performance, receiving watercourses and the environment.
- 12.25 Close partnership working between developers, the Council and Anglian Water Services will be required throughout the planning, delivery and occupation of the site to ensure that growth is supported by adequate wastewater infrastructure capacity and integrated with longer-term investment programmes, thereby facilitating sustainable development and environmental protection.

Policy PP11: Europit Site, Colchester

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver a comprehensive, high quality and co-ordinated development that provides for the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 40 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development;
- b) Proposals should be mindful of the sites urban area context and the opportunity to provide higher densities and compact forms of development that ensure an efficient use of land;
- c) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Turleys 2021 Impact Assessment) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:
 - i. Enhancement of the setting of nearby designated and non-designated heritage assets;
 - ii. Reinforcement of the historic character and building line of Magdalen Street;
 - iii. The retention and creation of key views towards St Botolph's Church and Priory;
 - iv. Active street frontages;
 - v. Building heights and massing that respond positively to the surrounding historical environment;
 - vi. to undertake archaeological evaluation and recording to fully characterise the archaeological potential of the site and identify any archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary;
- d) Safeguard suitable access for the maintenance of existing sewage infrastructure on the site.
- e) Contributions will be required towards:
 - i. flood risk solutions, in accordance with Policy EN8, EN8a and the Colchester Surface Water Management Plan Recommendations for Critical Drainage Area CDA 003 - Abbey Gate;
 - ii. LCWIP (Walking and Cycling) routes and
 - iii. Hythe Station Mobility Hub maximising opportunities for enhanced connectivity to the surrounding area including the City Centre, Colchester Town Station and Hythe.

Policy PP14: Gas Works and Hythe Scrap Yard Site

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 200 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and be compatible with surrounding development;
- b) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Turleys 2021 Impact Assessment) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:
 - i. A development form that responds positively to the character of surrounding development and the waterfront setting;
 - ii. Views of church towers to be retained;
 - iii. undertake further medieval and paleoenvironmental archaeological evaluation and recording to fully characterise the archaeological potential of the site and identify any archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary;
- c) Contributions will be required towards:
 - i. Relevant LCWIP (Walking and Cycling) Routes,
 - ii. Enhance to Public Open space outlined in PPOSS;
 - iii. flood risk solutions, in accordance with Policy EN8 and the Colchester Surface Water Management Plan Recommendations for Critical Drainage Areas CDA 013 Hythe Quay and CDA 02 The Hythe. Any surface water should be discharged at the 1in1 greenfield rate;
 - iv. Active travel links that maximise opportunities for enhanced connectivity to the surrounding area including the City Centre, mobility hubs and railway stations and opportunities to maximise the use of sustainable transport;
 - v. to upgrade existing walking and cycling routes in the area including connections to PROW Colchester 144

Proposals for the allocated site will only be supported where they accord with a comprehensive masterplan in relation to the entire allocation, that has been agreed with the Council prior to submission of any planning application. The masterplan must be of sufficient detail to ensure optimal placemaking and housing delivery outcomes for the allocation and should be informed by an appropriate evidence base. The masterplan should be developed in collaboration with the Council, and relevant infrastructure providers, it should incorporate engagement with the local community and be informed by use of design review. Where appropriate and necessary, the masterplan shall be supported by parameter plans, design codes and/or guidance.

Policy PP15: Hawkins Road, Colchester

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 50 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and be compatible with surrounding development;**
- b) Active travel links that maximise opportunities for enhanced connectivity to the surrounding area including the City Centre and railway stations and opportunities to maximise the use of sustainable transport;**
- c) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Turleys 2021 Impact Assessment) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:**
 - i. A development form that responds positively to the character of surrounding development and the waterfront setting;**
 - ii. Reuse buildings wherever possible;**
 - iii. Views of church towers to be retained;**
 - iv. Taller buildings should be located along the riverside;**
 - v. undertake further medieval and paleoenvironmental archaeological evaluation and recording to fully characterise the archaeological potential of the site and identify any archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary;**
 - vi. Proposals must demonstrate how the design layout, scale, massing and landscaping responds positively to the site's historic industrial and maritime.**
- d) No residential development at ground floor level within flood zone 3 and only essential infrastructure or water compatible land used in flood zone 3b areas;**
- e) Contributions will be required towards:**
 - i. Relevant LCWIP (Walking and Cycling) Routes;**
 - ii. Hythe Station Mobility Hub.**
 - iii. the restoration of the riverside footpath to deliver sufficient public realm enhancements appropriate to the local context, maximising the potential of the riverside location and improving the environment, through biodiversity improvements and the protection of water quality, increasing connectivity and providing convenient public access for pedestrians and cyclists**
 - iv. flood risk solutions, in accordance with Policy EN8 and the Colchester Surface Water Management Plan Recommendations for Critical Drainage Area CDA 08 - Parsons Heath and surface water should be discharged at the 1in1 greenfield rate.**

Proposals for the allocated site will only be supported where they accord with a comprehensive masterplan in relation to the entire allocation, that has been

agreed with the Council prior to submission of any planning application. The masterplan must be of sufficient detail to ensure optimal placemaking and housing delivery outcomes for the allocation and should be informed by an appropriate evidence base. The masterplan should be developed in collaboration with the Council, and relevant infrastructure providers, it should incorporate engagement with the local community and be informed by use of design review. Where appropriate and necessary, the masterplan shall be supported by parameter plans, design codes and/or guidance.

Policy PP50: BT site, Cowdray Avenue

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 40 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development;**
- b) Delivery of BNG in accordance with Policy EN2 and informed by site specific ecological assessment, with opportunities for the following onsite habitat: tree planting, open mosaic habitat;**
- c) Secure and contribute towards improving active travel links and connections, including relevant LCWIP routes, to the City Centre, Mobility Hubs, Colchester Orbital and the railway station;**
- d) Contributions will be required towards:**
 - i. flood risk solutions, in accordance with Policy EN8 and the Colchester Surface Water Management Plan Recommendations for Critical Drainage Area COL005 (St Anne's).**

Policy PP51: Former Land Rover Site, Cowdray Avenue

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 25 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development;**
- b) Secure and contribute towards improving active travel links and connections (including to relevant LCWIP routes) to the City Centre, Mobility Hubs, Colchester Orbital, the railway station and Castellum Grange;**
- c) Contributions will be required towards flood risk solutions, in accordance with Policy EN8 and the Colchester Surface Water Management Plan Recommendations for Critical Drainage Area COL007 (Mile End).**

Policy PP52: BT Repeater Station, Guildford Road

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 25 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development;**
- b) Secure and contribute towards active travel links and connections (including relevant LCWIP routes) to the City Centre, Mobility Hubs, Colchester Orbital and the railway station**
- c) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2026) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures. Including but not limited to:**
 - i. respond positively to the sites historic association with the former East Hill Brewery, contributing to the character and appearance of the conservation area and its setting.**
 - ii. Restriction of building heights and density to ensure development does not obstruct long range views of the Church of St James and St Paul or overshadow historic buildings along East Hill or appear unduly prominent in views from the street**
 - iii. prior to the submission of a planning application the developer will be required to undertake and fund further archaeological evaluation and recording to fully characterise the archaeological potential of the site and identify any archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary;**
- d) Contributions will be required towards flood risk solutions, in accordance with Policy EN8 and the Colchester Surface Water Management Plan Recommendations for Critical Drainage Area COL003 (Abbey Gate).**

Policy PP53: Land at Chapman's Farm, Nayland Road

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 35 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development;**
- b) Delivery of BNG in accordance with Policy EN2 and informed by site specific ecological assessment, with opportunities for the following onsite habitat: hedgerow retention and enhancement, tree planting;**
- c) Secure active travel links and connections to the City Centre and railway station.**
- d) Contributions will be required towards:**
 - i. North Station Mobility Hub;**
 - ii. Relevant LCWIP routes.**

Policy PP54: Sheepen Place

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 100 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development;**
- b) Secure active travel links and connections to City Centre, mobility hub and railway station;**
- c) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2026) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site, including but not limited to:**
 - i. design and layout measures should include sensitive treatment of the river frontage;**
 - ii. Careful consideration of building height, scale and massing;**
 - iii. Use of breaks in the built form to preserve and where possible enhance views from North Bridge and North Station Road Conservation area; and**
 - iv. Previous archaeological evaluation should be reviewed in inform the development layout and mitigation strategy.**
- d) Contributions will be required towards:**
 - i. flood risk solutions, in accordance with Policy EN8 and the Colchester Surface Water Management Plan Recommendations for Critical Drainage Area COL012 (Balkerne Hill roundabout);**
 - ii. Colchester Mobility Hubs.**

Policy PP55: Land adjacent Lethe Grove

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 75 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs which responds appropriately to the character of surrounding development;**
- b) Development of housing for military personnel connected to a nearby operational MOD establishment will be supported provided it satisfies all relevant policy requirements in the Local Plan;**
- c) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2026) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site, including but not limited to:**
 - i. appropriate green infrastructure buffer along the western edge to protect the setting of Berechurch Dyke Scheduled Monument and the potential line of the WWII anti-tank ditch;**
 - ii. the extent and treatment of the western buffer to be agreed through consultation;**
 - iii. the retention of an open and legible western corridor, avoiding built form, intrusive lighting, hard engineering and dense planting;**
 - iv. the design of development layouts, access routes, service corridors, drainage infrastructure and construction methodologies to avoid or minimise impacts on Berechurch Dyke;**
 - v. the incorporation of the historic alignment and character of Black Heath within the development; and**
 - vi. an archaeological assessment, evaluation and consultation including geophysical survey and targeted investigation.**
- c) Secure active travel links and connections to the City Centre, a Mobility Hub and Colchester Orbital.**
- d) Contributions will be required towards:**
 - i. Colchester High Street Mobility Hub;**
 - ii. Relevant LCWIP routes.**

Growth and Opportunity Areas

Northern Gateway

12.26 The area known as Northern Gateway includes the recent development of the Colchester Sports Park and the leisure uses off Junction 28 of the A12.

12.27 The remaining areas of land which are part of Northern Gateway which are undeveloped are safeguarded for future development opportunities covered by Policy OA4 for a mix of uses including residential, open space and commercial uses.

Policy OA4: Northern Gateway

The area shown on the policies map comprising the former Rugby club and surrounding land will be safeguarded for the following purposes as outlined below. In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, proposals will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 650 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs which responds appropriately to the character of surrounding development.
- b) Provision of employment on land north of Axial Way as shown on the policies map allocated for employment, primarily for office use within E class in accordance with Policy E1, having regard to the neighbouring uses
- c) Residential and town centre uses will not be supported on the mixed use and employment areas north of Axial Way and land north of A12
- d) Proposals for new foodstore provision will be supported within the mixed-use area defined on the proposals map on land south of Axial Way, subject to addressing the sequential and impact tests and other policies in this plan. New foodstore provision in this area will respond to the identified need for additional convenience goods floorspace in Colchester, in particular the North Colchester area (Retail, Leisure and Town Centre Study: Update 2026).
- e) Open space provision as identified on the policies map.
- f) Provision for an emergency services hub within the mixed-use area identified on the Policies Map will be supported subject to other policies in this plan.
- g) Provision for a range of other uses including but not limited to, housing for care, commercial, health care provision, energy infrastructure, employment generating uses and recreation / community provision will also be supported subject to other policies in this plan.
- h) Provision for a new local centre to serve the new and existing local community, this may include provision of retail, commercial and community facilities at an appropriate scale, relevant to the role and function of a local centre and the communities it is intended to serve.

Proposals for main town centre uses will be subject to the sequential test while any retail / leisure uses above 350sqm gross floorspace will be subject to the impact test.

- i) Safe and suitable site access to required highway design standards via Axial Way to be agreed with the Highway Authority.**
- j) Proposals within the area defined on the policies map as OA4 will also need to maximise opportunities for enhanced connectivity through green infrastructure and sustainable travel links, in particular opportunities to maximise the potential of the Rapid Transit System, the Park and Ride facility and other local links, including the Colchester Orbital and nearby footpaths and bridleways.**
- k) Provision for adequate wastewater capacity must be provided before commencement of development for all proposals that will create an increase to flows. Applicants will be required to demonstrate that there is capacity available at the receiving Water Recycling Centre to accommodate wastewater flows from the site for treatment and discharge including proposed phasing requirements or alternative solutions to the satisfaction of the Council and Anglian Water**
- l) Safeguard suitable access for the maintenance of existing sewage infrastructure on the site;**
- m) Development proposals within a Mineral Safeguarding Area will require a Mineral Resource Assessment (MRA). This applies to all planning applications for development on a site located within an MSA that is 5ha or more for sand and gravel, 3ha or more for chalk and greater than 1 dwelling for brickearth or brick clay. Please liaise with the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority for further information with regards to the scope of the MRA.**
- n) Contributions will be required towards:**
 - i. Relevant LCWIP (Walking and Cycling) routes**
 - ii. Improvements to the road network in the Mill Road Corridor**
 - iii. A Mobility Hub**
 - iv. A new bus route serving Axial Way/Colchester Business Park**

All development proposals within Myland and Braiswick Neighbourhood Plan Area will also be determined against the policies in the Myland and Braiswick Neighbourhood Plan Review (adopted October 2023) where they are up to date and relevant.

Hythe Opportunity Areas

- 12.28 The Hythe area is a former commercial harbour which includes some rundown and underused industrial land. There has been change in this area over the last few years, through expansion of the University of Essex and additional student accommodation. The area is a long-established regeneration area that seeks to deliver sustainable, mixed-use neighbourhoods, identifying the River Colne as a feature and respecting the historic character of the area.
- 12.29 There is good access to Hythe railway station and the area is located close to the University of Essex and City Centre but is constrained by flooding due to its proximity to the River Colne.
- 12.30 Sites are allocated for residential development in this area (see policies PP14 and PP15). However, there are additional opportunities at the Hythe, through wider regeneration. Regeneration will involve partnership working with public sector agencies, the local community and other key stakeholders including Community Land Trusts and the Hythe Task and Finish Group (responding to flooding issues in the area).
- 12.31 The Council, Environment Agency and Department for Communities and Local Government agreed in 2008 that sites within the East Colchester Regeneration Area could be flood risk sequentially tested within the regeneration area boundary rather than against sites across the borough, recognising the wider sustainable development benefits of continuing regeneration in the Hythe area. This approach was reaffirmed by the Environment Agency in 2017, and the Council requested its continuation for this Local Plan in June 2025. The majority of the regeneration area lies within areas of high flood risk and there are no reasonably available alternative sites at a lower flood risk within the area. Land in Flood Zones 1 and 2 is already developed, in active use, and has not been identified as available or suitable for residential development.

Policy OA1: King Edward Quay Opportunity Area

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development will be encouraged and supported on land identified on the policies map for mixed-use proposals including approximately 200 homes, where it contributes to achieving the following objectives:

- a) Provides a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development.
- b) Active travel links that maximise opportunities for enhanced connectivity to the surrounding area including the City Centre, mobility hubs and railway stations and opportunities to maximise the use of sustainable transport;
- c) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Turleys 2021 Impact Assessment) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:
 - i. A development form that responds positively to the character of surrounding development and the waterfront setting;
 - ii. Views of church towers to be retained;
 - iii. Taller buildings should be located along the riverside;
 - iv. Undertake further medieval and paleoenvironmental archaeological evaluation and recording to fully characterise the archaeological potential of the site and identify any archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary;
 - v. Proposals must demonstrate how the design layout, scale, massing and landscaping responds positively to the site's historic industrial and maritime context.
- d) Softening of the environment around the electricity substation to minimise its intrusive impact on the surrounding area;
- e) Proposals should consider the opportunity to improve and enhance the river environment and explore opportunities for river restoration, enhancement and provision of flood storage areas;
- f) Development proposals should respond positively to the setting of the nearby Distillery Pond Conservation Area in the design and layout;
- g) The site is within a Waste Consultation Area (WCA). Applications made within WCAs are required to include a Waste Infrastructure Impact Assessment (WIIA) as part of its evidence base. Please liaise with the Minerals and Waste Planning authority for further information with regards to the scope and content of WIIA given proximity to Hythe WWTW and Haven Road Recycling Centre.
- h) Contributions will be required towards:
 - i. LCWIP (Walking and Cycling) routes;
 - ii. Enhancement of Open space outlined in PPOSS
 - iii. flood risk solutions, in accordance with Policy EN8 and recommendations in the Surface Water Management Plan for Critical Drainage Areas 01 (Old Heath) and 02 (The Hythe) and surface water should be discharged at the 1in1 greenfield rate;

iv. The Hythe Mobility Hub.

Proposals for the allocated site will only be supported where they accord with a comprehensive masterplan in relation to the entire allocation, that has been agreed with the Council prior to submission of any planning application. The masterplan must be of sufficient detail to ensure optimal placemaking and housing delivery outcomes for the allocation and should be informed by an appropriate evidence base. The masterplan should be developed in collaboration with the Council, and relevant infrastructure providers, it should incorporate engagement with the local community and be informed by use of design review. Where appropriate and necessary, the masterplan shall be supported by parameter plans, design codes and/or guidance.

Policy OA2: Land East of Hawkins Road Opportunity Area

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development will be encouraged and supported on land identified on the policies map for mixed-use proposals including approximately 150 homes, where it contributes to achieving the following objectives:

- a) Provides a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development.
- b) Active travel links that maximise opportunities for enhanced connectivity to the surrounding area including the City Centre, mobility hubs and railway stations and opportunities to maximise the use of sustainable transport;
- c) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Turleys 2021 Impact Assessment) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:
 - i. A development form that responds positively to the character of surrounding development and the waterfront setting;
 - ii. Reuse buildings wherever possible;
 - iii. Views of church towers to be retained;
 - iv. Taller buildings should be located along the riverside;
 - v. Undertake further medieval and paleoenvironmental archaeological evaluation and recording to fully characterise the archaeological potential of the site and identify any archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary;
 - vi. Proposals must demonstrate how the design layout, scale, massing and landscaping responds positively to the site's historic industrial and maritime context.
- d) Having regard to the fact that parts of the site are subject to flood risk, no residential development will be supported at ground floor level within flood zone 3 and only essential infrastructure or water compatible land used in flood zone 3b areas;
- e) A comprehensive approach to regeneration to respond to constraints such as flood risk and land contamination in accordance with Policy EN9 and recommendations in the Surface Water Management Plan for Critical Drainage Area 08 (Parsons Heath) and surface water should be discharged at the 1in1 greenfield rate;
- f) Proposals should consider the opportunity to improve and enhance the river environment and explore opportunities for river restoration, enhancement and provision of flood storage areas;
- g) Contributions will be required towards:
 - i. LCWIP (Walking and Cycling) routes
 - ii. enhancement of the Public open space as identified in PPOSS;
 - iii. The Hythe Mobility Hub.

Proposals for the allocated site will only be supported where they accord with a comprehensive masterplan in relation to the entire allocation, that has been agreed with the Council prior to submission of any planning application. The masterplan must be of sufficient detail to ensure optimal placemaking and housing delivery outcomes for the allocation and should be informed by an appropriate evidence base. The masterplan should be developed in collaboration with the Council, and relevant infrastructure providers, it should incorporate engagement with the local community and be informed by use of design review. Where appropriate and necessary, the masterplan shall be supported by parameter plans, design codes and/or guidance.

Policy PEP13: Coal Yard Site, Hythe Station Road, Colchester

Land at the Coal Yard Site, Hythe Station Road, as shown on the policies map, is allocated for employment uses in accordance with Policy E1 and proposals for employment uses will be supported subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this Plan. In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Development to ensure it is compatible with the surrounding uses and neighbouring amenity.
- b) Suitable site access off Hythe Station Road to be agreed with the Highway Authority.
- c) Active travel links that maximise opportunities for enhanced connectivity to the surrounding area including the City Centre and railway stations and opportunities to maximise the use of sustainable transport.
- d) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Turleys 2021 Impact Assessment) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:
 - i. A development form that responds positively to the character of surrounding development;
 - ii. Views of church towers to be retained;
 - iii. Undertake further medieval and paleoenvironmental archaeological evaluation and recording to fully characterise the archaeological potential of the site and identify any archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary;
 - iv. Proposals must demonstrate how the design layout, scale, massing and landscaping responds positively to the site's historic industrial and maritime context.
- e) Contributions will be required towards:
 - i. LCWIP (Walking and Cycling) routes;
 - ii. Hythe Station Mobility Hub.
 - iii. flood risk solutions, in accordance with Policy EN8 and the Colchester Surface Water Management Plan Recommendations for Critical Drainage Area 08 Parsons Heath.

Magdalen Street – Opportunity Area

- 12.32 Magdalen Street is a key gateway to Colchester City Centre. There are a number of older commercial buildings suitable for reuse and or redevelopment to enhance this area. The area has changed in recent years through the development of student accommodation and supermarkets.
- 12.33 The area is located close to Colchester Town railway station, and future redevelopment is planned as a part of the Transforming the City Centre project, funded by the Town Deal and Levelling Up Funds. This includes improvements to the St Botolph junction to modernise the area creating a better balance between pedestrians, cyclists and motorists and improve the public space, public realm enhancement through Britannia Car Park and St Botolph's Priory to create a welcoming entrance to the city.

Policy OA3: Magdalen Street Opportunity Area

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development will be encouraged and supported on land identified on the policies map for mixed-use proposals including approximately 85 homes, where it contributes to achieving the following objectives:

- a) Provides a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development.**
- b) A comprehensive approach to regeneration in accordance with the City Centre Masterplan (adopted January 2024)**
- c) Consideration of existing businesses where possible or consider relocation where necessary;**
- d) Provide for a compatible mix of uses having regard to neighbouring amenity;**
- e) Provide pedestrian and cycle routes and connections to link to the City Centre, and wider networks including contributions to LCWIP (Walking and Cycling) routes, a mobility hub and St Botolph's Circle Roundabout;**
- f) Ensure new developments are responsive to the distinctive historic character of the area and reinforce the significance of the New Town Conservation Area designation through the reuse of heritage assets;**
- g) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Turleys 2021 Impact Assessment) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:**
 - i. enhancement of the setting of nearby designated and non-designated heritage assets;**

- ii. reinforcement of the historic character and building line of Magdalen Street;
 - iii. the retention and creation of key views towards St Botolph's Church and Priory;
 - iv. active street frontages;
 - v. building heights and massing that respond positively to the surrounding historical environment;
 - vi. to undertake archaeological evaluation and recording to fully characterise the archaeological potential of the site and identify any archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary;
- h) Contributions will be required towards:
- i. flood risk solutions, in accordance with Policy EN8 and recommendations in the Surface Water Management Plan for Critical Drainage Area COL 003 (Abbey Gate).

University of Essex and Knowledge Gateway

12.34 The Council recognises the value of the University of Essex and the Knowledge Gateway to Colchester City's economy and the vitality and viability of the city centre and will work in partnership to maximise the economic and social benefits associated with the University and Knowledge Gateway. Policies in the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community DPD may also be relevant.

Policy PEP2 Knowledge Gateway

The area shown on the policies map comprising the Knowledge Gateway will be safeguarded for employment purposes in accordance with Policy E1 to allow for provision of a range of additional jobs and to accommodate expansion of the existing research and technology uses.

Within this area the Council will continue to support the growth and retention of the Research Park, and where appropriate, opportunities for intensification of employment uses. All land and premises within this area will be safeguarded for employment uses, primarily for office use within E class where appropriate and non-B class employment generating uses of a scale and type compatible with the Research Park. Encouragement will also be given to uses which can be shown to be directly linked to the development of research associated with the University of Essex and to the provision of business incubator units. Proposals for uses which are not for office use within E class or where it cannot be demonstrated that they are linked to the Research Park will only be supported where they:

- a) Are ancillary to the existing employment uses on the site and are intended to serve the primary function of the site as an employment area and research park;**
- b) Provide the opportunity to maximise the sites potential for economic growth;**
- c) Support the continued operation of existing employment uses within the employment area and in particular its focus for research and technology contributing towards the delivery of the overall vision;**
- d) Do not generate potential conflict with the existing proposed E class uses and activities on the site.**

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements and subject to compliance with all other policies, proposals for employment uses should provide:

- i. Active travel links that maximise opportunities for enhanced connectivity to the surrounding area including the Garden Community, University, City Centre and Hythe Station and opportunities to maximise the use of sustainable transport;**
- ii. Colchester Mobility Hubs**

- e) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:
 - i. the preservation of the Grade II Registered Park and Garden in the east of the site;
 - ii. the retention of the listed building in the west of the site;
 - iii. the use of a view corridor through the site continuing the route of Annan Road;
 - iv. the preservation of the green space and planting in the east of the site to preserve views of the parkland;
 - v. the retention and enhancement of the planting around Salarybrook Farmhouse to retain its separation from new development;
 - vi. limits on the heights of buildings so that they so not dominate view;
 - vii. establish principles over treatment of designated assets;
- f) Demonstrate how the value of Wivenhoe Park Local Wildlife Site could be enhanced, which could be through the provision of green infrastructure.

Policy UE1 University of Essex

The area shown on the policies map is designated for University uses adjoining the Knowledge Gateway Employment Area and the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community. Within this area, (in addition to opportunities provided through the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community DPD and stated in policy ST9), development will be supported which enables significant expansion of the University of Essex, if needed. Policy PEP2 and the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community DPD seek to safeguard the retention and expansion of the Knowledge Gateway to allow for provision of a range for additional jobs and to accommodate expansion of the existing research and technology uses which build on the benefits of the University.

Any proposals for the expansion of the University will be required to provide good public transport, pedestrian and cycle links ensuring good connectivity to and from the City Centre, Hythe railway station, the Knowledge Gateway and the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community. This may include contributing to Colchester Mobility Hubs and the Colchester Orbital route.

Proposals will need to pay special regard to the preservation and enhancement of the Grade II listed Wivenhoe House and its Registered Park and Garden, including the wider setting of these heritage assets. Consideration should be given to how the value of Wivenhoe Park Local Wildlife Site might be enhanced, which could be through the provision of green infrastructure.

Development will be expected to contribute to the cost of direct infrastructure improvements as required, supported by up-to-date evidence in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IADP) or subsequent evidence which will be secured to an appropriate level by way of legal agreement.

Marks Tey Growth Area

- 12.35 Marks Tey is located at the junction of the A12 and A120. It is essentially a linear settlement that, while being sustainably located has been fragmented by the railway line and the A12/A120. It contains a good range of facilities which are located in different sections of the village; a railway station to the east providing an interchange between the mainline to London and branch services; a larger area of modern housing, a village hall, commercial areas and the primary school to the west and retail facilities to the south of the A12.
- 12.36 Large areas of land have previously been promoted for development in and around Marks Tey and there is an opportunity for Garden Village scale growth which could help reconnect the village. Its strategic location along with the benefits the train station brings, add weight to the potential for expansion. However, there is also recognition that infrastructure improvements will be required in order to support development at the scale promoted. Accordingly, the Plan allocates sites for housing which could deliver up to 2,500 new homes within the plan period, but on the proviso that it can be demonstrated that additional vehicular movements can be safely accommodated on the A12 and A120 without significantly increasing congestion.
- 12.37 Additional employment land is also allocated, recognising the areas potential given its location on the strategic road network and its position in relation to Stanstead to the west and the Haven ports to the west.
- 12.38 The policies below reflect the fact that it is not anticipated that all the growth promoted can be accommodated without significant upgrades to the A12 and A120. The Opportunity Area designation is intended to demonstrate that some development would be acceptable within the overall sites, subject to further evidence and mitigation being agreed with the highway authority and National Highways.

Policy OA5: Marks Tey Growth Area

The Marks Tey Growth Area is proposed as shown on the Policies Map and the Framework Plan.

The Growth Area will be holistically and comprehensively planned with a distinct identity that responds directly to its context and is of sufficient scale to incorporate a range of homes; employment; education, health and community facilities; and green spaces to enable residents to meet the majority of their day-to-day needs and maximise opportunities for active and sustainable travel. It will be comprehensively planned from the outset, with delivery phased to achieve the whole development, and will be underpinned by a comprehensive package of infrastructure. Proposals will be supported where they accord with the requirements set out in the Masterplan (which could be adopted as a Supplementary Plan) once adopted and other relevant policies.

- A) The Growth Area will deliver:**
 - a) Approximately 2,500 homes within the Plan period (as part of an expected larger development to be delivered beyond 2043)**
 - b) Approximately 18 hectares of employment land within the Plan period (as part of an expected overall total of at least 40 hectares of employment land to be delivered beyond 2043).**
 - c) Strategic open space, incorporating multifunctional uses.**
 - d) Improvements to transport corridors, enhanced sustainable connectivity including to the station, and supporting infrastructure including physical, social and community facilities.**

- B) A Masterplan and delivery framework will be prepared for the Growth Area which will set out how the new community will be designed, developed and delivered in phases, in accordance with the principles in the paragraphs below and as illustrated in the Framework Plan. This will be produced as a Supplementary Plan (or adopted guidance as appropriate) subject to the following minimum requirements:**
 - a) To be informed by an appropriate evidence base.**
 - b) To ensure optimal placemaking and housing delivery which is characterised as a distinctive place that capitalises on local assets, respects its context, and establishes an environment that promotes health, happiness and wellbeing.**
 - c) To be informed through collaboration with relevant infrastructure providers.**

- d) A long term community engagement strategy to be prepared and agreed as part of the masterplan to incorporate community and stakeholder participation in the design, and delivery and management of the Growth Area. Involvement of the relevant Parish Councils will be required as a key part of this engagement strategy.
 - e) At an early stage in the development of the Growth Area, the principles should be agreed for appropriate and sustainable long-term governance for the community facilities and green spaces as appropriate.
 - f) Where appropriate and necessary, the masterplan is to be supported by parameter plans, design codes and/ or guidance.
 - g) Ensure that the costs and benefits of developing the Growth Area are shared by all landowners, with appropriate measures being put in place to equalise the costs and land contributions.
- C) Planning proposals for major housing and employment will not be supported until the Masterplan / Supplementary Plan has been adopted. It is expected that the Masterplan will further develop the concepts identified in the Framework Plan which shows the essential spatial distribution of key land use and infrastructure principles to which the Masterplan will align, including but not limited to:
- a) Establishing a growth area approach to development density and parking which reflects the efficient use of land and maximises the opportunities for sustainable connectivity particularly in the areas closest to the station. In areas within reasonable walking distances of the station, housing development must be delivered at higher densities with highest densities closest to the station as indicated on the framework plan.
 - b) Provision of employment opportunities within the new community to be well connected to existing and new homes, the type and location to be determined by through the Masterplanning work.
 - c) Delivery of improvements to the strategic transport corridor and a package of active travel infrastructure improvements, including a new / improved sustainable route across the A12 and A120, providing an active travel network and a new 'park and choose' facility. This is to include the delivery of a new green sustainable route throughout the growth area providing the opportunity for enhanced sustainable access away from the A120 to the Station and to provide safe crossings of the A120 / A12 and railway line as indicated on the framework plan.

- d) Safeguarding the route of the A12 widening scheme in accordance with the approved Development Consent Order to allow for potential upgrading in the future as shown on the Framework Plan.**
- e) Designation of land on the south eastern edge of the Growth Area as a Marks Tey – Copford Strategic Green Gap for the purpose of preventing the coalescence of the two settlements as shown on the Framework Plan and the Policies Map.**
- f) Provision of at least 49ha of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANG) broadly indicated on the Framework Plan, the details of which are to be integrated into the Masterplanning and to reflect placemaking and the guidelines for SANG provision. Develop opportunities to create significant networks of new green infrastructure including three new parks (two of which could serve as SANGs), provide a high degree of connectivity to existing corridors and networks and enhance biodiversity and local nature recovery.**
- g) Provision of new and improved local centres at suitable locations distributed across the areas of development north and south of the A120 informed by the Masterplanning.**
- h) Provision for secondary, primary and early years education in consultation with the Local Education Authority including 12.4ha of land to support a new secondary school south of the A120, and two sites (each of 2.2ha) for new primary schools including Early Years & Childcare facilities, one to the north and one to the south of the A12/A120.**
- i) Create distinctive environments which are based on comprehensive assessments of the surrounding environment and that celebrate natural and historic environments and systems.**
- j) Development must not harm the special geological interest of the Brickpits SSSI nor the special ecological interest of the Brickpits Local Wildlife Site nor the special architectural and historic interest of the designated heritage assets in the Growth Area.**
- k) In accordance with Policy EN6, development proposals shall have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment, 2026), which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:**
 - i. the retention and enhancement of green infrastructure around the Marks Tey Brickpit SSSI, W.H. Collier Brick and Tile Works, Church Lane and land surrounding the Grade I listed Church of St Andrew;**
 - ii. the protection of important views towards the Grade I listed Church of St Andrew and across the Roman River Valley;**

- iii. the use of landscape buffers, planting and green corridors to soften the appearance of development and maintain the rural character of the area and the setting of nearby heritage assets;
 - iv. the retention and integration of historic landscape features, including historic hedgerows, field boundaries and the parish boundary and where appropriate, historical routes and archaeological features;
 - v. the conservation and incorporation of the Scheduled Monument of Medieval Moat at Marks Hall, the scheduled Monument of the Circular Brick Kilns, the Grade II listed Bottle Kiln, and associated heritage assets relating to Marks Tey Hall and the former W.H. Collier Brick and Tile Works;
 - vi. appropriate building heights, layout, design and access arrangements to minimise impacts on the significance and setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets; and
 - vii. prior to the submission of a planning application, the developer will be required to undertake and fund further archaeological evaluation and recording to fully characterise the archaeological potential of the site and identify any archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary
- l) Proposals must demonstrate that there is capacity available in the sewerage network and at the receiving Water Recycling Centre to accommodate wastewater flows from the proposal for treatment and discharge. Where insufficient capacity is available to serve the proposal at the point of anticipated connection, development will be required to be phased, or otherwise appropriately managed, to ensure that connections do not take place until the necessary infrastructure capacity is available.**
- m) A Partial Review of the Colchester Local Wildlife Sites Network has identified opportunities including woodland protection and management, hedgerow protection and management, wildflower-rich grassland creation, and pond protection and management. Development proposals should take into account the opportunities included in the site proforma in the LoWS Addendum report (2026) to avoid or minimise the potential threat of habitat loss and fragmentation associated with development, and the threat of disturbance and degradation associated with its long-term occupation.**
- n) Ecological surveys must determine whether the entire woodland resource and interconnecting hedgerows meet LoWS criteria. The Growth Area is located within an Important Invertebrate Area (IIA) and further exploration of the invertebrate assemblage, through review of species records and, potentially, targeted surveys, must be**

undertaken to assess eligibility against the LoWS invertebrate criteria. Where part of the site may meet LoWS selection criteria, the criteria must be given the highest priority for protection with appropriate mitigation and compensation measures incorporated into the design of the proposal.

- o) Development proposals within a Mineral Safeguarding Area will require a Mineral Resource Assessment (MRA). This applies to all planning applications for development on a site located within an MSA that is 5ha or more for sand and gravel, 3ha or more for chalk and greater than 1 dwelling for brickearth or brick clay. Please liaise with the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority for further information with regards to the scope of the MRA. Part of the Growth Area is within a Mineral Consultation Area (MCA). Non-mineral led applications made within MCAs are required to include a Minerals Infrastructure Impact Assessment (MIIA) as part of its evidence base. Please liaise with the Minerals and Waste Planning authority for further information with regards to the scope and content of MIIA.

- D) In addition to delivering the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in this Policy and Policy ST7, and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, all development forming part of the Growth Area will also be required to make contributions towards;

- Strategic Road Improvements (A12 and A120)
- Active travel bridge upgrade across A12 at Marks Tey
- Extension of LCWIP Cycle Route 3
- Station Road footway improvements and cycle route
- Secure cycle hub at Marks Tey Station
- Lexden Road sustainable travel corridor
- Rapid Transit System extension/new bus routes
- Colchester West Park and Choose
- Other Highway improvements in line with transport evidence and IADP

- E) Before granting planning consent, wintering bird surveys will be undertaken at the appropriate time of year to identify any offsite functional habitat. Wintering bird surveys should comprise two winter seasons, and both diurnal and nocturnal surveys. Natural England should be contacted for advice on how to determine whether mitigation is required based on the strength of the functional link. In the unlikely event that significant numbers are identified, development must firstly avoid impacts. Where this is not possible, development must be phased

to deliver habitat creation and management either on or off-site to mitigate any significant impacts. Any such habitat must be provided and fully functional before any development takes place which would affect significant numbers of SPA birds.

- F) All development Proposals within Marks Tey parish will also be determined against the policies in the Marks Tey Neighbourhood Plan (adopted April 2022) where they are up to date and relevant. Where relevant within the Growth Area Proposals within the Copford with Easthorpe Neighbourhood Plan Area, will also be determined against the policies in the Copford with Easthorpe Neighbourhood Plan (Adopted October 2023) where they are up to date and relevant. This includes consideration of the most up to date local housing needs evidence.**

12.39 The Spatial Strategy for the Marks Tey Growth Area is based on an evidence review, site assessments, land budget modelling and stakeholder liaison. The strategy features three development zones: north and west of the A12 and A120; south of the A12; and north and east of the railway station.

12.40 The Spatial Strategy can only be delivered through comprehensive Masterplanning of the whole Growth Area. The Framework Plan has been prepared to illustrate the key spatial principles of the policy area boundary to 2043 and beyond. It is expected that the Masterplan and delivery framework will further develop the concepts identified in the Framework Plan which shows the essential spatial distribution of key land use and infrastructure principles to which the Masterplan will align.

12.41 The Framework Plan identifies the land within which the strategy to 2043 will be delivered and the basis for the boundary shown on the Policies Map. Approximately 2,500 homes will be delivered within the Plan period across the development zones. The Framework Plan identifies the area closest to Marks Tey Station with the potential for high density housing, and a transition area where enhanced medium densities should be explored, subject to delivering place making that is sensitive to site constraints.

12.42 Approximately 18 hectares of employment land is identified to be delivered within the Plan period, the precise location and nature of which to be determined through Masterplanning. In addition, it is expected that community and social infrastructure will be delivered including education and community uses, and local centres.

12.43 The Framework Plan includes an active travel route network, comprising three core routes connecting the three zones. An active travel bridge is a critical component of the active travel network connecting the south development zone to the station and the remainder of the green infrastructure network. The active travel network will connect, encompass and enhance the Public Rights of Way network through the area.

12.44 A comprehensive multi functional approach will be taken to the planning and delivery of green infrastructure across the growth area, including the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) connected to the core active travel

network, and protecting the SSSI and Local Wildlife Site. An area of open land is identified on the Framework Plan as the Copford Strategic Gap to prevent the coalescence of the south development zone with Copford to the east.

- 12.45 A comprehensive package of high quality active and sustainable transport measures is identified in the Infrastructure Audit and Delivery Plan (IADP) which all development that forms part of the Growth Area will be expected to deliver and make contributions towards. Improvements to the Strategic Road Network are also identified in the IADP. The Framework Plan also safeguards the land for the route of the A12 widening scheme in accordance with the approved Development Consent Order to allow for potential upgrading of the route in the future. The potential for appropriate interim uses of the safeguarded land will be considered as part of the strategy.
- 12.46 The area beyond the growth area, identified as indicative future growth on the Framework Plan, has the potential to enable Marks Tey to continue to grow in a sustainable way after the plan period, but indicating that the settlement will reach a natural geographical limit of distance.
- 12.47 The Masterplan and delivery framework will be informed through engagement and collaboration including with relevant stakeholders, infrastructure providers, relevant Parish Councils and the community.
- 12.48 For strategic sites of 500 dwellings or more, early and ongoing collaboration between developers, the Council and Anglian Water Services will be essential to ensure that wastewater infrastructure is planned and delivered in a coordinated, timely and environmentally sustainable manner, particularly where there are constraints within the existing foul drainage network and/or wastewater recycling centre capacity.
- 12.49 A comprehensive site-wide foul drainage strategy should be prepared and agreed at an early stage of the development process. This should identify the preferred long-term solution, including a single sustainable point of connection to the public sewerage network, and demonstrate how the necessary wastewater infrastructure will be secured and delivered alongside development.
- 12.50 Where temporary drainage arrangements are required to facilitate early phases of development, these must be appropriately controlled, time-limited and linked to clearly defined triggers for the delivery and operation of permanent infrastructure. Development phasing should be aligned with the timely provision of wastewater infrastructure to avoid adverse impacts on network performance, receiving watercourses and the environment.
- 12.51 Close partnership working between developers, the Council and Anglian Water Services will be required throughout the planning, delivery and occupation of the site to ensure that growth is supported by adequate wastewater infrastructure capacity and integrated with longer-term investment programmes, thereby facilitating sustainable development and environmental protection.

12.52 In addition to the employment land identified within the Growth Area to be delivered within the Plan period, land within the Growth Area is safeguarded in Policy PEP6 for employment purposes. Planning permission for commercial, business and service (Class E c and g), general industrial (Class B2) and storage and distribution (Class B8) purposes on the site which is the land safeguarded in Policy PEP6 was approved in 2023.

Policy PEP6: Anderson's Site, Marks Tey

Land at Anderson's Site, Marks Tey, as shown on the policies map, is safeguarded for employment uses in accordance with Policy E1.

All development Proposals within Marks Tey parish will also be determined against the policies in the Marks Tey Neighbourhood Plan (adopted April 2022) where they are up to date and relevant.

Large Settlements

- 12.53 Large settlements are key locations for growth within the district, reflecting their greater range of services, facilities and accessibility. In accordance with the spatial strategy, these settlements will accommodate development at a scale appropriate to their role, constraints and opportunities, supporting sustainable patterns of growth and reinforcing their function as service centres for surrounding areas.
- 12.54 Development will be directed to suitable sites within or well-related to the existing settlement, making efficient use of land and supporting the vitality of local services, facilities and transport options. The scale and distribution of growth will take full account of environmental constraints, infrastructure capacity and local character and wider opportunities which may be realised.
- 12.55 In West Mersea and Wivenhoe, the extent of growth is carefully balanced against significant environmental constraints. Growth in Tiptree reflects its location, service provision and role and function, as well as opportunities associated with delivering the vision as set out in the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan. Across the large settlements, proposals will be expected to demonstrate that impacts can be appropriately managed, including cumulatively, and that necessary infrastructure is delivered alongside development.

Tiptree

12.56 Tiptree is a large village located on the southwest boundary of Colchester.

Development has grown up around key highway intersections in a roughly triangular built form. There is a small separate cluster of houses to the southwest of the main village known as Tiptree Heath. Tiptree has a district centre with a high number of key services and community facilities. It is the only large village with a secondary school. A neighbourhood plan with site allocations was adopted in 2023. The vision of the neighbourhood plan is to deliver a link road in the north of Tiptree, reducing congestion throughout the village. This plan seeks to build on the work undertaken to inform the Neighbourhood Plan and ensure the vision can be achieved.

Policy PP19: Land North of Oak Road, Tiptree

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver a comprehensive, high quality and co-ordinated development that provides for the following site-specific requirements:

- a) A predominantly residential development including community infrastructure, strategic open space and approximately 650 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development;**
- b) An active travel plan to be agreed with the Council which ensures site wide active travel connectivity including links beyond the site. This must include connections towards the settlement to the South and recreational access to the countryside;**
- c) Development must secure the delivery of the northern link road between the B1022 (Colchester Road) and the B1023 (Kelvedon Road) within the geographical scope of the allocation in accordance with Policy TIP07 and the objectives of the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan;**
- d) Development on this site should not be occupied until the Tiptree Medical Centre and Community Hub has been delivered in accordance with plans designed to meet the increased population in the local area;**
- e) Consideration to be given to the inclusion of a mobility hub which may incorporate provision for bus layover, in the vicinity of the land allocated for health/community purposes on the Elms Farm site;**
- f) Minimise potential threat of habitat loss and fragmentation buffers around Co13 Eden Wood LoWS, Co6 Inworth Wood LoWS and Messing Park LoWS and seek opportunities for tree planting between the woodland parcels to create a larger, more valuable woodland habitat;**
- g) Delivery of a Tiptree Country Park of approximately 27 hectares as indicated on the policies map and accessed through the development. This must include designing the country park to provide a new Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace, integrate multi-user routes, manage existing and create new habitats identified as strategic opportunities within the Essex LNRS, and space for outdoor sports/cricket pitch**

provision. The country park should include land for parking and a visitor centre;

- h) Demonstrate that there is capacity available in the sewerage network and at the receiving Water Recycling Centre to accommodate wastewater flows from the proposal for treatment and discharge. Where insufficient capacity is available to serve the proposal at the point of anticipated connection, development will be required to be phased, or otherwise appropriately managed, to ensure that connections do not take place until the necessary infrastructure capacity is available.**
- i) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:**

 - i. Development must maintain planting around the site perimeter to provide a green backdrop and screen views to nearby heritage assets;**
 - ii. Development must use materials appropriate to the rural setting and should break up large blocks of development planting and green space;**
 - iii. Green space at the eastern end and south of site must be retained to prevent new development from intruding into views from Grade II* listed Messing Park and maintain a sense of separation to Grade II listed Pan in the Wood respectively;**
 - iv. Locate site access away from the listed buildings to minimise traffic and visual intrusion near heritage assets;**
 - v. Prior to the submission of a planning application the developer will be required to undertake and fund further archaeological evaluation and recording to fully characterise the archaeological potential of the site and identify any archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary;**
 - vi. further work of archaeological evaluation and recording to fully characterise the archaeological potential of the site reduce and inform the need for and nature of any subsequent archaeological mitigation if required.**
- j) Before granting planning consent, wintering bird surveys will be undertaken to identify any offsite functional habitat. Wintering bird surveys should comprise two winter seasons, and both diurnal and nocturnal surveys. Natural England should be contacted for advice on how to determine whether mitigation is required based on the strength of the functional link. In the unlikely event that significant numbers are identified, development must firstly avoid impacts. Where this is not possible, development must be phased to deliver habitat creation and management either on or off-site to mitigate any significant impacts. Any such habitat must be provided and fully functional before any development takes place which would affect significant numbers of SPA birds.**
- k) Contributions will be required towards:**

 - i. LCWIP (Walking and Cycling) routes,**

- ii. Tiptree Mobility Hub,
- iii. Mildene school expansion,
- iv. 1 FE at Thurstable Secondary School (repurposing the Sixth Form),
- v. Tiptree Medical Centre and Community Hub

All development proposals within Tiptree Parish Neighbourhood Plan Area, will also be determined against the policies in the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan (Adopted May 2023) where they are up to date and relevant. This includes consideration of the most up to date local housing needs evidence.

Proposals for the allocated site will only be supported where they accord with a comprehensive masterplan in relation to the entire allocation, that has been agreed with the Council prior to submission of any planning application. The masterplan must be of sufficient detail to ensure optimal placemaking and housing delivery outcomes for the allocation and should be informed by an appropriate evidence base. The masterplan should be developed in collaboration with the Council and relevant infrastructure providers, it should incorporate engagement with the local community and be informed by use of design review. Where appropriate and necessary the masterplan shall be supported by, parameter plans, design codes and/or guidance. The masterplan should also consider opportunities to include surrounding areas of land, such as that to the South, within the wider development.

12.57 Land North of Oak Road, Tiptree presents an opportunity to deliver growth in the village which aligns with the aspirations and direction of growth in the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan. The allocation is situated between two allocated sites (Elms Farm to the East and Highland Nursery to the West) in the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan and will help contribute to the delivery of the northern link road as detailed in criterion c which will support reducing congestion and traffic in the village. While this allocation sits outside the Tiptree Parish Area (currently in Messing Parish), and thus the Neighbourhood Plan, the option to have the parish boundaries changed so the development land is included within the Tiptree Parish is being considered.

12.58 The policy details some site specific infrastructure requirements expected to be delivered. There is a desire for the northern link road to be served by a bus service, which would support access to the medical centre and community land to be created as part of development at Elms Farm. Therefore, it is considered a bus layover may be suitable as part of this development to enable buses to turn round near the medical centre, with the exact location to be determined.

12.59 Delivery of a 27ha country park will provide recreation opportunities for residents in Tiptree and nearby villages. It is expected that as part of this, car parking and a visitor centre will be incorporated to serve the country park. Layout of the country park will need to be designed to SANG standards and be agreed with Natural England. Within the country park, land should also be

made available for outdoor sports provision based on local demand which may include football or cricket pitches. Changing rooms to serve the outdoor sports facilities would need to be provided.

- 12.60 For strategic sites of 500 dwellings or more, early and ongoing collaboration between developers, the Council and Anglian Water Services will be essential to ensure that wastewater infrastructure is planned and delivered in a coordinated, timely and environmentally sustainable manner, particularly where there are constraints within the existing foul drainage network and/or wastewater recycling centre capacity.
- 12.61 A comprehensive site-wide foul drainage strategy should be prepared and agreed at an early stage of the development process. This should identify the preferred long-term solution, including a single sustainable point of connection to the public sewerage network, and demonstrate how the necessary wastewater infrastructure will be secured and delivered alongside development.
- 12.62 Where temporary drainage arrangements are required to facilitate early phases of development, these must be appropriately controlled, time-limited and linked to clearly defined triggers for the delivery and operation of permanent infrastructure. Development phasing should be aligned with the timely provision of wastewater infrastructure to avoid adverse impacts on network performance, receiving watercourses and the environment.
- 12.63 Close partnership working between developers, the Council and Anglian Water Services will be required throughout the planning, delivery and occupation of the site to ensure that growth is supported by adequate wastewater infrastructure capacity and integrated with longer-term investment programmes, thereby facilitating sustainable development and environmental protection.

Policy PP20: Land at Bonnie Blue Oak, Tiptree

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 30 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development;
- b) Vehicular access should be taken from the Elms Farm site to prevent further access points on Oak Road;
- c) Delivery of BNG in accordance with Policy EN2 and informed by site specific ecological assessment, with opportunities for the following onsite habitat: enhance the distinctiveness and condition of retained areas of grassland;
- d) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:
 - i. retain hedgerow around boundary of site contributing to screening of Grade II* listed Messing Park and Grade II listed Elm Farmhouse;
 - ii. building heights should be of a similar scale to surrounding development;
 - iii. undertake further archaeological evaluation and recording to fully characterise the archaeological potential of the site and identify any archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary;
 - iv. proposals must demonstrate how the design layout, scale, massing and landscaping responds positively to the site's heritage context.
- e) Contributions will be required towards:
 - i. LCWIP (Walking and Cycling) routes,
 - ii. Tiptree Mobility Hub,
 - iii. Mildene school expansion,
 - iv. 1 FE at Thurstable Green Secondary School (repurposing the Sixth Form),
 - v. Tiptree Medical Centre and Community Hub.

All development proposals within Tiptree Parish Neighbourhood Plan Area, will also be determined against the policies in the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan (Adopted May 2023) where they are up to date and relevant. This includes consideration of the most up to date local housing needs evidence.

Policy PP21: Highlands, Kelvedon Road, Tiptree

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 10 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development;**
- b) Development proposals should seek to avoid or minimise the potential threat of habitat loss and fragmentation associated with development, and the threat of disturbance and degradation associated with its long-term occupation (as identified in the LoWS Review 2026);**
- c) Consider the Grade II Listed farm complex to the north in the Heritage Statement and use the recommendations to inform site layout and design;**
- d) Contributions will be required towards:**
 - i. LCWIP (Walking and Cycling) routes,**
 - ii. Tiptree Mobility Hub,**
 - iii. Mildene school expansion,**
 - iv. 1 FE at Thurstable Secondary School (repurposing the Sixth Form),**
 - v. Tiptree Medical Centre and Community Hub.**

All development proposals within Tiptree Parish Neighbourhood Plan Area, will also be determined against the policies in the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan (Adopted May 2023) where they are up to date and relevant. This includes consideration of the most up to date local housing needs evidence.

Policy PP22: Telephone Exchange, Tiptree

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 5 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development;**
- b) Delivery of BNG in accordance with Policy EN2 and informed by site specific ecological assessment, with opportunities for the following onsite habitat: small-scale grassland enhancement, hedge enhancement and tree planting;**
- c) Safeguard suitable access for the maintenance of existing water supply infrastructure on the site;**
- d) Contributions will be required towards:**
 - i. LCWIP (Walking and Cycling) routes,**
 - ii. Tiptree Mobility Hub,**
 - iii. Mildene school expansion,**
 - iv. 1 FE at Thurstable Secondary School (repurposing the Sixth Form),**
 - v. Tiptree Medical Centre and Community Hub.**

All development proposals within Tiptree Parish Neighbourhood Plan Area, will also be determined against the policies in the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan (Adopted May 2023) where they are up to date and relevant. This includes consideration of the most up to date local housing needs evidence.

Policy PP22b: Land at New Park Cottage, Maypole Road, Tiptree

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 25 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development;**
- b) Delivery of BNG in accordance with Policy EN2 and informed by site specific ecological assessment, with opportunities for the following onsite habitat: protect and enhance retained hedgerows, trees and grassland, tree planting and creating additional scrub habitat;**
- c) A new and improved, safe and suitable vehicle access should be provided to Warriors Rest through the development;**
- d) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:**
 - i. the retention and enhancement of planting around the edges of the site to maintain screening to heritage assets and new development;**
 - ii. use of green space within the development to break up density in keeping with the rural location;**
 - iii. appropriate building heights, scale and massing that reflects the surrounding development; and**
 - iv. further archaeological evaluation is recommended.**
- e) Contributions will be required towards:**
 - i. LCWIP (Walking and Cycling) routes,**
 - ii. Tiptree Mobility Hub,**
 - iii. Mildene school expansion,**
 - iv. 1 FE at Thurstable Secondary School (repurposing the Sixth Form),**
 - v. Tiptree Medical Centre and Community Hub.**

All development proposals within Tiptree Parish Neighbourhood Plan Area, will also be determined against the policies in the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan (Adopted May 2023) where they are up to date and relevant. This includes consideration of the most up to date local housing needs evidence.

Policy PEP7 Highland Nursery, Tiptree

Land at Highlands Nursery, is safeguarded for employment uses in accordance with the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan. In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies, proposals for employment uses will be supported on land within the area identified on the policies map which accord with Policy E1 and the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan.

All development proposals within Tiptree Parish Neighbourhood Plan Area, will also be determined against the policies in the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan (Adopted May 2023) where they are up to date and relevant.

Policy PEP8 Land South of Factory Hill, Tiptree

Land South of Factory Hill, Tiptree, as shown on the policies map, is allocated for employment uses in accordance with Policy E1 and proposals for employment uses will be supported subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this Plan. In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Delivery of BNG in accordance with Policy EN2 and informed by site specific ecological assessment, with opportunities for the following onsite habitat: enhance retained grassland and new or enhanced hedgerows;**
- b) Safeguard suitable access for the maintenance of existing water supply and sewage infrastructure on the site;**
- c) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:**
 - i. The use of green space and planting to break up the development;**
 - ii. The maintenance and enhancement of the existing roadside planting and boundary hedgerows;**
 - iii. proposals must demonstrate how the design layout, scale, massing and landscaping responds positively to the site's heritage context.**

All development proposals within Tiptree Parish Neighbourhood Plan Area, will also be determined against the policies in the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan (Adopted May 2023) where they are up to date and relevant.

Policy PEP16: Land South of Tower Business Park, Tiptree

Land South of Tower Business Park, Tiptree, as shown on the policies map, is allocated for employment uses in accordance with Policy E1 and proposals for employment uses will be supported subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this Plan and provide the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7.

All development proposals within Tiptree Parish Neighbourhood Plan Area, will also be determined against the policies in the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan (Adopted May 2023) where they are up to date and relevant.

West Mersea

12.64 West Mersea is a coastal town located on the confluence of the Colne and Blackwater Estuaries, approximately 15km from Colchester city centre. There are bus routes serving the town to and from Colchester and serving the local secondary schools. West Mersea has numerous town centre and community uses both within the district centre and throughout the town, making it a sustainable settlement. However, it has environmental constraints: the Colne and Blackwater Estuaries are Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites and form part of the Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation and the Blackwater, Crouch, Roach and Colne Estuaries Marine Conservation Zone. A balance is needed to allow an appropriate scale of development in this sustainable settlement that avoids adverse effects on the integrity of the Colne and Blackwater estuaries and protects nationally important habitats and species. In addition, the island has one road in and out which at times is cut off by high tides which is a concern in relation to the potential increase in wildfires and the impact of climate change on rising sea levels. This vulnerability is noted on the policies map. The unique characteristics of Mersea and the number of constraints has influenced the amount of growth considered appropriate for Mersea during the plan period. Therefore, no more than 300 new dwellings should be delivered on large sites (10 units or more).

12.65 Also of relevance to proposals in West Mersea are policies LC4 (Islands) and PP23a (Mersea Islands Caravan Parks).

Policy PP23: Land East Dawes Lane, West Mersea

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Up to 300 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing, including the provision of almshouses, to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development.
- b) Provision of a higher proportion of one and two bedroomed houses, bungalows and almshouses within the scheme, unless it can be demonstrated that the particular circumstances relating to the tenure of the housing dictate otherwise or where such provision is demonstrated to not be in accordance with the latest available housing needs evidence.
- c) Delivery of BNG in accordance with Policy EN2 and informed by site specific ecological assessment, with opportunities for the following onsite habitat: enhance retained grassland, establish new grassland and native hedges, and new tree planting.
- d) Support will be given to delivering standing freshwater habitat within or adjacent to the site to support the delivery of the strategic creation opportunities in the Essex LNRS.

- e) **Enhanced provision of open space of at least 5 hectares must be provided within the site, and this open space must link with the open space within the approved scheme at Dawes Lane and connect through to The Glebe as indicated on the policies map.**
- f) **Provision of allotments to be transferred to West Mersea Town Council to manage and maintain, contiguous with development of that part of the site.**
- g) **Reconfiguration of West Mersea Clinic or alternative provision, to provide additional capacity to demonstrate that residents of the new development are able to access registration with a GP surgery in the local area without prejudicing the existing community.**
- h) **In accordance with Policy EN6, development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:**
 - i. **the use of a woodland strip and enhanced planting to provide natural screening between heritage assets and new development (especially in the north and south-east);**
 - ii. **The use of greenspace (especially in the north) to break up development and preserve the rural character;**
 - iii. **Limit the heights of buildings in order to minimise the potential visibility from the barrow over the treeline;**
 - iv. **Prior to the submission of a planning application the developer will be required to undertake and fund further archaeological evaluation and recording to fully characterise the archaeological potential of the site and identify any archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary.**
- i) **Before granting planning consent, wintering bird surveys will be undertaken to identify any offsite functional habitat. Wintering bird surveys should comprise two winter seasons, and both diurnal and nocturnal surveys. Natural England should be contacted for advice on how to determine whether mitigation is required based on the strength of the functional link. In the unlikely event that significant numbers are identified, development must firstly avoid impacts. Where this is not possible, development must be phased to deliver habitat creation and management either on or off-site to mitigate any significant impacts. Any such habitat must be provided and fully functional before any development takes place which would affect significant numbers of SPA birds.**
- j) **A foul drainage strategy will be required as part of any planning application to identify a sustainable point of connection to the public foul network. No development should take place until the strategy is approved and there is adequate capacity to accommodate the new dwellings.**
- k) **In addition to any relevant requirements under Policy ST7, contributions will be required towards:**
 - i **the enhancement of the quality and value of The Glebe Sports Ground and facilities including new clubhouse/pavilion and storage and small sided 3g AGP;**

- ii upgrades to the Water Recycling Centre;
- iii mobility hubs within the development, at the Glebe and/or the town centre.

All development proposals within West Mersea Neighbourhood Plan Area, will also be determined against the policies in the West Mersea Neighbourhood Plan (Adopted April 2022) where they are up to date and relevant. This includes consideration of the most up to date local housing needs evidence.

- 12.66 Given the environmental sensitivities of Mersea Island and its proximity to internationally important estuarine habitats, development should maximise opportunities for SuDS that attenuate surface water run-off and provide wider environmental benefits. In accordance with Policy EN8a, SuDS should be designed to manage flood risk whilst also seeking, where feasible, to improve water quality and reduce nutrient discharges to receiving waters.
- 12.67 The allocation provides an opportunity to deliver a significant area of multifunctional green infrastructure alongside new housing. The enhanced open space requirement will help maintain the transition between the built form of West Mersea and the surrounding countryside, provide opportunities for recreation, biodiversity enhancement and sustainable drainage, and strengthen connections between existing and new development. The integration of the site with adjoining open spaces, including links to The Glebe and the approved Dawes Lane development, will help create a coherent green infrastructure network across this part of West Mersea.

Policy PP23a: Mersea Island Caravan Parks

Development proposals at caravan parks, including change of use, intensification of an existing use, or change in activities on site will only be supported where they meet all the following criteria:

- a) Protects the integrity of habitats sites and minimises disturbance to designated breeding and wintering species. Proposals must be supported by information to enable a Habitats Regulations Assessment, including appropriate assessment where required, and demonstrate how any avoidance or mitigation measures identified in the appropriate assessment will be secured and delivered.
- b) Any outdoor lighting proposed must follow dark sky lighting principles to ensure that lighting avoids light pollution, avoids any further reduction in tranquillity and protects landscape character and wildlife. Any lighting proposed should be justified, directed to where it is needed to avoid spill and comply with relevant standards and best practice from the Institute of Lighting Professionals and UK Dark Skies Partnership.
- c) Anglian Water Services confirm that there is adequate wastewater treatment and sewage infrastructure capacity to serve the caravan park and avoid adverse impacts on water quality.
- d) Are supported with a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment and Flood Management and Flood Evacuation Plan. Proposals for caravan extensions in flood zone 3, including any increase to the future extent of this zone due to climate change, will only be supported where they satisfy the requirements of the Exception Test, demonstrate safe access and evacuation and do not increase risk elsewhere. Proposals that fail to meet these requirements will not be supported.
- e) Minimise impact on the amenity of residents or businesses living or operating near the site. The cumulative effects of proposals will be assessed collectively, not individually.
- f) Permanent occupancy will not be permitted, and compliance monitoring will continue to be undertaken. The cumulative impact of proposals for additional caravans or lodges will be assessed on an individual site basis and collectively, taking into account all sites on the island. Conversion of touring sites for static caravans and lodges will not be supported.
- g) Incorporates proportionate measures to support sustainable and active travel for leisure having regard to the site's location and function as visitor accommodation. Such measures should include the provision of mobility hubs.

Permission will not be granted for visitor accommodation at the caravan parks to be used as permanent residences. Visitor accommodation will be limited by condition or legal agreement to holiday use only and/or certain periods of the year in order to prevent permanent residences.

Justification

- 12.68 Policy PP23a provides criteria that will be used to assess the suitability of any new or extensions to existing or intensification of caravan parks on Mersea Island, addressing landscape, environmental and infrastructure constraints. It should be read alongside other policies including policies on coastal areas, landscape, biodiversity and tourism. Policy LC3 includes criteria for development within the coastal protection belt and states that proposals for new moorings for permanent residential houseboats will not be permitted because of their landscape and environmental impact on designated habitats sites. Houseboat proposals for new moorings on historical vacant sites or houseboats of historical maritime significance, may be acceptable.
- 12.69 There are six caravan sites on Mersea Island, three of which are for static vans or lodges, the other three sites have some touring and camping pitches for approximately 600 units. There are approximately 1988 static sites. There are also approximately 280 B&Bs, second homes and registered self-catering units on the Island. Together with some 600 Beach Huts on the south shoreline of Mersea Beach. The Town Council is concerned that any removal of touring sites to replace with static vans and lodges would encourage touring camper vans/cars to illegally pitch overnight in protected areas, adversely affecting Mersea Island's protected coastal sites.
- 12.70 Mersea Island lies within National Character Area 81: Greater Thames Estuary, recognised for its distinctive coastal landscape, estuarine ecology and environmental sensitivity. The Colchester Landscape Character Assessment notes that two of the key characteristics and sensitivities and value of the Mersea Island Coastal Farmland landscape character area are: 'a rural landscape albeit the sense of tranquillity is diminished in the vicinity of settlement and the holiday caravan parks'; and 'a strong sense of remoteness and wildness along the coastal edges, with wide open views across marshes and mudflats towards the surrounding estuaries and channels and the sound of wind and birds'. Guidance for Development Management includes reducing lighting impacts and avoiding any further reduction in tranquillity around West Mersea and the holiday caravan parks.
- 12.71 To demonstrate compliance with criteria (c), confirmation that there is adequate wastewater treatment and sewage infrastructure capacity to serve the caravan park and avoid adverse impacts on water quality must be sought from Anglian Water in advance of submission of the planning application and within the previous 12 months. Ideally evidence should be set out in a foul drainage assessment for the site.
- 12.72 Sites used for holiday or short-let caravans and camping, subject to a specific warning and evacuation plan, are deemed 'more vulnerable' in Annex 3 of the NPPF. The PPG states that development is compatible in flood zone 3 provided that the Exception Test is passed.

- 12.73 The introduction of further lighting has the potential to increase light pollution, reduce dark skies, further reduce tranquillity and adversely affect landscape character and wildlife. The policy criteria for lighting will ensure that the impacts of any further lighting are understood and that lighting schemes are designed to respect the tranquillity of the area. The policy requires compliance with dark sky lighting principles. These principles were developed by DarkSky International. The principles for outdoor lighting are: useful, use light only if it is needed; targeted, direct light so it falls only where it is needed; low level, light should be no brighter than necessary; controlled, use light only when it is needed using controls such as timers or motion detectors; and warm-coloured lights where possible to limit the amount of shorter wavelength (blue-violet) light.
- 12.74 Whilst it is accepted that most visitors to the caravan parks will arrive by car, there is opportunity for local trips to be made by other modes. Accordingly, mobility hubs should be planned into all proposals.

Wivenhoe

12.75 Wivenhoe benefits from good infrastructure provision including a mainline train station, a GP surgery, two primary schools, numerous shops and restaurants and abundant open space provision. There are also frequent bus services between Wivenhoe and Colchester and to Brightlingsea, a cycle path between Wivenhoe and the University of Essex and the popular Wivenhoe Trail along the river to Colchester. However, there are a number of constraints which has influenced the amount of growth considered appropriate for Wivenhoe. Wivenhoe is bordered by the River Colne to the west and south. In addition to the physical boundary that the river presents, land falls within flood risk zone 3. There are a number of environmental designations surrounding Wivenhoe. The Upper Colne Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lies to the west and south of Wivenhoe. The Colne Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar Site and SSSI and Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation (SAC) lie to the south-east of Wivenhoe. The Colne Local Nature Reserve and Local Wildlife Site runs adjacent to the built-up western boundary. The Coastal Protection Belt surrounds the west and south of Wivenhoe. Wivenhoe Gravel Pit SSSI lies to the north-east of Wivenhoe. A balance needs to be struck to allow appropriate growth in this sustainable settlement which accords with the spatial strategy and protection of sensitive environmental sites.

Policy PP24: Land Northwest of the Fire Station, Wivenhoe

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies, development will be supported on land within the area identified on the policies map which provides:

- a) Approximately 200 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development. The total number of dwellings will be spread between this site and the area currently set aside for a care home as part of the neighbourhood plan allocation;**
- b) Provide active travel connections between the adjoining Neighbourhood Plan Allocation and Colchester Road;**
- c) Provide safe recreational access to the countryside via active travel modes, particularly to the Wivenhoe Trail and the adjacent allotments;**
- d) A Heritage Statement to inform the layout of the site and scale of development, considering the setting of Grade II Listed Building on Colchester Road;**
- e) Delivery of BNG in accordance with Policy EN2 and informed by site specific ecological assessment, with opportunities for the following onsite habitat: enhance hedgerow condition and retain and create grassland habitats, particularly lowland dry acid grassland;**
- f) Opportunities for undergrounding of pylons should be explored;**

- g) Safeguard suitable access for the maintenance of existing sewage infrastructure on the site;**
- h) Before granting planning consent, wintering bird surveys will be undertaken to identify any offsite functional habitat. Wintering bird surveys should comprise two winter seasons, and both diurnal and nocturnal surveys. Natural England should be contacted for advice on how to determine whether mitigation is required based on the strength of the functional link. In the unlikely event that significant numbers are identified, development must firstly avoid impacts. Where this is not possible, development must be phased to deliver habitat creation and management either on or off-site to mitigate any significant impacts. Any such habitat must be provided and fully functional before any development takes place which would affect significant numbers of SPA birds.**
- i) Contributions will be required towards:**
 - i. LCWIP (Walking and Cycling) routes, other public rights of way where appropriate,**
 - ii. Wivenhoe Mobility Hub;**
 - iii. Mede Way Community Hub, or alternative community building in North Wivenhoe and;**
 - iv. Broad Lane Sports Ground including 1 full size 3G artificial pitch**

All development Proposals within Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan Area, will also be determined against the policies in the Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan (Adopted May 2019) where they are up to date and relevant. This includes consideration of the most up to date local housing needs evidence.

Justification

- 12.76** It is recognised that the presence of valued environmentally sensitive sites in Wivenhoe, including proximity to SSSI habitats, constrains growth opportunities in Wivenhoe. The plan acknowledges this, including information in the town's emerging Nature Plan, in allocating Land Northwest of the Fire Station recognising that through assessment that the site has limited natural habitat onsite, so is unlikely to harm biodiversity.
- 12.77** Whilst a small part of the allocation is within the coalescence break in the existing Neighbourhood Plan, the policy can enable for development to take place to fit in with the local character and landscape alongside delivering additional habitat and improvements for biodiversity. Safeguards in relation to the requirement for wintering bird surveys will also development can be planned to minimise any impacts on birdlife where identified.
- 12.78** The allocation is also in a sustainable location adjacent to one of the neighbourhood plan allocations. PP24 can complement the existing neighbourhood plan allocation, including through delivery of some homes allocated on land set aside for a care home which is no longer needed owing to the proposal for a care home on an alternative site in Wivenhoe. It will also

support provision of community uses in the north of Wivenhoe by delivering contributions to a community building in the area and also supporting access to the allotments being delivered as part of the existing allocation, as well as access to wider countryside.

Medium Settlements

- 12.79 Medium settlements play an important role in accommodating sustainable growth across the district, reflecting their level of services, facilities and connectivity. In line with the spatial strategy, these settlements will accommodate development at a scale appropriate to their opportunities and constraints, size, function and accessibility, helping to support and sustain local services and communities. In some medium settlements the scale of growth reflects opportunities linked to their location, accessibility and the role they can play in delivering growth aligned with the spatial strategy.
- 12.80 Growth in medium settlements will be directed to appropriate and deliverable sites within or well-related to the existing settlement, taking account of environmental and infrastructure constraints. Development should make efficient use of land, respond positively to the character and form of the settlement, and be supported by necessary infrastructure, either through existing capacity or appropriate mitigation.
- 12.81 This approach ensures that medium settlements contribute to meeting development needs in a sustainable way, while managing cumulative impacts and maintaining their distinctive character and role within the settlement hierarchy.

Abberton and Langenhoe

12.82 Abberton and Langenhoe were originally two separate settlements but have now effectively merged into one village which share services and facilities. The facilities in the village include a primary school, community hall, community shop and public open space. The village benefits from good road connections to Colchester being positioned along the B1025 which has bus stops situated along it which are served by the Mersea bus.

Policy PP25: View Park, Abberton and Langenhoe

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 50 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development.**
- b) Delivery of BNG in accordance with Policy EN2 and informed by site specific ecological assessment, with opportunities for the following onsite habitat: enhance the condition of any higher distinctiveness grassland and enhance the condition of hedgerows.**
- c) In accordance with Policy EN6, development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:**
 - i. development should avoid dense, uniform layouts in order to preserve the dispersed village-edge character near Tudhoe House, The Grange and Gun House, block style development should be avoided;**
 - ii. the tree lines to the north and east of the site should be preserved to maintain visual screening for nearby listed buildings;**
 - iii. site access should be located to the west, towards the main road, to reduce traffic and visual intrusion near heritage assets.**
- d) Safeguard suitable access for the maintenance of existing water supply infrastructure.**
- e) Contributions will be sought towards expanding and improving community, sport and leisure provision in the village to meet the needs of the expanded population.**

12.83 Given the current constraints and uncertainty regarding available wastewater treatment capacity within the Fingringhoe Wastewater Recycling Centre catchment and associated sewerage network, the applicant will be required to

engage with Anglian Water Services at an early stage and demonstrate, prior to the submission of a planning application, that sufficient capacity is available to accommodate the proposed development, or that appropriate infrastructure upgrades have been agreed to support it, which may include sustainable points of connection to the water supply and wastewater networks to minimise impacts on existing communities and the environment. Where capacity is not available within the required timescales, development may need to be phased to align with the delivery of necessary wastewater infrastructure improvements.

Boxted

12.84 Development in Botted is currently concentrated within three distinct settlement areas: Botted Cross, Workhouse Hill and an area to the south of the parish to the west of Straight Road. Development in Botted Cross has grown in a linear manner around Straight Road/Carters Hill, Dedham Road/Cage Lane crossroads extending north eastwards as far as Cooks Lane. Botted Cross is considered to be a sustainable location for growth as it is reasonably well served by a number of services and facilities.

Policy PP26: Land North of Botted Straight Road, Botted Cross

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 150 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development;
- b) Delivery of BNG in accordance with Policy EN2 and informed by site specific ecological assessment, with opportunities for the following onsite habitat: buffering woodland Priority Habitat to the north of the site and woodland to the west. Soil conditions may favour the creation of higher distinctiveness grasslands;
- c) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:
 - i. preserving long range views of the church tower using green space and planting, especially from Wainwright House;
 - ii. an area of green space in the north of the site should be used to set buildings back from the edge of the ridge, avoiding development becoming prominent in views across the valley from the north;
 - iii. preserving the tree lines to the north and west of the site to maintain visual screening for nearby listed buildings, an extension of treeline to north west of the site will help to screen from Botted Conservation area;
 - iv. break up dense blocks of development to preserve the rural character of the area, especially to the west and north of the site, development should avoid dense, uniform layouts;
 - v. site access located to the east, associated with the modern development that has taken place in that direction;
- d) Before granting planning consent, wintering bird surveys will be undertaken to identify any offsite functional habitat. Wintering bird surveys should comprise two winter seasons, and both diurnal and

nocturnal surveys. Natural England should be contacted for advice on how to determine whether mitigation is required based on the strength of the functional link. In the unlikely event that significant numbers are identified, development must firstly avoid impacts. Where this is not possible, development must be phased to deliver habitat creation and management either on or off-site to mitigate any significant impacts. Any such habitat must be provided and fully functional before any development takes place which would affect significant numbers of SPA birds;

- e) Development shall minimise light pollution through a comprehensive lighting strategy informed by the Dedham Vale National Landscape Lighting Design Guide. Lighting shall protect dark skies, tranquillity, residential amenity and ecological networks.**

All development proposals within Boxted Neighbourhood Plan Area, will also be determined against the policies in the Boxted Neighbourhood Plan (Adopted December 2016) where they are up to date and relevant.

12.85 Development within the Langham Wastewater Recycling Centre (WRC) catchment will need to take account of existing capacity constraints within both the wastewater treatment works and the associated sewerage network. The Water Cycle Study identifies that the WRC is currently operating at its permitted discharge limit and that there are existing sewer network capacity issues within the catchment, including infiltration of surface water and groundwater into the sewer system. Further environmental assessment and infrastructure improvements will be required to accommodate planned growth.

12.86 Developers will be required to engage with Anglian Water Services at the earliest opportunity and, prior to the submission of a planning application, demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available within both the Langham WRC and the associated sewer network to accommodate the proposed development, or that an agreed strategy is in place to deliver any necessary upgrades. Development proposals should be accompanied by evidence of consultation with Anglian Water Services and confirmation of the proposed point of connection and servicing strategy.

12.87 Given the identified infrastructure constraints, development may need to be phased to align with the delivery of sewerage network improvements and any future wastewater treatment capacity enhancements. In particular, the timing of housing delivery should have regard to the recommendations of the Water Cycle Study and the availability of infrastructure capacity, ensuring that growth does not result in adverse impacts on existing communities, the sewerage system or the water environment.

Chappel and Wakes Colne

12.88 Chappel and Wakes Colne are separate settlements but are located adjacent to one another and share services and facilities. Chappel has one core settlement area with three remote/dispersed small clusters of housing at Rose Green, Swan Street and Wakes Street. The core focus of Chappel is centred around the primary school. The settlement is defined to the east by the railway line, which is the Sudbury to Marks Tey branch line. Wakes Colne parish includes the main settlement area with smaller dispersed clusters of housing around Inworth Lane and at Middle Green. The core focus of Wakes Colne is around the railway, defined to the east by the railway line. The railway station is also home to Chappel and Wakes Colne Railway Museum which hosts many events and houses a number of refurbished steam trains.

Policy PP27: Swan Grove, Chappel

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) **Approximately 35 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development;**
- b) **Delivery of BNG in accordance with Policy EN2 and informed by site specific ecological assessment, with opportunities for the following onsite habitat: enhance hedgerow condition, buffer Chappel Ponds and Millennium Green LoWS, and maintain and strengthen ecological connectivity;**
- c) **Safeguard suitable access for the maintenance of existing sewage infrastructure on the site;**
- d) **In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Turleys 2021 Impact Assessment) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:**
 - i. **maintain the visual separation between the village and Grade II listed Hill House and Martyns Croft;**
 - ii. **proposals must demonstrate how the design layout, scale, massing and landscaping responds positively to the site's heritage context.**
- e) **Contributions will be required towards:**
 - i. **a new, or improvements to the existing village hall including but not limited to potential for additional parking;**
 - ii. **a secure cycle hub at Chappel and Wakes Colne station, Wakes Colne Mobility Hub;**

- iii. **public transport improvements and an active travel route between station/mobility hub and Wakes Hall Business Park employment site.**

Policy PP28: Land West of Station Road, Wakes Colne

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 200 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development.
- b) Provision of a link road between Station Road and the A1124 with junction layout and points of vehicle access to be agreed with the Highway Authority. Full exploration of vehicle access being stopped along Station Road to through traffic (cul de sac) with appropriate treatment of the road for pedestrian cycle priority. The design of these highway features must be informed by public consultation.
- c) Provision of safe crossings across the A1124 to be agreed with the Highway Authority.
- d) Secure active travel links and connections from the development to Wakes Hall Business Centre and railway station; and across the A1124, to be agreed with the Highway Authority.
- e) 'Enhanced Open Space' substantively in excess of 10% of the allocation area must be provided as open space. This should include approximately 8 hectares within the site to provide recreation, BNG and community uses, informed by the Parish Councils, and could incorporate outdoor gym, children's play area and new changing facilities at the cricket club;
- f) Delivery of BNG in accordance with Policy EN2 and informed by site specific ecological assessment, with opportunities for the following onsite habitat: buffer and extend the ancient woodland in Acorn Wood LoWS and strengthen north to south connectivity along the key ecological corridor. The site is on the north valley slope of the Colne Valley with patches of superficial sand and gravel deposits, which might make parts of it particularly suitable for grassland creation; Support will be given to delivering standing freshwater, woodland or grassland habitat to support the delivery of the strategic creation opportunities in the Essex LNRS.
- g) Include measures to ensure external lighting is sensitively designed so it will not adversely impact on dark skies.
- h) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:
 - i. the maintenance and enhancement of the treeline and planting along the southern site boundary;
 - ii. the use of green space to create a buffer to the conservation area and Acorn Wood;
 - iii. the use of green space and planting to break up new development and help preserve the rural character of the area;
 - iv. limits on the heights of buildings, especially in the north.

- v. the use of view corridors through the site to maintain visual links between Wakes Colne House, Crows Hall and Acorn Wood.
 - vi. for construction traffic to avoid passing listed buildings along the A1124.
 - vii. Prior to the submission of a planning application the developer will be required to undertake and fund further archaeological evaluation and recording to fully characterise the archaeological potential of the site and identify any archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary.
- i) Development proposals within a Mineral Safeguarding Area will require a Mineral Resource Assessment (MRA). This applies to all planning applications for development on a site located within an MSA that is 5ha or more for sand and gravel, 3ha or more for chalk and greater than 1 dwelling for brickearth or brick clay. Please liaise with the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority for further information with regards to the scope of the MRA.
 - j) Contributions will be required towards:
 - i. a new, or improvements to the existing, village hall including but not limited to potential for additional parking;
 - ii. a secure cycle hub at Chappel and Wakes Colne station, and Wakes Colne Mobility Hub.

Proposals for the allocated site will only be supported where they accord with a comprehensive masterplan in relation to the entire allocation, that has been agreed with the Council prior to submission of any planning application. The masterplan must be of sufficient detail to ensure optimal placemaking and housing delivery outcomes for the allocation and should be informed by an appropriate evidence base. The masterplan should be developed in collaboration with the Council, and relevant infrastructure providers and consultees including Historic England, it should incorporate engagement with the local community and be informed by use of design review. Where appropriate and necessary, the masterplan shall be supported by parameter plans, design codes and/or guidance.

12.89 Development on land West of Station Road, Wakes Colne provides an opportunity to deliver not only new homes, but also safe pedestrian and cycle routes linking the communities of Wakes Colne and Chappel with the station and other facilities. The provision of a link road between Station Road and the A1124 will enable the exploration of vehicle access being stopped along Station Road to through traffic and improve and enhance the route for pedestrian and cycle priority providing safe access to the station. The design of these highway features must be informed by public consultation and agreed with the Highway Authority.

12.90 Development on land West of Station Road also provides the opportunity for enhanced community facilities and enhanced provision of open space that will benefit both existing and future communities.

Policy PEP12: Land at Wakes Hall Business Centre

Land Wakes Hall Business Centre, as shown on the policies map, is allocated for employment uses in accordance with Policy E1 and proposals for employment uses will be supported subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this Plan. In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Safe active travel routes and access to ensure connectivity between the site and existing routes and to maximise opportunities for enhanced active and sustainable travel connectivity to the surrounding area including Chappel and Wakes Colne Station.
- b) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:
 - i. the tree and hedge lines that form parts of the boundaries of the site should be preserved and enhanced to maintain visual screening for nearby heritage assets, especially important in the east of the site;
 - ii. site access should be located to the south, towards the main road (A1124 Tyburn Hill), to reduce traffic and visual intrusion near heritage assets, also minimise gaps in the surrounding planting.
- c) Contributions will be required towards:
 - i. a secure cycle hub at Chappel and Wakes Colne station, Wakes Colne Mobility Hub;
 - ii. public transport improvements and an active travel route between station/mobility hub and Wakes Hall Business Park employment site.

Copford

12.91 The Parish of Copford with Easthorpe comprises three distinct villages:

Copford, Easthorpe, and Copford Green, the latter being a designated conservation area and one of Colchester's small settlements. Development in Copford has grown in a linear manner along London Road, eastwards towards Stanway and westwards towards Marks Tey. Copford Church of England Primary School is located on Church Road between Copford and Copford Green. There is open space, a village hall, gift shop and pub within the parish and a number of local services including pubs, restaurants and a post office located along London Road in Stanway, just outside of the Copford parish boundary and in Marks Tey, which is approximately 1km from the centre of Copford.

Policy PP29a: Land East of School Road, Copford

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver a comprehensive, high quality and co-ordinated development that provides for the following site-specific requirements:

- a) A predominantly residential development including community infrastructure, strategic open space and approximately 300 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development.
- b) An active travel plan to be agreed with the Council which ensures site wide active travel connectivity including links beyond the site.
- c) Provision of a new local centre to serve the new and existing local community. This may include provision of retail, commercial and community facilities at an appropriate scale, relevant to the role and function of a local centre and the communities it is intended to serve, to be informed by the Parish Council.
- d) 'Enhanced Open Space' as shown on the policies map substantively in excess of 10% of the allocation area must be provided as open space. This should include at least one area of strategic open space and multiple areas of less formal and more incidental 'doorstop' open space.
- e) Strategic open space is to provide a naturally landscaped community space that is well connected to the wider Public Rights of Way network. This should also ensure it provides an appropriate buffer required to protect the LoWs and as required in respect of the pumping station. Explore opportunities to integrate this space with Pits Wood LoWS (which consists of Ancient Wood Irreplaceable Habitat and Priority Habitat) through the creation of grassland, scrub, freshwater and woodland habitats that would buffer the LoWS. The size of the buffer will be informed by ecological assessment to protect the site from recreational pressure.

- f) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2026) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:
 - i. the use of green space and planting to break up and screen development particularly along the south-western boundaries;
 - ii. retention of an appropriate landscape buffer along Hall Road;
 - iii. careful treatment of the southern and south-western edge to retain a sense of rural separation between Copford and Copford Green; and
 - iv. limits on the heights of buildings to ensure new development is in keeping with the surrounding buildings;
- g) Provision of a buffer around the sewer pumping station and safeguard suitable access for the maintenance of existing water supply and sewage infrastructure on the site.
- h) Before granting planning consent, wintering bird surveys will be undertaken to identify any offsite functional habitat. Wintering bird surveys should comprise two winter seasons, and both diurnal and nocturnal surveys. Natural England should be contacted for advice on how to determine whether mitigation is required based on the strength of the functional link. In the unlikely event that significant numbers are identified, development must firstly avoid impacts. Where this is not possible, development must be phased to deliver habitat creation and management either on or off-site to mitigate any significant impacts. Any such habitat must be provided and fully functional before any development takes place which would affect significant numbers of SPA birds.
- i) The site is within a Waste Consultation Area (WCA). Applications made within WCAs are required to include a Waste Infrastructure Impact Assessment (WIIA) as part of its evidence base. Please liaise with the Minerals and Waste Planning authority for further information with regards to the scope and content of WIIA.
- j) Contributions will be required towards:
 - i. Provision for a new, or contributions to enhancements to the existing, village hall including additional parking.
 - ii. Copford Cricket Club pavilion upgrades
 - iii. Marks Tey Mobility Hub

All development Proposals within Copford with Easthorpe Neighbourhood Plan Area, will also be determined against the policies in the Copford with Easthorpe Neighbourhood Plan (Adopted October 2023) where they are up to date and relevant. This includes consideration of the most up to date local housing needs evidence.

Proposals for the allocated site will only be supported where they accord with a comprehensive masterplan in relation to the entire allocation, that has been agreed with the Council prior to submission of any planning application. The

masterplan must be of sufficient detail to ensure optimal placemaking and housing delivery outcomes for the allocation and should be informed by an appropriate evidence base. The masterplan should be developed in collaboration with the Council, and relevant infrastructure providers, it should incorporate engagement with the local community and be informed by use of design review. Where appropriate and necessary, the masterplan shall be supported by parameter plans, design codes and/or guidance.

12.92 Development on Land East of School Road, Copford provides an opportunity to deliver not only new homes but also enhanced community facilities and enhanced provision of open space that will benefit both existing and future communities. The development should be masterplanned to ensure the open space provides a naturally landscaped space that is well connected to the wider Public Rights of Way network creating a green corridor.

12.93 The strategic open space should provide an appropriate buffer required to protect the Pits Wood Local Wildlife Site (LoWS) and an appropriate buffer to the pumping station. The size and location of the buffer should be determined through additional evidence including ecological assessment to protect the LoWS from recreational pressure. Opportunities should also be explored to integrate the strategic open space with Pits Wood LoWS through the creation of grassland, scrub, freshwater and woodland habitats that would buffer the LoWS.

Policy PP29b: Land South of Copford Village Hall, Copford

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 50 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development.**
- b) Delivery of BNG in accordance with Policy EN2 and informed by site specific ecological assessment, with opportunities for the following onsite habitat: new/ enhanced hedges and retained and enhanced grassland.**
- c) Development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:**
 - i. the use of green space and planting to break up and screen development;**
 - ii. limits on the heights of buildings to ensure new development is in keeping with the surrounding buildings;**
 - iii. proposals must demonstrate how the design layout, scale, massing and landscaping responds positively to the site's heritage context.**
- d) The site is within a Waste Consultation Area (WCA). Applications made within WCAs are required to include a Waste Infrastructure Impact Assessment (WIIA) as part of its evidence base. Please liaise with the Minerals and Waste Planning authority for further information with regards to the scope and content of WIIA.**
- e) Any site specific infrastructure requirements from the IDP including provision for appropriate service and facilities / uses to create a local centre to serve the communities across the site as informed by the masterplanning;**
- f) Before granting planning consent, wintering bird surveys will be undertaken to identify any offsite functional habitat. Wintering bird surveys should comprise two winter seasons, and both diurnal and nocturnal surveys. Natural England should be contacted for advice on how to determine whether mitigation is required based on the strength of the functional link. In the unlikely event that significant numbers are identified, development must firstly avoid impacts. Where this is not possible, development must be phased to deliver habitat creation and management either on or off-site to mitigate any significant impacts. Any such habitat must be provided and fully functional before any development takes place which would affect significant numbers of SPA birds.**
- g) Contributions will be required towards:**
 - i. Provision for a new, or contributions to enhancements to the existing, village hall including additional parking.**
 - ii. Copford Cricket Club pavilion upgrades**

iii. Marks Tey Mobility Hub

All development Proposals within Copford with Easthorpe Neighbourhood Plan Area, will also be determined against the policies in the Copford with Easthorpe Neighbourhood Plan (Adopted October 2023) where they are up to date and relevant. This includes consideration of the most up to date local housing needs evidence.

Policy PP29c: Land East of Queensberry Avenue, Copford

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 70 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development;
- b) Access via Queensberry Avenue and/or London Road;
- c) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2026) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:
 - i. the use of green space and planting to break up and soften new development;
 - ii. the retention and reinforcement of existing boundary planting to maintain a visual separation between the development and London Road;
 - iii. building heights and massing that reflect the surrounding edge to protect views;
 - iv. retain and enhance the public footpath, Willow Walk;
 - v. where practicable incorporate a designed green corridor along the western part of the southern boundary to help avoid impacts on surviving remains associated with Copford Windmill; and
 - vi. further archaeological work including desk-based assessment, geographical survey and evaluation.
- d) Permanent diversion and/or upgrade to the existing Public Right of Way which runs along the western boundary edge of the site;
- e) Development proposals within a Mineral Safeguarding Area will require a Mineral Resource Assessment (MRA). This applies to all planning applications for development on a site located within an MSA that is 5ha or more for sand and gravel, 3ha or more for chalk and greater than 1 dwelling for brickearth or brick clay. Please liaise with the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority for further information with regards to the scope of the MRA.
- f) Contributions will be required towards:
 - i. Provision for a new or contributions to enhancements to the existing village hall including additional parking.
 - ii. Copford Cricket Club pavilion upgrades
 - iii. Marks Tey Mobility Hub

All development Proposals within Copford with Easthorpe Neighbourhood Plan Area, will also be determined against the policies in the Copford with Easthorpe Neighbourhood Plan (Adopted October 2023) where they are up to date and relevant. This includes consideration of the most up to date local housing needs evidence.

Dedham and Dedham Heath

- 12.94 Most of the Dedham parish area falls within the Dedham Vale National Landscape (previously known as AONB). The largest settlement within the parish is the main historic village of Dedham to the north. A smaller area of predominantly housing called Dedham Heath lies to the south and two smaller clusters of properties lie to the west and east of Dedham Heath known as Lamb Corner and Bargate Lane respectively. Dedham has a range of services and facilities, including its own primary school. Dedham Heath is located approx. 1km away and is on a bus route to Dedham.
- 12.95 Dedham is a popular tourist destination and at certain times the existing roads and car parks struggle to cope with the additional traffic. The Parish Council have indicated a strong need for additional car parking to support tackling this issue. Proposals for additional parking in Dedham will be supported where they comply with the relevant policies in the Local Plan.

Policy PP30: Land South of Long Road, Dedham

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 15 new dwellings, including affordable in accordance with policy H2 Affordable Housing, of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development;**
- b) Delivery of BNG in accordance with Policy EN2 and informed by site specific ecological assessment, with opportunities for the following onsite habitat: retain and enhance the condition of grassland.**
- c) The design of access arrangements, visibility splays, signage, lighting, footways and associated infrastructure shall minimise urbanising impacts and be sympathetic to the rural character of Long Road West.**
- d) Development proposals shall minimise light pollution and protect the dark skies and tranquillity of the Dedham Vale National Landscape through sensitive lighting design and appropriate mitigation measures.**
- e) Contributions towards enhancing community facilities informed by the Parish Council**

12.96 Given the current constraints and uncertainty regarding available wastewater treatment capacity within the Dedham Wastewater Recycling Centre catchment and associated sewerage network, the applicant will be required to engage with Anglian Water Services at an early stage and demonstrate, prior to the submission of a planning application, that sufficient capacity is available to accommodate the proposed development, or that appropriate infrastructure upgrades have been agreed to support it, which may include sustainable points of connection to the water supply and wastewater networks to minimise impacts on existing communities and the environment. Where capacity is not available within the required timescales, development may need to be phased to align with the delivery of necessary wastewater infrastructure improvements.

Eight Ash Green

- 12.97 Eight Ash Green comprises three main areas which have a range of services and facilities: Eight Ash Green/Fordham Heath, Eight Ash Green/Choats Corner and Seven Star Green. Eight Ash Green is interspersed with open farmland and contains some small businesses premises. There are a number of local services including hairdressers, convenience store, petrol station, village hall, open spaces and primary school. Tollgate and Stane Park are located approximately 1.5km to the south-east and provide a good range of services and facilities.
- 12.98 The two residential allocations provide an opportunity to deliver a coordinated and sustainable extension to the village. Together the sites will help meet identified housing needs whilst supporting local services, facilities and infrastructure. Land North of Halstead Road and West of Fiddlers Wood is located adjacent to and builds upon the pattern of growth established through the Eight Ash Green Neighbourhood Plan. This enables new development to integrate with the existing community and create a logical continuation of the village.
- 12.99 The two allocations are positioned on opposite sides of the A1124 (Halstead Road). This road currently acts as a barrier to movement throughout the village and the delivery of both sites presents an opportunity to improve connectivity and encourage more sustainable travel choices. Development proposals will therefore be expected to contribute towards measures that improve access between existing and new neighbourhoods, local facilities and public transport services.
- 12.100 In particular, the provision of a safe crossing point across the A1124, agreed with the Highway Authority, will help connect residents to the primary school, village hall, local shops, open spaces, bus services and other community facilities. In combination with improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure, these measures will support safer movement throughout the village, reduce reliance on private vehicles and improve access to facilities for existing and future residents.
- 12.101 Contributions towards the Eight Ash Green Mobility Hub, improvements to the Halstead Road junction, and the delivery of a walking and cycling route between Eight Ash Green and Stanway will form part of a wider package of transport improvements. Collectively these measures will improve local accessibility, strengthen connections to employment, education and services, and provide improved links to the Rapid Transit System and wider sustainable transport network.
- 12.102 The Council will continue to work with the Highway Authority, the Parish Council, landowners and developers to secure a coordinated approach to delivering the necessary infrastructure and community benefits associated with these allocations.

Policy PP32: Land North of Halstead Road and West of Fiddlers Wood Eight Ash Green

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 250 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development.
- b) Delivery of BNG in accordance with Policy EN2 and informed by site specific ecological assessment, with opportunities for the following onsite habitats: woodland, scrub and grassland as buffers to the adjacent ancient woodland (this supports the delivery of the strategic creation opportunities in the Essex LNRs).
- c) The adjacent Fiddlers Wood Co43 LoWS (ancient woodland) must be safeguarded, with a buffer and protected from recreational pressure associated with new housing.
- d) In accordance with Policy EN6, development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:
 - i. the use of green space to create a buffer to Fiddlers Wood and in the northwest to protect views from the conservation area;
 - ii. the use of green space and planting to break up large blocks of development and help retain the rural character of the area;
 - iii. the use of planting to provide additional screening to Mantills Farmhouse;
 - iv. limits on the heights of buildings;
 - v. access to the site to be located away from Foxes Lane;
 - vi. the consideration of the historical field alignments in development plans and layout; and
 - vii. Prior to the submission of a planning application the developer will be required to undertake and fund further archaeological evaluation and recording to fully characterise the archaeological potential of the site and identify any archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary.
- e) Provision of a buffer around the sewer pumping station.
- f) Development proposals within a Mineral Safeguarding Area will require a Mineral Resource Assessment (MRA). This applies to all planning applications for development on a site located within an MSA that is 5ha or more for sand and gravel, 3ha or more for chalk and greater than 1 dwelling for brickearth or brick clay. Please liaise with the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority for further information with regards to the scope of the MRA.
- g) Before granting planning consent, wintering bird surveys will be undertaken to identify any offsite functional habitat. Wintering bird surveys should comprise two winter seasons, and both diurnal and

nocturnal surveys. Natural England should be contacted for advice on how to determine whether mitigation is required based on the strength of the functional link. In the unlikely event that significant numbers are identified, development must firstly avoid impacts. Where this is not possible, development must be phased to deliver habitat creation and management either on or off-site to mitigate any significant impacts. Any such habitat must be provided and fully functional before any development takes place which would affect significant numbers of SPA birds.

h) Contributions will be required towards:

- i. Eight Ash Green Mobility Hub;**
- ii. Improvements to Halstead Road Junction;**
- iii. Walking and cycling route from Eight Ash Green to Stanway (connecting to new RTS);**
- iv. Other community facilities informed by the Parish Council.**

All development proposals within Eight Ash Green Neighbourhood Plan Area, will also be determined against the policies in the Eight Ash Green Neighbourhood Plan (December 2019) where they are up to date and relevant. This includes consideration of the most up to date local housing needs evidence.

Policy PP32a Land South of Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 250 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development.**
- b) Provision of safe crossing across the A1124 to be agreed with the Highway Authority.**
- c) Before granting planning consent, wintering bird surveys will be undertaken to identify any offsite functional habitat. Wintering bird surveys should comprise two winter seasons, and both diurnal and nocturnal surveys. Natural England should be contacted for advice on how to determine whether mitigation is required based on the strength of the functional link. In the unlikely event that significant numbers are identified, development must firstly avoid impacts. Where this is not possible, development must be phased to deliver habitat creation and management either on or off-site to mitigate any significant impacts. Any such habitat must be provided and fully functional before any development takes place which would affect significant numbers of SPA birds.**
- d) In accordance with Policy EN6, development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (High Level Heritage Impact Assessment 2026) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site, including but not limited to:**
 - i. the use of green space and planting, particularly along the eastern, southern and western boundaries, to break up and soften development;**
 - ii. the retention and reinforcement of existing hedgerows and boundary planting, where possible, to maintain visual separation from Malting House, Mantills Farmhouse and Foxes Lane;**
 - iii. The careful treatment of Halstead Road frontage so that the milestone is retained in situ, should be protected during construction and remain visible;**
 - iv. limits on the height, scale and massing of buildings to ensure development reflects surrounding development and does not become visually dominant in available views;**
 - v. the retention in situ, protection and enhancement of the historic milestone on Halstead Road, including ensuring it remains visible and legible within the street scene;**
 - vi. the retention and enhancement of the public footpath along the western boundary as part of a landscape-led design response; and**
 - vii. prior to the submission of a planning application the developer will be required to undertake and fund further archaeological assessment and evaluation, including review of previous**

geophysical survey results, to fully characterise the archaeological potential of the site and identify any archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary.

e) Contributions will be required towards:

- i. Eight Ash Green Mobility Hub;**
- ii. Improvements to Halstead Road Junction;**
- iii. Walking and cycling route from Eight Ash Green to Stanway (connecting to new RTS);**
- iv. Other community facilities informed by the Parish Council.**

All development proposals within Eight Ash Green Neighbourhood Plan Area, will also be determined against the policies in the Eight Ash Green Neighbourhood Plan (December 2019) where they are up to date and relevant. This includes consideration of the most up to date local housing needs evidence.

Policy PEP9: Bullbanks Farm, Eight Ash Green

Land at Bullbanks Farm, Eight Ash Green, as shown on the policies map, is allocated for employment uses in accordance with Policy E1 and proposals for employment uses will be supported subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this Plan. In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected, in accordance with Policy EN6, to have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025) which identified further work of archaeological evaluation and recording to investigate the nature, extent and significance of any remains that are present could reduce any adverse impacts upon them.

All development proposals within Eight Ash Green Neighbourhood Plan Area, will also be determined against the policies in the Eight Ash Green Neighbourhood Plan (December 2019) where they are up to date and relevant.

Fordham

12.103 Fordham is a linear settlement with a core concentration of development which has evolved over time, including a number of small estate type developments. A primary school is situated at the southern end of the village just beyond the settlement boundary. The village hall is located within the core of the concentrated area of development and hosts a shop and post office at limited times during the week. Also within the village is a playing field and a community orchard maintained by the local community. A small cluster of dwellings to the north along Plummers Road is separated by the Grade II listed Moat Hall which is situated on a significant mature landscaped garden which adjoins an established community woodland managed by the Woodland Trust.

Policy PP33: Land East of Plummers, Fordham

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 25 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development;**
- b) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:**
 - i. retaining the roadside ribbon-style character of settlement in the area;**
 - ii. the existing trees and hedges in the north and south of the site should be retained;**
 - iii. preservation of green space in the south-western corner of the site to help preserve the setting of the farm buildings to the south;**
- c) Support will be given to delivering woodland habitat within or adjacent to the site to support the delivery of the strategic creation opportunities in the Essex LNRS;**
- d) The point of vehicular access is to be through the existing site off Plummers Road (reserved as part of planning application), to be agreed with the Highway Authority and it will need to be demonstrated that the proposal would not be detrimental to highway capacity and safety.**

Great Horkesley

12.104 Great Horkesley is essentially linear in shape and has developed over time along the old Roman road that radiates away from north Colchester (now the A134). More recently development has spread westwards along a number of roads off the main road. Land to the east of the main road has remained relatively free of development and is more open in character. Great Horkesley is fragmented with the main core of the settlement to the south and two smaller fragments to the north along the A134. The southern edge of the main part of the village is approximately 0.6km from the Colchester urban edge and is located north of the A12. There are a range of services and facilities within the village.

Policy PP34: Land North of Coach Road, Great Horkesley

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver a comprehensive, high quality and co-ordinated development that provides for the following site-specific requirements:

- a) A predominantly residential development including community infrastructure, strategic open space and approximately 800 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development.**
- b) Safe and suitable access to required highway design standards to be agreed with the Highway Authority. All vehicular access to be off Coach Road only, with the exception of the small area adjoining the Causeway, which will need to be served by a suitable access as well as make provision for a safe pedestrian / cycle route connecting the Causeway with the rest of the development.**
- c) An active travel plan to be agreed with the Council which ensures site wide active travel connectivity including links beyond the site, connectivity within and throughout the site to existing footways and any public rights of way, particularly to the South of Coach Road, a pedestrian / cycle link to the existing village hall and connection off Coach Road to the south with the Causeway to the east of the site. A safe walking and cycling route should also be provided to the Chesterwell development where there are a large range of services and facilities.**
- d) Provision for a local centre which may include provision of retail, commercial and community facilities at an appropriate scale, relevant to the role and function of a local centre and the communities it is intended to serve.**

- e) Provision for primary education and Early Years & Childcare which may be through expansion of existing facilities or on site provision. The allocation is to include 2.2ha of land for this use to ensure all options remain open
- f) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:
 - i. the use of green space and woodland planting to retain some of the rural character of the area (especially in the north);
 - ii. retaining and enhancing the existing planting on boundaries of the site in order to maintain screening of the nearby listed buildings;
 - iii. retaining and enhancing the woodland area in the north-east of the site;
 - iv. consideration in the design of any development within the site to limit the heights of buildings;
 - v. using the historical field pattern to inform development plans and the site layout and;
 - vi. further work of a geophysical survey and archaeological evaluation and recording in the north-western part of the site is also recommended in order to reduce and/or offset any adverse impacts from any development.
- g) 'Enhanced Open Space' as shown on the policies map substantively in excess of 10% of the allocation area must be provided as open space, which could form part of the SANG provision. This should include at least one area of strategic open space and multiple areas of less formal and more incidental 'doorstop' open space.
- h) Before granting planning consent, wintering bird surveys will be undertaken to identify any offsite functional habitat. Wintering bird surveys should comprise two winter seasons, and both diurnal and nocturnal surveys. Natural England should be contacted for advice on how to determine whether mitigation is required based on the strength of the functional link. In the unlikely event that significant numbers are identified, development must firstly avoid impacts. Where this is not possible, development must be phased to deliver habitat creation and management either on or off-site to mitigate any significant impacts. Any such habitat must be provided and fully functional before any development takes place which would affect significant numbers of SPA birds.
- i) Support will be given to delivering standing freshwater, grassland or woodland habitat to support the delivery of the strategic creation opportunities in the Essex LNRS.
- j) Demonstrate that there is capacity available in the sewerage network and at the receiving Water Recycling Centre to accommodate wastewater flows from the proposal for treatment and discharge. Where insufficient capacity is available to serve the proposal at the point of

anticipated connection, development will be required to be phased, or otherwise appropriately managed, to ensure that connections do not take place until the necessary infrastructure capacity is available.

k) Contributions will be required towards:

- i. extending the village hall or other local community facilities to be informed by the Parish Council.**
- ii. Mobility Hubs**

Proposals for the allocated site will only be supported where they accord with a comprehensive masterplan in relation to the entire allocation, that has been agreed with the Council prior to submission of any planning application. The masterplan must be of sufficient detail to ensure optimal placemaking and housing delivery outcomes for the allocation and should be informed by an appropriate evidence base. The masterplan should be developed in collaboration with the Council, and relevant infrastructure providers, it should incorporate engagement with the local community and be informed by use of design review. Where appropriate and necessary, the masterplan shall be supported by parameter plans, design codes and/or guidance.

12.105 Land north of Coach Road will play an important role in meeting the district's housing needs whilst supporting the long-term sustainability of Great Horkesley. The scale of development provides a significant opportunity to deliver not only new homes, but also new infrastructure, services, open spaces and environmental enhancements that benefit both existing and future communities.

12.106 The allocation comprises land in multiple ownerships and therefore requires a coordinated and comprehensive approach to planning and delivery. Development coming forward on a piecemeal basis would risk compromising connectivity, placemaking objectives, infrastructure provision and the efficient use of land. A masterplan-led approach will provide a shared framework for all landowners and developers, ensuring that the site is planned and delivered as a cohesive extension to the village rather than as a series of separate developments.

12.107 The masterplanning process will be critical in establishing a clear vision for the site and ensuring that development is founded on strong placemaking principles. This should include the creation of a distinctive and well-connected neighbourhood, integrated with the existing settlement through attractive walking, cycling and public transport connections, high-quality public spaces, green infrastructure and community facilities. The comprehensive planning of the allocation will help maximise opportunities to improve movement throughout the village, strengthen connections between existing and new communities and secure wider social, environmental and economic benefits.

12.108 A coordinated approach also provides the best opportunity to address strategic infrastructure requirements efficiently and effectively. In particular, it will enable drainage and wastewater matters, transport infrastructure, education

provision, open space and environmental mitigation to be considered across the allocation as a whole, ensuring that solutions are deliverable, appropriately phased and aligned with development proposals. By planning infrastructure at the site-wide level, the allocation can achieve better outcomes for residents, infrastructure providers and the wider community.

- 12.109 The Council will work proactively with landowners, developers, infrastructure providers, statutory consultees and the Parish Council and local community throughout the masterplanning process to ensure that the allocation delivers a high-quality and sustainable development which responds positively to its setting and contributes to the long-term prosperity and character of Great Horkesley.
- 12.110 There are current constraints and uncertainty regarding available wastewater treatment capacity within the West Bergholt Wastewater Recycling Centre catchment and associated sewerage network. For strategic sites of 500 dwellings or more, early and ongoing collaboration between developers, the Council and Anglian Water Services will be essential to ensure that wastewater infrastructure is planned and delivered in a coordinated, timely and environmentally sustainable manner, particularly where there are constraints within the existing foul drainage network and/or wastewater recycling centre capacity.
- 12.111 A comprehensive site-wide foul drainage strategy should be prepared and agreed at an early stage of the development process. This should identify the preferred long-term solution, including a single sustainable point of connection to the public sewerage network, and demonstrate how the necessary wastewater infrastructure will be secured and delivered alongside development.
- 12.112 Where temporary drainage arrangements are required to facilitate early phases of development, these must be appropriately controlled, time-limited and linked to clearly defined triggers for the delivery and operation of permanent infrastructure. Development phasing should be aligned with the timely provision of wastewater infrastructure to avoid adverse impacts on network performance, receiving watercourses and the environment.
- 12.113 Close partnership working between developers, the Council and Anglian Water Services will be required throughout the planning, delivery and occupation of the site to ensure that growth is supported by adequate wastewater infrastructure capacity and integrated with longer-term investment programmes, thereby facilitating sustainable development and environmental protection.

Policy PP35: The Old School, Great Horkesley

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 13 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development;**
- b) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Turleys 2021 Impact Assessment) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:**
 - i. careful consideration of the development proposals to ensure the connection to Church of England School is maintained and setting enhanced;**
 - ii. access through the site needs to be carefully considered from a settings perspective;**
- c) Contributions will be required towards:**
 - i. extending the village hall or other local community facilities to be informed by the Parish Council.**

12.114 Given the current constraints and uncertainty regarding available wastewater treatment capacity within the West Bergholt Wastewater Recycling Centre catchment and associated sewerage network, the applicant will be required to engage with Anglian Water Services at an early stage and demonstrate, prior to the submission of a planning application, that sufficient capacity is available to accommodate the proposed development, or that appropriate infrastructure upgrades have been agreed to support it, which may include sustainable points of connection to the water supply and wastewater networks to minimise impacts on existing communities and the environment. Where capacity is not available within the required timescales, development may need to be phased to align with the delivery of necessary wastewater infrastructure improvements.

Great Tey

12.115 Great Tey is situated north of the Roman River and is surrounded by largely flat arable land. The parish of Great Tey is a small rural community that contains a few local amenities including a village pub, a school, and a Norman church. The community originally developed at the southern end, as evidenced by the Conservation Area, with a newer small estate to the north and ribbon development along the main road through the village between Little Tey and Chappel.

Policy PP36: Land at Earls Colne Road, Great Tey

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 150 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development;**
- b) Safe and suitable site access including junction visibility at Earls Colne Road / Chappel Road to required highway design standards and point of vehicle access off Earls Colne Road to be agreed with the Highway Authority and demonstration that proposal would not be detrimental to highway capacity or safety;**
- c) Delivery of BNG in accordance with Policy EN2 and informed by site specific ecological assessment, the creation of chalky boulder clay grassland may be suitable if soil nutrient status can be reduced;**
- d) Support will be given to delivering standing freshwater or woodland habitat to support the delivery of the strategic creation opportunities in the Essex LNRs;**
- e) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:**
 - i. preservation of views of the Church Tower, in views from Earls Colne Road, and preservation of open green space in the foreground of this view (along the northern edge of the site), to help preserve the visual connection between the Church Tower and conservation area and the surrounding open agricultural landscape;**
 - ii. green space buffer to separate Newbarn Farmyard from any new development;**
 - iii. the use of green space (especially in the west and north of the site) should be used to preserve the rural character;**
 - iv. the use of a view corridor down the centre of the site;**
 - v. the use of green space and planting to break up the development;**
 - vi. limiting the heights of buildings;**
 - vii. sensitive design should be used to retain the agricultural setting;**

- viii. prior to the submission of a planning application the developer will be required to undertake and fund further archaeological evaluation and recording to fully characterise the archaeological potential of the site and identify any archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary;
- f) Contributions will be required towards:
 - i. Wakes Colne/Chappel Mobility Hub
- g) Before granting planning consent, wintering bird surveys will be undertaken to identify any offsite functional habitat. Wintering bird surveys should comprise two winter seasons, and both diurnal and nocturnal surveys. Natural England should be contacted for advice on how to determine whether mitigation is required based on the strength of the functional link. In the unlikely event that significant numbers are identified, development must firstly avoid impacts. Where this is not possible, development must be phased to deliver habitat creation and management either on or off-site to mitigate any significant impacts. Any such habitat must be provided and fully functional before any development takes place which would affect significant numbers of SPA birds.

All development Proposals within Great Tey parish Neighbourhood Plan Area, will also be determined against the policies in the Great Tey Neighbourhood Plan (adopted October 2024) where they are up to date and relevant. This includes consideration of the most up to date local housing needs evidence.

Policy PP36a: Land East of Brook Road, Great Tey

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 50 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development;**
- b) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2026) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:**
 - i. preserving and enhancing field boundaries to soften the edge of new development in views looking towards Great Tey Conservation Area;**
 - ii. use of a buffer of green space in the northernmost part of the site to distance development from the medieval moated homestead monument to prevent its loss or deterioration and maintain the historic settlement edge;**
 - iii. limiting the heights and density of buildings;**
 - iv. development should be focussed behind the existing residential properties on Brook Road and massed away from the south west corner of the site where it is likely to be most visible from the Churchyard of St Barnabas;**
 - v. site access should be located towards the southern part of the site where safe and practicable;**
 - vi. prior to the submission of a planning application the developer will be required to undertake and fund further archaeological evaluation and recording to fully characterise the archaeological potential of the site and identify any archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary;**
- c) Before granting planning consent, wintering bird surveys will be undertaken to identify any offsite functional habitat. Wintering bird surveys should comprise two winter seasons, and both diurnal and nocturnal surveys. Natural England should be contacted for advice on how to determine whether mitigation is required based on the strength of the functional link. In the unlikely event that significant numbers are identified, development must firstly avoid impacts. Where this is not possible, development must be phased to deliver habitat creation and management either on or off-site to mitigate any significant impacts. Any such habitat must be provided and fully functional before any development takes place which would affect significant numbers of SPA birds.**
- d) The site is within a Waste Consultation Area (WCA). Applications made within WCAs are required to include a Waste Infrastructure Impact Assessment (WIIA) as part of its evidence base. Please liaise with the**

Minerals and Waste Planning authority for further information with regards to the scope and content of WIIA.

- e) Contributions will be required towards:**
 - i. Wakes Colne/Chappel Mobility Hub.**

All development Proposals within Great Tey Parish Neighbourhood Plan Area, will also be determined against the policies in the Great Tey Neighbourhood Plan (adopted October 2024) where they are up to date and relevant. This includes consideration of the most up to date local housing needs evidence.

Langham

- 12.116 Langham includes two areas of settlement, Langham Moor and St. Margaret's Cross, linked by School Road. A former WWII airfield lies between the two areas. The village contains a mixture of historic properties and farmhouses with more recent development. Langham contains a public house, a community café, a community shop, community centre, recreation ground, a playground, football pitches and tennis courts. It lies close to the A12 trunk road – a strategic transport corridor. The Dedham Vale National Landscape is outside the settlement to the north and east.
- 12.117 Langham's allocation reflects the spatial strategy's focus on directing growth to sustainable and accessible locations, including key transport corridors such as the A12. While identified as a medium settlement, its strategic location enables it to accommodate a higher level of development than would be expected under a purely proportionate approach. The scale of growth is therefore justified as it supports sustainable travel patterns, infrastructure delivery and the overall strategy of concentrating development in well-connected locations. This approach ensures that growth is aligned with the plan's wider objectives of delivering sustainable communities and making efficient use of accessible locations.
- 12.118 The Council recognises that there are existing constraints in relation to wastewater treatment capacity and the foul drainage network serving Langham. Policy NZ3 applies to all development and requires that adequate capacity is available or can be provided, and this will be a key consideration in bringing sites forward. Engagement with Anglian Water will be required to ensure that development is appropriately phased to align with infrastructure upgrades, and that suitable solutions are identified and secured. This may include consideration of interim or alternative delivery mechanisms, such as a New Appointment and Variation (NAV) arrangement, where appropriate, which could be adopted by Anglian Water in the future.

Policy PP37: Land north of Park Lane, Langham

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver a comprehensive, high quality and co-ordinated development that provides for the following site-specific requirements:

- a) A predominantly residential development including community infrastructure, strategic open space and approximately 850 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development.**
- b) Impacts on the Strategic Road Network can be satisfactorily mitigated to the satisfaction of National Highways.**
- c) Provision for primary education and Early Years & Childcare. 2.2ha of land within the development area shall be safeguarded for primary and Early Years purposes to ensure education facilities can be provided locally for new residents without impacting the existing provision**
- d) An active travel plan to be agreed with the Council which ensures site wide active travel connectivity within and beyond the site.**
- e) 'Enhanced Open Space' substantively in excess of 10% of the allocation area must be provided as open space. This should include at least one area of strategic open space located centrally within the site to provide a naturally landscaped community space that is well connected to new and existing development and which could contribute to SANG alongside multiple areas of less formal and more incidental 'doorstop' open space.**
- f) Delivery of BNG in accordance with Policy EN2 and informed by site specific ecological assessment, with opportunities for enhancement of existing hedgerows. Soil conditions may favour the creation of higher distinctiveness grasslands, including some of a calcareous character.**
- g) Support will be given to delivering grassland habitat to support the delivery of the strategic creation opportunities in the Essex LNRS.**
- h) Demonstrate that there is capacity available in the sewerage network and at the receiving Water Recycling Centre to accommodate wastewater flows from the proposal for treatment and discharge. Where insufficient capacity is available to serve the proposal at the point of anticipated connection, development will be required to be phased, or otherwise appropriately managed, to ensure that connections do not take place until the necessary infrastructure capacity is available. Development will only be supported when the necessary infrastructure improvements have been demonstrated to be deliverable and will be completed prior to occupation of the development.**
- i) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:**
 - i. Planting around the edge of the development should be maintained to preserve the green backdrop to the listed buildings in views looking out from the main village throughfares;**

- ii. where possible large blocks of development should be avoided and development should be broken up by planting and green space. Efforts should be made to retain the roadside ribbon-style character of settlement in the area and dense, uniform layouts should be avoided;
 - iii. the existing treeline should be retained. The tree lines that form the boundaries of the site, as well as those within the site should be preserved and enhanced in order to maintain visual screening for nearby listed buildings;
 - iv. green space should be retained along Park Lane to preserve the dispersed character of the settlement in this area. Planting should be used to screen new development where possible from the listed buildings along this road;
 - v. site access should be located away from the listed buildings in order to reduce traffic and visual intrusion near heritage assets;
- j) Provision of a new local centre to serve the new and existing local community. This may include provision of retail, commercial and community facilities (including education) at an appropriate scale, relevant to the role and function of a local centre and the communities it is intended to serve.
- k) Before granting planning consent, wintering bird surveys will be undertaken to identify any offsite functional habitat. Wintering bird surveys should comprise two winter seasons, and both diurnal and nocturnal surveys. Natural England should be contacted for advice on how to determine whether mitigation is required based on the strength of the functional link. In the unlikely event that significant numbers are identified, development must firstly avoid impacts. Where this is not possible, development must be phased to deliver habitat creation and management either on or off-site to mitigate any significant impacts. Any such habitat must be provided and fully functional before any development takes place which would affect significant numbers of SPA birds.
- l) Development proposals within a Mineral Safeguarding Area will require a Mineral Resource Assessment (MRA). This applies to all planning applications for development on a site located within an MSA that is 5ha or more for sand and gravel, 3ha or more for chalk and greater than 1 dwelling for brickearth or brick clay. Please liaise with the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority for further information with regards to the scope of the MRA.
- m) Contributions will be required towards:
 - i. Langham Mobility Hub
 - ii. Cycle route improvements to connect to Park and Ride and access to the Rapid Transit System
 - iii. New or improved bus connection and service to connect with the P&R at Boxted Road
 - iv. New or improved community facilities to be informed by the Parish Council
- n) Development shall minimise light pollution through a comprehensive lighting strategy informed by the Dedham Vale National Landscape

Lighting Design Guide. Lighting shall protect dark skies, tranquillity, residential amenity and ecological networks.

Proposals for the allocated site will only be supported where they accord with a comprehensive masterplan in relation to the entire allocation, that has been agreed with the Council prior to submission of any planning application. The masterplan must be of sufficient detail to ensure optimal placemaking and housing delivery outcomes for the allocation and should be informed by an appropriate evidence base. The masterplan should be developed in collaboration with the Council, and relevant infrastructure providers, it should incorporate engagement with the local community and be informed by use of design review. Where appropriate and necessary, the masterplan shall be supported by parameter plans, design codes and/or guidance.

- 12.119 The scale of the allocation at Park Lane, Langham provides an opportunity to plan for growth in a comprehensive manner and secure a range of infrastructure, community and environmental benefits that would be unlikely to come forward through a series of smaller, dispersed sites. The allocation is intended to create a well-designed and sustainable community, integrating new homes with green infrastructure, community facilities, education provision and improved opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport use.
- 12.120 A comprehensive masterplan will be required to establish a clear vision for the site and ensure that development is coordinated from the outset. The masterplanning process should consider movement, landscape, ecology, heritage, drainage, infrastructure delivery and the relationship between new and existing communities as part of an integrated approach to placemaking. This will ensure that development responds positively to local character whilst creating a distinct and cohesive new neighbourhood.
- 12.121 The allocation has been identified as a strategic location for growth due to its accessibility and proximity to the A12 corridor. The scale of development proposed enables the delivery of new infrastructure, services, open spaces and community facilities that can benefit both existing and future residents. Development will be expected to come forward in a coordinated manner, with appropriate phasing to ensure that supporting infrastructure is provided alongside growth and that impacts on existing communities are appropriately managed.
- 12.122 Although the site does not lie within the Dedham Vale National Landscape careful attention will be required to landscape character, views and settlement form. The masterplanning and design process should be landscape-led, making full use of retained vegetation, existing field boundaries, green corridors and open spaces to help incorporate development into its surroundings and provide a sensitive transition between the village and the wider countryside.

- 12.123 Development will need to take account of the existing capacity constraints within the Langham Wastewater Recycling Centre (WRC) catchment. The Water Cycle Study identifies that the WRC is currently operating at its permitted discharge limit and that there are existing sewer network capacity issues within the catchment, including infiltration of surface water and groundwater into the sewer system. Further environmental assessment and infrastructure improvements will be required to accommodate the scale of growth proposed through the Local Plan.
- 12.124 Given the scale of the allocation, early and ongoing collaboration between the developer, the Council and Anglian Water Services will be essential to ensure that wastewater infrastructure is planned and delivered in a coordinated, timely and environmentally sustainable manner. Developers will be required to engage with Anglian Water Services at the earliest opportunity and, prior to the submission of a planning application, demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available within both the Langham WRC and the associated sewerage network to accommodate the proposed development, or that an agreed strategy is in place to deliver the necessary infrastructure upgrades. This may require development to be phased to align with the provision of wastewater infrastructure and available network capacity.
- 12.125 A comprehensive site-wide foul drainage strategy should be prepared and agreed at an early stage of the development process. This should identify the preferred long-term solution, including a single sustainable point of connection to the public sewerage network, and demonstrate how the necessary wastewater infrastructure will be secured and delivered alongside development. Development proposals should be supported by evidence of engagement with Anglian Water Services and confirmation of the proposed servicing and connection strategy.
- 12.126 Where temporary drainage arrangements are required to facilitate early phases of development, these must be appropriately controlled, time-limited and linked to clearly defined triggers for the delivery and operation of permanent infrastructure. Development phasing should be aligned with the timely provision of wastewater infrastructure to avoid adverse impacts on network performance, receiving watercourses and the environment.
- 12.127 Close partnership working between the developer, the Council and Anglian Water Services will be required throughout the planning, delivery and occupation of the site to ensure that growth is supported by adequate wastewater infrastructure capacity and integrated with longer-term investment programmes, thereby facilitating sustainable development and environmental protection.

Policy PP38: Land opposite Wick Road, Langham

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 10 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development;**
- b) Delivery of BNG in accordance with Policy EN2 and informed by site specific ecological assessment, with opportunities for the following onsite habitat: enhance the distinctiveness and condition of retained areas of grassland and hedgerow;**
- c) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:**
 - i. enhancing the planting along the southern boundary of the site;**
 - ii. the use of green space (especially in the south);**
 - iii. consideration in the design of any development within the site to limit the heights of buildings;**
 - iv. further work of archaeological evaluation and recording is recommended in order to reduce and/or offset any adverse impacts from any development;**
- d) Contributions will be required towards:**
 - i. Langham Mobility Hub**
 - ii. Cycle route improvements to connect to Park and Ride and access to the Rapid Transit System**
 - iii. New or improved bus connection and service to connect with the P&R at Boxted Road**
 - iv. New or improved community facilities to be informed by the Parish Council**
- e) Development shall minimise light pollution through a comprehensive lighting strategy informed by the Dedham Vale National Landscape Lighting Design Guide. Lighting shall protect dark skies, tranquillity, residential amenity and ecological networks.**

12.128 Development within the Langham Wastewater Recycling Centre (WRC) catchment will need to take account of existing capacity constraints within both the wastewater treatment works and the associated sewerage network. The Water Cycle Study identifies that the WRC is currently operating at its permitted discharge limit and that there are existing sewer network capacity issues within the catchment, including infiltration of surface water and groundwater into the sewer system. Further environmental assessment and infrastructure improvements will be required to accommodate planned growth.

12.129 Developers will be required to engage with Anglian Water Services at the earliest opportunity and, prior to the submission of a planning application,

demonstrate that sufficient capacity is available within both the Langham WRC and the associated sewer network to accommodate the proposed development, or that an agreed strategy is in place to deliver any necessary upgrades. Development proposals should be accompanied by evidence of consultation with Anglian Water Services and confirmation of the proposed point of connection and servicing strategy.

- 12.130 Given the identified infrastructure constraints, development may need to be phased to align with the delivery of sewerage network improvements and any future wastewater treatment capacity enhancements. In particular, the timing of housing delivery should have regard to the recommendations of the Water Cycle Study and the availability of infrastructure capacity, ensuring that growth does not result in adverse impacts on existing communities, the sewerage system or the water environment.

Policy PEP10 Lodge Lane, Langham

Land at Lodge Lane, as shown on the policies map, is safeguarded for employment uses in accordance with Policy E1.

Layer de la Haye

12.131 Development in Layer de la Haye is concentrated within two settlement areas: Layer village and Malting Green. The two areas are physically separated by a large grass sward known as Malting Green, a large part of which is a designated Local Wildlife Site (Co 93). It is also an important open space that plays an important function in defining the rural character of the existing two settlement areas. Layer de la Haye has a mix of community and social infrastructure including a primary school, GP surgery, shop, two pubs, village hall and open spaces.

Policy PP39: Land at The Furze, Layer de la Haye

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 10 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing, including the provision of bungalows or almshouses, to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development.**
- b) Proposals should take into account the opportunities included in the LoWS Addendum report (2026) (including hedgerow management and maintenance, meadow creation, tree retention, and scrub management) to avoid or minimise the potential threat of habitat loss and fragmentation associated with development, and the threat of disturbance and degradation associated with its long-term occupation. Where possible, adjacent developments should contribute to cohesive ecological mitigation and enhancement.**
- c) Ecological surveys should further explore the invertebrate assemblage through a review of species records and, potentially, targeted surveys and assess eligibility against the LoWS invertebrate criteria and demonstrate appropriate mitigation if required.**
- d) Contributions will be required towards improvements to public transport including provision of new bus stop(s).**

Policy PP40: Land West of The Folley, Laver de la Haye

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 75 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing, including the provision of bungalows and/or almshouses, to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development.
- b) Delivery of BNG in accordance with Policy EN2 and informed by site specific ecological assessment, with opportunities for the following onsite habitat: enhance woodland and grassland habitat. The site is on superficial sands and gravels that could make the site suitable for the creation of Lowland Dry Acid Grassland if nutrient levels can be lowered.
- c) Proposals should take into account the opportunities included in the LoWS Addendum report (2026) (including hedgerow management and maintenance, meadow creation, tree retention, scrub management, and grassland enhancement) to avoid or minimise the potential threat of habitat loss and fragmentation associated with development, and the threat of disturbance and degradation associated with its long-term occupation. Where possible, adjacent developments should contribute to cohesive ecological mitigation and enhancement.
- d) Ecological surveys should further explore the invertebrate assemblage through a review of species records and, potentially, targeted surveys and assess eligibility against the LoWS invertebrate criteria and demonstrate appropriate mitigation if required.
- e) Whilst there are two landowners, only one access to serve both sites will be supported and it must be demonstrated that the access point does not alter the rural character of The Folley.
- f) An active travel link through both sites to the adjoining site to the south (Monarch Rise) to connect with the village.
- g) Provision of community facilities informed by the Parish Council including allotments and provision of a play area within the development site.
- h) Contributions will be required towards:
 - i. improvements to public transport including provision of new bus stop(s);
 - ii. improvements to the village hall, MUGA, recreation ground, (including but not limited to outdoor gym and play equipment) and Malting Green, all to be agreed with the Parish Council.

Policy PP40a: Malting Green Road, Layer de la Haye

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 30 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing, including the provision of bungalows and/or almshouses, to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development.**
- b) Delivery of BNG in accordance with Policy EN2 and informed by site specific ecological assessment, with opportunities for the following onsite habitat: retain grassland, hedgerow enhancement and tree planting.**
- c) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (High Level Heritage Impact Assessment 2026) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site, including but not limited to:**
 - i. the use of green space and planting to break up and soften development and help retain the rural character of the area;**
 - ii. the retention and reinforcement of existing hedgerows and boundary planting to soften the transition between the development and the surrounding landscape and to help preserve the setting of Great House Farmhouse;**
 - iii. the use of planting around the edge of the development to provide screening and reduce the potential for development to become visible from Great House Farmhouse should intervening vegetation be lost in the future;**
 - iv. limits on the height, scale and massing of buildings to ensure development reflects the surrounding built form and does not become visually intrusive; and**
 - v. prior to the submission of a planning application the developer will be required to undertake and fund further archaeological assessment and evaluation, including a review of any previous surveys or test-pitting work, to fully characterise the archaeological potential of the site and identify any archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary.**
- d) Contributions will be required towards:**
 - i. improvements to public transport including provision of new bus stop(s);**
 - ii. improvements to the village hall, MUGA, recreation ground, (including but not limited to outdoor gym and play equipment) and Malting Green, all to be agreed with the Parish Council.**

Rowhedge

12.132 Rowhedge lies within the parish of East Donyland, which covers the south-east of Colchester. The settlement was historically centred around the shipbuilding and fishing industries of the River Colne. The village lies on the opposite bank of the river to Wivenhoe but despite its close proximity to the town, access is only available by road through Colchester. Rowhedge has good public transport and road links to Colchester and contains its own primary school, post office and recreational facilities.

Policy PP41: Rowhedge Business Park, Rowhedge

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 50 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development.**
- b) Delivery of BNG in accordance with Policy EN2 and informed by site specific ecological assessment, with opportunities for the following onsite habitat: enhance the adjacent woodland and open mosaic condition.**
- c) The area of woodland within the site must be safeguarded and retained as tree cover and open space.**
- d) Development proposals should seek to avoid or minimise the potential threat of habitat loss and fragmentation associated with development, and the threat of disturbance and degradation associated with its long-term occupation (as identified in the LoWS Review 2026).**
- e) Ecological surveys must determine whether the entire woodland resource meets the LoWS criteria. Where part of the site may meet LoWS selection criteria, the criteria mitigation and compensation measures must be incorporated into the design of the proposal.**
- f) Contributions will be required towards expansion of the existing Rowhedge University Medical Practice.**

West Bergholt

- 12.133 West Bergholt is situated approximately 1km to the north-west of Colchester. The village is centred around a triangle of roads: the B1508 Colchester Road, Chappel 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 development has occurred on the northern side of Colchester Road.
- 12.134 The Local Plan allocations for West Bergholt complement and extend the pattern of growth established through the adopted West Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan. The allocations represent a continuation of the village's plan-led approach to growth, making use of sites that relate well to the existing settlement and can contribute towards meeting housing needs while supporting local services and facilities. The allocations will assist in delivering sustainable growth in a manner that respects the character of the village and its landscape setting.
- 12.135 Given the current constraints and uncertainty regarding available wastewater treatment capacity within the West Bergholt Wastewater Recycling Centre catchment and associated sewerage network, applicants for all sites in West Bergholt will be required to engage with Anglian Water Services at an early stage and demonstrate, prior to the submission of a planning application, that sufficient capacity is available to accommodate the proposed development, or that appropriate infrastructure upgrades have been agreed to support it, which may include sustainable points of connection to the water supply and wastewater networks to minimise impacts on existing communities and the environment. Where capacity is not available within the required timescales, development may need to be phased to align with the delivery of necessary wastewater infrastructure improvements.

Policy PP42: Land at White Hart Lane, West Bergholt

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 185 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs, including the latest West Bergholt Housing Needs Survey; and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development;**
- b) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:**

- i. the use of green space (especially in the west and south) to break up blocks of development;
- ii. the use of planting to soften the built edge of development;
- iii. limits on the heights of buildings;
- iv. the consideration of the historical field layouts to inform the development plan and layout;
- v. development to respect local historical character distinctiveness;
- vi. consideration of the historical field and street layouts to inform the development plan and layout;
- vii. Prior to the submission of a planning application the developer will be required to undertake and fund further archaeological evaluation and recording and settings assessment for the Scheduled Hillfort to fully characterise the archaeological potential of the site and identify any archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary;
- c) Safe and suitable site access to required highway design standards. The point of vehicular access to be off Colchester Road via the existing Neighbourhood Plan site allocation to be agreed with the Highway Authority.
- d) Policy PC4 sets out considerations regarding density of development additionally, consideration to be given to regard to the West Bergholt Housing Density Survey and any updated evidence where appropriate;
- e) Contributions will be required towards:
 - i. safe crossings from the development across Colchester Road.
 - ii. LCWIP (Walking and Cycling) Routes including connecting to North Station roundabout via B1508
 - iii. West Bergholt Mobility Hub
 - iv. Enhancements to Poors Land Lorkin Daniell Field and William Sims Sports Field;
 - v. A community hub

Proposals for the allocated site will only be supported where they accord with a comprehensive masterplan in relation to the entire allocation, that has been agreed with the Council prior to submission of any planning application. The masterplan must be of sufficient detail to ensure optimal placemaking and housing delivery outcomes for the allocation and should be informed by an appropriate evidence base. The masterplan should be developed in collaboration with the Council, and relevant infrastructure providers, it should incorporate engagement with the local community and be informed by use of design review. Where appropriate and necessary, the masterplan shall be supported by parameter plans, design codes and/or guidance.

All development proposals within West Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan Area, will also be determined against the policies in the West Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan (Adopted October 2019) where they are up to date and relevant. This includes consideration of the most up to date local housing needs evidence.

Policy PP43: Land North of Colchester Road, West Bergholt

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 185 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs, including the latest West Bergholt Housing Needs Survey; and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development;
- b) Safe and suitable site access to required highway design standards. The point of vehicular access is to be off William Sims Close to be agreed with the Highway Authority;
- c) Provide a safe pedestrian access to ensure connectivity within and throughout the site to existing footways and any public rights of way, particularly to the west and to Armoury Road to the east. Ensure provision of green infrastructure connections and recreational access to the countryside, also securing active travel links and connections to the settlement;
- d) Policy PC4 sets out considerations regarding density of development additionally, consideration to be given to regard to the West Bergholt Housing Density Survey and any updated evidence where appropriate;
- e) Contributions will be required towards:
 - i. safe crossings from the development across Colchester Road.
 - ii. LCWIP (Walking and Cycling) Routes including connecting to North Station roundabout via B1508
 - iii. West Bergholt Mobility Hub
 - iv. Enhancements to Poors Land, Lorkin Daniell Field and William Sims Sports Field;
 - v. A community hub.

Proposals for the allocated site will only be supported where they accord with a comprehensive masterplan in relation to the entire allocation, that has been agreed with the Council prior to submission of any planning application. The masterplan must be of sufficient detail to ensure optimal placemaking and housing delivery outcomes for the allocation and should be informed by an appropriate evidence base. The masterplan should be developed in collaboration with the Council, and relevant infrastructure providers, it should incorporate engagement with the local community and be informed by use of design review. Where appropriate and necessary, the masterplan shall be supported by parameter plans, design codes and/or guidance.

All development proposals within West Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan Area, will also be determined against the policies in the West Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan (Adopted October 2019) where they are up to date and relevant. This includes consideration of the most up to date local housing needs evidence.

Policy PEP11 Land at Pattens Yard, West Bergholt

Land at Pattens Yard, West Bergholt, as shown on the policies map, is allocated for employment uses in accordance with Policy E1. In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other policies, proposals for employment uses will be supported on land within the area identified on the policies map which accord with Policy E1 and provide:

- a) 0.7ha of open space and/or green infrastructure;
- b) Demonstrate that development will avoid harming the operation of the stables, the safety of riders and access to public footpath 4;
- c) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:
 - i. large areas of built development should be avoided where possible, especially towards the western edge of the site;
 - ii. design should reflect the rural and agricultural setting and respond to the character of the surrounding heritage assets;
 - iii. the tree and hedge lines that form parts of the boundaries of the site should be preserved and enhanced to maintain visual screening for nearby heritage assets;
 - iv. the layout of the development should incorporate areas of green space and planting in order to break up areas of built development and to help preserve the rural and dispersed character of the area, especially in the west of the site. These should also allow views out towards the Iron Age Small multivallate hillfort known as Pitchbury Ramparts and Alcrofts;
 - v. site access should be located to the north-east, towards the existing employment development, to reduce traffic and visual intrusion near heritage assets and limit gaps in the surrounding planting;
 - vi. conserve the milestone: If the milestone is able to be found, it may be possible to carry out conservation work and ensure that it is sited in an appropriate position;
 - vii. The site is within a Waste Consultation Area (WCA). Applications made within WCAs are required to include a Waste Infrastructure Impact Assessment (WIIA) as part of its evidence base. Please liaise with the Minerals and Waste Planning authority for further information with regards to the scope and content of WIIA;
- d) Contributions will be required towards:
 - i. LCWIP (Walking and Cycling) Routes including connecting to North Station roundabout via B1508

All development proposals within West Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan Area, will also be determined against the policies in the West Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan (Adopted October 2019) where they are up to date and relevant.

Small Settlements

- 12.136 Small settlements play an important role in maintaining the rural character and diversity of place across the district. Consistent with the spatial strategy, these settlements will accommodate only limited and carefully managed growth. Development will be small-scale and proportionate to the size, role and function of the settlement, supporting local needs while safeguarding their distinct character, landscape setting and environmental assets.
- 12.137 Opportunities for infill and redevelopment within settlement boundaries will be supported where they respect the pattern and form of the village, avoid cumulative harm, and can be accommodated within existing infrastructure capacity or supported by appropriate mitigation. In many cases, environmental and infrastructure constraints limit the scope for growth, and not all small settlements will be identified for development.
- 12.138 This approach ensures that small settlements continue to contribute to sustainable patterns of development, while recognising the importance of protecting the countryside and avoiding unsustainable dispersal of growth.

Aldham

12.139 Aldham is a nucleated settlement that has developed around the junction of Brook Road/New Road and Green Lane/Tey Road with more modern development to the north-east and south-east. Aldham is rural in character and is accessed by narrow country lanes but is close to the A12/A120 and A1124.

Policy PP45: Land off New Road, Aldham

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 15 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development;**
- b) 'Enhanced Open Space' as shown on the policies map in excess of 10% of the allocation area must be provided as open space to reflect the site characteristics.**
- c) Any loss of hedgerow to allow for suitable access must be compensated.**
- d) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:**
 - i. retention and enhancement of the hedge and trees along the east and south east boundaries of the site to maintain screening to the church;**
 - ii. limitation on building height to ensure they are in keeping with the surrounding development;**
 - iii. further work of archaeological evaluation and recording is recommended in order to reduce and/or offset any adverse impacts from any development.**

Policy PEP15: Land at Former Mill Race Nursery, Aldham

Land at Mill Race Nursery, Aldham, as shown on the policies map, is allocated for employment, leisure and community uses. Proposals for an appropriate mix of uses will be supported subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this Plan.

All land and premises within this area will be safeguarded for a mix of employment, commercial and leisure uses, in accordance with Policy E1. Other Class uses will be supported where they are ancillary to the existing employment, leisure and community uses on the site and are intended to serve the primary function of the site, subject to any requirements for a sequential / impact test where the this applies.

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2026) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:
 - i. the retention of planting and trees along the eastern boundary to provide natural screening between heritage assets and new development;
 - ii. sensitive design and layout to protect the rural character of the conservation area and its connection to the river;
 - iii. limit on building heights;
 - iv. the retention of a buffer of open space around the pillbox and towards the river to maintain connection;
 - v. the careful treatment of the north-west corner of the site and controls on construction vehicle movements near south-west corner to preserve the pillbox and anti-tank pimple in situ and
 - vi. further work of archaeological evaluation and recording is recommended in order to reduce and/or offset any adverse impacts from any development.

Birch and Layer Breton

- 12.140 Birch Green is the largest area of housing within the wider Birch parish area (with the smaller historic core of Birch to the north and a separate, isolated cluster of dwellings known as Hardy's Green to the north-west). Birch Green is broadly triangular in shape where development has filled the space between Birch Street, Mill Lane and Straight Way, with some development extending beyond Mill Lane and Birch Street to the north and Crayes Green to the south-east. Birch Green is rural in character, has limited connections to the strategic road network but has a few key services including its own primary school and village hall.
- 12.141 Layer Breton is a linear settlement that has developed over time as a form of ribbon development along Layer Breton Hill, which is a rural road that links Colchester with Tolleshunt D'Arcy via Birch. Layer Breton is rural in character, poorly connected to the strategic road network and is accessed by narrow country lanes.

Policy PP46: Land at Birch Green, Birch

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 15 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development.**
- b) Delivery of BNG in accordance with Policy EN2 and informed by site specific ecological assessment, with opportunities for the following onsite habitat: grassland and hedgerow enhancement and tree planting.**
- c) Grassland compensation and any mitigation set out in protected species surveys (there is a pond 25m east of the site).**
- d) 'Enhanced Open Space' substantively in excess of 10% of the allocation area must be provided as open space onsite and demonstrate how this can link to the adjacent open space to the north.**
- e) In accordance with Policy EN6, development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:**
 - i. preserve views of the spire of the Church of St Peter and Paul in Birch;**
 - ii. maintain and enhance screening separating the site from Mill House;**
 - iii. use green space and planting to break up development in views from the Birch Conservation Area;**
 - iv. limit the heights of buildings so they are in keeping with surrounding development;**

- v. further work of archaeological evaluation and recording is recommended in order to reduce and/or offset any adverse impacts from any development.**
- f) Safeguarding of suitable access for the maintenance of existing water supply infrastructure.**

Fingringhoe

- 12.142 Fingringhoe is essentially a linear settlement comprised of two main residential areas that have developed either side of the historic core of Fingringhoe, which contains a primary school, church and public house. Fingringhoe is a designated rural area, which means affordable housing will be required for schemes of 5 dwellings or more.
- 12.143 The built up area to the east of the historic core of Fingringhoe is isolated, with one access road in and out (Church Road) which could make evacuation difficult in times of an emergency such as from hazards including wildfires and flooding. This area is indicated on the policies map to highlight this as a key consideration for the design, and impact, of new development close to these locations.

Policy PP47: Land at Picketts Farm, Fingringhoe

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 5 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development;**
 - b) Delivery of BNG in accordance with Policy EN2 and informed by site specific ecological assessment, with opportunities for grassland habitat;**
 - c) Have regard to the Essex LNRS, which identifies a strategic opportunity for grassland habitat north of the site.**
- 12.144 Given the current constraints and uncertainty regarding available wastewater treatment capacity within the Fingringhoe Wastewater Recycling Centre catchment and associated sewerage network, the applicant will be required to engage with Anglian Water Services at an early stage and demonstrate, prior to the submission of a planning application, that sufficient capacity is available to accommodate the proposed development, or that appropriate infrastructure upgrades have been agreed to support it, which may include sustainable points of connection to the water supply and wastewater networks to minimise impacts on existing communities and the environment. Where capacity is not available within the required timescales, development may need to be phased to align with the delivery of necessary wastewater infrastructure improvements.

Messing

12.145 Messing is located north of Tiptree. Messing is very rural and historic in character and is accessed by narrow country lanes. It has limited services and facilities but it has a primary school.

Policy PP48: Kelvedon Road, Messing

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and site specific infrastructure requirements from the IADP and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 25 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development;
- b) 'Enhanced Open Space' as shown on the Policies Map substantively in excess of 10% of the allocation area must be provided as open space. This should include a minimum of 1.7ha of public open space;
- c) Support will be given to delivering standing freshwater habitat to support the delivery of the strategic creation opportunities in the Essex LNRS;
- d) Provision of a footway access to the primary school
- e) Ensure provision of green infrastructure connections and recreational access to the countryside via public rights of way 3 and 17
- f) In accordance with Policy EN6 development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:
 - i. Views must be preserved towards the church tower at the Grade II* listed Church of All Saints, with use of green space to break up large blocks of development to retain rural character of the settlement particularly adjacent to Kelvedon Road;
 - ii. green space and planting on the northern edge of the development to help preserve the setting of Osborne House;
 - iii. use of green space and planting to break up large blocks of development and help retain rural character of the settlement;
 - iv. limits on the heights of buildings;
 - v. further work of a geophysical survey and archaeological evaluation is recommended in order to reduce and/or offset any adverse impacts from any development;
- g) A site-specific drainage strategy must be prepared to ensure existing surface water flooding issues are not exacerbated by the development and that development design is compatible with, and complements, existing flood mitigation solutions on site and in the village;
- h) Contributions will be required towards:
 - i. expansion of Mildene school in Tiptree; and
 - ii. the new Tiptree medical centre;
- i) Before granting planning consent, wintering bird surveys will be undertaken to identify any offsite functional habitat. Wintering bird surveys should comprise two winter seasons, and both diurnal and

nocturnal surveys. Natural England should be contacted for advice on how to determine whether mitigation is required based on the strength of the functional link. In the unlikely event that significant numbers are identified, development must firstly avoid impacts. Where this is not possible, development must be phased to deliver habitat creation and management either on or off-site to mitigate any significant impacts. Any such habitat must be provided and fully functional before any development takes place which would affect significant numbers of SPA birds.

Peldon

- 12.146 Housing in Peldon is laid out in a triangular pattern around three roads. The settlement boundary in Peldon currently comprises two roughly equivalent areas of housing on either side of two of the three roads. The triangular residential area is surrounded by arable farms. The village lies within the Coastal Protection Belt.
- 12.147 Given the current constraints and uncertainty regarding available wastewater treatment capacity within the Fingringhoe Wastewater Recycling Centre catchment and associated sewerage network, the applicant will be required to engage with Anglian Water Services at an early stage and demonstrate, prior to the submission of a planning application, that sufficient capacity is available to accommodate the proposed development, or that appropriate infrastructure upgrades have been agreed to support it, which may include sustainable points of connection to the water supply and wastewater networks to minimise impacts on existing communities and the environment. Where capacity is not available within the required timescales, development may need to be phased to align with the delivery of necessary wastewater infrastructure improvements.

Policy PP49a: Land South of Mersea Road, Peldon

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 25 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development;**
- b) Delivery of BNG in accordance with Policy EN2 and informed by site specific ecological assessment, with opportunities for the following onsite habitat: creation of new grassland and hedges and tree planting;**
- c) In accordance with Policy EN6, development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (2026) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site, including but not limited to:**
 - i. retention of openness within the north-eastern part of the site, where feasible, to help preserve rural views from Grade II listed Slane Cottage;**
 - ii. lower density development along the Mersea Road frontage to provide a softer transition between the settlement and surrounding countryside;**
 - iii. use of green space, structural planting and boundary landscaping to break up built form and retain the rural character of the site;**
 - iv. boundary planting to along the southern and eastern boundaries where possible to avoid a hard settlement edge;**

- v. careful treatment of Mersea Road frontage to respond sensitively to the historic roadside settlement pattern, not appearing overly prominent in views from Slane Cottage;**
- vi. building heights, scale and massing that respond to the surrounding settlement pattern and avoid visually dominant development; and**
- vii. further archaeological assessment and evaluation to inform the design of development and any necessary mitigation measures.**

Policy PP49b: Land west of Malting Road, Peldon

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in Policy ST7 and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this plan, development proposals within the area identified on the policies map will be expected to deliver the following site-specific requirements:

- a) Approximately 5 new dwellings of a mix, type and tenure of housing to meet evidenced needs and respond appropriately to the character of surrounding development;
- b) Delivery of BNG in accordance with Policy EN2 and informed by site specific ecological assessment, with opportunities for the following onsite habitat: enhance the pond within the site and creation of new grassland, hedgerows and tree planting;
- c) In accordance with Policy EN6, development proposals should have regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment (Stage 2 Impact Assessment 2025) which identified key sensitivities and mitigation measures for this site. Including but not limited to:
 - i. respect the setting of and conserve the local distinctiveness of the Church of St Mary
 - ii. the retention and enhancement of planting around the edges of the site, particularly to the south and east;
 - iii. the use of green space within the new development to break up;
 - iv. density, in keeping with the rural character of the settlement;
 - v. development to be set back from Maltings Road to soften views to the west;
 - vi. the use of appropriate building heights, scale and massing that reflect the surrounding development; and
 - vii. further desk based archaeological assessment and evaluation and possible geophysical survey.

13. Monitoring

- 13.1 It is essential that the policies that are set out in the Local Plan are effective and more importantly, that they are delivering the Plan's vision and objectives. Every year the Council publishes an Authority Monitoring Report (AMR). The AMR plays an important role monitoring the Local Plan.
- 13.2 The monitoring framework below provides an initial basis for assessing how the Plan's policies and objectives are being implemented and whether they are achieving the intended outcomes. The framework draws on the monitoring measures identified through the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process and will help inform future reporting through the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR).
- 13.3 The monitoring framework has been influenced by the indicators included in the SA Scoping Report (2024), alongside indicators received through consultation on the SA Scoping Report. Indicators have been selected to provide a proportionate and practical basis for monitoring, focusing where possible on measures that are clear, measurable and supported by data that is available or can be accessed from reliable sources. In many cases, monitoring will draw on information collected by the Council, while data provided by external organisations, such as the Environment Agency, Natural England, Historic England, Essex County Council and national datasets, may also be used. The indicators may be refined, amended or supplemented over the plan period in response to changes in data availability, monitoring outcomes or issues identified through the AMR process.

Monitoring Framework			
Relevant policies	Indicator	Target	Source
SA Objective 1: Provide a sufficient level of housing to meet needs and enable people to live in decent, safe, sustainable and affordable homes.			
• Policy ST3: Spatial Strategy • Policy ST9: The Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community • Policy H1: Housing Mix • Policy H2: Affordable Housing • Policy H3: Student Accommodation • Policy H4: Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and Co-Living Housing • Policy H5: Specialist Housing including Housing for an Aging Population • Policy H6: Self and Custom Build • Policy H7: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople • Policy H8: Rural Workers Dwellings	Net housing completions per annum	To deliver 1,276 homes per annum.	Development Management
	Number and percentage of affordable housing units delivered by tenure (Social Rent, Affordable Rent, Shared Ownership and other intermediate products).	Deliver affordable housing in accordance with Local Plan Policy H2 requirements and identified local need. Seek an overall affordable tenure split of 80% affordable rented housing and 20% intermediate housing, with Social Rent prioritised where viable.	Development Management Housing Services Appeals
	Number of serviced self and custom build plots secured and delivered on major developments of 100+ dwellings.	Deliver self and custom build plots in accordance with Policy H6.	Development Management
	Specialist, accessible and wheelchair-user housing delivered, including retirement housing, extra care housing, supported housing, care accommodation and M4(3)	Meet the identified specialist accommodation and accessibility needs.	Development Management

	wheelchair-user dwellings.		
	Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitches or plots permitted and delivered against identified need.	Meet specialist accommodation needs identified in the latest evidence base and Local Plan policy.	Development Management
	Households on the Housing Register and homelessness households.	Monitor whether housing delivery is addressing identified housing need.	Housing Register
SA Objective 2: Support the efficient use of land.			
• Policy ST3: Spatial Strategy • Policy ST4: Development in the Countryside • Policy ST8: Place Shaping Principles • Policy PC2: Active and Sustainable Travel • Policy PC4: Development Density	Delivery of development on previously developed land.	Maximise the appropriate use of previously developed land while maintaining a deliverable supply of sites.	Brownfield Register
SA Objective 3: Achieve a prosperous and sustainable local economy that improves employment and training opportunities and supports the vitality and viability of centres.			
• Policy ST3: Spatial Strategy • Policy E1: Protection of Employment • Policy E2: Economic Development in	Permissions granted for employment and leisure by type.	Maintain a sufficient supply of employment floorspace to meet identified needs over the plan period.	Development Management
	Economically active and	Improve economic participation and	ONS Annual Population Survey

Rural Areas and the Countryside - Policy E3: Agricultural Development and Diversification - Policy E4: Retail and Centres	inactive population.	monitor local labour market resilience.	
SA Objective 4: Reduce the need to travel and promote sustainable and active transport options to reduce congestion.			
- Policy ST7a: Sustainable Transport and Connectivity - Policy ST8: Place Shaping Principles - Policy PC2: Active and Sustainable Travel - Policy PC3: Parking Standards - Policy PC4: Development Density	Modal split and self-containment via local transport evidence (where available).	Increase the proportion of journeys made by sustainable and active modes and reduce reliance on single-occupancy car travel.	Development Management Essex County Council Transport Monitoring
	Travel Plans secured for major residential and commercial developments.	Secure and implement Travel Plans where required by policy.	Development Management
SA Objective 5: Promote stronger, more resilient and inclusive communities, improve health and wellbeing and reduce deprivation.			
- Policy ST1: Health and Wellbeing - Policy ST8: Place Shaping Principles - Policy CS1: Retention of Community Facilities - Policy CS2: Enhancement of and Provision for Community Facilities	Key community infrastructure delivered through planning obligations.	Secure and deliver community infrastructure required to support planned growth.	Development Management
	Life expectancy and health inequality indicators.	Monitor health outcomes and support actions that contribute to reduced inequalities.	Health stakeholders

• Policy CS4: Sports Provision • Policy PC1: Healthier Food Environments • Policy PC6: Design and Amenity • Policy PC9: Play and Child-Friendly Places			
SA Objective 6: Provide access to services, facilities and education.			
• Policy ST3: Spatial Strategy • Policy ST7: Infrastructure Delivery and Impact Mitigation • Policy ST7a: Sustainable Transport and Connectivity • Policy CS1: Retention of Community Facilities • Policy CS2: Enhancement of and Provision for Community Facilities • Policy CS3: Education Provision • Policy PC2: Active and Sustainable Travel	Key community, education and service infrastructure delivered through planning obligations and infrastructure programmes.	Deliver infrastructure required to support planned growth and maintain access to key services.	Development Management
SA Objective 7: Conserving and enhancing townscape character, heritage and cultural assets.			
• Policy ST8: Place Shaping Principles	Recorded loss of Listed Buildings Grade I, Grade II*,	No loss of designated heritage assets as a result of development contrary to policy.	Development Management/ Historic England

• Policy EN6: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment • Policy EN7: Archaeology • Policy CS5: Tourism, Leisure, Arts, Culture and Heritage • Policy PC6: Design and Amenity	Scheduled Monuments or nationally important archaeological sites to development.		
	Heritage assets on the Heritage at Risk Register.	Reduce assets at risk and avoid new assets being added due to neglect or harmful development.	Historic England Heritage at Risk Register
	Local List additions and losses, including non-designated heritage assets.	Support positive conservation outcomes and maintain an up-to-date Local List.	Council Local List
SA Objective 8: Protect, conserve, enhance and restore biodiversity and promote and conserve geodiversity.			
• Policy ST2: Environment and the Green Network and Waterways • Policy EN1: Nature Conservation Designated Sites • Policy EN2: Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Environmental Net Gain • Policy EN3: Biodiversity and Geodiversity • Policy EN4: Irreplaceable Habitats • Policy EN5: Canopy Cover	Amount of development in designated biodiversity or geodiversity areas.	Avoid adverse impacts on protected sites and secure appropriate mitigation where development is permitted.	Development Management
	Planning applications approved contrary to Environment Agency or Natural England advice.	No permissions granted contrary to statutory environmental advice unless fully justified and mitigated.	Development Management
	Number and area of Local Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife Sites.	Maintain or increase the extent and positive management of local nature conservation sites.	Essex Wildlife Trust
	Compliance with Essex	Secure RAMS mitigation for relevant development in line	Development Management

- and New and Existing Trees • Policy GN1: Open Space and Green Network and Waterways Principles • Policy GN2: Strategic Green Spaces and Nature Recovery • Policy GN5: Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace • Policy GN6: Retention of Open Space	Coast RAMS requirements.	with adopted requirements.	
	Biodiversity net gain secured and delivered, including habitat sites and strategic allocations.	Secure statutory biodiversity net gain and deliver habitat commitments through development and strategic site allocations.	Development Management
SA Objective 9: Conserve and enhance the character and distinctiveness of the landscape.			
• Policy ST2: Environment and the Green Network and Waterways • Policy ST4: Development in the Countryside • Policy ST8: Place Shaping Principles • Policy GN1: Open Space and Green Network and Waterways Principles • Policy GN2: Strategic Green Spaces and Nature Recovery	Amount of development in designated landscapes and sensitive landscape areas.	Avoid unacceptable harm to landscape character and secure mitigation/enhancement where development is permitted.	Development Management

• Policy GN3: Local Green Spaces • Policy GN6: Retention of Open Space • Policy LC1: Landscape • Policy LC2: Dedham Vale National Landscape • Policy LC3: Coastal Areas • Policy LC4: Islands			
SA Objective 10: Minimise greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.			
• Policy ST2: Environment and the Green Network and Waterways • Policy NZ4: Renewable Energy • Policy NZ2: Embodied Carbon and Circular Economy in Homes and Buildings	Renewable and low-carbon energy installed by type and capacity.	Increase renewable and low-carbon energy capacity delivered through development and standalone schemes.	Development Management (where not under Permitted Development)
	Emissions produced in the Colchester City Centre area	Downward trend over the plan period.	Council Monitoring/DESNZ Statistics/ONS,
SA Objective 11: Manage and reduce flood risk from all sources.			
• Policy ST2: Environment and the Green Network and Waterways • Policy EN8: Flood Risk • Policy EN8a: Sustainable Drainage Systems	Number and proportion of major schemes incorporating sustainable drainage and water management measures.	Ensure major development incorporates appropriate flood risk management and sustainable drainage measures.	Development Management

Policy NZ3: Wastewater and Water Supply			
SA Objective 12: Reduce waste generation and increase levels of reuse and recycling.			
Policy ST7: Infrastructure Delivery and Impact Mitigation	Household recycling rate and residual waste generation.	Meet the Council's KPI's.	Council Waste Monitoring
SA Objective 13: Protect and improve air quality.			
- Policy ST1: Health and Wellbeing - Policy ST7a: Sustainable Transport and Connectivity - Policy EN9: Pollution and Contaminated Land - Policy PC2: Active and Sustainable Travel - Policy PC6: Design and Amenity	Number and extent of Air Quality Management Areas.	Improve air quality and support achievement of AQMA objectives.	Air Quality Management Areas records
	Levels of pollution in the air.	To ensure pollution levels are not increasing.	Air Quality Annual Status Reporting
SA Objective 14: Protect the quality and quantity of water resources.			
- Policy ST2: Environment and the Green Network and Waterways - Policy EN8: Flood Risk - Policy EN8a: Sustainable Drainage Systems - Policy NZ3: Wastewater and Water Supply	Number and proportion of major schemes incorporating water management, water efficiency and SuDS measures.	Ensure development is supported by appropriate water management and efficiency measures.	Development Management

14. Appendices

14.1 Colchester Local Plan Section 1 (February 2021) and Section 2 (July 2022) will be superseded by the Colchester Local Plan 2026 to 2043. The table below sets out the adopted Local Plan policies and the name of the relevant new policy. It also identifies any policies which are to be saved from the Section One Local Plan.

Colchester Local Plan 2017 to 2033		Colchester Local Plan 2026 to 2043	
Existing Policy Reference	Existing Policy Name	New Policy Reference	New Policy Name
Section 1			
SP1	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development		
SP2	Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS)	EN1	Nature Conservation and Designated Sites
SP3	Spatial Strategy for North Essex	ST3 ST4	Spatial Strategy Development in the Countryside
SP4	Meeting Housing Needs	ST5	Colchester's Housing Need
SP5	Providing for Employment	ST6	Colchester's Employment Need
SP6	Infrastructure and Connectivity	ST7	Infrastructure Delivery and Impact Mitigation
SP7	Place Shaping Principles	ST8	Placemaking Principles
SP8	Development and Delivery of New Garden Community in North Essex		Saved
SP9	Tendring/Colchester Borders Garden Community		Saved
Section 2			
SG1		ST3 ST4	Spatial Strategy

Colchester Local Plan 2017 to 2033		Colchester Local Plan 2026 to 2043	
Existing Policy Reference	Existing Policy Name	New Policy Reference	New Policy Name
	Colchester's Spatial Strategy		Development in the Countryside
SG2	Housing Delivery	ST5	Colchester's Housing Need
SG3	Economic Growth Provision	ST6	Colchester's Employment Need
SG4	Local Economic Areas	E1 PEP1- PEP16	Protection of Employment
SG5	Centre Hierarchy	E4	Retail and Centres
SG6	Town Centre Uses	E4	Retail and Centres
SG6a	Local Centres	E4	Retail and Centres
SG7	Infrastructure Delivery and Impact Mitigation	ST7 ST7a	Infrastructure Delivery and Impact Mitigation
SG8	Neighbourhood Plan	Place policies	Neighbourhood plans are referred to in relevant Place policies
ENV1	Environment	ST2 EN1 EN2 EN3 EN4	Environment and the Green Network Nature conservation designated sites Biodiversity net gain (BNG) and environmental net gain Biodiversity and geodiversity Irreplaceable habitats
ENV2	Coastal Areas	LC3	Coastal areas
ENV3	Green Infrastructure	GN1	Green Network and Waterways Principles

Colchester Local Plan 2017 to 2033		Colchester Local Plan 2026 to 2043	
Existing Policy Reference	Existing Policy Name	New Policy Reference	New Policy Name
ENV4	Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	LC2	Dedham Vale National Landscape
ENV5	Pollution and Contaminated Land	EN9	Pollution and Contaminated Land
CC1	Climate Change	NZ1 GN4	Net Zero Carbon Development (in operation) Tree Canopy Cover
PP1	Generic Infrastructure and Mitigation Requirements	ST7	Infrastructure Delivery and Impact Mitigation
TC1	Town Centre Policy and Hierarchy	E4	Retail and Centres
TC2	Retail Frontages	E4	Retail and Centres
EC1	Knowledge gateway and University of Essex Strategic Economic Area	PEP2 UE1	Knowledge Gateway University of Essex
WC3	Colchester Zoo	E5	Colchester Zoo
SS12b	Coast Road West Mersea	LC3	Coastal Areas
SS12c	Mersea Island Caravan Parks	CS6	Caravan Parks
OV1	Development in Other Villages	ST3	Spatial Strategy
OV2	Countryside	ST4	Development in the Countryside
DM1	Health and Wellbeing	ST1 PC1	Health and Wellbeing Healthier Food Environments
DM2	Community Facilities	CS1 CS2 PC9	Retention of Community Facilities Enhancement and Provision for new Community Facilities
DM3	Education Provision	CS3	Education Provision

Colchester Local Plan 2017 to 2033		Colchester Local Plan 2026 to 2043	
Existing Policy Reference	Existing Policy Name	New Policy Reference	New Policy Name
DM4	Sports Provision	CS4	Sports Provision
DM5	Tourism, leisure, Culture and Heritage	CS5	Tourism, Leisure, Arts, Culture and Heritage
DM6	Economic Development in Rural Areas and the Countryside	E2	Economic Development in Rural Areas and the Countryside
DM7	Agricultural Development and Diversification	E3	Agricultural Development and Diversification
DM8	Affordable Housing	H2	Affordable Housing
DM9	Development Density	PC4	Development Density
DM10	Housing Diversity	H3 H4 H5 H6	Student Accommodation Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) Specialist Housing including Housing for an Aging Population Self and Custom Build
DM11	Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	H7	Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
DM12	Housing Standards	PC6 H5	Design and Amenity Specialist Housing including housing for an aging population
DM13	Domestic Development	PC5	Domestic Development
DM14	Rural Workers Dwellings	H8	Rural Workers Dwellings
DM15	Design and Amenity	PC6	Design and Amenity
DM16	Historic Environment	EN6 EN7	Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment Archaeology
DM17	Retention of Open Space	GN6	Retention of Open Space

Colchester Local Plan 2017 to 2033		Colchester Local Plan 2026 to 2043	
Existing Policy Reference	Existing Policy Name	New Policy Reference	New Policy Name
DM18	Provision of Open Space and Recreation Facilities	GN1	Green network and waterways principles
DM19	Private Amenity Space	PC8	Private amenity space
DM20	Promoting Sustainable Transport and Changing Travel Behaviour	PC2 ST7a	Active and Sustainable Travel
DM21	Sustainable Access to development	PC2	Active and Sustainable Travel
DM22	Parking	PC3	Parking Standards
DM23	Flood Risk and Water Management	EN8	Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)
DM24	Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems	EN8	Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)
DM25	Renewable Energy, Water Waste and Recycling	NZ4 NZ3	Renewable Energy Wastewater and Water Supply
Place Policies		Place Policies PP1-PP55; OA1-OA5	

Policy SP 8 Development & Delivery of a New Garden Community in North Essex

The following new garden community is proposed at the broad location shown on Map 10.2.

Tendring/Colchester Borders, a new garden community which will deliver between 2,200 and 2,500 homes, 7 hectares of employment land and provision for Gypsies and Travellers within the Plan period (as part of an expected overall total of between 7,000 and 9,000 homes and 25 hectares of employment land to be delivered beyond 2033).

The garden community will be holistically and comprehensively planned with a distinct identity that responds directly to its context and is of sufficient scale to incorporate a range of homes, employment, education & community facilities, green space and other uses to enable residents to meet the majority of their day-to-day needs, reducing the need for outward commuting. It will be comprehensively planned from the outset, with delivery phased to achieve the whole development, and will be underpinned by a comprehensive package of infrastructure.

A Development Plan Document (DPD) will be prepared for the garden community, containing policies setting out how the new community will be designed, developed and delivered in phases, in accordance with the principles in paragraphs i-xiv below. No planning consent for development forming part of the garden community will be granted until the DPD has been adopted. All development forming part of the garden community will comply with these principles.

- i. Community and stakeholder participation in the design and delivery of the garden community from the outset and a long-term community engagement and activation strategy.
- ii. The public sector working pro-actively and collaboratively with the private sector to design, and bring forward the garden community, deploying new models of delivery where appropriate and ensuring that the cost of achieving the following is borne by landowners and those promoting the developments: (a) securing a high-quality of place-making, (b) ensuring the timely delivery of both on-site and off-site infrastructure required to address the impact of the new community, and (c) providing and funding a mechanism for future stewardship, management, maintenance and renewal of community infrastructure and assets. Where appropriate, developers will be expected to contribute towards publicly-funded infrastructure, including a contribution towards the A120-A133 link road. Given the scale of and time period for development of the new garden community, the appropriate model of delivery will need to secure a comprehensive approach to delivery in order to achieve the outcomes outlined in points (a) - (c) in this paragraph, avoid a piecemeal approach to development, provide the funding and phasing of both development and infrastructure, and be sustainable and accountable in the long term.
- iii. Promotion and execution of the highest quality of planning, design and management of the built and public realm so that the Garden Community is

characterised as a distinctive place that capitalises on local assets, respects its context, and establishes an environment that promotes health, happiness and well-being.

iv. Sequencing of development and infrastructure provision (both on-site and off-site) to ensure that the latter is provided ahead of or in tandem with the development it supports to address the impacts of the new garden community, meet the needs of its residents and establish sustainable travel patterns. To ensure new development does not have an adverse effect on any European Protected or nationally important sites and complies with environmental legislation (notably the Water Framework Directive and the Habitats Directive), the required waste water treatment capacity must be available ahead of the occupation of dwellings.

v. Development that provides for a truly balanced and inclusive community and meets the housing needs of local people including a mix of dwelling sizes, tenures and types, provision for self- and custom-built homes, provision for the aging population; and provision for Gypsies and Travellers; and that meets the requirements of those most in need including the provision of 30% affordable housing in the garden community.

vi. Provide and promote opportunities for employment within the new community and within sustainable commuting distance of it.

vii. Plan the new community around a step change in integrated and sustainable transport systems for the North Essex area that put walking, cycling and rapid public transit networks and connections at the heart of growth in the area, encouraging and incentivising more sustainable active travel patterns.

viii. Structure the new community to create sociable, vibrant and walkable neighbourhoods with equality of access for all to a range of community services and facilities including health, education, retail, culture, community meeting spaces, multi-functional open space, sports and leisure facilities.

ix. Develop specific garden community parking approaches and standards that help promote the use of sustainable transport and make efficient use of land.

x. Create distinctive environments which are based on comprehensive assessments of the surrounding environment and that celebrate natural and historic environments and systems, utilise a multi-functional green-grid to create significant networks of new green infrastructure including a new country park at the garden community, provide a high degree of connectivity to existing corridors and networks and enhance biodiversity.

xi. Secure a smart and sustainable approach that fosters climate resilience and a 21st century environment in the design and construction of the garden community to secure net gains in local biodiversity, highest standards of energy efficiency and innovation in technology to reduce the impact of climate change, the incorporation of innovative water efficiency/re-use measures (with the aim of being water neutral in areas of serious water stress), and sustainable waste and mineral management.

xii. Ensure that the costs and benefits of developing a garden community are shared by all landowners, with appropriate measures being put in place to equalise the costs and land contributions.

xiii. Consideration of potential on-site mineral resources through a Minerals Resource Assessment as required by the Minerals Planning Authority.

xiv. Establishment at an early stage in the development of the garden community, of appropriate and sustainable long-term governance and stewardship arrangements for community assets including green space, public realm areas and community and other relevant facilities; such arrangements to be funded by the development and include community representation to ensure residents have a stake in the long term development, stewardship and management of their community.

Policy SP 9 Tendring/Colchester Borders Garden Community

The Development Plan Document (DPD) required for the Tendring / Colchester Borders Garden Community by Policy SP8 will define the boundary of the new community and the amount of development it will contain. The adoption of the DPD will be contingent on the completion of a Heritage Impact Assessment carried out in accordance with Historic England guidance. The Heritage Impact Assessment will assess the impact of proposed allocations upon the historic environment, inform the appropriate extent and capacity of the development and establish any mitigation measures necessary. The DPD will be produced in consultation with the local community and stakeholders and will include a concept plan showing the disposition and quantity of future land-uses, and give a three dimensional indication of the urban design and landscape parameters which will be incorporated into any future planning applications; together with a phasing and implementation strategy which sets out how the rate of development will be linked to the provision of the necessary social, physical and environmental infrastructure to ensure that the respective phases of the development do not come forward until the necessary infrastructure has been secured. The DPD and any application for planning permission for development forming part of the garden community must be consistent with the requirements set out in this policy.

For the Plan period up to 2033, housing delivery from the garden community, irrespective of its actual location, will be distributed equally between Colchester Borough Council and Tendring District Council. If, after taking into account its share of delivery from the garden community, either of those authorities has a shortfall in delivery against the housing requirement for its area, it will need to make up the shortfall within its own area. It may not use the other authority's share of delivery from the garden community to make up the shortfall.

The DPD and any planning application will address the following principles and requirements in the design, development and delivery of the new garden community:

A. Place-Making and Design Quality

1. The development of a new garden community to high standards of design and layout drawing on its context and the considerable assets within its boundaries such

as woodland, streams and changes in topography, as well as the opportunities afforded by the proximity of the University of Essex campus to create a new garden community that is innovative, contemporary and technologically enabled, set within a strong green framework with new neighbourhood centres at its heart. It will be designed and developed to have its own identity and be as self-sustaining as possible recognising its location close to the edge of Colchester. It will secure appropriate integration with Colchester and the nearby University of Essex campus by the provision of suitable walking and cycling links and rapid public transport systems and connections to enable residents of the new community to have convenient access to town centre services and facilities in Colchester as well as Elmstead Market. Clear separation will be maintained between the new garden community and the nearby villages of Elmstead Market and Wivenhoe. Safeguarding the important green edge to Colchester will be essential with a new country park provided along the Salary Brook corridor and incorporating Churn Wood.

2. Detailed masterplans and design guidance, based on a robust assessment of historic and natural environmental constraints and opportunities for enhancement, will be adopted to inform and guide development proposals and planning applications for the garden community.

B. Housing

3. A mix of housing types and tenures including self- and custom-build and starter homes will be provided on the site, including a minimum of 30% affordable housing. The affordable housing will be phased through the development.

4. New residential development will seek to achieve appropriate densities which reflect both context, place-making aspirations and opportunities for increased levels of development around neighbourhood centres and transport hubs.

C. Employment and Jobs

5. The garden community will make provision for a wide range of jobs, skills and training opportunities. The DPD will allocate about 25 hectares of B use employment land within the garden community. This may include provision for office, research & development, light industrial and/or other employment generating uses towards the south of the site in proximity to the existing University of Essex and Knowledge Gateway and provision for office, research & development, industrial, storage and distribution uses towards the north of the site close to the A120.

6. High speed and reliable broadband will be provided and homes will include specific spaces to enable working from home.

D. Transportation

7. A package of measures will be introduced to encourage smarter transport choices to meet the needs of the new community and to maximise the opportunities for sustainable travel. Policy SP6 requires planning consent and full funding approval for the A120-A133 link road and Route 1 of the rapid transit system to have been secured before planning approval is granted for any development at the garden community. Additional transport priorities include the provision of a network of

footpaths, cycleways and bridleways to enhance permeability within the site and to access and to access the adjoining areas; park and ride facilities and other effective integrated measures to mitigate the transport impacts of the proposed development on the strategic and local road network. Longer term transport interventions will need to be carefully designed to minimise the impacts on the strategic and local transport network and fully mitigate any environmental or traffic impacts arising from the development.

8. Foot and cycle ways shall be provided throughout the development and connecting with the surrounding urban areas and countryside, including seamlessly linking key development areas to the University of Essex, Hythe station and Colchester Town Centre.

9. Primary vehicular access to the site will be provided off the A120 and A133. Any other road improvements required to meet needs arising from the garden community will be set out in the DPD and further defined as part of the masterplanning process.

10. Other specific transport-related infrastructure requirements identified through the Strategic Growth Development Plan Document and masterplans for this garden community will be delivered in a phased manner.

E. Community Infrastructure

11. District and neighbourhood centres of an appropriate scale will be provided to serve the proposed development. The centres will be located where they will be easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transit to the majority of residents in the garden community.

12. Community meeting places will be provided within the local centres.

13. Increased primary healthcare capacity will be provided to serve the new development as appropriate. This may be by means of new infrastructure or improvement, reconfiguration, extension or relocation of existing medical facilities.

14. A secondary school, primary schools and early-years facilities will be provided to serve the new development.

15. A network of multi-functional green infrastructure will be provided within the garden community incorporating key elements of the existing green assets within the site. It will include community parks, allotments, a new country park, the provision of sports areas with associated facilities; and play facilities.

16. Indoor leisure and sports facilities will be provided within the new community, or contributions made to the improvement of off-site leisure facilities to serve the new development.

F. Other Requirements

17. The delivery of smart, innovative and sustainable water efficiency/re-use solutions that fosters climate resilience and a 21st century approach towards water supply, water and waste water treatment and flood risk management. Taking a strategic approach to flood risk through the use of Strategic Flood Risk Assessments

and the updated Climate Projections 2019 and identifying opportunities for Natural Flood Risk Management. Provision of improvements to waste water treatment plant including an upgrade to the Colchester Waste Water Treatment Plan and off-site drainage improvements aligned with the phasing of the development within the plan period and that proposed post 2033. To ensure new development does not have an adverse effect on any European Protected or nationally important site and complies with environmental legislation (notably the Water Framework Directive and the Habitats Directive), the required waste water treatment capacity must be available ahead of the occupation of dwellings.

18. Landscape buffers between the site and existing development in Colchester, Wivenhoe and Elmstead Market.

19. Conserve and where appropriate enhance the significance of heritage assets (including any contribution made by their settings) both within and surrounding the site. Designated heritage assets within the garden community area include Grade II listed Allen's Farmhouse, Ivy Cottage, Lamberts, and three buildings at Hill farmhouse. Designated heritage assets nearby include the grade I listed Church of St Anne and St Lawrence, grade II* listed Wivenhoe House, Elmstead Hall and Spring Valley Mill and numerous grade II listed buildings as well as the grade II listed Wivenhoe Registered Park and Garden. Harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should be avoided in the first instance.

20. Avoidance, protection and/or enhancement of biodiversity assets within and surrounding the site; including Bullock Wood SSSI, Ardleigh Gravel Pits SSSI, Wivenhoe Pits SSSI and Upper Colne Marshes SSSI and relevant European protected sites. Contributions will be secured towards mitigation measures in accordance with the Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy. Wintering bird surveys will be undertaken at the appropriate time of year as part of the DPD preparation to identify any offsite functional habitat. Should any be identified, development must firstly avoid impacts. Where this is not possible, development must be phased to deliver habitat creation and management either on- or off-site to mitigate any significant impacts. Any such habitat must be provided and fully functional before any development takes place which would affect significant numbers of SPA birds.

21. Provision of appropriate buffers along strategic road and rail infrastructure to protect new development.

22. Provision of appropriate design and infrastructure that incorporates the highest standards of innovation in energy efficiency and technology to reduce impact of climate change, water efficiency (with the aim of being water neutral in areas of serious water stress), and sustainable waste / recycling management facilities.

23. Measures to support the development of the new community including provision of community development support workers (or other provision) for a minimum of ten years from initial occupation of the first homes and appropriate community governance structures.

24. Establishment at an early stage in the development of the garden community, of appropriate and sustainable long-term governance and stewardship arrangements for community assets including green space, public realm areas and community and other relevant facilities; such arrangements to be funded by the development and include community representation to ensure residents have a stake in the long term development, stewardship and management of their community.

25. Allocation of additional land within the garden community, to accommodate University expansion, which is at least equivalent in size to the allocation in the Colchester Local Development Framework Site Allocations document October 2010.

14.2 The following Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance are superseded:

- Colne Harbour Masterplan – January 2008
- Colne Harbour Design Framework – January 2001
- Colne Harbour Public Space Design Guide
- Essex County Hospital Development Brief – December 2014
- Stanway Railway Sidings Development Brief – April 2011
- Stanway Southern Sites Access Development Brief – December 2013
- Garrison Masterplan – November 2002
- Sustainable Drainage Systems Design Guide – December 2014
- Planning Guidance Note on Air Quality – August 2012
- Sustainable Construction SPD

14.3 The following Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance remain:

- Abro Development Brief - SPD
- Active Travel SPD
- Climate Change SPD
- Biodiversity SPD
- Affordable Housing SPD
- Backland and Infill SPD
- Essex Coast RAMS SPD
- North Colchester Growth Area SPD
- Provision of Community Facilities SPD
- Provision of Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities SPD
- Shopfront Design Guide SPD
- Street Services Delivery Strategy SPD
- Colchester City Centre Masterplan SPD
- Vehicle Parking Standards SPD – 2009
- Development and Public Rights of Way – Jan 2010
- Managing Archaeology in Development SPD – 2015
- External Materials Guide for New Development – July 2004
- Developing a Landscape for the Future – September 2013
- Magdalen Street Development Brief – February 2014
- Magdalen Street Sidings Development Brief – February 2014
- Planning for Broadband – February 2016
- Rural Workers Dwelling – Guidance Note for Applicants – August 2012
- Tollgate Vision July 2013

15. Glossary

Adopted/Adoption - The final confirmation of a plan's status by a local planning authority (LPA).

Affordable Housing – The Councils definition will accord with the current definition in the National Planning Policy Framework (or any successor document) but will also include those uses eligible under Essex County Council's Independent Living Programme. It includes social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Affordable housing should meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.

Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) – Areas designated by local authorities because they are not likely to achieve national air quality objectives by the relevant deadlines.

Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) – A report published annually by the Councils monitoring progress in delivering progress in Local Plan policies and allocations.

Biodiversity Net Gain - Biodiversity Net Gain is an approach to development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before. The Environment Act contains a new biodiversity net gain condition for planning permissions. To meet this requirement biodiversity gains will need to be measured using a biodiversity metric.

Brownfield Land (also known as Previously Developed Land) - Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.

Boundary treatment - How a building or development site relates to its boundary - open, closed, accessible, fence, landscaped etc.

Centre - References to centres apply to city centres, town centres, district centres and local centres but exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance. See definitions of local centres and district centres.

Coastal protection belt - is a planning policy designation aimed at safeguarding the open, rural, and undeveloped character of Essex's coastline, which is considered a finite and irreplaceable resource. It was originally delineated in 1984 using tidal influence of estuaries as the inland boundary and physical features like roads, field boundaries, and public rights of way for clarity and defensibility.

Community Facilities - Are buildings, which enable a variety of local activity to take place including, but not limited to, the following: Schools, Universities and other educational facilities; Libraries and community centres; Doctors surgeries, medical centres and hospitals; Public houses and local shops; Museums and art galleries; Child care centres; Sport and recreational facilities; Youth clubs; Playgrounds; Cemeteries; and Places of worship.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – A mechanism by which Councils can set a standard charge on specified development in their area to pay for new infrastructure required to support growth.

Competent person (to prepare site investigation information) - A person with a recognised relevant qualification, sufficient experience in dealing with the type(s) of pollution or land instability, and membership of a relevant professional organisation.

Critical drainage area - A discrete geographic area (usually a hydrological catchment) where multiple or interlinked sources of flood risk cause flooding during a severe rainfall event thereby affecting people, property or local infrastructure.

Design code - A set of illustrated design requirements that provide specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of a site or area.

Development – The definition in Section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is ‘means the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operation in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any building or other land’.

Development Plan – This includes adopted Local Plans, neighbourhood plans and is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The Development Plan is the starting point for decision making. This includes the Essex Minerals Local Plan and the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan.

District Centre – Important role serving the day-to-day needs of their local populations as well as providing access to shops and services for neighbouring areas across and beyond the district, but not to a level comparable with Colchester City Centre.

Energy hierarchy – The energy hierarchy is a classification of energy strategies, prioritised to assist progress towards a more sustainable energy system. The steps are: be lean, use less energy; be clean, supply energy efficiently; be green, use renewable energy; and offset.

Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS): A statutory spatial strategy under the Environment Act 2021, led by Essex County Council, identifying priority habitats, opportunity areas, and actions to reverse biodiversity decline and support nature recovery across Essex.

European Sites - The European network of protected sites established under the Birds Directive and Habitats Directive (includes SPA, SAC, and Ramsar sites). See also habitats sites.

Flood risk - The level of flood risk is the product of the frequency or likelihood of the flood events and their consequences (such as loss, damage, harm, distress and disruption). Areas at risk of flooding are those at risk of flooding from any source, now or in the future. Flood risk also accounts for the interactions between these different flood sources.

Flood zone - Flood Zones show the probability of flooding, ignoring the presence of existing defences.

Garden Community – Communities which are holistically planned new settlements that respond directly to their regional, local and individual site context and opportunities to create developments underpinned by a series of interrelated principles which are based on the following Town and Country Planning Association Garden City Principles: Land value capture for the benefit of the community; Strong vision, leadership and community engagement; Community ownership of land and long-term stewardship of assets; Mixed-tenure homes and housing types that are genuinely affordable; A wide range of local jobs in the Garden Community within easy commuting distance of homes; Beautifully and imaginatively designed homes with gardens, combining the best of town and country to create healthy communities, and including opportunities to grow food; Development that enhances the natural environment, providing a comprehensive green infrastructure network and net biodiversity gains, and that uses zero-carbon and energy-positive technology to ensure climate resilience; Strong cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable, vibrant, sociable neighbourhoods; Integrated and accessible transport systems, with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of local transport.

Green-blue Infrastructure – A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity.

Green Network and Waterways – The Council's name for green and blue infrastructure, named to be more easily understood by the public. It encompasses the definition of green infrastructure in the NPPF.

Greenfield Site - Land which has never been built on before or where the remains of any structure or activity have blended into the landscape over time.

Gypsies and Travellers - Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such. In determining whether persons are "gypsies and travellers" consideration will be given to the following issues amongst other relevant matters: a) whether they previously led a nomadic habit of life b) the reasons for ceasing their nomadic habit of life c) whether there is an intention of living a nomadic habit of life in the future, and if so, how soon and in what circumstances.

Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) - The Habitat Regulation Assessment is a statutory requirement under the [Conservation \(Natural Habitats\) \(Amendment\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2010 \(as amended\)](#). An HRA is required for a plan or project which, either alone or in combination with, other plans or projects is likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of a European/ habitats site.

Habitats site - Any site which would be included within the definition at regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and any relevant Marine Sites. Part of the 'national site network'.

Infrastructure - Infrastructure means any structure, building, system, facility and/or provision required by an area for its social and/or economic function and/or well-being including (but not exclusively): footways, cycleways and highways; public transport; drainage and flood protection; waste recycling facilities; education and childcare; healthcare; sports, leisure and recreation facilities; community and social facilities; cultural facilities; police, fire & rescue and ambulance facilities; green infrastructure; open space; affordable housing; broadband; facilities for specific sections of the community such as youth or the elderly.

Lawton's principles - refer to a framework developed by Sir Michael Lawton in the context of ecological conservation. These principles were outlined in the 2010 report, Making Space for Nature, which aimed to improve the resilience and effectiveness of England's local wildlife sites. These principles are often summarized as 'Better, Bigger, More and Joined-up', and they underpin many modern conservation strategies, including the development of Nature Recovery Networks and Green Infrastructure Planning.

Local Centre – An essential role providing a range of small shops and services to meet the basic needs of local communities, serving a small catchment.

Local Development Scheme (LDS) - This is the project plan for a three year period for the production of all documents that will comprise the Local Plan. It identifies each Local Development Document and establishes a timetable for preparing each.

Local Plan - The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the [Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#).

Local Wildlife Sites – Habitats identified by Essex Wildlife Trust as important for the conservation of wildlife.

Massing - The combined effect of the arrangement, volume and shape of a building or group of buildings in relation to other buildings and spaces. This is also called bulk.

Main Town Centre Uses – As defined in the National Planning Policy Framework, main Town Centre uses include retail development (Including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment facilities, the more intensive sport and

recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres, and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

Mineral Consultation Area (MCA) – A designated zone surrounding existing or allocated mineral sites and infrastructure, typically extending up to 250 metres from their boundaries. The purpose of an MCA is to safeguard mineral resources and infrastructure by ensuring that any proposed non-mineral development within these areas does not compromise or prejudice the continued efficient operation of mineral activities.

Mineral Safeguarding Area - An area designated by the Minerals Planning Authority (Essex County Council) which covers known deposits of minerals which are desired to be kept safeguarded from unnecessary sterilisation by non-mineral development.

Mitigation hierarchy - The mitigation hierarchy is a widely used tool that guides users towards limiting as far as possible the negative impacts on biodiversity from development projects. As a priority, impacts on key habitats and features must be avoided wherever feasible. Then the design must minimise impacts, then remediate impacts, and as a last resort compensate for impacts.

Modal Share - A modal share is the percentage of travellers using a particular type of transportation.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - Government planning policy which replaces a large number of Planning Policy Guidance notes and Planning Policy Statements with one single document. It sets out new planning requirements and objectives in relation to issues such as housing, employment, transport and the historic and natural environment amongst others.

Natural surveillance - Natural surveillance is an urban design, architecture and landscaping technique that seeks to deter crime with social and highly visible spaces. Natural surveillance is based on the theory that isolation makes crime both easier and more likely.

Neighbourhood Plan - A plan prepared by a Parish Council, Neighbourhood Forum, or other locally constituted community group, for a particular neighbourhood.

Open space - All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

Permitted Development Rights – The level of development that can take place before planning permission is required, as stated in [The Town and Country Planning \(General Permitted Development\) Order 1995](#), as amended.

Planning Obligation/Section 106 Agreement – A legally binding agreement between a local planning authority and any person interested in land within the area of the local authority, or an undertaking by such person, under which development is

restricted, activities or uses required; or a financial contribution to be made. Used to mitigate the impacts of development.

Planning Practice Guidance – Guidance and detail supporting the National Planning Policy Framework which is published online and regularly updated.

Previously Developed Land - see brownfield land above.

Ramsar Site – An area identified by international agreement on endangered habitats.

Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) – A tool used to manage and mitigate the adverse effects from increased recreational disturbance arising from new developments on European/ habitats Sites.

Self-build and custom-build housing – Housing built by an individual, a group of individuals, or persons working with or for them, to be occupied by that individual. Such housing can be either market or affordable housing. A legal definition, for the purpose of applying the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended), is contained in section 1(A1) and (A2) of that Act.

Setting of a heritage asset - The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

Significance (for heritage policy) - The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic, or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) - Land notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as an ecosystem of flora and/or fauna considered to be of significant national value and interest to merit its conservation and management.

Sound/Soundness - To be considered sound, a Development Plan Document must be justified (founded on robust and credible evidence and be the most appropriate strategy) and effective (deliverable, flexible and able to be monitored).

Special Area of Conservation (SAC) - A site of European importance designated by the member states, where necessary conservation measures are applied for the maintenance or restoration, at favourable conservation status, of the habitats and/or species for which the site is designated.

Special Protection Area (SPA) - A site designated under the Birds Directive by the member states where appropriate steps are taken to protect the bird species for which the site is designated.

Standard Method - A nationally prescribed formula used to calculate the minimum number of homes that should be planned for in each local authority area. It is based on household growth projections and affordability ratios (the relationship between

house prices and earnings). There is a cap to limit increases in areas with already high housing targets.

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) - This will set out the standards that the Council intend to achieve in relation to involving the community and all stakeholders in the preparation, alteration, and continuing review of all Local Development Plan Documents and in significant planning applications, and also how the Council intends to achieve those standards. The Statement of Community Involvement will not be a Development Plan Document (see above) but will be subject to independent examination. A consultation statement showing how the Local Planning Authority has complied with its Statement of Community Involvement should accompany all Local Development Documents.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) - A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) - A study prepared for the Councils Evidence Base further to national guidance which assesses the overall state of the housing market and advises on future housing policies used to inform the Housing Strategy.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – A document produced by the Council to add further detailed guidance and information on a particular subject such as Sustainable Construction or Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities. An SPD is subject to a formal consultation period and then is used as a material consideration when determining planning applications.

Supported and specialist housing, as defined by Essex County Council, refers to accommodation designed for individuals who need help to live independently, including those with disabilities, mental health needs, older people, care leavers, and survivors of domestic abuse. It includes both supported housing with tailored assistance and specialist housing adapted for specific needs, such as wheelchair access or extra care facilities. The approach is person-centred, aiming to promote independence and wellbeing, and is guided by quality standards and integrated planning across housing and care services.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) - An appraisal of the economic, social, and environmental effects of a plan from the outset of the preparation process, so that decisions can be made that accord with sustainable development.

Sustainable Communities - places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built, and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all.

Sustainable Construction – is the name given to building in an energy efficient way. The incorporation of many new technologies and energy saving techniques into

a building can dramatically reduce the CO₂ emissions and carbon footprint of a building. Initiatives include grey water recycling systems, solar panels, home recycling, wind turbines and ground water heating systems.

Sustainable Development - Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) –Methods of management practices and control structures that are designed to drain surface water in a more sustainable manner than some conventional techniques.

Sustainable Transport - Sustainable Transport refers to walking, cycling and public transport, including train and bus. Sustainable Transport is transport that makes efficient use of natural resources and minimises pollution. In particular, Sustainable Transport seeks to minimise the emissions of carbon dioxide – a greenhouse gas associated with climate change – as well as nitrogen oxides, sulphur oxides, carbon monoxide and particulates, all of which affect local air quality.

Swales - Swales are shallow, broad and vegetated channels designed to store and/or convey water runoff and remove pollutants.

Topography - the physical features of an area of land, especially the position of its rivers, mountains.

Town Centre - Area defined on the proposal map, including the primary shopping area and areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area. References to town centres or centres apply to city centres, town centres, district centres and local centres but exclude small parades of shops.

Travel Plan - A plan demonstrating how a development would encourage its users to use more sustainable methods of transport to access a development.

Use Class - Different uses are given a classification as defined by The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (As amended). For example, an E use refers to retail, restaurant, office, financial/professional services, indoor sports, medical and nursery and a C3 use would refer to a residential dwellings (houses, flats, apartments etc).

Waste Consultation Area - A designated zone around existing or proposed waste management facilities where consultation is required before certain types of development can proceed. The purpose of a WCA is to safeguard waste infrastructure by ensuring that new developments do not compromise the operation or future viability of waste sites. Within these areas, planning authorities must consult Essex County Council (as the Waste Planning Authority) on applications that could affect waste management operations, particularly those involving sensitive uses like housing, schools, or hospitals.

Waste Infrastructure Impact Assessment - A planning tool used to evaluate the potential impacts of proposed developments on existing or safeguarded waste management facilities. It is required when development is proposed within a Waste

Consultation Area, to ensure that the new use does not compromise the operation, capacity, or future viability of waste infrastructure. The assessment helps the Waste Planning Authority determine whether the development would adversely affect the safeguarded site's ability to carry out its function, and whether mitigation or design changes are needed.