



Colchester  
Borough Council

# Local Plan

## Colchester Borough

Local Plan 2017 – 2033  
Section 2 | Adopted July 2022



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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Plan is the second section of a two part Local Plan for Colchester, which is a diverse and growing borough, with a vibrant town centre, attractive villages and important natural landscapes. Over the next 15 years the Borough will face many challenges, such as population growth and change, evolving economic trends and the need for more sustainable transportation. The Local Plan addresses these challenges 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, objectives and policies for planning and delivery across the Borough. It is in 2 Sections (contained in separate documents) with Section 1 providing a shared strategic policy context and addressing cross boundary matters for North Essex together with Braintree and Tendring Councils. The North Essex Authorities' Shared Strategic Section 1 Plan comprises the Section 1 of the Colchester Local Plan. This was adopted by Colchester Borough Council on 2 February 2021.
- 1.3 The second part of the Plan is set out in this document comprising The Colchester Local Plan Section 2 which provides the policy framework, site allocations and development management policies for the Borough up to 2033. This was adopted by Colchester Borough Council in July 2022.
- 1.4 Taken together, these two sections of the Plan combine to provide a spatial framework that brings together and co-ordinates a range of strategies prepared by the Council, its partners and other agencies and authorities. It includes policies for deciding development proposals. It takes account of projected changes in the economy, employment, housing need, transport demand, and seeks to maintain the quality of the natural and built environment as well as its historic environment. It provides the strategy and policies for shaping the Borough until 2033 and beyond.
- 1.5 The production of the Local Plan represents years of work, starting with extensive technical evidence, significant public engagement, negotiation and co-operation from many partners and stakeholders including developers, campaign groups and local residents. Finally, it was subject to scrutiny from an Independent Government Inspector from the Planning Inspectorate to ensure the Plan is legally compliant, sound and consistent with national policy. Following Submission in October 2017 and independent Examination in April 2021, the Colchester Local Plan Section 2 was found to be legally compliant and sound subject to Main Modifications which have all been incorporated.
- 1.6 This Local Plan like all others has benefitted from a significant number of contributors over a number of years. There are 2 individuals who sadly passed away during 2021, who both had a significant influence on shaping and informing the content or process, which has enriched the final Plan:

Tributes

- *Stephen Ashworth - (1963 – 2021) Planning Law Partner at Dentons. Stephen worked with the Council and other partners for many years to support and guide the Plan preparation for both Sections of the Local Plan. Stephen's intellect, passion, dedication and pragmatic, solution focused approach to planning provided a steer throughout the process. Without a doubt, the Plan is better for all his contributions.*
- *Alistair Day – (1970 - 2021) Principal Planning & Specialists Manager. Alistair worked tirelessly as an Officer at Colchester Borough Council for over 20 years, and it is without doubt a better place for his involvement. Alistair quietly influenced the plan making team with understated contributions to many of the policies, which will ensure his legacy continues to live on for many years to come, well beyond the Plan period.*

### **Local Plan: The Process**

- 1.7 The Borough 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 Guidance**

- 1.8 The Local Plan must reflect the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. Further national guidance on planning policies is provided in Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The NPPF establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which the Local Planning Authority will implement in making its planning decisions. It is a statutory requirement for the Local Planning Authority to produce planning policies for the Borough. The policies must comply with national planning policy unless there is overwhelming evidence to demonstrate why this is not the case.

### **South East Local Enterprise Partnership**

- 1.9 To bridge the gap between the national and local levels, business-led Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) have been established across the country. The South East LEP (SELEP) includes the Colchester Borough and comprises the areas of Essex, Kent and East Sussex. Whilst the LEP has no statutory land use planning powers, it is responsible for determining local economic priorities and undertaking activities to encourage economic growth and local job creation.

### **County Level Plans**

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

#### **Essex Local Transport Plan**

- 1.11 The Essex Local Transport Plan contains the Essex Transport Strategy and sets out the 15 year vision to improve travel in the county and underlines the importance of the transport network in achieving sustainable, long term economic growth and enriching the life of residents. It is supplemented by delivery strategies for public transport, highways, cycling and public rights of way.

#### **Economic Plan for Essex and North Essex Economic Strategy**

- 1.12 The Economic Plan for Essex is based on the collective ambitions of all local authorities in Essex with a Strategy for North Essex prepared more recently - The North Essex Economic Strategy, covering Colchester, Braintree, Tendring and Uttlesford, which aims to ensure the area can rise to the economic challenges and opportunities.

Essex Minerals Local Plan

- 1.13 Essex County Council is the Minerals Planning Authority for the Borough, and is responsible for preparing planning policies, and also for assessing applications for mineral development. The Essex Minerals Local Plan (2014) is a statutory Development Plan and should be read alongside the Colchester Local Plan. The role of the Minerals Local Plan is to identify sites for the extraction of sufficient quantities of mineral within Essex to facilitate development over the Plan period.
- 1.14 There are active quarry sites in the Borough as well as currently unworked sand and gravel and brick clay deposits which are subject to a Minerals Safeguarding policy within the Minerals Local Plan. The safeguarding policy requires the Minerals Planning Authority – 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 may apply within Colchester Borough are highlighted on the relevant Policies Maps, sign posting to the Essex Minerals Local Plan for more information. Refer to the Essex Mineral Local Plan for information about potential Minerals Safeguarding Areas in parts of the Borough outside the scope of the Local Plan Policies Maps. Regard should be had to the requirements of the Minerals Local Plan where a development falls within a Minerals Safeguarding Area.
- 1.15 The Minerals Local Plan also designates Mineral Consultation Areas at a distance of 250 metres around active quarries, mineral infrastructure and mineral deposits permitted for extraction. Essex County Council will be required to be consulted on all non-mineral related development within these areas.

Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan

- 1.16 Essex County Council is the Waste Planning Authority for the Borough, and is responsible for preparing planning policies, and also for assessing applications for waste management development. The Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan (2017) is a statutory Development Plan which should be read alongside the Colchester Local Plan. It sets out where and how waste management developments can occur and is the planning policy against which waste management development planning applications are assessed.
- 1.17 The Waste Local Plan covers the period to 2033. The Waste Local Plan allocates new waste development at Bellhouse Farm, Stanway; Fingringhoe Quarry and Wivenhoe Quarry. It also identifies Areas of Search to meet the need for additional small scale waste management facilities. These Areas of Search are existing industrial estates within the Borough and are located away from residential and other uses sensitive to amenity impacts such as schools, retail, leisure and office development.
- 1.18 The Plan also designates Waste Consultation Areas at a distance of 250 metres around waste management facilities. Essex County Council will be required to be consulted on all non-waste related development within these areas.



### **Borough Strategies**

- 1.19 The Local Plan brings together the spatial elements of a number of key Borough strategies and provides a focus for future development.

#### **Colchester Borough Council Strategic Plan**

- 1.20 This plan sets out the direction and future potential for the Borough, with the aim of making the Borough a vibrant, thriving, prosperous and welcoming place.

#### **Colchester Economic Strategy**

- 1.21 This plan provides an overarching vision and framework for economic interventions in Colchester, including guidance on partnership work and prioritising resources.

#### **Colchester Environmental Sustainability Strategy**

- 1.22 This provides information about the Council's approach to environmental issues. It responds to the increasing importance of environmental issues recognising that the Council has a key role to play at a local and regional level in promoting environmental sustainability.
- 1.23 Other Strategies which form part of the evidence base, for example, Playing Pitch Strategy, Indoor Sports Strategy, Green Infrastructure Strategy and draft Cultural Strategy also provide guidance and context for planning policy.

### **Duty to Co-operate**

- 1.24 In preparing the Local Plan, the Local Planning Authority 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, together with agencies responsible for transport, health and the environment.
- 1.25 Further information on the duty is provided in The North Essex Authorities' Shared Strategic Section 1 Plan, which discusses the strategic approach to Local Plan issues across Colchester, Braintree and Tendring.

### **Evidence Base**

- 1.26 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 national planning policy. The evidence gathered from the documents covering topics including housing, economy, natural and built environment, climate change, 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. All of the evidence base can be viewed on the Council's website.

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

- 1.27 Policy development has been carried out in the light of a Sustainability Appraisal, incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment. The Sustainability Appraisal tests the sustainability of the Plan options throughout the production process. It does this by considering how different policy choices perform against a range of 'sustainability' 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 amendments to policies, or measures that could help to minimise any negative impacts identified and maximise the sustainability of the Local Plan.

### **Habitat Regulations Assessment**

- 1.28 The Habitats Regulations Assessment is the process for determining whether a plan or project will have adverse effects on European sites. The Local Planning Authority carried out a Habitat Regulations Assessment screening opinion and concluded that a high level of growth, regardless of location, has the potential to lead to adverse effects on European sites in the Borough, primarily owing to increased levels of recreational disturbance. The draft Local Plan was re-screened with input from Natural England in 2016, and policies and issues were identified to be assessed for likely significant effect in the appropriate assessment.
- 1.29 An appropriate assessment was undertaken, which concluded that the Local Plan, alone and in-combination, will not adversely affect the integrity of European sites.
- 1.30 All this evidence is made publicly available. The Local Planning Authority will keep the evidence base under review and monitor the implementation of the Local Plan's objectives and policies. Monitoring reports on key Local Plan issues will be published on an annual basis and will highlight whether circumstances have changed sufficiently to require a review of the Local Plan in its entirety or a review of selected policies.

### **Local Plan: Structure of the Plan and other related documents**

- 1.31 Development Plan Documents for Colchester will comprise:

- The Colchester Borough Local Plan setting out the overarching spatial vision for development of the Borough to 2033; broad locations for strategic growth; other detailed allocations; and development management policies. The Local Plan provides the planning framework for the other Documents listed below. The North Essex Authorities Strategic Section 1 Plan outlines policy for strategic growth across North Essex, including a cross-boundary Garden Community,

while this Plan - Colchester Local Plan Section 2 details specific policies and allocations within the Borough. The allocations provided in the plan are shown on the associated Policies Maps.

- A Joint Local Plan (Development Plan Document) is being produced with Tendring District Council which allocates land within a Garden Community. It will also provide relevant policy guidance, and set 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.

### **Other Colchester Planning Documents**

1.32 The Local Plan is accompanied by a number of other planning documents that provide policies, guidance and feedback:

- 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;
- Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) – set out in more detail how some of the Local Plan's policies will be applied;
- Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) - provides an annual summary of key statistics that monitor the effectiveness of the Local Plan.
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – A charging schedule may be developed to set out how the CIL will be applied to various categories of development. This is subject to change when the Government announces how it is to proceed with a new Infrastructure Levy.

## **2. Vision and Objectives for Section Two**

### **Local Characteristics and Key Issues for Colchester**

- 2.1 The unique characteristics of Colchester create specific issues, opportunities and challenges for the future, which need to be addressed by the Local Plan. The sub-regional issues identified in Section 1 of the Plan, combined with the following issues for Colchester provide the basis and context for the development of the Section 2 Colchester Vision and Objectives, the Spatial Strategy and Policies.

### **Making the most of the Borough's location and links between communities**

- 2.2 Spatially, Colchester benefits from its southeast location with good access to London, London Stansted Airport and the port of Harwich. The Borough's population has grown by 17.9% between 2001 and 2015 and was estimated to stand at 183,939 people in mid-2015. The Borough's growing population is accommodated within a spatial structure defined by the urban area at its centre, surrounded by a rural hinterland with three smaller centres, Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe. While Colchester is less deprived than Essex as a whole, two small areas in Colchester were in the top 10% most deprived in England in 2010, Magnolia in St. Andrew's Ward and St Anne's Estate in St Anne's ward. Sustainable development for the future will require the development of sustainable land use patterns that maximise accessibility between jobs, homes, services and facilities.

### **Deliver economic growth in response to new challenges and trends**

- 2.3 Colchester has maintained good levels of employment growth over the last two decades with declining industrial employment being offset by a growth in office jobs. Colchester registered 92,300 workforce jobs in 2014 representing an increase of 20% over 1991 levels. This increase was higher than in the UK (14.6%) and similar to the East of England (19.6%) but was lower than employment growth recorded across Essex as a whole (27.9%) over the same period. The challenge for Colchester will be to retain existing office employers and to increase the supply of better-quality modern space catering to small and start-up businesses.

### **Supporting the Town Centre as the heart of the Borough**

- 2.4 Colchester Town Centre serves as a centre not only for the Borough but for a much wider area of North East Essex, with residents of Braintree, Maldon and Tendring districts travelling into the town to work, shop and use its community facilities. The Town Centre's present character reflects its rich and diverse history dating back to the Iron Age and including its period as the Roman capital of Britain, its importance as a wool and cloth centre in medieval and Tudor times, and its focus as a hub for Victorian and 20<sup>th</sup> century industry. In addition to its wealth of historic buildings and environments the Town Centre is also valued for its shops; employment opportunities; institutions of learning and culture; and services catering to a wide variety of users. The Local Plan seeks to retain the

pre-eminence and vitality of the Town Centre in the face of changing economic and lifestyle trends and the rapid pace of technological innovation.

### **Building houses fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

- 2.5 Colchester delivered 12,644 new homes between 2001/02 and 2014/15 at an average rate of 903 dwellings per year. Given the continuing pressures on the South East housing market, Colchester will need to maintain its good rate of delivery over the next plan period to meet the Objectively Assessed Need figure of 920 houses a year, while also ensuring that increasing quantity is matched with high design quality, a suitable housing mix and sustainable construction.

### **Improving Accessibility**

- 2.6 The car currently dominates the way people travel, with the 2011 Census showing that the car represents 55% of all journeys to work in the Borough. The Borough's self-containment rate (share of residents who also work within the Borough) was 69% in 2011, with 24,850 employed residents leaving the Borough to work. Of these 25% go to Greater London, 15% to Tendring District, 15% to Braintree District and 10% to Chelmsford City. The Local Plan will need to manage the continuing pressures of vehicle congestion and parking while developing practical solutions to minimise the need to travel and provide non-car-based alternatives to movement around the Borough.

### **Vision: Colchester in 2033**

- 2.7 The following Vision sets out where we want to be in 2033. The objectives that follow address the issues, opportunities and problems faced by the Borough.

Colchester will be an active and welcoming town with its rich and prestigious heritage treasured and showcased for all to enjoy. Colchester will be acclaimed for the creative, innovative and sustainable ways in which it addresses the wide range of challenges facing the Borough, including climate change; population growth and its changing composition; new lifestyle and technological innovations; creating and maintaining strong safe, healthy communities; and shifting market forces.

The Council will work proactively to ensure that the historic Town Centre continues its role as the cultural and economic heart of the Borough and international visitor destination. The surrounding urban area of Colchester will continue to provide a focus for new housing and employment with good transport accessibility and links to green spaces within both urban areas and the adjacent countryside. Tiptree, Wivenhoe and West Mersea are the largest of the Borough's sustainable settlements and will provide essential services and facilities to their rural hinterland. The rural hinterland will remain home to an array of distinctive and thriving villages, set amidst beautiful landscapes and coastal areas which will be protected and enhanced for the enjoyment of all. Colchester's heritage will continue to be a source of pride and community identity

and heritage assets will be protected and enhanced.

Colchester has made the most of its brownfield sites in recent years, revitalising large areas of the town, providing an array of high-quality new homes, businesses, and facilities. Colchester will build on this progress with the delivery of a range of high quality greenfield developments and regenerating further brownfield sites where they become available. Working in partnership with our neighbours and local communities, a new exemplary Garden Community to the East will become an innovatively designed, sustainable community enabling a strong sense of local identity, social inclusion, and involvement; well-co-ordinated and timely delivery of high quality infrastructure and facilities; good links to the Borough's primary hub at Colchester Town Centre; a range of market and affordable housing, and an array of job opportunities, together with opportunities for sport; renewable energy; leisure and recreation; walking and cycling, and growing produce.

The Borough will enable the provision of a wide range of new housing that addresses the need for affordable, well-designed and adaptable homes that meet the needs of a diverse market, including families, young people/students, and an increasing number of older residents. New development will be designed and located to ensure that residents are, from the start, able to reach a wide range of destinations using sustainable transport methods. The Council with its partners will pursue a range of funding options to ensure the timely delivery of new infrastructure and facilities.

Colchester will boast a diverse and thriving economy within a prosperous South East region, supported by high-quality digital infrastructure and accessible locations for new employment development, providing job opportunities for all. The Borough Council will pursue commercial opportunities that support job creation and generate revenue to help sustain the delivery of essential public services to the whole community, working in partnership with public and private sector partners. Colchester will provide an array of high quality training and educational opportunities at all levels, providing equality of opportunity for all. In particular, the University of Essex will grow in its role as a leading higher education institution, developing strong links to the new Garden Community as well as the Town Centre and East Colchester.

## **Objectives**

2.8 The Objectives for the Borough can be broken down into three themes as set out below:

### **1. Sustainable Growth**

- Ensure new development is sustainable and minimises the use of scarce natural resources and addresses the causes and potential impacts of climate change, and encourages renewable energy.
- Focus new development at sustainable locations to create new communities with distinctive identities whilst supporting existing communities, local businesses, and sustainable transport.
- Provide high quality housing of all tenures at accessible locations to accommodate our growing community.
- Ensure there are sufficient sites allocated in the right locations to support employment growth over the plan period.
- Focus development at accessible locations which support public transport, walking and cycling, and reduce the need to travel, and enhance sustainable travel connections.
- Protect and enhance the vitality and viability of Colchester's historic Town Centre.
- Secure infrastructure to support new development.
- Promotion of healthy lifestyles through the provision and enhancement of sport, leisure and recreation facilities, public open space and green infrastructure.

### **2. Natural Environment**

- Protect the countryside and coast.
- Develop a green infrastructure network across the Borough.
- Ensure new development avoids areas of flood risk and reduces future flood risk where possible.
- Protect and enhance landscapes, biodiversity, green spaces, air and water quality, and river corridors.
- Protect and enhance designated sites, geodiversity and soils.

### **3. Places**

- Ensure the unique qualities of different communities and environments, paying particular attention to heritage assets, in the Borough are identified, protected and enhanced through policies and allocations which ensure high quality, consistency, equity and responsiveness to local character.
- Promote high quality design and sustain Colchester's historic character, found in its buildings, townscape and archaeology.
- Improve streetscapes, open spaces and green links to provide attractive and accessible spaces for residents to live, work and play.

### **3. Sustainable Growth Policies**

#### **The Spatial Strategy**

- 3.1 The Spatial Strategy directs development towards the most sustainable locations, as illustrated by the Key Diagrams, and provides for supporting facilities and infrastructure to create sustainable local communities. The Spatial Strategy provides the framework for the place-based approach of the Local Plan and relates allocations to the unique characteristics of particular communities within the Borough. The Spatial Strategy reflects the Local Planning Authority's evidence base, which includes a Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Land Availability Assessment, along with a range of associated issues including development needs, environmental constraints, and deliverability. It also reflects sustainable development principles underpinned by the NPPF which seeks to achieve all development meeting the three dimensions of sustainable development, that is; social, economic and environmental sustainability. Examples of development which may meet all of these are illustrated below:
- (a) Development being located at accessible locations where residents will have good access to employment opportunities and be in close proximity to regularly used services, facilities, shops, etc, to contribute towards the economic and social dimensions of sustainable development.
  - (b) Proposals showing how new users can access social services and facilities to contribute towards the social dimension of sustainable development.
  - (c) Proposals which demonstrate that they will not adversely affect landscape character and the undeveloped nature of the countryside and coast and would not lead to reliance on the private car, increasing carbon emissions, to contribute towards the environmental element of sustainable development.
- 3.2 All development will need to be in accordance with the spatial strategy and should meet the three dimensions of sustainable development.
- 3.3 Following on from the Spatial Strategy for North Essex set forth in Section 1 of the plan, the Strategic Growth policies in Section 2 of the Plan provide the complete strategic picture of the role and functions of different areas of Colchester within its sub-regional context.



## **Growth Locations**

### **Urban Area of Colchester**

- 3.4 In Colchester's spatial hierarchy, the urban area of Colchester is ranked as the most sustainable location for growth, given its high level of accessibility and concentration of housing, jobs and services. Within this urban area, the Central Area of Colchester including the Town Centre is the most sustainable location for new development given that it can accommodate higher densities, it has good access to public transport, walking and cycling routes and provides a concentrated mix of uses which minimise the need to travel. The surrounding built up, North, South, East and West (including Stanway) urban areas of Colchester provide the next tier of sustainable locations for growth.
- 3.5 Policy SG3 sets out the Centres Hierarchy. Proposals for town centre uses such as retail, offices, leisure, culture and entertainment facilities, and food/drink establishments will accordingly be directed to Colchester Town Centre in the first instance. Policy TC1 provides further guidance on the mechanisms for maintaining Colchester Town Centre's pre-eminent position.
- 3.6 Some areas of Colchester have been a focus for regeneration over a number of years, with significant progress and delivery evident in some areas such as the Garrison and North Colchester. Other areas will continue to be a focus for regeneration and enhancement delivered via a range of mixed use, commercial, social and residential opportunities. Estate regeneration in line with the Government's Estate Regeneration Strategy will be explored in estate areas such as Greenstead that could benefit from a comprehensive upgrading of community facilities, infrastructure and housing in line with overall strategic priorities. Special Policy Areas have been designated where required to provide a clear context against which to promote opportunities for appropriate growth, enhanced public realm and connectivity. Site allocations along with specific policy considerations for other parts of the urban area of Colchester are contained in the policies indicated below:
- 3.7 Urban Colchester comprises of the following areas listed below along with relevant policy references:

#### **Central Colchester**

- TC1 - Town Centre Policy and Hierarchy
- TC2 - Retail Frontages
- TC3 - Central Colchester other allocations
- TC4 - Transport in Colchester Town Centre

#### **North Colchester**

- NC1- Northern Gateway/Severalls Strategic Economic Area
- NC2 - North Station Special Policy Area
- NC3 - North Colchester other allocations
- NC4 - Transport in North Colchester

South Colchester

- SC1- South Colchester Allocations
- SC2 - Middlewick Ranges
- SC3 - Transport in South Colchester

East Colchester

- EC1 - Knowledge Gateway and University Strategic Economic Area
- EC2 - East Colchester- The Hythe Special Policy Area
- EC3 - East Colchester other allocations
- EC4 - Transport in East Colchester

West Colchester

- WC1 - Stanway Strategic Economic Area
- WC2 - Stanway
- WC3 - Colchester Zoo Special Policy Area
- WC4 - West Colchester other allocations
- WC5 - Transport in West Colchester

**Sustainable Settlements**

3.8 The next tier in the spatial hierarchy includes larger existing 'Sustainable Settlements', which are considered to have the potential to accommodate further proportionate growth and the Garden Community, which is programmed for long term strategic growth beyond the plan period. Policy SP9 in Part One describes the requirements of the new Garden Community to the East of Colchester.

3.9 As the underlying principle of the NPPF and therefore the Local Plan is to support the principle of sustainable development, it is important that new allocations for growth and the associated settlement boundaries relate to sustainable locations. The Local Plan therefore defines those settlements which are 'sustainable'. This is justified using evidence from the Strategic Land Availability Assessment, Sustainability Appraisal and Settlement Boundary Review. By implication any other settlements are less sustainable, although it is recognised that these 'Other Villages' serve an important community function within the rural areas of the Borough.

3.10 To develop a list of settlements considered to qualify as 'sustainable', each village was assessed as part of the Settlement Boundary Review against criteria related to the NPPF identification of the three dimensions of sustainability. Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe have automatically been included in the Sustainable Settlements category due to their larger populations and concentrations of jobs, facilities, services and function.

3.11 Settlement boundaries 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. The Borough's settlement boundaries have been reviewed as part of the evidence base of the Local Plan and drawn tightly to exclude areas that are more rural in character. This approach protects Colchester's rich countryside, seeks to avoid development that

would be detrimental to the character and identity of the Borough's villages and reduces the likelihood of the private car being the sole mode of transport.

- 3.12 Those settlements which tend to have the most sustainable characteristics are, for the most part the larger villages which have a population of at least 500. This reflects the historic development of settlements which have evolved around good accessibility and key community facilities such as churches and primary schools. The approach in the Local Plan is to channel some growth to the most sustainable settlements to encourage their continued growth recognising the key function they play beyond the urban area of Colchester. Site allocations are identified in each of the place policies, providing a more proactive approach to new development in these settlements. The growth provided for in these settlements is considered appropriate to the size of the settlement, local landscape character, other local constraints, identified need and the availability of infrastructure.
- 3.13 There are a number of active Neighbourhood Plan working groups which have either made or are preparing Neighbourhood Plans under the Localism Act 2011 across the Borough. More detailed proposals for site allocations and other policy matters are set out in the Neighbourhood Plan for these areas, Policy SG8 and the relevant Place Policy.

### **Other Villages**

- 3.14 Other Villages tend to be small villages with only limited facilities, which local communities rely on for basic needs and as social hubs. Settlements classed as Other Villages are listed in Table SG1. These smaller rural villages often operate as clusters by sharing key services and facilities which help provide a strong sense of identity for the communities living and working there. Although the Local Plan does not promote substantial housing growth or other development in these Other Villages, their role in serving a community function in the rural areas is recognised. Other Villages are defined by tightly drawn settlement boundaries which reflect the core community focus of each village and protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Other Villages can accommodate a limited amount of small scale development and the policy context setting out the types of development considered appropriate is set out in policy OV1.

### **Countryside**

- 3.15 Within the countryside, there are a number of very small isolated clusters of dwellings or small hamlets across the Borough, which lack any community facilities or services and rely on nearby villages or towns to meet their daily needs. Although they provide a community function for residents, their location is physically detached and sometimes remote, from the larger village to which they relate, and accordingly they are classed as countryside. Development within the countryside will be restricted to activities that either require a rural location or proposals that help sustain a rural community and local economy and which help protect the rural character of the areas where the development is being proposed. The type of development considered appropriate within the countryside is set out in policy OV2 of the Local Plan.

### **Policy SG1: Colchester's Spatial Strategy**

Throughout the Borough, growth will be located at the most accessible and sustainable locations in accordance with the spatial strategy for North Essex set forth in Policy SP3 in Section One and with the spatial hierarchy set out in Table SG1. The spatial hierarchy ranks areas of the Borough in order of their sustainability merits and the size, function and services provided in each area. The centres hierarchy is set out in Policy SG3.

Development will be focused on accessible locations to reduce the need to travel. Development will be supported where a real travel choice is provided and sustainable travel for different purposes is promoted throughout the day.

This spatial hierarchy focuses growth on the urban area of Colchester, reflecting its position as the main location for jobs, housing, services, and transport. Within this urban area, the Central Area of Colchester including the Town Centre is the most sustainable location for new development given that it can accommodate higher densities reliant on its good access to public transport and concentrated mix of uses which minimise the need to travel. The surrounding built up, North, South, East and West (including Stanway) urban areas of Colchester provide the next sub-level of well-connected, sustainable locations for growth. The next tier of preferred growth includes a Garden Community straddling the boundary with Tendring District Council providing a new greenfield sustainable community which will grow gradually, over time, extending beyond the plan period. The second tier also includes existing Sustainable Settlements within the Borough most of which are planned for appropriate growth.

In the remaining Other Villages and Countryside of Colchester, new development will only be acceptable where it accords with policies OV1 and OV2. New development in the open countryside will be required to respect the character and appearance of landscapes and the built environment and preserve or enhance the historic environment and biodiversity to safeguard the rural character of the Borough.

**Table SG1: Spatial Hierarchy**

<b>Urban Area of Colchester</b>	
Central Colchester	
South, East, North and West Colchester, including Stanway and Myland and Braiswick (Neighbourhood Plan made 2016),	
<b>Garden Community</b>	<b>Sustainable Settlements</b>
Tendring/Colchester Borders Garden Community	Abberton and Langenhoe Boxted (Neighbourhood Plan made 2016) Chappel and Wakes Colne Copford and Copford Green Dedham Eight Ash Green Fordham Great Horkesley Great Tey Langham Layer de la Haye Marks Tey Rowhedge Tiptree West Bergholt West Mersea Wivenhoe
<b>Other Villages</b>	
Aldham Birch Dedham Heath Easthorpe East Mersea Fingringhoe Great Wigborough Layer Breton Little Horkesley Messing Mount Bures Peldon Salcott Wormingford	
<b>Countryside</b>	

## Housing Delivery

- 3.16 Colchester Borough shares its housing market area with Braintree District, Tendring District and Chelmsford City. The Council has worked with all of these authorities in jointly commissioning housing studies to determine the respective levels of housing needs for each district over the plan period. For Colchester these studies have determined that the Objectively Assessed Housing Needs (OAHN) for Colchester Borough is 920 new dwellings per year or 14,720 new homes over the plan period between 2017 and 2033. Since the plan was submitted, 3,337 new dwellings were delivered between 2017 and 31.3.2020. Accordingly, during the remainder of the plan period, the Council needs to plan for a minimum of 11,383 dwellings in order to meet the objectively assessed need.
- 3.17 Colchester has an excellent track record of housing delivery. Since 1974 an average of 833 new dwellings have been delivered in the Borough every year. Over the previous plan period to date of submission (2001 – 2016) the Council exceeded its cumulative housing target by almost 900 dwellings. Therefore, at the beginning of the new plan period the Council was not in a position where it needed to make up any previous shortfall in housing delivery.
- 3.18 To plan for the Borough's OAHN, 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 housing land supply comprises existing commitments, new allocations and broad locations for growth.
- 3.19 Existing commitments are residential sites with planning permission or where the granting of planning permission is considered to be imminent. Many of these sites, particularly the larger sites, were allocated for residential use in the previous Local Plan. For the remainder of the new Local Plan period these existing commitments account for approximately 5,900 new dwellings. Site specific information on existing commitments can be found in the Housing Trajectory.
- 3.20 New allocations are sites which have been allocated 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 Borough has a limited and diminishing supply of brownfield sites that can contribute to accommodating new growth. Accordingly, new allocations within the plan include a level of new greenfield sites. These sites have been subject to thorough assessment and public consultation to determine their sustainability and suitability for residential uses. All new allocations have also been subject to exhaustive discussions with stakeholders including landowners and service providers to ensure sites have been selected based on their availability, achievability and deliverability.
- 3.21 The Place policies in this 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. Given the time that elapsed between submission of the plan and adoption, some of the allocations were converted into commitments following the grant of planning

permission. Within the remainder of the Plan period new allocations account for approximately 7,100 new dwellings. New allocations are set out in their respective Place policies as well as detailed in the Housing Trajectory.

3.22 Housing land supply is also comprised of a broad location for growth. As set out in Section One of the Local Plan the broad location for a Garden Community is expected to contribute 1,100 to 1,250 new dwellings to Colchester Borough's housing supply within the plan period. Information relating to the broad location for growth is detailed in Section One and listed in the Housing Trajectory.

3.23 Ensuring the quality of new housing development is equivalent in importance to ensuring its quantity. Policies in the Development Management section of this plan accordingly provide for affordable housing (DM8), housing to meet the needs of a range of different groups within the population (Housing Diversity DM10), and good design (Design and Amenity DM15).

#### **Policy SG2: Housing Delivery**

The Local Planning Authority will plan, monitor and manage the delivery of at least 14,720 new homes in Colchester Borough between 2017 and 2033. The housing target is based on a robust Objectively Assessed Housing Need figure of 920 homes a year and provides alignment with the targets for the delivery of employment land.

The overall distribution of new housing, as shown in Table SG2, is guided by the settlement hierarchy set out in the Spatial Strategy and Policy SG1. New housing development will be focused on the following key areas:

- Colchester urban area (Place policies for Central, North, South, East and West Colchester)
- Tendring / Colchester Borders Garden Community (Section 1 Policy SP9)

Detailed decisions on the location, type and level of development to be carried out in the Garden Community will be made through a joint plan to be agreed with Tendring District Council, as outlined in Section 1 of this plan.

To maintain the vitality and viability of the Borough's smaller towns and villages, an appropriate level of new development will be brought forward in Sustainable Settlements to support new homes and economic and social development. Details on those allocations are provided in Policies SS1- SS16 (Sustainable Settlements).

**Table SG2: Colchester's Housing Provision**

Settlements and Key Development Areas		Homes Delivered 2017-2021	Existing commitments (2021-2033)	New Allocations (2021-2033)	Policy reference
Colchester Urban Area		2544	4011	2201	TC3, NC3, SC1, SC2 EC3, WC4
Stanway		502	919	956	WC2
Tendring / Colchester Borders Garden Community				1,100 - 1,250	Section 1 SP8 and SP9
Tiptree		149	326	400	SS14
Sustainable Settlements	Abberton and Langenhoe	6	899	55	SS1-16
	Boxted	28			
	Chappel and Wakes Colne	2		30	
	Copford and Copford Green	1		120	
	Fordham	1		20	
	Great Horkesley	22		13	
	Great Tey	1		45	
	Langham	0		40	
	Laver de la Haye	8		70	
	Marks Tey	39		0	
	Rowhedge	209		40	
	West Bergholt	15		50	
	West Mersea	29		200	
	Wivenhoe	297		250	
Other Areas		222		0	
Total		4075	6155	5740	15,970

Source: CBC, Colchester Housing Trajectory 2017-33, May 2021

*Note SP3 in Section One refers to the housing supply period of 2013-2033 therefore refers to a higher supply total of 18,400. There have been 7,804 new dwellings completed since 2013/14 which when added to the supply of 11,895 results in a total of 19,699 units. 4,075 dwellings have been completed since the Local Plan was submitted in 2017.*



## **Economic Delivery Policies**

3.24 This section of the Plan sets out the Council's approach to economic growth, including retailing.

3.25 In accordance with the NPPF, the Council has set forth a clear strategy for Economic Growth in its Economic Development Strategy 2015-21, which has the following priorities:

- Creating new jobs;
- Raising the employability and skill levels of our residents and retaining talent;
- Creating, supporting and retaining businesses;
- Improving 'hard' (road, rail and broadband connectivity) and 'soft' infrastructure (business and employment support, employment sites); and
- Securing greater inward investment and funding.

3.26 The focus on digital connectivity in the Economic Development Strategy is further supported by a Digital Strategy for the Borough (2017), with a vision for Colchester to be 'the best-connected borough in the East of England, offering all businesses and all new residential developments world-class, future-proofed connectivity and to drive the uptake of digital technology to make the best of its potential for delivering economic growth and job creation'. Advanced digital connectivity will enhance economic growth and public service delivery, reducing costs while improving coverage and introducing new products and processes. Delivering improved digital connectivity will involve making optimum use of national initiatives, combined with the innovative use of local assets and suppliers.

3.27 The Local Planning Authority's allocations support these strategies and also reflect the need for economic growth to be targeted at the most marketable, accessible and sustainable locations. The Council commissioned studies including an Employment Land Needs Assessment, (ELNA) (January 2015) to update the evidence base and enable effective planning to facilitate the provision of appropriate employment to reflect current trends, market changes and projections for the plan period. The ELNA analysed the forecast fastest growing sectors in the Borough and found that of these, three are fully B class occupiers—Professional Services, Business Services and Real Estate – and one part B class – Construction. The inability of existing stock to accommodate job growth in these sectors requires new suitable land and premises which are well-located within the Borough. Inevitably, this will be predominantly on greenfield employment land as previous development has absorbed the Borough's brownfield land availability.

3.28 The ELNA looked at demand for employment land using four scenarios and concludes that the Council should plan to accommodate at least the 2012 demographic baseline scenario to ensure that the Borough's growth potential arising from its resident workforce is not constrained by lack of spatial capacity in future.

3.29 As part of the preparation of the Local Plan a full review of the unimplemented Strategic and Local Employment sites has been considered, informed by the

ELNA as well as settlement assessments, strategic land availability assessments and policy review in the light of national guidance and other evidence as relevant. The employment land allocations listed in Table SG3 below provide for a total of 28.5 ha of B use employment land in Strategic and Local Employment Areas and a further 3.5 ha of B use employment land in the Garden Community within Colchester during the plan period. This total figure of 32 ha accords with the baseline scenario. Table SG3 also illustrates the potential B use floorspace that could be delivered on these sites. It is also recognised that a major contribution to jobs in the Borough comes from other economic uses which are not classified as B class uses. Essex County Council has undertaken a 'Grow on Space Feasibility Study' to explore the need for employment 'Grow-On Space' within the County. Such flexible employment space, between 100 – 300 sqm in scale, is required to enable flexible premises for businesses to move on from incubation / enterprise centres / start-up spaces, and free up these units for other start-ups. The Essex Economic Commission also identified an inadequate supply of flexible tenures (e.g. Grow-on Space), which is holding back successful businesses that want to expand and grow. The Council will consider which interventions are the most appropriate and viable to ensure the provision of flexible local employment space (by tenure) in the plan area.

- 3.30 In order to bring forward these sites and maintain an appropriate level and type of employment provision a specific policy approach for each area is appropriate. Around the edge of urban Colchester there are three Strategic Locations for economic growth; to the east, north and west of Colchester. Local Economic Areas (LEAs) are dispersed around the Borough. Some LEAs are located within sustainable settlements which provide a key role in supporting the economic sustainability of the settlements. Other established sites are operating successfully in more remote rural locations. While the latter are less sustainable in terms of accessibility, the role they play in contributing to the wider rural economy and their function within the Borough-wide economic area is important, hence the continued protection of some of these sites. The ELNA highlights some sites as being somewhat dated and that modernisation should be encouraged if opportunities arise through reuse or expansion proposals.

### **Strategic Economic Areas**

- 3.31 The Strategic Economic Areas (SEAs) are the best employment sites in the Borough and should be retained for employment purposes to meet anticipated needs over the plan period, in accordance with the NPPF. Up to date evidence however suggests not all the land previously allocated for employment will be required and, accordingly, the boundaries of each SEA has been reassessed.
- 3.32 The Knowledge Gateway and University SEA reflects opportunities associated with the growth plans for the University of Essex and the benefits linked to the new Garden Community to the east of Colchester. Additional land to expand the Knowledge Gateway is expected to be allocated within the Garden Community to the east.
- 3.33 The Northern Gateway and Severalls SEA responds to the potential to maximise its prime location adjacent to Junctions 28 and 29 of the A12, for the retention and expansion of the Business Park and for opportunities to deliver an enhanced sports and leisure hub. A reconfiguration on the previous allocation has taken place to reflect approvals and the changing economic market which has seen a reducing demand for land for B uses.
- 3.34 The third SEA at Stanway continues to be a favoured location for strategic economic opportunities taking advantage of good access to the A12 and A120. The Stanway SEA has been reviewed and reflects planning approvals and the decreasing demand for traditional employment land.
- 3.35 To allow for flexibility, the SEAs are divided into sub areas (zones), the policy context for which is set out in the individual place policies. The Local Planning Authority will work with other key stakeholders to ensure a comprehensive approach to the delivery of employment land and other mixed commercial uses within the SEAs in accordance with policies NC1, EC1 and WC1.

### **Garden Community Strategic Allocation**

- 3.36 Policy SP3 in Section 1 of this plan indicates that the new garden community will make a strategic contribution to employment provision serving the sustainable community and the rest of the Borough. The extent, location and policy context for the garden community to the east of Colchester will be informed by future master planning and Development Plan Documents for the area.

### **Policy SG3: Economic Growth Provision**

The Local Planning Authority will encourage economic development and have allocated 32 hectares of land to plan for the delivery of employment land (principally Class B2, B8 uses, supporting Class E uses and any associated employment generating sui generis uses) in Colchester Borough up to 2033. An additional 3.5 hectares of employment land is expected to come forward in Colchester within the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community with a further 25 hectares to be allocated in the overall Garden Community for development post-2033. Existing economic uses on the sites identified will be safeguarded in accordance with the relevant policies. New development for employment uses will primarily be provided on a range of sites to ensure jobs are accessible to new and existing communities across the borough. Sites include;

- Land within Strategic Economic Areas as indicated on the policies maps (policies NC1, EC1 and WC1)
- Land within Local Economic Areas identified on the policies maps
- Land within defined mixed use special policy areas as shown on the policies maps (Policies TC3, NC2-3, EC2)
- Existing sites with planning permission.

Within some of the defined economic areas alternative economic non-B class uses contribute to the provision of jobs providing flexibility and securing delivery of the additional jobs. Suitable alternative economic uses will be supported within the defined areas where they are in accordance with all relevant policies in the plan.

**Table SG3: Colchester Employment Land Supply 2017-2033**

Location / Allocations		Site area (ha.)	Office (B1 a/b) sqm	Industrial (B1c/2/8) sqm	Total sqm
<b>Strategic Economic Areas (SEAs)</b>					
North Colchester		10.4	56,696	0	56,696
Stanway		1.4	0	5,600	5,600
Knowledge Gateway		7.0	22,538	0	22,538
<b>Local Economic Areas (LEAs)</b>					
Colchester Town Centre	Town Centre Core	0.7	3,160	0	3,160
	Edge of Centre	3.5	0	13,959	13,959
District Centres (outside Colchester)		1.5	3,078	3,078	6,156
Other Rural Areas		4.0	2,000	14,000	16,000
<b>Total SEAs and LEAs</b>		28.5	87,472	36,637	124,109
Tendring Colchester Borders GC		3.5	TBD	TBD	TBD
<b>Total all allocations</b>		32			

Sources: Lichfields (March 2017); CBC Planning Policy (April, 2017)

3.37 Additionally, further floorspace for non-B class economic uses will be provided within the following areas of urban Colchester:

- Colchester Town Centre (Policy TC3)
- North Station Special Policy Area (Policy NC2)
- East Colchester – Hythe Special Policy Area (Policy EC2)
- Colchester Zoo (Policy WC4).

### **Local Economic Areas**

- 3.38 The Local Economic Areas provide an important contribution to the Colchester economy alongside the Strategic Economic Areas. Local Economic Areas are listed in policy/table SG4 and in each case they are cross referenced in the place policies.
- 3.39 The Economic Areas shown on the Policies Maps provide a framework within which Colchester's business community can develop and compete at a local, regional, national and international level. The Council will work with businesses within these areas to encourage them to adapt and respond to changing economic conditions in order to support business growth and ensure the economic viability of local communities.
- 3.40 Employment sites are under increasing pressure to be developed for housing and other uses, but it is important to retain existing employment sites where possible and appropriate. Employment site retention and provision is particularly necessary to enable balanced job and housing growth and to provide choices for businesses looking to expand or relocate.
- 3.41 Economic Areas contain a range of sites and premises that meet the needs of the business community and offers flexibility and choice. However, the NPPF advises local planning authorities to take a pragmatic approach to the protection of employment sites where there are high vacancy rates and/or where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for the allocated employment use. To build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, policies need to be flexible whilst ensuring that the needs of the community are met. To this end, the Local Planning Authority will, where possible, seek to retain Class B uses at employment sites whilst at the same time preventing the long-term vacancy of land and units where other non-Class B uses may be appropriate.
- 3.42 There is pressure to change commercial land and premises into higher value uses but if an employment site were lost to a higher value use every time an application was made then this would run the risk of a declining stock of employment premises that would hamper the ability of the Borough to maintain and increase employment growth. The loss of commercial space to other uses could also lead to future economic and social problems such as increased unemployment and increased out commuting.

**Policy SG4: Local Economic Areas**

The Local Economic Areas as defined on the policies maps and listed in policy tables SG3 and SG4, will be safeguarded primarily for B class uses and office use within E Class where appropriate to provide, protect and enhance employment provision in a range of locations across the borough to enable balanced job and housing growth. Planning permission will be granted for the redevelopment or change of use for non-Class B uses where:

- (i) it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable prospect of the site concerned being used for Class B purposes; and
- (ii) the supply, availability and variety of B use class employment land is sufficient to meet Borough and local needs; and
- (iii) it can be demonstrated that the alternative use cannot be reasonably located elsewhere within the area it serves; and
- (iv) the proposal does not generate potential conflict with the existing proposed B class uses / activities on the site; and
- (v) the use will not give rise to unacceptable traffic generation, noise, smells or vehicle parking; and
- (vi) The proposal provides the opportunity to maximise the sites potential for economic growth and support the continued operation of existing employment uses within the economic area.

Opportunities to enhance and renew more dated buildings within Local Economic Areas will be supported when proposals are promoted for improvements to existing operations or for new operations where the use and scale is appropriate.

**Table SG4: Local Economic Areas**

Local Economic Area	Place Policy Reference
<b>Colchester</b>	
Barrack Street	EC3
Brook Street	EC3
Chandlers Row (Port Lane)	EC3
COLBEA (George Williams Way)	EC3
Crown Interchange	NC3
Davey Close (including Oyster Park)	EC3
Gosbecks Road	SC1
Maldon Road (including Shrub End Depot)	SC1
Middleborough Area (including Fairfax House/Digby House, Causton Road and Sheepen Road)	TC3
Eastgates (including Moorside)	EC3
Southway	TC3
Whitehall Industrial Estate	EC3
<b>Outside Colchester</b>	
Abberton - Pantiles Farm, Peldon Road	SS1
Boxted - Classic Pot Emporium	SS2
Boxted - Tin Bins Skip Hire)	SS2
Dedham/Langham - Depot (Old Ipswich Road)	SS9
Great Horkesley - Holly Lodge	SS7
Great Tey - Tey Brook Farm	SS8
Langham – Lodge Lane	SS9
Langham - Powerplus Engineering and Whitnell Contractors Site, School Road	SS9
Marks Tey – Timber Yard	SS11
Tiptree - Alexander Cleghorn	SS14
Tiptree - Tower Business Park	SS14
Tiptree - Wilkins & Son	SS14
Tiptree – Basket Works	SS14
West Bergholt - Pattens Yard, Nayland Road	SS15
West Mersea - Waldegraves Farm	SS12a
West Mersea - Boat Yards, Coast Road	SS12c
West Mersea - Rushmere Close	SS12a
Wormingford Airfield – (Packards Lane, Fordham Road North and South)	OV1



## **Retailing**

### **Centres Hierarchy**

- 3.43 The NPPF provides specific guidance on town centre uses and requires that local authorities should define a network and hierarchy of centres to help ensure their vitality. The Local Planning Authority's Centre Hierarchy accordingly, identifies Colchester Town Centre at the top of the hierarchy, followed by District and then Local Centres, in accordance with the recommendations of the 2016 Retail and Town Centre Study.
- 3.44 The hierarchy in Colchester Borough has two principal functions. Firstly, it will help to establish the Local Planning Authority's overarching strategy for the growth and management of town centre uses in the Borough's centres. It should therefore influence developer's decisions about where they seek to bring forward new development and of what type and scale. Secondly, when planning applications are submitted, the hierarchy will inform decisions on whether a particular centre is an appropriate location for the type and scale of town centre use(s) proposed, having regard for the primary role and function of that centre refer to Policy SG5 'definitions' below.
- 3.45 National planning guidance provides for the definition of Primary Shopping Areas to safeguard concentrations of retail uses which underpin the vitality and viability of Town Centres. In Colchester, Primary Shopping Areas have been defined for the Town and District Centres and will be used for the purposes of assessing sequentially preferable locations for retail developments. Within the Town Centre Primary Shopping Area, further refinement of town centre character is made in Policy TC2 through the definition of primary and secondary retail frontages in recognition of the Town Centre's more diverse character and larger size in relation to the District Centres. To help manage the appropriate growth of the District Centres, Primary Shopping Areas (PSA) are defined primarily having regard to the extent of main retail and service uses.

### **Town Centre**

- 3.46 Colchester Town Centre is the principal comparison goods shopping destination in the Borough supported by a number of non-retail facilities including services, leisure, cultural, and community uses. Research and analysis has established that the Town Centre is relatively healthy, although there are areas of weakness and concerns over longer term investment prospects. New retail and leisure development in particular is necessary to ensure the Town Centre's vitality and viability over the plan period. To address this, a robust 'town centre first' approach is adopted to ensure that larger scale development is focused on the Town Centre, helping to protect it against competition from other shopping destinations and maintain its position at the top of the Borough's retail hierarchy. Policy TC3 provides detail on the allocation of land within the Town Centre to provide additional town centre use capacity. Policy TC1 (Town Centre) provides more detail on the implementation of this approach. In line with the requirements of the NPPF the Town Centre Boundary is defined on the policies map, together with the

Primary Shopping Area and within this both Primary and Secondary Street Frontages referred to in Policy TC2.

### **District Centres**

3.47 Colchester Borough has a number of district centres, each with their own characteristics and functions but each 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 Borough, but not to a level comparable with Colchester Town Centre. Further district centres will be planned within the new garden community to serve their population as the master planning for the area progresses.

3.48 The evidence indicates that the overall strategy for the Borough's district centres should focus on the appropriate diversification of the non-retail offer, including services and community facilities, to better serve the day-to-day needs of their local communities. They do not require substantial new retail development to ensure their vitality and viability over the plan period. Instead, larger scale retail development should be focused on Colchester Town Centre in accordance with the hierarchy to help strengthen its primary role as a sub-regional shopping destination.

### **District Centres within Colchester Urban Area**

#### **Tollgate**

3.49 Tollgate is located in Stanway (approximately 4.8 km) to the west of Colchester Town Centre) and is the largest of Colchester's district centres. It has evolved from a predominantly 'bulky' retail park into an established shopping destination with a substantial range of multiple comparison goods retailers (such as Next, Argos, Sport Direct, Boots, Currys and PC World), a Sainsbury's food / non-food superstore, and a number of food and drink uses.

3.50 Tollgate competes with Colchester Town Centre for comparison goods expenditure. This is likely to be intensified by two schemes for additional development of town centre uses allowed on appeal. It is important that planning policy for Tollgate District Centre ensures that it plays a subsidiary position to the Town Centre in the centre hierarchy as set out in Policy SG5 and Table SG5. Its role and function as a district centre would be enhanced through the introduction of new services and/or community facilities.

#### **Turner Rise**

3.51 Turner Rise is a District Centre dominated by large buildings set around extensive areas of surface car parking. It is located approximately 1km to the north of the town centre, and within 250m to the east of Colchester Rail Station. The surrounding area is characterised by a mix of uses with residential development to the north and east of the site, and commercial uses to the west around the railway station. The Turner Rise District Centre consists of a large supermarket, retail units and a restaurant. The retail mix has changed over recent

years from mainly bulky goods retail to an increased range of retail units. In 2016, two new food and drink pod units were constructed. Overall, the retail evidence confirms that Turner Rise is performing well, largely underpinned by the Asda superstore and a 'value' focused comparison goods retail offer. Its role and function as a district centre would be enhanced through the introduction of new services and/or community facilities, as opposed to new retail development. The PSA is defined on the policies Map and will be the focus for any further retail uses, in accordance with Policy SG6.

#### Peartree Road

3.52 The Peartree Road District Centre is located approximately 3.5km to the southwest of the town centre and the surrounding area is predominantly residential. It consists of three separate areas:

- North of Peartree Road – supermarket, retail units, offices and food outlets.
- The Peartree Business Centre and Peartree Road – variety of small retail units ranging from bicycle sales, bulky goods and builders merchants in addition to services such as dry cleaners and a gym.
- South of Peartree Road and Moss Road – variety of units including bulky goods retail, offices, builders merchants and leisure units

3.53 Overall, the retail evidence confirms that Peartree Road is performing well albeit is lacking in terms of services and/or community facilities. Its role and function as a District Centre would be enhanced through the introduction of such uses, to complement the existing retail and leisure attractions. The PSA is defined on the policies Map and will be the focus for any further retail uses, in accordance with Policy SG 6.

#### Highwoods

3.54 The Highwoods District Centre is located approximately 2.5km to the northeast of the town centre and serves a distinct surrounding residential catchment area. It consists of a large supermarket and local community facilities and services such as a dry cleaners, post office, surgery and community centre. Overall, the retail evidence confirms that Highwoods District Centre is performing well for the main food shopping needs of the surrounding communities. It also has a limited but important service-based role and function. The PSA is defined on the policies Map and will be the focus for any further retail uses, in accordance with Policy SG6.

### **District Centres Outside Colchester Urban Area**

#### **Tiptree**

3.55 Tiptree is situated approximately 16 km to the southwest of Colchester Town Centre. It is dominated by Tesco and Asda superstores with Tesco in particular, given its closer relationship with the core shopping area focused along Church Road, being an important anchor to the centre. According to the market share evidence, Tiptree's substantial convenience goods shopping offer also principally serves the western parts of the Borough, including some smaller rural settlements where there is a very limited retail offer. The centre is situated within a substantial residential area which is reasonably well served by bus. It includes a wider range of retail, service and community uses including a library. Key retailers include Iceland and Boots, while there are also several independents.

3.56 Overall, the retail evidence confirms that Tiptree performs an important role in terms of serving predominately localised shopping and service needs, and it is a vital and viable centre.

#### **West Mersea**

3.57 West Mersea is situated approximately 16 km to the south of Colchester Town Centre. It includes a range of retail, service and community facilities (i.e. Post Office, library, leisure and / community centre and several food and drink establishments). Key retailers include Boots, Tesco Express, Co-Op and Spar. Reflecting its Island location, the market share evidence indicates that the centre principally draws trade from its immediate catchment. Mersea Island also has a tourist/ holidaymaker function, which is likely to help support its shops and other facilities. The centre's retail offer is somewhat dispersed but relatively distinct owing to the diversity of independent retailers. It has a substantial walk-in catchment and is reasonably well served by bus.

3.58 Overall, the retail evidence confirms that West Mersea is a vital and viable centre within the limitations of its small scale and localised nature. The mix of uses and the high level of occupancy would suggest that it serves an important role in the retail hierarchy.

#### **Wivenhoe**

3.59 Wivenhoe is situated approximately 6.4 km to the southeast of Colchester Town Centre. It has a limited range of retail, service and community facilities (i.e. Post Office, library, hair/ beauty salon). There are also a number of food and drink establishments and the Co-op. Thus, the centre has a convenience-based function, principally serving the day-to-day needs of the local community, and this is reflected by the market share evidence. The centre has an attractive historic character and is reasonably well served by bus and rail.

3.60 Overall, the retail evidence confirms that Wivenhoe is a vital and viable centre within the limitations of its small scale and localised nature. The mix of uses

(albeit very limited) and the high level of occupancy would suggest that it serves an important role in the retail hierarchy.

### **Local Centres**

- 3.61 The Retail and Town Centre study commented that local centres “perform an important role in terms of providing small scale retail and service uses to meet the basic needs of local communities.”
- 3.62 Local centres are categorised as containing at least one food store or convenience store and a small range of other shops/ services/ community facilities of local importance. Smaller retail areas are neighbourhood parades and whilst they fulfil an important role for local communities, they do not form part of the centre's hierarchy.
- 3.63 It is important to retain retail, retail services, community uses, financial/ business uses and leisure services within local centres at ground floor level. These uses serve local communities and reduce the need to travel for basic services. If lost to residential use and / or alternative uses they are unlikely to return, to the detriment of local communities. Many of the Borough's local centres include residential within upper floors, which the Local Planning Authority encourages.
- 3.64 The Local Planning Authority will consider favourably proposals for expansion of local centres where they are of an appropriate scale and type, having regard to the definition set out in Policy SG5, which would enhance the vitality of the local centre and would not adversely affect residential amenity. Where appropriate, measures will be required to promote sustainable travel to ensure that the amount of vehicular movements to / from the local centre is not increased as a result of the expansion. Where necessary conditions will be attached to control hours of operation, types of use etc to protect residential amenity.
- 3.65 The Borough's local centres are largely located within the heart of residential areas within the urban area of Colchester. Local centres outside of the urban area of Colchester include Dedham; London Road, Marks Tey; and Vine Road, Wivenhoe.
- 3.66 Dedham is situated in a rural location approximately 11.2 km to the northeast of Colchester Town Centre. It has a limited range of retail, service and community facilities including a community centre, various retail outlets and several food and drink establishments. Dedham also has a tourism industry, which is likely to help support its retail shops and other facilities. The centre's retail offer is concentrated along the High Street and whilst limited, it does serve as a Local Centre providing a vital role for the settlement and for other surrounding villages in North Colchester where there are very few shops and services. The mix of uses and the high level of occupancy would suggest that it serves an important role in the retail hierarchy in a local context.
- 3.67 London Road, Marks Tey local centre is remote from the main residential area of Marks Tey. There are high end convenience uses in this centre; a butchers and Chateau Wines, as well as three take-aways and a garage with a shop.

- 3.68 Vine Road in Wivenhoe includes a One Stop convenience store, estate agent, pharmacy, hairdressers and beauty salon, and take away. These uses serve a local catchment and parking is located in front of this linear local centre.
- 3.69 As the master planning work on the garden community develops local centres will be planned to serve communities and compliment the district centres, as appropriate.

**Policy SG5: Centre Hierarchy**

In accordance with the NPPF the centres identified in the following hierarchy will be the preferred location for main town centre uses such as retail, office, leisure and entertainment.

Definitions of centres:

**Town Centre:** the Borough's principal and a sub-regional centre for comparison goods shopping, services, culture, leisure, with 'regional' aspirations.

**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 Borough, but not to a level comparable with Colchester Town Centre.

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

**Table SG5: Colchester Borough's Hierarchy of Centres**

<b>Town Centre</b> Colchester Town Centre	
<b>District Centres</b> Tiptree West Mersea Wivenhoe Tollgate Peartree Road Turner Rise Highwoods	<b>Proposed District Centre</b> Tendring / Colchester Borders Garden Community
<b>Local Centres:</b> St Christopher Road, St Johns Hawthorne Avenue, Greenstead Iceni Way, Shrub End William Harris Way, Garrison Homefield Road, Garrison Monkwick and Mersea Road The Willows Old Heath Road Hythe Quay London Road, Stanway Villa Road, Stanway Blackberry Road, Stanway The Commons, Prettygate Dedham London Road, Marks Tey Vine Road, Wivenhoe  The new Garden Community will include local centres to compliment district centres and build on the network of centres in the hierarchy.	

- 3.70 In order to manage appropriate growth within the Town and District Centres and to help safeguard the current hierarchy and the role and function of each of the centres, planning applications will be required to address the provisions in the National Planning Policy Framework concerning the sequential test and retail impact assessments.

### **Sequential Test**

- 3.71 Applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre and are not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan should demonstrate that sequentially preferable sites have been thoroughly considered. Centre sites are sequentially preferable, followed by edge of centre sites. Only if suitable sites are not available should out of centre sites be considered. In accordance with Paragraph 24 of the Framework, sequential testing will start from the Primary Shopping Area boundary for retail uses and the town centre boundary for all other town centre uses.

### **Impact Assessments**

- 3.72 Above a specified threshold, planning applications for town centre uses, not in an existing centre and not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan, will be required to include a Retail Impact Assessment. The NPPF provides for Local Planning Authorities to set local floorspace thresholds, above which retail impact assessments will be required. Based on this floorspace thresholds will apply to Colchester Town Centre and the District Centres as set out in the table below.
- 3.73 In addition, proposals for retail and leisure uses outside the Town and District Centres, above the floorspace thresholds set out below will also be subject to an Impact Assessment and will be supported where no significant adverse impacts to Colchester Town Centre (and/or any other defined centre) are demonstrated. This policy response seeks to manage the growth of the District Centres and protect the Town Centre's position at the apex of the hierarchy.
- 3.74 Where a retail impact assessment is required, this should be carried out in accordance with the guidance set out in the Assessment Specification 2021 or any updated guidance which applies at the time.
- 3.75 In accordance with the NPPF in cases where a planning application fails to satisfy the sequential test or is likely to have significant adverse impact on one or more of the factors identified above in the impact assessment, it should be refused.



**Policy SG6: Town Centre Uses**

Proposals for 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.

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

In cases where the Local Planning Authority are 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 (i- vi below).

- (i) Proposals for main town centre uses in or 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 Town Centre at the apex of the centre hierarchy, either individually or cumulatively with other committed proposals, and;
- (ii) Proposals for main town centre uses in or on the edge of centres are suitable to the town / district centre function and maintains or adds to its viability and vitality and enhances the diversity of the centre without changing the position of the centre within the overall hierarchy and;
- (iii) 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 and;
- (iv) The proposal would not have a significant adverse impact on the vitality and viability of Colchester Town Centre and/or any other defined centre either individually or cumulatively with other committed proposals and;
- (v) The proposal would not have a significant adverse impact on committed and / planned public or private investment in Colchester Town Centre and /or any other defined centre either individually or cumulatively with other committed proposals and;
- (vi) In relation to criteria (iv) and (v) above an Impact Assessment must be provided where the proposal;
  - Exceeds the thresholds set out in table SG6 below.

**Table SG6 Impact Assessments Thresholds**

<b>Centre</b>	<b>Retail and/or leisure floorspace (sqm gross)</b>
Colchester Tollgate Peartree Road Turner Rise Highwoods	1,500
Tiptree West Mersea Wivenhoe	1,000

**Policy SG6a Local Centres**

Local centres will be protected and enhanced to provide shops, services and community facilities for local communities. Proposals for change of use within designated local centres will need to demonstrate that it will provide a retail use, retail service, community use, financial/ businesses service or a leisure service and will meet the basic needs of local communities.

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 sustainable travel behaviour.

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

## Infrastructure

3.76 The Local Planning Authority fully appreciates that the delivery of new homes and jobs needs to be supported by infrastructure, including a wide range of transport options, utilities, and community facilities. This issue is of particular concern to existing residents and businesses. The Local Planning Authority has prepared an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), to inform the local plan, based on other evidence work; studies prepared for the Garden Community; relevant Neighbourhood Plans; topic based national and local studies; and discussions with infrastructure providers. The IDP will sit alongside this plan and provide specifics on the main items of infrastructure required, when they are likely to be provided, and who will pay for them. Additionally, the place policies in this plan will highlight essential pieces of site-specific infrastructure as relevant for all new allocations.

3.77 The broad categories of necessary infrastructure covered in the IDP include:

- Water and Drainage – water supply, waste water, flood risk management and resilience, and water quality.
- Energy – electricity, gas, and renewable energy.
- Communications – broadband coverage and provision.
- Leisure and green infrastructure – sport, open space and community facilities.
- Education – early years and childcare, primary, secondary, further education, and higher education.
- Health – hospitals, health centres, GP surgeries, dentists, public health, and preventative health care.
- Transport – highways, cycle and pedestrian facilities, rail, bus, park and ride, travel management, and car parking.

3.78 For the purposes of this policy the widest reasonable definition of infrastructure and infrastructure providers will be applied. Examples of types of infrastructure are provided in the glossary appended to this plan. Regard should be had to the latest version of the ECC Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions as well as Council Guidance.

3.79 Infrastructure and community facilities are mainly provided by partner agencies and service providers such as water and energy provision by the utility companies; a range of services including highways and social services by Essex County Council; education by a range of public and private sector providers, and healthcare services and facilities by the North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group and National Health Service England Midlands and East (NHSE) England. The IDP identifies the different investment and development time scales for these providers and the Council will work with those providers to help deliver a co-ordinated approach to new infrastructure delivery.

3.80 Telecommunications and digital infrastructure technologies are evolving rapidly, and proposals will need to enable sites to access high quality digital infrastructure including fibre and wireless services (5G and Long-Term Evolution i.e. successor technologies) which are accessible from a range of providers.

- 3.81 Developers will be expected to contribute towards meeting appropriate infrastructure costs. This will include contributions to both on-site costs and strategic off-site infrastructure costs. Contributions will be secured under S106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and/or secured through a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) as appropriate. CIL will complement and not duplicate planning obligations. A CIL charging schedule linked to this Plan would stipulate a charge, per square metre of gross internal floorspace, for relevant classes of development. A proportion of CIL funds would be passed to Parish/Town councils. The Government is currently considering changes to CIL and it may be that contributions are secured under other provisions in future legislation.
- 3.82 In the event that essential infrastructure cannot be appropriately delivered to support new development it may be necessary to restrict development from being commenced or, in certain cases, from being permitted. When infrastructure cannot be provided within, or is not appropriate to be located on, the development site itself, developers will be expected to make a contribution to the cost to provide the infrastructure elsewhere.
- 3.83 Section 1 provides the strategic priorities for infrastructure provision or improvement in Policy SP4, and Policies SP7, 8 and 9 provide further information on specific Garden Community infrastructure requirements. In Section 2, Policy PP1 provides generic infrastructure requirements for new allocations. Locational specific infrastructure requirements are identified within allocation policies for urban Colchester and the Sustainable Settlements.

**Policy SG7: Infrastructure Delivery and Impact Mitigation**

All new development should be supported by, and have good access to, all necessary infrastructure.

Permission will only be granted if it can be demonstrated that there is sufficient appropriate infrastructure capacity to support the development or that such capacity will be delivered by the proposal. It must further be demonstrated that such capacity as is required will prove sustainable over time both in physical and financial terms.

Where a development proposal requires additional infrastructure capacity, to be deemed acceptable, mitigation measures must be agreed with the Local Planning Authority and the appropriate infrastructure provider. Such measures may include (not exclusively):

- (i) Financial contributions towards new or expanded facilities and the maintenance thereof;
- (ii) On-site provision (which may include building works);
- (iii) Off-site capacity improvement works; and/or
- (iv) The provision of land.

Developers will be expected to contribute towards the delivery of relevant infrastructure. They will either make direct provision or will contribute towards the provision of local and strategic infrastructure required by the development either alone or cumulatively with other developments.

Measures required to mitigate the impacts of recreational disturbance on habitats sites will be delivered as detailed in the adopted Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy.

Small sites can have a cumulative effect on infrastructure and proportional contributions will be sought from all developments where this is demonstrated to be the case. Developers and landowners must work positively with the Local Planning Authority, neighbouring authorities and other infrastructure providers throughout the planning process to ensure that the cumulative impact of development is considered and then mitigated, at the appropriate time, in line with published policies and guidance.

Exceptions to this policy will only be considered whereby:

- (i) It is proven that the benefit of the development proceeding without full mitigation outweighs the collective harm;
- (ii) 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;
- (iii) 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
- (iv) Obligations are entered into by the developer that provide for appropriate additional mitigation in the event that viability improves prior to completion of the development.

## Neighbourhood Plans

- 3.84 The 2011 Localism Act introduced the concept of Neighbourhood Planning. Under this Act local communities in urban and rural areas were given new powers to prepare Neighbourhood Plans enabling these communities to have a greater influence over the future land use within their areas.
- 3.85 Neighbourhood Plans can vary in terms of their complexity and approach and can cover one or more of the following topics areas: site allocations, housing type/size, local housing need, affordable housing, local character considerations, design and building materials, boundary fences/walls design criteria, community facilitates and services to sustainable development. The Local Planning Authority will be supportive of communities who want to prepare Neighbourhood Plans.
- 3.86 Neighbourhood Plans are subject to examination and referendum and Plans which successfully pass these two tests will be made (adopted) as part of the Development Plan for Colchester. Any issues which are not covered by the scope of a Neighbourhood Plan will be determined in accordance with the Local Plan.
- 3.87 Practice has shown that the process of developing Neighbourhood Plans is very time intensive for local communities and they face many challenges which are not always anticipated. Where a community has committed to undertake a Neighbourhood Plan, the Local Planning Authority wishes to support them with this and encourage continued commitment to lead to successfully made Neighbourhood Plans. Where circumstances lead to the significant stalling of Plans, serious blockages with little likelihood of solution or failing a Referendum, every effort will be made to work with the Neighbourhood Plan Group to resolve issues, but where this is unsuccessful, there will be a need for the planning function to revert to the Local Planning Authority, in particular when this impacts on planned housing delivery. In such circumstances the Local Planning Authority will intervene as appropriate.
- 3.88 The policy approach for each Neighbourhood Plan allocating sites is set out in the relevant place policy. Neighbourhood Plans not allocating sites will be progressed in accordance with the NPPF/PPG and the most current Neighbourhood Plan Regulations. The preparation of all plans will be reviewed under the Authority Monitoring Report and where progress is stalled for any significant time, in particular for those plans which are allocating sites, the Local Planning Authority will consider the need for intervention.

**Policy SG8: Neighbourhood Plans**

Towns and villages are encouraged to plan for the specific needs of their communities by developing Neighbourhood Plans. The Local Planning Authority will support Parish and Town Councils and Neighbourhood Forums (in unparished areas) to prepare Neighbourhood Plans containing locally determined policies to guide land use and meet future development needs in their areas.

Once a Neighbourhood Plan is made, this becomes part of the Development Plan.

Neighbourhood Plans have been made for Boxted, Myland and Braiswick, Wivenhoe, West Bergholt and Eight Ash Green and these now form part of the Development Plan for Colchester.

Neighbourhood Plans are required to be compliant with the following Strategic Policies in this Plan: Section 1 Policies SP1-9 and Section 2 Policies SG1-8, ENV1- 5, CC1 and PP1.

## **4. Environmental Assets Policies**

### **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 countryside provides the attractive landscape setting that defines and characterises the villages and rural communities of Colchester Borough. The countryside and coastal areas also provide important agricultural, tourism and recreational opportunities that support local economies and communities. The Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty extends into the northern part of the Borough and has the highest status of protection in relation to its natural beauty and special qualities.

### **Habitats Sites and Other Designations**

- 4.2 The Council has statutory obligations under the Habitats Directive and Birds Directive to protect important habitats and species designated as habitats sites. This policy aims to protect the undeveloped areas of the Colne and Blackwater Estuaries and coast and Abberton Reservoir, and support regeneration that enhances the river's recreation and nature conservation values.
- 4.3 Where a proposal is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (alone or in-combination) the Local Planning Authority will make an appropriate assessment of the implications of the proposal for the habitats site(s) in view of the site(s) conservation objectives. Applicants will be expected to provide information for the purposes of the Habitat Regulations Assessment. The Local Planning Authority will only grant planning consent where it can be ascertained that the proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of a habitats site, unless the exceptional requirements of Regulations 62 and 66 of the Habitats Regulations relating to the absence of alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interest and provision of compensation have been met.
- 4.4 The Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) Strategy Document was adopted in 2019 and SPD was adopted in 2020. The Essex Coast RAMS, which has the brand name Bird Aware Essex Coast, aims to deliver the mitigation necessary to avoid adverse effects on the integrity of habitats sites from the in-combination impacts of residential development in Essex. The Essex Coast RAMS identifies a detailed programme of strategic avoidance and mitigation measures which are to be funded by developer contributions from all qualifying residential development within the Zones of Influence as defined in the adopted RAMS.
- 4.5 The Borough contains a range of other sites designated for their wildlife interest, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserves, Local Nature Reserves, Local Sites and Special Roadside Verges. Brownfield sites can also be important for biodiversity.
- 4.6 All development proposals should initially be assessed to establish the likely presence or absence of Protected Species or Species /Habitats of Principal



Importance on the development site. This may be through a Phase 1 Habitat assessment combined with site visits. Where there is a confirmed presence, or reasonable likelihood, of a legally protected species or Species of Principal Importance, on an application site (or where present on adjacent land) and where the species is likely to be affected then detailed ecological surveys should be carried out at the appropriate time of year in accordance with current best practice. Applicants will be required to follow the mitigation hierarchy and demonstrate that adverse impacts upon the species have been avoided. Where impacts cannot be avoided a detailed Ecological Enhancement and Mitigation Plan should be prepared and submitted and agreed with the Local Planning Authority. Where ecological assessments are required, a biosecurity protocol method statement should be included to ensure the introduction of invasive non-native species is prevented. Where district licensing schemes exist, applicants can fulfil their legal obligations regarding protected species by participating in the district licensing scheme. Mitigation must provide net gains for biodiversity and conform to the requirements of relevant legislation and Government Standing Advice.

- 4.7 Where Priority Habitats are likely to be adversely impacted by a proposal, the developer must demonstrate that adverse impacts will be avoided, and impacts that cannot be avoided are mitigated on-site and supplemented with measurable net gains for biodiversity. Where residual impacts remain, off-site compensation and enhancement may be required so that there is a measurable net gain and no net loss in quantity and quality of Priority Habitat in the Borough.
- 4.8 All development proposals must comply with current requirements and best practice for measurable biodiversity net gain and Nature Recovery Strategies and Networks. As a minimum, 10% biodiversity net gain is required or as otherwise indicated in policy and legislation. This is in addition to the requirement to follow the mitigation hierarchy. Biodiversity net gain requirements must not undermine the existing range of protections, in planning policy and legislation, for irreplaceable habitats and protected sites. As part of the planning process a calculation in line with the latest Natural England Biodiversity Metric should be submitted and strict adherence to the mitigation hierarchy should be used to ensure harm is avoided in the first instance, that provision for a minimum 10% measurable net gain in biodiversity is made onsite wherever possible and that offsite compensation with a long-term management plan is used as a last resort. All projects should have regard to reducing the impacts of climate change and delivering multiple benefits in terms of but not exclusive to habitats, carbon storage and Natural Flood Management.

### **Wildlife and Biodiversity**

- 4.9 Hedgerows subject to a Hedgerow Retention Notice must be assessed by the Local Planning Authority's Landscape Officer against criteria in the Hedgerows Regulations 1997. Where a hedgerow is deemed to be 'Important' under the Hedgerows Regulations, the developer must demonstrate that adverse impacts upon the important hedgerow will be avoided. This is necessary as the loss of both 'Important' and other significant hedgerows is difficult to mitigate against as they cannot easily be recreated as either a landscape or ecological feature.

- 4.10 The European Water Framework Directive imposes legal requirements to improve the water environment. All waterbodies must achieve 'good ecological status' by 2027, prevent deterioration of surface water and groundwater and seek enhancements where rivers, lakes and estuaries are not achieving good ecological status or potential. The local planning authority supports the directive and proposals which seek to further these aims where it is possible to do so. In pursuit of this aim, proposals should seek to minimise disturbance to riverbeds. Proposals are encouraged to be in compliance with the Anglian River Basin Management Plan (2015) or its successor, which addresses pressures on the water environment and whose environmental objectives are legally binding on all public bodies whose decisions affect the quality of the water environment.
- 4.11 The Coastal Protection Belt protects the open and undeveloped stretches of coastline in the Borough which could be harmed by development that might otherwise be acceptable in a countryside area. The original designation of 1984 has been reviewed with some amendment to the Borough's Coastal Protection Belt and is shown on the policies map.
- 4.12 A major threat to the low lying coastal and estuary areas is rising sea levels as a result of climate change. This threat will be addressed by increasing the network of green corridors and areas of open space to aid the dispersal of species that will need to migrate as climate change renders their existing habitat unsuitable. Climate change impacts, particularly sea level rise, will also be addressed by accommodating future flood waters and inter-tidal habitats through managed realignment projects identified in the Essex and South Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan, without harm to landscape character and the built and historic environment.

### **Countryside**

- 4.13 Policy ENV1 aims to control development outside of settlements to protect open stretches of countryside around and between existing settlements, to protect landscape character, to prevent coalescence and retain settlement identity. Any development in the countryside, i.e. land outside of settlement boundaries, must be compatible with local landscape character and setting. Development will be supported provided it does not adversely impact on the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, the relationship between and the separate identities of settlements, visual amenity, or the factors that contribute to valued landscapes, whilst also complying with other relevant policies of the Local Plan. Proposals are required to have regard to Colchester's Landscape Character Assessment and the Council's adopted Landscape Guidance for Developers alongside any other relevant or updated evidence, in order to identify and evaluate the effect of a proposed development on the character, value and sensitivity to change of a proposed site and its setting to help conserve the Borough's landscape character.

## **Heritage**

- 4.14 The historic environment will be protected across the Borough with reference to studies including the Townscape Character Assessment, the Urban Archaeological Database and Historic Environment Characterisation Study and updated evidence as produced. Policy DM16 provides criteria for development affecting heritage assets. The Local Plan as a whole protects heritage assets through general and site-specific policy criteria, which ensures that the protection of heritage assets is an integral part of every aspect of the Local Plan.

### **Policy ENV1: Environment**

The Local Planning Authority will conserve and enhance Colchester's natural and historic environment, countryside and coastline. The Local Planning Authority will safeguard the Borough's biodiversity, geology, history and archaeology, which help define the landscape character of the Borough, through the protection and enhancement of sites of international, national, regional and local importance. The Local Planning Authority will require development to be in compliance with, and contribute positively towards, delivering the aims and objectives of the Anglian River Basin Management Plan.

#### **A. Designated sites**

Development proposals that have adverse effects on the integrity of habitats sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest or significant adverse impacts on the special qualities of the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (including its setting) (either alone or in-combination) will not be supported.

#### **B. Essex Coast RAMS**

A Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy has been completed in compliance with the Habitats Directive and Habitats Regulations. Further to Section 1 Policy SP2, contributions will be secured from qualifying residential development, within the Zones of Influence as defined in the adopted RAMS, towards mitigation measures identified in the Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS).

#### **C. Biodiversity and geodiversity**

Development proposals where the principal objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity and geodiversity interests will be supported in principle.

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

- (i) Is supported with appropriate ecological surveys where necessary; and
- (ii) Where there is reason to suspect the presence of a protected species (and impact to), or Species/Habitats of Principal Importance, applications should be accompanied by an ecological survey assessing their presence and, if present, the proposal must be sensitive to, and make provision for their needs and demonstrate the mitigation hierarchy has been followed; and
- (iii) Will conserve or enhance the biodiversity value of greenfield and brownfield sites and minimise fragmentation of habitats; and

- (iv) Maximises opportunities for the preservation, restoration, enhancement and connection of natural habitats in accordance with the UK and Essex Biodiversity Action Plans or future replacements; and
- (v) Incorporates beneficial biodiversity conservation features, measurable biodiversity net gain of at least 10% in line with the principles outlined in the Natural England Biodiversity Metric, and habitat creation where appropriate.

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 Principle Importance, will not be permitted unless:

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

The Local Planning Authority will take a precautionary approach where insufficient information is provided about avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures and secure mitigation and compensation through planning conditions/obligations where necessary.

#### **D. Irreplaceable habitats**

Proposals that would result in the loss of irreplaceable habitats, such as ancient woodland, Important Hedgerows and veteran trees will not be permitted unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy, to the satisfaction of the local planning authority, exists.

#### **E. Countryside**

The local planning authority will carefully balance the requirement for new development within the countryside to meet identified development needs in accordance with Colchester's spatial strategy, and to support the vitality of rural communities, whilst ensuring that development does not have an adverse impact on the different roles, the relationship between and separate identities of settlements, 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 and complies with other relevant policies. Within valued landscapes, development will only be permitted where it would not impact upon and would protect and enhance the factors that contribute to valued landscapes.

## Coastal Areas

- 4.15 The open, undeveloped and rural landscape character of the coastal area of Colchester Borough is an extremely rich, diverse and irreplaceable natural asset in terms of its natural and cultural features. It includes substantial parts of the Colne and Blackwater Estuaries. The ecological importance of the Colne and Blackwater Estuaries is reflected by the variety of international and European designations covering them i.e. Ramsar sites, Special Protection Areas (Birds Directive), and the Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designated under the Habitats Directive. The Colne and Blackwater Estuaries are also protected as part of the larger Colne, Blackwater, Roach and Crouch Marine Conservation Zone. There are also a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Local Wildlife Sites designated around the estuaries.
- 4.16 The Borough's coastline is also home to a number of sizeable communities in West Mersea, Rowhedge, and Wivenhoe. As a consequence, there are a number of diverse planning considerations and land uses which all need to be managed in an integrated way within the Borough's coastal belt. These include internationally important habitats, land and water-based recreation, fishing, and heritage assets (including archaeological). Obligations to protect the important natural and heritage assets have to be carefully considered against the need to satisfy legislative requirements and the wider socio-economic needs of the Borough's coastal communities.
- 4.17 Climate change including sea level rise is likely to present increasing pressure on the management of coastal habitats and coastal communities along Colchester's coastal fringe. The Essex and South Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan (October 2010) has shown that sections of the coastal frontage within the Borough are highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and coastal processes and four potential managed realignment sites have been identified. Two of the managed realignment sites are located along the Colne Estuary (SMP ref D6b Wivenhoe Marshes and D8a Inner Colne West Bank) and the other two are on Mersea Island (SMP ref E2 - Seaward frontage between North Barn and West Mersea and E4a North Strood Channel). All four sites have been identified for re-alignment between 2025 -2055. The sites are shown on the Policies map and will be safeguarded over the lifetime of the Local Plan for the delivery of setback schemes in accordance with the Shoreline Management Plan timetable. It will be important that future land uses and developments along the Borough's frontage, in particular built-up frontages, can demonstrate a high level of resilience in response to changing local climatic conditions.
- 4.18 In 1984, Essex County Council produced the Essex Coast Protection Subject Plan. This defined a county wide Coastal Protection Belt, which was reviewed and updated in 2016 by the Local Planning Authority. The Colchester Coastal Protection Belt aims to protect the rural and undeveloped coastline in the Borough from inappropriate development that would adversely affect its rural, undeveloped and open character and irreplaceable assets, landward and marine sites of nature conservation importance, and buildings and areas of special architectural, historic or archaeological importance. The Belt's rural and undeveloped coastline is of international and national significance for its historic environment assets and

nature conservation interest. These multiple assets are strongly focussed and interrelated within the defined area, including between the coastline and adjoining inland areas.

- 4.19 The Coastal Protection Belt has a unique character, which should be strongly protected and enhanced. There is a local need for greater priority to be given to the restraint of potentially damaging development than is normally possible under national planning policies. The Coastal Protection Belt adopts the precautionary principle and seeks to restrict development to within the built-up areas of the coast. Some developments however require a coastal location and cannot be located elsewhere or are needed to help sustain the socio-economic base of a coastal area or serve the needs of the local coastal community. This may include sustainable tourism or leisure related developments where they meet the requirements of policies elsewhere in the Plan. There are also a number of new housing allocations being proposed within Abberton, and West Mersea which are located within the revised Colchester Coastal Protection Belt. Allocating residential development on the edge of these settlements is considered appropriate as it will deliver social and economic benefits to the communities where they are built and ensure that the new housing is sustainably located close to existing facilities and infrastructure. It also helps protect the character of the Coastal Protection Belt by preventing urban sprawl into the more open and undeveloped stretches of the Borough's coastline. Where development is proposed within the Coastal Protection Belt, and where flood risk is also a constraint, the proposed use must be appropriate to the flood zone in which it is to be sited and to the flood vulnerability classification.
- 4.20 The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) has commenced work on the preparation of the first South East (Inshore) Marine Plan. Colchester falls within this plan area. The Marine Plan once completed will cover the area up to Mean High Water Springs, the Borough's coastline and the tidal reaches of the Colne Estuary/ River Colne. The Marine Plan's jurisdiction will overlap with the Local Planning Authority's responsibilities (which extend to mean low water) and due regard must be paid to the Marine Plan. This new and evolving concept of a Marine Plan will at a local level be implemented in accordance with the national Marine Policy Statements. The Local Plan will be integrated with the South East (Inshore) Marine Plan, once it is complete, to provide a consistent approach for planning on land, and within the Borough's inter-tidal and marine environment.
- 4.21 A new coastal path is currently being planned around the whole of England's coastline. The delivery of the England Coast Path is embedded in the Marine and Coastal Access Act and Natural England is charged with its delivery by 2020. Once completed in addition to delivering a new long distance walking route, areas of 'spreading room' may also be delivered beside the route where people can explore and relax.
- 4.22 The Salcott to Jaywick and Mersea Island stretches of the England Coast Path fall within Colchester Borough. Designating these routes as part of the England Coast Path will contribute to coastal regeneration by supporting coastal businesses and services, through increased visitor spending where additional visits are made. This aligns well with the Council's aspirations to support coastal

communities and sustainable coastal tourism initiatives in the Borough. The England Coast Path will avoid private houses and gardens and major ports.

The path will also avoid sensitive habitats and areas important for sensitive species. This is important in Colchester as much of the Borough's coast is designated under national, European and international designations.

- 4.23 The Borough Council supports the principle of creating an England Coast Path and will work with Natural England to secure its delivery along the Borough's coastline.

**Policy ENV2: Coastal Areas**

Until such time as the South East (Inshore Marine Plan) is completed, any planning proposals within the Borough's coastal, estuarine, intertidal and tidal environment, will need to accord with guidance set out in the national Marine Policy Statement.

Within the Coastal Protection Belt and along the undeveloped coast an integrated approach to coastal management will be promoted and development will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that it:

- (i) Requires a coastal location and is located within the developed area of the coast; and
- (ii) Is a land use type that is appropriate to the Flood Zone, will be safe from flooding over its planned lifetime and will not have an unacceptable impact on coastal change; and
- (iii) Will not be significantly detrimental to conserving important nature conservation, heritage assets, maritime uses and the landscape and seascape character of the coast; and
- (iv) Will deliver or sustain social and economic sustainability benefits considered important to the well-being of the coastal communities; and
- (v) Provides opportunities and scope for adaptation to climate change; and
- (vi) Will not hinder the future creation and maintenance of a continuous signed and managed England Coast Path.

## **Green Infrastructure**

- 4.24 Green Infrastructure is a strategic network of multifunctional green and blue (water) spaces, and the connections between them, in both urban and rural areas. A Green Infrastructure network may comprise spaces in public or private ownership, with or without public access that is capable of delivering a range of environmental, economic, health and quality of life benefits for local communities and wildlife.
- 4.25 In Colchester, green infrastructure covers a range of green and blue spaces including allotments, community gardens, amenity greenspaces, cemeteries, natural and semi natural green spaces, river and estuary corridors, play areas, parks and gardens.
- 4.26 The benefits delivered by well-connected green infrastructure networks are diverse. Green infrastructure provides an important landscape function by protecting green gaps/buffers and areas of open space within and between developments and settlements. Ecologically, green infrastructure provides important wildlife corridors that species use to move between sites for feeding and breeding. Such networks also provide valuable corridors which aide the dispersal of species in response to changing climatic conditions. Well-designed green infrastructure networks can also play a key role in flood prevention /alleviation as part of new development.
- 4.27 Strategic green links provide valuable corridors for the movement of people. Existing open spaces, sports facilities and green link networks provide the people of Colchester with opportunities for passive and active recreation and encourages healthy and active lifestyles. The availability of a well-functioning green infrastructure network close to centres of population provides an important role in alleviating pressure on sensitive designated habitats sites (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites) by providing alternative green spaces that people can use for dog walking and general recreational use. It is therefore important that all residents have access to green (or blue) infrastructure close to where they live or work.
- 4.28 The green spaces along the Colne River, connect the town centre, suburbs, countryside, villages and the coast. These corridors provide alternative means for people making journeys into and across Colchester. 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. It is important that the existing green infrastructure network is protected and enhanced, and new links created as part of future developments to improve Green Infrastructure provision overall including the delivery of sustainable transport corridors across the Borough where gaps exist.
- 4.29 The Council has been working with a range of access groups to deliver a new green infrastructure asset, the Colchester Orbital route. Approximately 14-15 miles in length, the Colchester Orbital is a circular multi-user route around the town's periphery, connecting green spaces, where possible, with cycle routes and bridleways to appeal to the widest range of users. It currently comprises an Inner



Route with proposals to create a secondary outer Orbital route over the plan period. The key aims of the Colchester Orbital project are to create a route that links Colchester's valuable green spaces, to enhance connectivity between them as wildlife habitats, and to create a sense of a green corridor around the town. The project also seeks to strengthen walking links between Colchester, its suburbs and surrounding villages to deliver real alternative sustainable commuting routes, to enhance tourism opportunities and to improve opportunities for active healthy lifestyles, including the expansion of walking horizons of mobility-restricted users.

- 4.30 While much of the Inner Orbital network already exists, it is not complete. The route will serve walkers including mobility-restricted users, cyclists and where practical horse riders. Opportunities to improve connectivity between existing Green Infrastructure assets, the Orbital and new development should be maximised. Not all sections of the existing route are currently fully accessible for all potential users. New developments will be expected to contribute towards the creation of new paths /green infrastructure where gaps exist and to improve linkages and connectivity with other spurs of the GI network such as the Wivenhoe Trail or wildlife areas. New paths/links should be constructed to a standard to ensure that they provide direct links to services, facilities and infrastructure, are useable all year round and make users feel secure and minimise maintenance costs. Designs will need to be sympathetic to the Green Infrastructure environment but not allow the Green Infrastructure to become a barrier to sustainable active travel. Contributions will also be sought, where related to development, to enhance the quality of the existing Orbital route through improved signage, drainage improvements or new landscaping.
- 4.31 The Colchester Orbital route is shown in Appendix 1. An audit of the Orbital route has been completed by the Orbital Access Group and this information will be used to inform improvements that need to be made from development contributions where appropriate.

### **Policy ENV3: Green Infrastructure**

The Local Planning Authority will aim to protect, enhance and deliver a comprehensive green infrastructure network comprising strategic green links between the rural hinterland, urban Colchester, river corridors and open spaces across the Borough. It will seek to protect and enhance the existing network of green and blue infrastructure features and to secure the delivery of new green infrastructure where deficiencies and gaps are identified that will benefit communities, wildlife and the environment. The Council will work with access stakeholder/groups to support the delivery of a 'new' multi-user route, the Colchester Orbital, around urban Colchester.

Development proposals that contribute to the delivery of projects identified in the Colchester Green Infrastructure Strategy, the Orbital Project Audit Paper and the Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Essex will be positively supported.

The Local Planning Authority will seek opportunities from future developments, where appropriate, to improve the connectivity between the Colchester Orbital route, new developments and the wider countryside. Radial connections will be secured between existing green infrastructure assets, existing development, and the Orbital routes new development. This will improve the choices available to residents to access and participate more easily in healthy activities, such as walking, cycling and horse riding.

Proposals that cause loss or harm to the green infrastructure network will not be permitted unless the need for and benefits of the development outweigh any adverse impacts. Where adverse impacts on green infrastructure are unavoidable, development will only be permitted if suitable mitigation measures for the network are provided. Key linkages will be constructed to a suitable standard to allow year-round secure usage by all.

The Local Planning Authority will seek contributions or require work to be undertaken as part of new development where appropriate, to create new paths where gaps are evident in the existing green infrastructure network/Orbital routes or to enhance the quality of the existing route.

The use of land and buildings as new allotments, orchards, community gardens and for local food growing spaces and production will be supported, including the temporary use of vacant or derelict land or buildings and the use of incidental open space on housing estates and other open space areas, where this does not conflict with other policy objectives.

Green infrastructure that contributes to the protection and enhancement of water bodies will be supported, including de-culverting, creation and management of ecological buffer strips and new wetland areas to help manage flood risk and reduce diffuse pollution.

## **Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

- 4.32 The Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) has been designated for its national importance in terms of landscape quality 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.
- 4.33 The features that define the Natural Beauty and Special Qualities of the Dedham Vale AONB have been identified in the Dedham Vale AONB Natural Beauty and Special Qualities and Perceived and Anticipated Risks Report commissioned by the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Joint Advisory Committee and prepared by Alison Farmer Associates in 2016.
- 4.34 In this report, Natural Beauty has been defined in terms of Landscape Quality, Scenic Quality, Relative Wildness, Relative Tranquillity and Natural and Cultural Heritage Features. The special qualities have been influenced by factors such as traditional land use patterns, evidence of human habitation through history, geology, river valleys and woodlands or association with artists and writers.
- 4.35 Applications within or close to the AONB will need to consider how proposals impact on the Natural Beauty and Special Qualities of the Dedham Vale AONB as outlined in the Natural Beauty and Special Qualities document referred to above. Major applications may need to be supported with a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
- 4.36 A recent report by the International Dark Sky Association concluded that the Dedham Vale night sky was good enough quality to qualify for Bronze level International Dark Sky status. Work started in 2017 on securing this international designation for the Dedham Vale. To help secure this designation in the future it will be essential to minimise and manage light pollution from all future developments within and on the edge of the AONB.
- 4.37 It is essential that the AONB and its setting is conserved and enhanced. However, it is acknowledged that the Dedham Vale is a 'living' landscape which needs to be able to adapt, change and respond positively to changing social, economic and environmental issues (climate change, changing agricultural sector, recreational pressures) to meet the needs of the local community and visitors to the area. In exceptional cases development proposals that help maintain the economic and social wellbeing of the AONB will be supported where these do not detract from the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB or its setting. Minor house extensions may provide little opportunity to enhance the landscape qualities of the AONB and accordingly will not be exclusively rejected on this basis where otherwise acceptable. Developer contributions can be paid to the Stour Valley Environment Fund to secure environmental gains elsewhere in the Stour Valley.
- 4.38 Solar farms and wind turbines are large developments that can have landscape and visual impacts. Proposals for solar farm or wind farms/turbines within or near

the Dedham Vale AONB should accord with the most current national policy and best practice to help conserve and enhance the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB.

- 4.39 Proposals outside of the AONB will not be supported where, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, they will have a negative impact on the natural beauty, tranquillity, special qualities, setting and public enjoyment of the AONB.

**Policy ENV4: Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

Development will only be supported in or on land within the setting of the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) that:

- (i) Makes a positive contribution to the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB, including tranquillity and the AONB's good quality night/dark skies; and,
- (ii) Does not adversely affect the character, quality views, into and out of the AONB and distinctiveness of the AONB or threaten public enjoyment of these areas, including by increased motorised vehicle movement; and,
- (iii) That there are no adverse impacts on the setting of the AONB which cannot reasonably be mitigated against and,
- (iv) Supports the wider environmental, social and economic objectives as set out in the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Management Plan.

Applications for major development within or in close proximity to the boundary of the Dedham Vale AONB will be refused unless in exceptional circumstances it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest, and this outweighs other material considerations.

Where exceptional development is suitable, landscape enhancements, mitigation or compensation measures must be provided. The Local Planning Authority will seek opportunities to mitigate the impact of features identified as having adverse impacts. Residual impacts may be offset by other planning gain within the AONB or contributions to the Stour Valley Environment Fund.

Proposals for solar farm developments or wind turbine/wind farms within or on land within the setting of the Dedham Vale AONB should have regard to the advice in the Local Planning Authority's Guidance Note '*Designing solar farm renewable energy development*' and in the '*Dedham Vale AONB Position Statement Renewable Energy in the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (March 2013)*'.

The Local Planning Authority will also encourage proposals in or near the AONB to underground new infrastructure associated with electricity schemes or communication equipment where financially viable, to help protect its landscape qualities.

## **Pollution and Contaminated Land**

- 4.40 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 / eliminate the problem.
- 4.41 Local Authorities have a duty to review and assess local air quality under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995. Where a Local Authority considers that one or more of the objectives are unlikely to be met and there is relevant exposure, an Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) must be declared and an action plan developed setting out measures to work towards an improvement of the air quality in the area. Within Colchester there are 4 such designated areas. Applications within an AQMA and all major planning applications, may be required to submit an air quality impact assessment to assess and quantify the impact on local air quality and to identify appropriate mitigation measures to ensure that development is acceptable on the grounds of air quality. Contributions may also be required towards the cost of air quality mitigation measures.
- 4.42 Where there are applications for planning permission that will also require an Environmental Permit, consideration should be given to submitting applications in parallel.
- 4.43 Land contamination is also a material consideration for planning purposes. There are some locations where a previous land use has caused an effect on the suitability of the land for some alternative uses or development. In some cases, remediation works may be required to make land suitable for the proposed use prior to allowing development to take place. A precautionary approach to considering potentially contaminated land is essential to ensure there is no unacceptable risk to health, or to the environment or amenity. The Local Planning Authority will require the applicant to demonstrate by way of adequate site investigation information, prepared by a competent person, that there is no unacceptable risk to health, or the environment and where unacceptable contamination is found there will be a requirement for mitigation / remediation/verification, as agreed with the Council. Sufficient information must be provided to clearly demonstrate that the risk from contamination can be satisfactorily reduced to an acceptable level before the application can be determined. Where appropriate, investigations and remediation may need to be implemented prior to any development commencing. Where mitigation / remediation cannot be satisfactorily achieved development will be refused.

**Policy ENV5: Pollution and Contaminated Land**

Proposals will be supported that will 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, noise nuisance, surface / ground water sources or land pollution.

Proposals for developments within designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) or where development within a nearby locality may impact on an AQMA are required, first, 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 Local Planning Authority. Permission will only be granted where the Council is satisfied that after selection of appropriate mitigation the development, alone and cumulatively, will not have an unacceptable significant impact on air quality, health and well-being.

Development proposals on contaminated land, or where there is reason to suspect contamination, must include an assessment of the extent of contamination and any possible risks. 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 determined as contaminated land under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

## 5. Climate Change Policy

5.1 The NPPF states that mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy, is part of the role of the planning system. It recognises that planning can help shape places to secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and provide resilience to the impacts of climate change, and support the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. This is fundamental to the achievement of sustainable development.

5.2 Sustainable development is at the heart of the Local Plan. Through the Local Plan the Council is seeking to create communities that secure reductions in greenhouse gas emissions through the location, mix and design of development, provide resilience to the impacts of a changing climate, support the delivery of renewable energy technologies and district heating systems, and minimise waste.

5.3 The Local Plan as a whole sets out a strategy for climate change mitigation and adaptation. Examples of climate change mitigation are:

- Reducing the need to travel and providing for sustainable transport;
- Providing opportunities for renewable and low carbon energy technologies;
- Providing opportunities for decentralised energy and heating;
- Promoting low carbon design approaches to reduce energy consumption in buildings, such as passive solar design.

Examples of climate change adaptation are:

- Considering future climate risks when allocating development sites to ensure risks are understood over the development's lifetime;
- Avoiding areas that are most vulnerable to future flood risk;
- Considering the impact of and promoting design responses to flood risk and coastal change for the lifetime of the development;
- Considering availability of water and water infrastructure for the lifetime of the development and design responses to promote water efficiency and protect water quality;
- Promoting adaptation approaches in design policies for developments and the public realm.

5.4 New development should be planned to avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. Developers will be expected to demonstrate how the scheme mitigates and adapts to climate change. In particular proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they have taken account of flood risk, water efficiency, biodiversity, landform, layout, building orientation, massing, tree planting and landscaping to minimise energy consumption and provide resilience to a changing climate.

5.5 Policy ENV3 includes detailed criteria relating to green infrastructure. Where possible, connections should be made to the Colchester Orbital. Landscaping and tree planting are important climate change adaptation measures and new

development should take every opportunity to enhance the Borough's green infrastructure network. Landscaping schemes should include species that will tolerate a changing climate, which will help future proof towns and urban areas against rising temperatures. The benefits for the natural and local environment and climate change of tree canopy cover are widely recognised. A study (The Canopy Cover of England's Towns and Cities: baselining and setting targets to improve human health and well-being) carried out in 2017, concluded the following:

- An average TCC of 20% should be set as the minimum standard for most UK towns and cities, with a lower target of 15% for coastal towns;
- Towns and cities with at least 20% cover should set targets to increase cover by at least 5% (i.e. above the  $\pm 2\%$  tolerance of i-Tree Canopy) within ten to 20 years (depending on what is achievable against their baseline); and
- Targets and strategies for increasing tree cover should be set according to the species, size and age composition of the existing urban forest, based upon a ward/district level and land-use assessment.

5.6 The tree canopy coverage for Colchester Borough is currently 18% varying between wards / locations there are some areas with larger and better canopy cover and others with significantly less. As per the recommendation above, the long-term aim should be to increase the canopy cover of the borough to 20% and then 25%. It is recognised that this is an aspirational target, but that new development should seek to contribute to increase tree canopy cover where appropriate. It is considered that 10% as a target on development sites where appropriate would help to mitigate the likely losses of trees over the plan period whilst steadily increasing the overall canopy cover of the borough.

5.7 A Canopy Cover Assessment will be required for all major applications<sup>1</sup>. Development proposals should seek where appropriate to increase the level of canopy cover on site by a minimum of 10%. In circumstances, where this is not possible or desirable, compensatory provision should be identified and secured through a legal obligation. This will increase the overall canopy cover of the

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<sup>1</sup> Major applications are defined as per Article 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management) Procedure (England) Order 2015 as: Development involving any one or more of the following —

- (a) the winning and working of minerals or the use of land for mineral-working deposits;
- (b) waste development;
- (c) the provision of dwellinghouses where—
  - (i) the number of dwellinghouses to be provided is 10 or more; or
  - (ii) the development is to be carried out on a site having an area of 0.5 hectares or more and it is not known whether the development falls within sub-paragraph ;
- (d) the provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 1,000 square metres or more; or
- (e) development carried out on a site having an area of 1 hectare or more



borough, enable sites to mitigate and adapt to climate change and deliver biodiversity net gain.

- 5.8 To help contribute towards achieving the national climate change target set out in the Climate Change Act 2008 of net zero carbon by 2050 from a 1990 baseline, the Local Planning Authority will encourage development to meet a proportion of energy needs from renewable or low carbon sources. In 2019, the Council made a Climate Emergency declaration. The Council is committed to firm action and has set a target to be net zero carbon by 2030 and is committed to a significant programme of environmental stewardship. A Climate Challenge and Sustainability Strategy and a Carbon Management Plan will support the Climate Emergency Action Plan and will set out detailed specific carbon reduction projects.
- 5.9 The Local Planning Authority will support proposals for renewable energy development providing that there would be no adverse effects on Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, or the Dedham Vale AONB. Policy DM25 includes criteria that will be used to assess proposals for renewable energy schemes.
- 5.10 Whilst renewable energy has an important role to play in contributing to a reduction in Colchester's greenhouse gas emissions, regard should be had to the energy hierarchy. The energy hierarchy sets out the order in which energy issues should be tackled:
1. Reduce the need for energy;
  2. Use energy more efficiently;
  3. Use renewable energy;
  4. Any continuing use of fossil fuels should be clean and efficient.
- 5.11 The Council is supporting the development of a low carbon district heating system using an open loop ground source heat pump at Colchester Northern Gateway for a mixed used development in conjunction with the Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy Heat Network Investment Project.
- 5.12 Existing buildings can also play an important role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions through improved energy efficiency measures where appropriate. Householders and businesses will be encouraged to make energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings as part of proposals for extensions/ alterations. Appropriate energy efficiency measures for historic buildings will be different in relation to certain classes of historic buildings.

### **Policy CC1: Climate Change**

Colchester Borough Council made a Climate Emergency declaration in 2019. A Climate Challenge and Sustainability Strategy and a Carbon Management Plan will support the Climate Emergency Action Plan and will set out detailed specific carbon reduction projects. In addressing the move to a low carbon future for Colchester, the Local Planning Authority will plan for new development in locations and ways that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, adopt the principles set out in the energy hierarchy and provide resilience to the impacts of a changing climate.

A low carbon future for Colchester will be achieved by:

- (i) Encouraging and supporting the provision of renewable and low carbon technologies.
- (ii) Encouraging new development to provide a proportion of the energy demand through renewable or low carbon sources.
- (iii) Encouraging design and construction techniques which contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation by using landform, layout, building orientation, massing, tree planting and landscaping to minimise energy consumption and provide resilience to a changing climate.
- (iv) A Canopy Cover Assessment will be required for all major applications<sup>2</sup>. Development proposals should seek where appropriate to increase the level of canopy cover on site by a minimum of 10%. In circumstances, where this is not possible or desirable, compensatory provision should be identified and secured through a legal obligation.
- (v) Requiring both innovative design and technologies that reduce the impacts of climate change within the garden community.
- (vi) Supporting opportunities to deliver decentralised energy systems, particularly those which are powered by a renewable or low carbon source. Supporting connection to an existing decentralised energy supply system where there is capacity to supply the proposed development, or design for future connection where there are proposals for such a system.
- (vii) Requiring development in the Northern Gateway to connect to or be

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<sup>2</sup> Major applications are defined as per Article 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management) Procedure (England) Order 2015 as: Development involving any one or more of the following—

- (a) the winning and working of minerals or the use of land for mineral-working deposits;
- (b) waste development;
- (c) the provision of dwellinghouses where—
  - (i) the number of dwellinghouses to be provided is 10 or more; or
  - (ii) the development is to be carried out on a site having an area of 0.5 hectares or more and it is not known whether the development falls within sub-paragraph ;
- (d) the provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 1,000 square metres or more; or
- (e) development carried out on a site having an area of 1 hectare or more

capable of connecting to the district heating scheme where there is capacity to supply the proposed development and where it is appropriate and viable to do so.

- (viii) Supporting energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings in the Borough where appropriate.
- (ix) Minimising waste and improving reuse and recycling rates.
- (x) Development will be directed to locations with the least impact on flooding or water resources. All development should consider the impact of and promotion of design responses to flood risk for the lifetime of the development and the availability of water and wastewater infrastructure for the lifetime of the development.
- (xi) Green infrastructure should be used to manage and enhance existing habitats. Opportunities should be taken to create new habitats and assist with species migration. Consideration should be given to the use of green infrastructure to provide shade during higher temperatures and for flood mitigation. The potential role of green infrastructure as 'productive landscapes' should also be considered.

## 6. Place Policies

6.1 The policies and text contained within this section set out allocations for specific parts of the Borough and explain how those allocations align with the Plan's overall spatial strategy and policy objectives. The allocations contain site specific requirements for infrastructure and mitigation and management of any site constraints. These will be required in addition to general requirements for infrastructure contained in Policy PP1 and other requirements as relevant contained in Development Management policies. Policy PP1 highlights general issues concerning infrastructure provision, archaeology and developer contributions that affect proposals across the Borough and are essential to ensuring that new development adequately mitigates its impact on the surrounding area and makes a positive contribution to its character and amenity.

### **Policy PP1: Generic Infrastructure and Mitigation Requirements**

In addition to site specific requirements identified in relevant policies, all proposals will be required to make contributions to the cost of infrastructure improvements and/or community facilities, including education, as required and supported by up-to-date evidence from appropriate sources including the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), Parish/Town Council, or specially commissioned work. Contributions will be secured to an appropriate level by way of legal agreement or through CIL as required. In addition, proposals must, as relevant, address all of the following Borough wide requirements:

- (i) Adequate wastewater treatment, water supply network enhancements, and sewage infrastructure enhancements for the relevant catchment area;
- (ii) Appropriate SuDS for managing surface water runoff within the overall design and layout of the site;
- (iii) Proportionate mitigation for area-wide transport issues as identified in the policies for North, East, South and West Colchester contained in the 'Places' section of the plan;
- (iv) Safe pedestrian access from the site to existing footways to enhance connectivity;
- (v) Suitable design and screening/landscaping to minimise any negative impact on the surrounding landscape and/or heritage assets;
- (vi) Potential archaeological significance of the site as required, by way of pre-determination evaluation (geophysical survey and trial trenching). Any findings from the evaluation will need to be reflected in a detailed mitigation strategy for further investigation to be agreed and submitted with the application to preserve in-situ or adequately recorded by excavation, secured by a planning condition; and
- (vii) Further to Section 1 Policy SP2, developments will be required to contribute towards mitigation measures in accordance with the Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy 2018-2038 (RAMS).

## **Colchester**

- 6.2 As a regional centre Colchester is the key focus for a wide range of development opportunities and challenges. This section covers the area of Colchester, divided up into five broad geographic areas designed to help the user and follow a place based Local Plan. The policies relating to Colchester are set out below under the headings, Central, North, South, East and West Colchester.

### **Central Colchester**

#### **Town Centre**

- 6.3 The Town Centre remains largely defined by the Town Walls first constructed by the Romans two thousand years ago and which led to the development of a compact commercial core built to a higher density and different character to development outside the walls. The insertion of new roads on Balmerne Hill and Southway in the 1960-70s created boundaries between the Town Centre and surrounding residential areas to the west and south sides and limits the potential for Town Centre expansion in those directions. Within this plan, the Town Centre boundary has been extended to include the Crouch Street shopping area. This recognises Crouch Street's role in strengthening the Town Centre's presence of independent retailers, food/drink establishments, and small offices.
- 6.4 Policy for the Town Centre is intended to support its pre-eminent position in the Borough's spatial hierarchy and provide a flexible approach to adapting to changing economic and social circumstances. Town centres have been evolving to provide a greater mix of leisure and food/drink uses in previously retail-only areas. In recognition of this trend, the Local Planning Authority will accept a greater diversity of town centre uses in primary shopping areas to support the core retail uses. This approach is intended to increase the mix of compatible uses in Colchester's historic core to provide a more robust economic environment which also stimulate a greater diversity of evening activities. The Town Centre will therefore attract people of various ages and interests at different times of the day and night, and when combined with effective Town Centre management policies, safety and inclusiveness will be improved.
- 6.5 The Town Centre boasts important historic character which must be protected and enhanced by all development as set out in Policy DM16 Historic Environment and relevant supporting guidance as required. Opportunities to enhance the public realm and attractiveness of the street environment will be encouraged wherever possible.
- 6.6 The town centre is the most accessible location in the Borough by all modes of transport. There is an extensive walking network from all directions with approximately 15,900 people (7,600 dwellings) within an 800m walk distance of the town centre; there is a cycle network serving the town centre from all directions with a mixture of on and off-road routes. Barriers to cycling have been improved with new shared use bridges across the river to the north and across Balmerne Hill to the west, with cycling allowed through subways under the main

roads to the south and west. Cycle parking is available in the core of the town centre. With a bus travel time of 20 minutes 95% of the urban area of Colchester is served by a regular bus service to the town centre – some services working through the day on a 12 minute frequency. Nearly all the bus services in Colchester pass through the town centre, including those serving the rural areas and the interurban coach services. Park and ride on a 15 minute frequency serves the town centre from the north. Buses pick up and drop off in the heart of the town centre providing excellent access, with the opportunity to interchange between services. The town centre is also served by two railway stations – Colchester Town is on the southeast edge of the town centre, with a 30 minute service from the mainline and the line to Clacton. Colchester station is 1 mile to the north but has regular mainline services and is a straight walk to the town centre or a 5 minute wait for a bus. The main vehicle parking is provided around the edge of the town centre with some 3,200 public spaces aimed mainly at short stay shoppers. The road network feeds into the town centre from all directions with an urban dual carriageway to the west and south. No other location in the Borough has this level of accessibility for all modes of transport.

- 6.7 Colchester Borough Council has worked with partners to deliver pure fibre connectivity, delivering up to gigabit speeds, to businesses in the Town Centre. The new infrastructure makes Colchester Town Centre one of the best-connected places in the UK and positions it ideally for the future deployment of 5G mobile telephony as well as “smart city” innovations.

#### **Policy TC1: Town Centre Policy and Hierarchy**

Colchester Town Centre is at the top of the retail hierarchy set forth in Policy SG5. Accordingly, it will be the priority focus for new Town Centre uses and larger scale development.

The Local Planning Authority will encourage development in the Town Centre (as defined on the Policies Map) which is focused on retail (particularly comparison) and supporting leisure, culture, and restaurant / café uses to enhance the Borough’s role as a sub-regional shopping and leisure destination and important tourist destination.

The Council will seek to deliver more attractive public spaces and streetscapes in the Town Centre. The Local Planning Authority will support proposals that positively contribute towards creating an attractive, vibrant and safe Town Centre that offers a diverse mix of uses, including shared mixed-use spaces and short-term uses, and extend the time when the Town Centre is active subject to their impact on local amenity.

### **Retail Frontages**

- 6.8 The extent of the Primary Shopping Area has been reviewed to address the requirement in the NPPF to provide and define the extent of primary and secondary shopping frontages in town centres. The previous Local Plan provided for the Inner and Outer Core where the requirement for the Inner Core was 85% of frontages to be in retail use with a lower requirement of 50% in the Outer Core. The primary shopping areas illustrated on the Policies map include those selected areas, largely within the previous Inner Core designation, where it is reasonable to maintain a high percentage of retail uses within each street frontage. Greater flexibility for changes of use is provided to maximise the number of occupied units and sustain a more diverse composition of uses. This reflects the increasing predominance of leisure, food/drink and cultural uses within town centre areas historically confined to retail uses only. It will also help accommodate the need for additional capacity for town centre uses in the main Town Centre area.
- 6.9 Town Centre sites are the Council's strong preference for future retail development in line with the retail hierarchy. The need for further development capacity within the Town Centre will largely be met by redevelopment of existing areas, given the land use, environmental and topographic constraints on further Town Centre expansion. The St. Botolph's area to the east will continue to be a focus for new development in the Town Centre, with the Firstsite gallery, which opened in 2011, serving as a catalyst for further culture and leisure-focused development. With permission granted for an arthouse cinema, further development is programmed to include development of town centre floorspace including a hotel; restaurant cluster; and student accommodation.

#### **Policy TC2: Retail Frontages**

Given that the Town Centre is at the top of the centre hierarchy in the Borough as a whole, within Colchester Town Centre the Local Planning Authority will seek to maintain a high proportion of retail uses on each Primary Street Frontage within the Primary Shopping Area shown on the Policies Map. Development proposals for non-retail uses within primary frontages will be permitted where they would enhance vitality and viability, be appropriate to the character and function of the area and not compromise the appearance of the frontage and its contribution to the streetscape.

Within the Secondary Street Frontages in the Primary Shopping Area as defined on the Policies map, support will be given for the continuing role of retail uses supported by other activity-generating town centre uses which enhance the vitality and activity of the area, including food and drink premises, non-residential institutions and leisure uses, at ground floor level.

Where planning applications are required, alternative non-retail town centre uses in the Primary Shopping area will be supported where they meet the following criteria:

- Maintain a 70% (Primary Street Frontage) or 50% (Secondary Street Frontage) level of retail uses on the relevant street frontage unless non-

viability of retail use can be demonstrated as detailed above and;

- Make a positive contribution to footfall and levels of activity throughout the day; and;
- Retain and /or enhances the quality and design of the street frontage through the inclusion of active frontages and / displays; appropriate use of materials; sympathetic scale; retention of historic features; and relationship to surrounding streetscape and;
- Are compatible with adjacent uses – the proposal complements the town centre uses in the immediate area.

Proposals which provide premises occupying small footprints and flexible ground floor footprints will be supported in these frontages to help encourage the town's small / independent town centre businesses.

### **Town Centre Allocations**

- 6.10 Reflecting its position at the top of the retail hierarchy, Colchester Town Centre will be the focus for additional retail floorspace in line with the requirement in the NPPF to meet in full the demand for town centre uses.
- 6.11 Medium to longer term need for town centre use floorspace will be addressed by redevelopment of the St. Botolph's and Priory Walk developments, providing potential opportunities for redevelopment of existing buildings and car parks. At Priory Walk, which provides a key pedestrian link between Firstsite /St Botolphs and the core shopping area, redevelopment could improve the public realm and retail offer either through reconfiguration and refurbishment of the existing outdated centre, or by redevelopment. At St. Botolph's, the Council is actively pursuing a co-ordinated scheme for redevelopment of the outdated buildings and vacant land in line with long-standing Council objectives for the area to achieve a mixed-use development with a focus on leisure and related uses. The need for further floorspace will be kept under review and if required updated evidence will inform specific allocations within these areas and additional areas will be allocated within the Town Centre if necessary.
- 6.12 Additional office floorspace to sustain the Town Centre will be supported at the adjacent Middleborough Local Economic Area as shown on the Policies Map. This is specifically safeguarded for the retention of office uses and also allows scope for redevelopment to provide additional purpose-built modern accommodation well-connected to Town Centre facilities. The area's edge of centre location means it would be considered to be sequentially preferable, if land was available, suitable and deliverable, to other potential locations for offices in the Borough. The Town Centre fringe areas also contain areas of existing employment floorspace at South St. Peters Street, George Williams Way and Southway which will be safeguarded to ensure the supply of well-located business use premises.



### Residential allocations

- 6.13 Residential uses will be supported within the Town Centre to support vitality, diversity, and economic activity. In addition, it is expected that further residential units will be created through the permitted development change of use from office to residential, as well as the refurbishment of upper floors over town centre uses. New residential allocations are provided for in the Britannia Street car park and for a portion of the St Runwald Street car park. Development of these car parks would require Transport Assessment work to demonstrate that they would result in a neutral impact on parking provision for the Town Centre, or, to provide alternatives including new spaces or demand management measures as appropriate.

### Employment allocations

- 6.14 All planning proposals for new town centre development will need to have regard to the historic nature of the town centre and proposals will be required to meet high design standards, respect the surrounding diverse architectural heritage and meet policy requirements on archaeological investigation in accordance with the generic requirements in PP1 and other requirements as appropriate.
- 6.15 Vineyard Gate, St. Botolphs, Priory Street and Britannia St. fall within Critical Drainage Areas CDA 03 as shown in the Surface Water Management Plan for Colchester. Developer contributions will be sought towards the costs of delivering flood defence / flood management solutions within this CDA as specified in the SWMP to help manage flood risk in this part of Colchester. Solutions should be agreed between Essex County (Local Lead Flood Authority), the Environment Agency, developers and the Local Planning Authority.

## **Policy TC3: Town Centre Allocations**

### **Town Centre Uses - Allocations**

Development will need to protect and enhance the character of the conservation area, listed buildings, heritage assets and their setting on and in the vicinity of the site, including where appropriate, the Scheduled Monument (Town Walls).

To address the identified need for additional town centre use floorspace providing a mix of comparison shopping; food and drink; entertainment; and residential uses over the plan period to 2033, additional potential capacity has been identified as follows and is shown on the Policies Map:

#### Vineyard Gate

Redevelopment of Vineyard Gate over the plan period to provide a residential-led mixed use scheme:

Requirements:

- Approximately 100 dwellings;
- Development will need to protect and enhance the character of the Scheduled Ancient Monument (Town Walls).
- Provide direct pedestrian connections to/from Lion Walk.

Contributions needed towards the delivery of flood defence/flood management solutions as identified in the SWMP for CDA 03.

#### St. Botolphs

Mixed use scheme providing cinema, hotel; restaurant cluster; retail; student accommodation; Creative Business Centre (1.86 ha)

Requirements:

- Access off Queen Street.
- Development will need to protect and enhance the character of the Conservation Area and listed buildings.

#### Priory Walk

Redevelopment and/or extension of Priory Walk area to provide retail and mixed use floorspace (0.95ha)

Requirements;

- Development will need to protect and enhance the setting of nearby listed buildings and the town centre conservation area.
- Provide for pedestrian connections between St Botolphs and Long / Short Wyre Street.

The 2016 Retail Study Update identified limited capacity for convenience goods floorspace over the plan period (after allowing for existing commitments).

### **Residential allocations:**

Residential allocations as identified on the Policies Map will be supported where they meet the requirements identified for each site below in addition to generic infrastructure requirements in PP1 and pollution/contamination mitigation in ENV5:

Land at Britannia Car Park

- Allocated for 150 dwellings;
- Residential development to have neutral effect on overall town centre car parking capacity.
- Development will need to protect and enhance the setting of the Scheduled Monument (The Priory).
- Development will need to protect and enhance the setting of nearby listed buildings and the town centre conservation area.
- Contribute towards flood risk solutions, in accordance with Flood Risk Management policy DM23 and SWMP recommendations for CDA 03.

Part of St Runwalds Car park

- Allocated for 40 dwellings;
- Access to be agreed with the Highway Authority.
- Development will need to protect and enhance the setting of nearby listed buildings and the town centre conservation area.

**Employment allocations:**

Additional office floorspace to sustain the Town Centre will be supported just outside the Town Centre boundary within the Middleborough Local Economic Area as shown on the Policies Map. In addition, proposals for office use elsewhere in the Town Centre will be supported where they comply with other policy requirements.

The following LEAs are safeguarded for economic use in accordance with Policy SG4 and as shown on the Policies Map:

- Southway
- COLBEA Business Centre George Williams Way

### **Transport in Colchester Town Centre**

- 6.16 The town centre is a highly accessible location by all transport modes and is central to urban Colchester. Being the town centre there is a high level of pedestrian movement and within the central core pedestrians are given priority. Elsewhere pedestrian movement is managed alongside other users.
- 6.17 The National Cycle network passes through the town centre with routes from the north (NCN1) Highwoods/Ipswich Road Route, west (NCN1) Lexden Route, and the Wivenhoe trail (NCN 51 from the east). The Garrison Cycle Route connects from the south passing through Southway subway.
- 6.18 Nearly all of the urban bus services penetrate into the town centre, with bus priority provided on certain routes to provide a greater reliability of service. Park and Ride also serves the town from the north.
- 6.19 Within the Town Centre there are areas designated Air Quality Management Areas. Measures which help improve the air quality in the area such as, sustainable transport, promotion of low emission vehicles, cleaner vehicles, smoothing traffic flows and improving the street design will be required together with mitigation against any identified impacts.
- 6.20 Strategic Transport Modelling and other ongoing studies identify locations in the Town Centre where improvements to, and investment in, the transport network have been identified as being necessary. Where proposals are demonstrated to add pressure to the transport network measures will be required to mitigate the impact. The transport evidence base is continuously evolving and additional issues and schemes may be identified during the Plan period. The exact scale, timing and nature of this infrastructure will be determined through more detailed assessment as the planning process develops.

**Policy TC4: Transport in Colchester Town Centre**

Developments in Colchester Town Centre will be expected to contribute to a package of sustainable transport measures including walking, cycling, public transport, travel planning and the promotion of sustainable travel.

Where it is demonstrated that proposals will impact on the highway network, contributions will be sought towards mitigation and improvements, including to the following projects;

- Enhancement to Southway / St Botolphs Roundabout, taking into consideration traffic flows, the quality of place and improving access to the Town Centre and Colchester Town Railway Station.
- Provision for public transport within the town centre area, including; space for bus stops, shelters and linkage to real-time information.
- Provision for Rapid Transit services including space to provide capacity for these and connections onto other locations including the route connecting the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community with East Colchester, the Town Centre and North Colchester required by Section 1 Policy SP6.
- Improvements to the pedestrian and cycling network to ensure that developments are accessible and permeable.

For areas with large multiple sites located in close proximity to each other the cumulative impact of all the development in the area must be considered.

The positioning and size of bus shelters, signs and other highways infrastructure must have regard to the historic character of the area and setting of heritage assets.

## **North Colchester**

- 6.21 The North Colchester area has been the subject of various planning applications and development in recent years and this is expected to continue through the plan period. The road infrastructure has already seen significant change with Axial Way, United Way, A12 Junction 28 and the Northern Approaches Road all opened by April 2015. The early delivery of transport infrastructure allowed Colchester United football club to relocate to the Weston Homes Community Stadium in 2008. The stadium was part of a comprehensive development granted planning permission in 2006. The applications allowed for an element of leisure use as well as employment space to support future housing growth in the area. The uses permitted included the community stadium, health and fitness centre, a hotel, public house and other food/drink uses, some of which are under construction. The mix of uses was permitted to enable funding of the stadium and local road infrastructure.
- 6.22 The North Transit Corridor will facilitate high quality public transport services that can bypass traffic and provide easy access by a range of sustainable modes to the town centre, North Colchester and the Park and Ride via Colchester Station. The last section of the North Transit Corridor, referred to as NAR2 Busway in the previous Local Plan, is yet to be delivered and is subject to an existing legal agreement. The remaining link is shown on the policies map and the Council will actively seek to secure its delivery.
- 6.23 All new development must be well connected for walking and cycling to existing and new communities. The dual carriageway A12 trunk road serves the development areas north and south of the A12. Measures need to be included in the masterplan to provide safe, direct, cohesive walking and cycle linkages to allow people to move independently between the development areas and the new opportunities on offer.
- 6.24 The Myland and Braiswick Neighbourhood Plan identifies the Northern Gateway proposals as having the potential to deliver an array of sport and leisure facilities which will provide much needed opportunities for sport and recreation and which will make an important contribution to the sustainability of the Myland area. The Plan indicates that Myland Community Council will work with Colchester Borough Council to ensure the proposed sport and leisure development area will help to satisfy resident aspirations.

### **Zone 1 – Strategic Employment Area**

- 6.25 The Employment Land Needs Assessment identifies North Colchester and Severalls Strategic Economic Area as one of the Borough's best located and connected sites for business, benefiting from excellent access to the strategic road network and as such additional land is allocated for employment purposes. The area is well placed to accommodate over-spill demand from the Colchester and Severalls Business Parks, as expansion and development opportunities become increasingly rare on these well performing and popular business areas. A limited range of non-B class uses will be supported in accordance with the policy where they do not undermine or constrain the main purpose of the economic

function of the area to deliver significant job growth. Main town centre uses will only be supported where they are ancillary to, and related in scale to, the primary employment focus of the area. Examples of acceptable uses include trade counters and services to support employees at the business park.

### **Zone 2 – Cuckoo Farm North West**

- 6.26 Land adjacent to the community stadium is allocated for mixed use. It is expected that a mixed leisure and commercial scheme will be delivered to complement the sport offer elsewhere in the SEA.

### **Zone 3 - Northern Gateway area north of the A12**

- 6.27 It is proposed that the Council will deliver the next phase of the Northern Gateway Masterplan vision through the development of a new sports and recreational hub on land in its ownership to the north of the A12, referred to as zone 3 on the policies map. The scheme provides an opportunity to bring forward the site as a sub-regional leisure destination and to enhance and expand the range of sport and recreational facilities available for local clubs and residents in order to increase participation levels across the Borough.
- 6.28 Development of land to the north of the A12 provides opportunities to deliver a range of new complementary indoor and outdoor sports facilities. The Indoor Sports Facility Strategy has identified a need for more indoor sports facilities to support the growing population of Colchester, especially in north Colchester. The Playing Pitch Strategy has identified the need to increase the number of sports pitches (including artificial grass pitches) and to enhance the quality of existing pitches to improve provision, maintain quality and to meet growing demand. The Playing Pitch strategy has also identified a number of indoor facilities required to complement outdoor provision, including an indoor sports hub and a rugby club pavilion. New cycling training facilities will be delivered and the needs of sports clubs currently using facilities at Mill Road will be accommodated where practical. Investment will be made in infrastructure to ensure sustainable multi-user access to the development from the local communities and car parking.

### **Land at and adjacent to the Rugby Club**

- 6.29 The Rugby Club site is allocated for residential development and open space to provide enabling development to help deliver the sport facilities detailed above, which will benefit the whole borough. Provision of significant open space will be required within the site to ensure that some of the existing benefits are retained for local residents. There will also be a requirement to provide a community space which may include provision for a church. As with the proposals in zones 2 and 3, there will be a masterplan agreed which will provide a more detailed framework for the area as a whole. Proposals will be expected to comply with this. It is anticipated that development of this site will deliver approximately 300 dwellings. Land within this allocation will also provide 260 units of Extra Care accommodation.

- 6.30 The Council is seeking to deliver sustainable initiatives as part of the development objectives within this area including opportunities for sustainable energy and potential for a District Heat Network, ultrafast broadband, and sustainable lighting initiative. Opportunities to showcase exemplar elements, such as achieving ambitious sustainability objectives will be encouraged where appropriate. The Council has been successful in a bid for funding for the delivery of the Heat Network in this area.

**Policy NC1: North Colchester and Severalls Strategic Economic Area**

All land and premises within the North Colchester and Severalls Strategic Economic Area including the areas known as the Northern Gateway and Severalls and Colchester Business Parks will be safeguarded for the identified uses based on a zoned approach as indicated below.

A master plan will be prepared to provide a detailed guidance covering parts of the economic area. Proposals which are in accordance with the agreed masterplan will be supported.

All proposals within the North Colchester and Severalls Strategic Economic Area will be required to provide good public transport, pedestrian and cycle links ensuring good connectivity within the area, with neighbouring communities, to the Colchester Orbital Route, and to and from the town centre and Colchester Station.

Development will be expected to contribute to the cost of infrastructure improvements where necessary and identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) or subsequent evidence.

**Zone 1:** as defined on the Policies Map (existing and proposed employment land) will be the primary focus for employment uses and as such, alternative uses will only be supported where they:

- (i) Are ancillary to the existing employment uses on the site intended to serve the primary function of the site as an employment area; and
- (ii) Provide the opportunity to maximise the sites potential for economic growth and support the continued operation of existing employment uses within the economic area; and
- (iii) Do not generate potential conflict with the existing or proposed uses / activities on the site; and
- (iv) There is no reasonable prospect of the site being used for appropriate employment uses.

**Zone 2:** The area defined on the policies map as zone 2 (adjacent to the Stadium) is being developed by the Council as a leisure / community hub and will be safeguarded for a mix of uses including sport, leisure and recreation. Uses will be permitted where they clearly demonstrate the potential for job creation and provided that they do not undermine or constrain the main purpose of the economic function of the wider area. Uses may include an appropriate scale of



leisure and commercial space, open space and green infrastructure to enhance connectivity. No retail use will be permitted unless it is ancillary to another use and meets the requirements of the sequential test and impact test if required.

**Zone 3** as defined on the Policies Map (including areas known as the Northern Gateway area north of the A12) land will be safeguarded primarily for a range of sport and recreation uses within use classes D, subject to up-to-date evidence supporting a need for such use. Proposals will need to be in accordance with an agreed master plan.

**Allocation for Residential and Open Space Uses**

The area shown on the policies map which comprises the existing Rugby Club will be safeguarded for employment use (as set out above) as well as residential use to provide enabling development to deliver the sport and leisure / community uses in Zone 3. Development of the site will provide for approximately 300 new dwellings, 260 units of Extra Care accommodation and community space which may include a church. Access will be taken from Axial Way unless other considerations prevent this.

Proposals will be permitted in accordance with a masterplan to be approved by the Local Planning Authority which will incorporate an appropriate design approach and enhanced public realm to ensure the different uses can be accommodated in a compatible way.

**North Station Special Policy Area**

- 6.31 Colchester Station is a key gateway to Colchester with the mainline railway station facilitating high frequency services including intercity routes between Norwich and London and services to Clacton and into Suffolk. Regeneration of this area remains key to the continued development of Colchester in a manner that is attractive to investment, visitors and residents.
- 6.32 The North Station area of Colchester was designated as a regeneration area in the Core Strategy and some initial work on developing a masterplan was undertaken post 2010. Implementation of some of the initiatives arising from this, including the Fixing the Link project, have been delivered during the early part of 2016. Many of the concepts remain relevant and the principle of the overall vision remains, to create a welcoming gateway to the town, set within a balanced mix of uses, with enhanced connectivity to and from this area of Colchester.
- 6.33 The North Station Special Policy Area is based on a review of the boundary that was defined in the previous draft masterplan. The area designated on the Policies Map focuses on the North Station Gateway and the existing traditional urban village on North Station Road. Other areas are now covered by different policies. However, the North Station Special Policy Area still builds on opportunities to improve the public realm and enhance connectivity within the wider area including the Town Centre, Cowdray Avenue and Turner Rise, the surrounding residential areas and green infrastructure links in Castle Park, Highwoods Country Park and the Colchester Orbital Route.
- 6.34 Colchester Station has been upgraded over the past few years as part of the National Stations Improvement Programme and through the Station Travel Plan initiative. The Colchester Station Travel Plan was developed in partnership with successive Train Operating Companies and Essex County Council and has been running since 2008.
- 6.35 As part of the Station Travel Plan, objectives have been agreed for improvements to the station forecourt. This will include access to the station for all modes and from all directions and prioritise access to the station for sustainable modes.
- 6.36 The station forecourt needs to become not only an efficient transition point between modes of transport, but also to be seen as a public square and a new public space in its own right. There are regeneration opportunities adjoining the station and off Clarendon Road, including the car sales site adjacent to the railway bridge.
- 6.37 The completion of the North Transit Corridor will provide easy access by a range of sustainable modes to the Town Centre, North Colchester and the Park and Ride, via Colchester Station. The Transit Corridor will facilitate high quality public transport services that can bypass traffic congestion in the area.

- 6.38 The traditional urban area that is situated on either side of North Station Road has a distinctive character. The Fixing the Link project has created new wayfinding to improve the walking route from Colchester Station to the Town Centre. The North Station Road area will be enhanced as a walkable environment which is the focus for the day to day needs of its immediate community, but also improves the route for those passing through the area to and from the Town Centre and the station.

**Policy NC2: North Station Special Policy Area**

Within the area designated on the policies map as the North Station Special Policy Area, development which contributes to regeneration of the area will be supported. Development will need to address the following criteria:

- (i) Creation of a positive sense of arrival at the station, providing a quality public transport interchange as part of the Station Gateway, improving the accessibility and function of the station;
- (ii) Creation of new areas of high quality public realm in the station area to provide greater legibility within the area;
- (iii) Supports public transport and related physical improvements, including the North Transit Corridor, and encourages more sustainable transport choices, particularly by commuters;
- (iv) Support for redevelopment and appropriate new proposals which enhance built character and promote compatible land uses and activities including office floorspace, leisure uses, retail related to the primary function of the area associated with the station, residential and open space;
- (v) Improves the quality of the public realm and streetscape through improvements to footpaths, cycle routes and direct crossings in order to encourage walking and cycling, particularly between the town centre, neighbouring commercial areas, communities and the railway station. Opportunities will be sought to widen footpaths and cycleways in the vicinity of the station when opportunities arise and encouragement will be given to the creation of a green link between High Woods Country Park and Castle Park;
- (vi) Assess the impact of development proposals on pollution levels in the Air Quality Management Area and if necessary, provide adequate mitigation against any harmful effects to air quality. Wherever possible opportunities will be sought to improve the quality of air in the AQMA including through improvements to congestion levels and traffic flows;
- (vii) Supports and enhances the vibrancy of the North Station Road area as a focus for the day to day needs of its immediate community and to improve the route for those passing to and from the town centre and the station.

**North Colchester other allocations/policies**

6.39 North Colchester is designated for the following areas of new residential and employment development:

**Land at Braiswick**

6.40 Land has been identified at Braiswick at St Botolph's Farm and land south of Colchester Golf Club to accommodate some residential growth over the plan period. These two sites have been promoted for residential uses separately however given their proximity to one another and in order to make the most efficient use of the land, the sites should be planned comprehensively as one development. Planning this development as one site will reduce the number of access points on to Braiswick. Moreover, a comprehensive approach will be capable of delivering better local infrastructure, including combined onsite open space provision; enhanced connectivity; and integrated landscaping. A comprehensive masterplan will therefore be required to accompany any application for residential uses in this area.

6.41 Landscaping within the sites will be an important aspect of any successful scheme given the site's location on the edge of town; its proximity to the A12; its proximity to the golf course; and to reduce the impact of development on neighbouring residents. Therefore, a landscape assessment should be carried out as part of any proposed residential development taking into account these local constraints. Existing belts of trees along the western and northern boundaries of the site should be retained and where possible improved because they help to screen the site from the golf course to the north and provide a soft transition from the Colchester urban area to open countryside and West Bergholt to the west. Furthermore, existing landscape features along the western boundary of the site should be retained and enhanced to mitigate the impact of noise from the A12. The most western part of the site is within flood zone 3 therefore no residential uses will be permitted in this area. Finally, an existing Public Right of Way runs alongside the eastern boundary of the site and this route should be retained, enhanced and integrated into the development.

**Policy NC3: North Colchester**

**Land at Braiswick**

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in policy PP1, development will be supported on land within the area identified on the policies map, which must be comprehensively planned setting out how any proposal will provide:

- (i) Up to 70 dwellings; and
- (i) Access from Braiswick (road); and
- (ii) Contributions to highway improvements on the local road network, in particular at North station; and
- (iii) The retention and enhancement of existing tree belts within the site in addition to a landscape appraisal to look at opportunities to further improve other landscape features within the site; and
- (iv) Effective noise mitigation measures; and
- (v) No residential development in the area of site within Flood Zone 3; and
- (vi) Retention and improvements to the existing Public Right of Way which runs along the eastern boundary of the site.

### **Transport in North Colchester**

- 6.42 The transport network in North Colchester is characterised by access to two strategic routes – the A12 via junction 28 and 29 and the Great Eastern Mainline at Colchester Station. The Great Eastern Mainline runs east west through Colchester splitting north Colchester from Central Colchester. These networks serve significant employment and residential areas which are continuing to grow.
- 6.43 The station and hospital provide a focus for public transport services with regular bus services radiating out from the town centre. There is limited east to west connectivity by bus.
- 6.44 The National Cycle Network (NCN1) runs from the north via the North Colchester Business Park, Highwoods, including the Country Park, under the railway and through to Leisure World and the Town Centre. A connection is also made through the Highwoods Country Park to the railway station. There is an alternative north south cycle route via the A1232 Ipswich Road leading from Cowdray Avenue to the Severalls Business Park.
- 6.45 Strategic Transport Modelling and other ongoing studies identify locations in North Colchester where improvements to, and investment in, the transport network are required. Development that will add pressure to the transport network will be required to help mitigate the impact.

#### **Policy NC4: Transport in North Colchester**

Developments in North Colchester will be expected to contribute to a package of sustainable transport measures including walking, cycling, public transport, travel planning and the promotion of sustainable travel.

Where it is demonstrated that proposals will impact on the highway network, contributions will be sought towards mitigation and improvements, including to the following projects;

- Improvements to A12 Junction 28, including the operation of Axial Way/United Way/Via Urbis Romanae.
- Improvements to the Ipswich Road approach to the A12 Junction 29 Investment in the Colchester Station area to significantly enhance a Key Gateway into Colchester, providing ongoing improvements including; access for all, interchange and enhancements to encourage walking and cycling to the station.
- Improvements to the current cycle network to provide linkages between developments and access to key locations including; across Highwoods Country Park, Ipswich Road, Mile End Road and Bergholt Road leading to the station and southwards to the Town Centre;
- Enhancements to the East / West public transport services, to serve the area to connect existing and new residential developments with employment and leisure opportunities. This includes the route connecting the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community with East Colchester, the Town Centre, and North Colchester required by Section 1 Policy SP6.

The type of public transport service may vary.

- Delivery of The NAR2 busway.

For areas with large multiple sites located in close proximity to each other the cumulative impact of all the development in the area must be considered.

6.46 There are other known improvements to, and investment in, the transport network which have been identified through the Strategic Transport Modelling and other ongoing studies, listed below. In some cases, schemes have also been identified to overcome these issues. The transport evidence base is continuously evolving and additional issues and schemes may be identified during the Plan period. The exact scale, timing and nature of this infrastructure will be determined through more detailed assessment as the planning process develops.

- A1232 Ipswich Road – modification to the A1232 Ipswich Road/A133 Cowdray Road/St Andrews Ave. Funding secured through Local Growth Fund for construction to commence in 2017/18
- A120 upgrades – ECC and Highways England have progressed regarding a new and improved A120 between Braintree and the A12. In March 2020, the government announced its Road Investment Strategy (RIS) which included a commitment to progress further development work on the A120 dualling to prepare the scheme for delivery. The A120 dualling scheme be considered for inclusion in the RIS3 programme 2025 – 2030
- A133/A134 Colne Bank Roundabout capacity enhancements – scheme to improve operation of this key junction on the local road network.
- Support to be given to additional car parking provision at Dedham to address an identified need and associated transport implications within Dedham and the surrounding transport network at peak times.

## **South Colchester**

6.47 Development has gradually extended south of Colchester following the relocation of the Garrison. Further opportunities to expand the urban area southwards presents itself on land which the Ministry of Defence wish to dispose of around part of Middlewick Ranges as well as a number of smaller sites.

### **Land at Gosbecks Phase 2**

6.48 The site at Gosbecks Road, Colchester is well supported by infrastructure including a supermarket. However, the immediate area is not well served by public transport with a lack of bus stops on Gosbecks Road. This site has the potential to deliver up to 150 dwellings as part of a logical second phase of residential development at Gosbecks. Any development would be required to demonstrate that development would not cause an unacceptable impact to the adjacent Scheduled Monument (the landowners having previously gifted the land to CBC with funds for preservation), as well as contributions towards public realm improvements. Adequate protection and enhancement of the Scheduled Monument and its setting will be required and agreed by the Local Planning Authority.

### **South of Berechurch Hall Road**

6.49 The proposal for 150 units opposite an existing residential area on Berechurch Hall Road would entail comprehensive planning of two smaller sites accommodating approximately 50 units with an adjacent site accommodating 100 units. Consideration of a cohesive layout, access and design approach to the site will provide a sustainable urban extension to Colchester's southern boundary. Landscaping to this boundary will need to reflect the edge of urban area location to respect the transition of character to the countryside. To address the poor public transport provision in the vicinity of the site, new development will provide improvements, and access to the existing bus service. Development will also need to ensure acceptable access is provided onto Berechurch Hall Road and ensure archaeological investigations are carried out.

### **Land at Maldon Road / Shrub End**

6.50 The employment area at Maldon Road has been extended to include a further 0.8 hectare which is allocated within the 3.5ha shown in Table SG3 for Edge of Centre areas to provide further opportunities in this area for local employment, building on the benefits provided by its location, existing operations and access.

### **ABRO Site**

6.51 The site, known as the ABRO site, was previously part of the Royal Artillery Barracks (latterly known as Le Cateau Barracks), forming a northern most part of the old Colchester Garrison. Now vacant the ABRO site is 4.26 hectares, including a 3.80 hectare area allocated for residential use. The site is predominantly flattened hard surfacing, with some buildings of mixed size and architectural/historic significance. The northeast corner of the site is former green



space converted to car parking in recent times. The Roman Circus Scheduled Monument (SAM) extends over the 0.46 hectare southern part of the site and is allocated for open space. A development brief been prepared for the site and was subject to public consultation 2020/21. The requirements and quantum of development on the site will be set out in the final Development Brief.

### **Employment Land at Gosbecks**

6.52 Gosbecks Farm, Gosbecks Road, Colchester is safeguarded as a Local Economic Area which will support the existing employment uses at the site. As an economic area a range of mixed uses will be appropriate with the primary focus of the site being to deliver further employment.

#### **Policy SC1: South Colchester Allocations**

Allocations as shown on the policies map will be safeguarded for residential uses. In addition to the requirements in Policy PP1, proposals will be required to satisfy the Local Planning Authority with regard to the site-specific requirements as identified below.

#### **Land at Gosbecks Phase 2**

Development of this site will be supported where it provides:

- (i) Up to 150 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with the surrounding development;
- (ii) New bus stop provision to service the site and improve sustainable transport links to Colchester Town Centre;
- (iii) New public art and improvements to the public realm; and
- (iv) A contribution to Gosbecks Archaeological Park.

#### **South of Berechurch Hall Road**

Development of this site will be supported where it provides:

- (i) Up to 150 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with the surrounding development;
- (ii) Contributions to/delivery of improvements to the local road network;
- (iii) New bus stop provision to service the site and improve sustainable transport links to Colchester town centre; and
- (iv) A comprehensive approach to development of the three separate parcels of land which together make up the allocation.

#### **ABRO site**

The 4.26 hectare site will provide 3.80 hectares for residential development and 0.46 hectares for open space. Development of this site will be supported where it accords with the ABRO Development Brief.

Any proposals will also take into account 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 extraction be proven, the mineral shall be worked in accordance with a scheme/masterplan as part of the phased delivery of the non-mineral development.

The following Local Economic Areas as shown on the Policies Map will be allocated/safeguarded for economic uses in accordance with Table SG3 and policies SG3 and SG4:

- Land at Maldon Road / Shrub End and
- Land at Gosbecks.

### **Land at Middlewick Ranges**

6.53 Middlewick Ranges is a 76ha site owned by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation, located between Mersea Road and Abbots Road on the south-eastern boundary of urban Colchester. The site is well positioned to key services and is reasonably accessible by public transport. It is located approximately 2.5km to Colchester Town train station and there are buses serving Monkwick and West Mersea that provide regular services past this site. Middlewick Ranges is therefore considered to be sustainable in principle.

6.54 The Defence Infrastructure Organisation is disposing of a number of sites nationally including Middlewick Ranges. The site was originally proposed for the allocation of 2000 dwellings, however as there are a number of constraints at the site which will restrict the final number of dwellings that can be delivered at this location, the allocation is for up to 1000 dwellings. Given the potential constraints and opportunities associated with the site, there will be a requirement for a master planning approach working together with the MOD, and any future landowners, to inform the best opportunities for delivering housing and supporting infrastructure, as well as ensuring the delivery of a development appropriate to its setting. More guidance in respect of the approach, scope and requirements for master planning for this site are set out below.

6.55 Vehicular access to the site, the impact of any development on the local road network and necessary mitigation, will need to be determined prior to any detailed scheme being submitted. The development would need to be supported by a Transport Assessment that stresses the importance of sustainable transport as the primary means of access and movement to, from and within the site. The Transport Assessment should set out that where impacts would occur and the necessary mitigation to address those impacts; any mitigation which would need to be agreed with CBC and ECC and secured as part of the planning permission. As a minimum the Transport Assessment would need to include details regarding:

- Support for local bus services to traverse the site and provide frequent and regular connections to the town centre, railway stations and any other identified and agreed destinations;
- Provision of bus stops within the site and upgrade of existing bus stops in the vicinity of the site (specification to ECC standards);
- Bus priority measures at key junctions;
- Demonstration of an extensive network of footpaths and cycleways within the site and connections at the site boundaries into the external network. Improvements to the external network of footpaths and cycleways in the vicinity of the site as agreed;
- Provision of a distributor road across the site with dedicated footpath and cycleways alongside it over its entire length;
- Provision of new sections of footway, cycleway and uncontrolled and controlled crossings in the vicinity of the site as agreed;
- Improvements to the Public Rights of Way Network across and in the vicinity of the site; and

- Delivery of a bespoke Travel Plan for the development of the site, with the appointment of a Travel Plan Co-ordinator and commitment to provision of tailored Residential Travel Information Packs for each household.

6.56 In the event that the detailed transport assessment work indicates that the traffic constraints cannot be adequately addressed, the number of homes permitted will be reduced to reflect this with support for up to 1,000 once the traffic impacts can be adequately resolved.

6.57 Middlewick Ranges is a designated Local Wildlife Site (reference Co122). The site was reviewed as part of a wider Local Sites Review in 2015 and as a result of the review the area designated has been extended. The Ecological Evidence Report confirms that the habitats within the site are of high biodiversity value, including 53 Ha of acid grassland. The site supports a range of protected species such as invertebrates, breeding birds and bats, therefore given the site's ecological sensitivity, full ecological assessments will need to be undertaken as part of any planning application including for all Protected Species, and Species of Principal Importance during the appropriate survey season. The Council will also be seeking a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain on the development site, following application of the mitigation hierarchy, in line with the Environment Act 2021. The Council will require a developer to commit to a suitable legal mechanism to ensure the long-term establishment, management and maintenance of the mitigation/compensation land for a minimum of 30 years and a strategy for the monitoring of key mitigation and/or compensation as part of the grant of any planning permission.

6.58 The area is a well-used recreational space, particularly with dog walkers. Any future development proposal will be expected to deliver new open space as well as strategic green infrastructure to meet the needs of existing and new residents in this part of Colchester, to minimise subsequent footfall on the Essex coastal sites and nearby Roman River SSSI, and provide substantial buffers to existing sensitive habitats. The range of typologies may include accessible natural greenspace, formal playing pitches, parks and play space, green corridors and land for future cemetery use (including potential for a woodland cemetery), if suitable and required. The master planning process will need to inform further consideration in respect of the type, layout and configuration of open space and green infrastructure. A key requirement will be to ensure connectivity between green walking routes across the site and the existing Colchester Orbital, a circular walking and cycling route around the town's perimeter, which runs through the north-west of the Middlewick Ranges linking some of the town's key open spaces, heritage sites and PRoW. The Council will seek to retain and enhance PRoW within the development along with the route and character of the Colchester Orbital.

6.59 The site has archaeological interest due to the potential for the presence of buried archaeological remains, in particular, relating to prehistoric, Roman and civil war and World War II defences. The WW2 pill boxes, and tank line form an important landscape opportunity. The Council believes they also represent an important heritage interpretation and visitor opportunity. Further investigations will be required at a planning application stage, prior to the commencement of any

development. Policy PP1 (vi) will apply in this respect to any planning application on this site. It is also possible that a future management plan for the redoubt may be required as part of the planning permission, which will need to be agreed with the Council.

6.60 In terms of local character, the site sits in an area of gently sloping open landscape bordered by Colchester to the north and the wooded Roman River to the south. It currently provides some physical and visual separation between the existing urban area and the Roman River Valley. Any development will need to minimise and mitigate potential impacts on the wider landscape, on adjoining minor roads and recreational pressure on the landscape and biodiversity assets. New development should respond to the existing settlement pattern, screen any existing visual intrusions, conserve and manage existing woodland and hedgerows, and use materials appropriate to local character. An LVIA will be required to inform the proposed masterplan and any subsequent planning application. Extra High Voltage electricity pylons lie at the north of the site. There would be visual benefits to these being undergrounded but in the event that this is not feasible they would act as a constraint on the layout of development.

6.61 Development of Middlewick Ranges may be further constrained by pockets of contamination therefore an investigation into all potential sources of contamination will need to be carried out as part of any future development proposals and submitted as part of any planning application. Any investigation will need to include assessment of areas inaccessible during the 2018 site visit, together with any activity since the date of reporting including detail of any fly tipping, and continued MoD uses. Policy ENV5 will be relevant to any planning application in respect of this matter.

6.62 The Middlewick Ranges site falls within Critical Drainage Area 01 (Old Heath Area) as defined in Colchester's Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP). Contributions will be sought towards the costs of delivering flood defence/flood management solutions within CDA 01 as set out in the SWMP.

6.63 A Masterplan must be agreed with the Local Planning Authority prior to the submission of any planning application, in order to inform the detailed definition and mix of uses within the site. The masterplan process should include engagement of the local community, use of design advice and review where available, and assessment frameworks such as Building for a Healthy Life or similar. The masterplan will be supported, as appropriate, with site wide parameter plans, design codes or design guidance.

6.64 Developer contributions will be sought where required towards the cost of mitigation including ecological mitigation, remediation of any on site contamination as part of the development of the site; community infrastructure including education provision; traffic and highways mitigation including enhancements to the public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure; accessible natural green space and public open space.

- 6.65 Development at Middlewick Ranges will be phased to start towards the middle of the plan period. This is necessary to enable further detailed work to be carried out to inform a comprehensive masterplan process as described above and to allow for appropriate engagement with all relevant parties including the local residents. This will also allow for the commencement of soil preparation for the required biodiversity mitigation, compensation and net gain allowing for the soil conditions to respond to changes in pH, which is imperative to the practical use of turves from the ranges to create new areas of acid grassland. This will help inform or refine the later stages of the net gain strategy. The masterplan will inform any subsequent planning application.
- 6.66 Due to the high distinctiveness of the biodiversity of the site and the complexity of recreating and managing protected habitats for the long term, both onsite and in the mitigation lands, the Council will require the appointment, by the developer, of a suitably qualified and experienced nature conservation management organisation as a partner to take forward this element of the development. The Council will require the developer to enter into an appropriate legal agreement to secure the long term (minimum 30-year) management and monitoring of retained protected habitats, the biodiversity mitigation, compensation and net gain land, by the nature conservation organisation, including a mechanism for funding and governance that ensures both the nature conservation value and local community interest. The landowner of the mitigation land will need to be party to such an agreement.

**Policy SC2: Middlewick Ranges**

The allocation shown on the Policies Map is expected to deliver up to 1000 new dwellings. The final number of dwellings will only be confirmed through master planning. In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in policy PP1, development will be supported on land within the area identified on the policies map where it:

- (i) Delivers up to 1000 new houses of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development; and
- (ii) Is supported by a Transport Assessment which sets out where impacts would occur and any mitigation to address those impacts, as well as measures proposed to ensure sustainable transport is the primary means of access and movement to, from and within the site. The Transport Assessment and mitigation measures are to be agreed with the Highway Authority and The Council as part of any planning permission; and
- (iii) Delivers access and highway works on the local road network, including new junctions, to be agreed with the Highway Authority and delivered at the appropriate time commensurate with the development; and
- (iv) Delivers enhancements to sustainable travel connectivity including public transport, cycling and walking infrastructure, including connection and enhancement to the Colchester Orbital; and
- (v) Provides for retention or diversion of any existing public rights of way within the site and incorporation wherever possible into the green infrastructure network; and
- (vi) The built footprint of the development has been sited to minimise the effects on protected habitats and species; and
- (vii) Is supported by the submission of appropriate mitigation and net gain plans to enhance the ecology of the remaining areas of the Local Wildlife Site to provide compensatory habitat to replace habitat lost to development and a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain; and
- (viii) Secures the appointment, by the developer, of a suitably qualified and experienced nature conservation management organisation as a partner to take forward the habitat conservation, creation and management of the development; and
- (ix) Identifies and commits to a legal mechanism, in a form to be agreed with the Council, to ensure the long-term establishment, management and maintenance of the retained acid grassland, the biodiversity mitigation/compensation and net gain land and a strategy for the monitoring of key mitigation, compensation and net gain. The legal mechanism will identify the funding mechanism and governance structure (including the option of designation as a Local Nature Reserve) that ensures both the nature conservation value and local community interest in the retained acid grassland, other protected habitats, the biodiversity mitigation and compensation land, and areas of net gain; and
- (x) Includes a detailed strategy and management plan, to be agreed with the Council, for the existing and proposed green infrastructure and public open space network, including formal playing pitches, strategic green corridors, green buffers and structural landscape; and
- (xi) Includes a detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment in order to

minimise and mitigate potential impacts on the wider landscape and urban character; and

(xii) Delivers Mitigation measures to address site contamination; and

(xiii) Provides for Primary and early years education as follows;

a. a new primary school with co-located 56 place early years and childcare nursery on 3 hectares of suitable land allocated for education and childcare use; and

b. a new 56 place stand-alone early years and childcare nursery on 0.13 hectares of suitable land allocated for education and childcare use; and

(xiv) Secures financial contribution to early years and childcare, primary and secondary education provision as required by the Local Planning Authority primarily through Section 106 Planning Obligations or the Community Infrastructure Levy.

A Masterplan for the whole site is to be agreed with the Council prior to submission of any planning application. The masterplan must be informed by, or supported by, as appropriate, site wide parameter plans, design codes or guidance, developed through engagement with the local community, be informed by use of design review where available, and assessment frameworks such as Building for a Healthy Life or similar.

Before granting planning consent, wintering bird surveys will be undertaken at the appropriate time of year to identify any offsite functional habitat. 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.



### **Transport in South Colchester**

- 6.67 This area is characterised by a series of B roads radiating out from the town centre, with a number of unclassified roads linking these B roads together. Berechurch Hall Road and Gosbecks Road acts as an informal southern distributor route connecting in the east with the B1025 Mersea Road and in the west to the B1022 Maldon Road.
- 6.68 The bus network radiates out from the town centre, with high frequency services interspersed with lower frequency services serving the rural areas and villages to the south and west. There are no east-west public transport routes. The Garrison development has provided an excellent north south walking and cycle route with a mix of on road and off-road routes leading to Southway in the town centre and will be used as an example of good practice in future developments. The Boadicea route provides a link to the west from Berechurch. There are however gaps in the network and east-west routes are limited.
- 6.69 Strategic Transport Modelling and other ongoing studies identifies locations in South Colchester where improvements to, and investment in, the transport network are required. Development that will add pressure to the transport network will be required to help mitigate the impact. The transport evidence base is continuously evolving and additional issues and schemes may be identified during the Plan period. The exact scale, timing and nature of this infrastructure will be determined through more detailed assessment as the planning process develops.

#### **Policy SC3: Transport in South Colchester**

Developments in South Colchester will be expected to contribute to a package of sustainable transport measures including walking, cycling, public transport, travel planning and the promotion of sustainable travel.

Where it is demonstrated that proposals will impact on the highway network, contributions will be sought towards mitigation and improvements, including to the following projects;

- Improvements to junctions including; Circular Road South/Berechurch Road and Shrub End Road/Maldon Road.
- Improvements to manage the flow of traffic along Gosbecks Road and Berechurch Hall Road.
- Improvements to public transport including potential east / west service and bus priority at junctions, especially where buses are experiencing delays.
- Improvements to routes for walking, cycling and horse riding where appropriate, including links to the Garrison and Boadicea Routes and complete gaps in the network.

For areas with large multiple sites located in close proximity to each other the cumulative impact of all the development in the area must be considered.

## **East Colchester**

### **Knowledge Gateway and University Strategic Economic Area**

- 6.70 The University of Essex is a leading research-intensive university and is ranked in the top 20 for research excellence within the UK. The University currently provides 1870 jobs and indirectly supports a further 2693 jobs, as well as contributing £404 million in turnover and indirect economic impact to the East of England. On the basis of the current Strategic Plan, by 2018, the University will grow to some 15,000 students. Continuation of this current rate of growth in student numbers would see the University achieve a student body of approximately 20,000 by 2025 and 25,000 students by the end of the Local Plan period.
- 6.71 These ambitious plans for the growth of the University have many benefits for Colchester Borough as a whole, the Town Centre and in particular east Colchester, including allowing the development of clusters of companies that can take advantage of co-location whilst minimising the costs of further infrastructure development. Through £13 million of investment and partnership with new and growing businesses, the expansion of the Knowledge Gateway research and technology park on the Colchester Campus has the potential to bring 2000 further jobs to the local economy by 2025.
- 6.72 Colchester's evidence base, the Employment Land Needs Assessment, acknowledges the role and importance of the Knowledge Gateway for developing technological and creative businesses. Unlocking some of the barriers, particularly associated with the existing transport infrastructure, will assist in bringing forward further development on this site. This primarily seeks to promote B1 uses within the area but acknowledges that some flexibility to this approach is beneficial, with the key principle being that proposals should be related to the key function of the economic area.
- 6.73 The University is supporting the designation of a fifth national University Enterprise Zone (UEZ), in addition to those in Bradford, Bristol, Liverpool and Nottingham. UEZs do not come with the same tax and business rate incentives or promises of high-speed broadband that are features of Enterprise Zones. However, they are granted support in driving export trade and attracting inward investment through the government's UK Trade and Investment (UKTI), as well as being subject to simplified planning arrangements. The Essex UEZ would have a focus on digital and creative industries, a sector that contributes £2.5 billion per year to the economy of the South East LEP area. Colchester has the largest concentration of digital creative businesses in Essex and the Haven Gateway, with over 3500 people employed in this sector across more than 600 companies. A UEZ for Colchester can help to ensure that developments in the Knowledge Gateway will also support developments in Colchester Town Centre.
- 6.74 The University competes globally for staff and students and there is a clear need for good quality and affordable accommodation. On the Colchester campus, the University already offers a mix of medium and high-rise student accommodation,

and it is likely that future need will mirror this pattern to allow for an efficient use of space, protection of the historic Wivenhoe House, and surrounding parkland and ensure that as many students as possible can be accommodated on the campus. High quality staff housing will also be in demand, with the development of the new Garden Community also providing attractive new locations for University staff to live, adding to the existing blend of urban and rural dwellings in the area. The University strongly supports a vision for a proposed Garden Community to the east of Colchester, providing a sustainable, mixed academic, commercial and residential community that offers a high quality of life to enhance both Colchester and the University. The University will therefore be a key partner in the master planning process for the Garden Community, recognising the importance and mutual benefit to establishing an integrated approach to planning and engagement.

- 6.75 The significant growth envisaged by the University and the associated expansion opportunities for the Knowledge Gateway technology park will be released over the long term with phases being delivered throughout the plan period and potentially beyond associated with the new Garden Community. This will provide a framework for the expansion of both the University and the Knowledge Gateway and also provide the opportunity to maximise any benefits associated with the new Garden Community. A joined up approach and the mutual opportunities for both are evident, particularly associated with infrastructure improvements with alternative public transport options being a key factor for East Colchester.
- 6.76 It is recognised that the University makes a significant contribution to the economy of Colchester Borough and to the vitality and viability of the Town Centre. There are unique opportunities for the community and the university to feed off each other, particularly as sports and cultural facilities are improved with the potential to create opportunities for the community to benefit from extensive facilities providing a hub in this area of Colchester which would not otherwise be available to them. The benefits and opportunities for shared use will be further explored through the Sports Strategy Delivery Board. In addition, opportunities for the University to pursue a greater physical presence in the town centre will be encouraged. Expansion proposals for the University will be supported in response to programmed growth.

**Policy EC1: Knowledge Gateway and University of Essex Strategic Economic Area**

The Council recognises the value of the University of Essex to Colchester Borough's economy and the vitality and viability of the town centre, and will work in partnership to maximise the economic and social benefits associated with it.

The area shown on the Policies Map is designated as the University and Knowledge Gateway Strategic Economic Area. Within this area development will be supported which enables significant expansion of the University of Essex as reflected in its current Strategic Plan 2013-19 as well as the retention and expansion of the Knowledge Gateway. Proposals which provide for the retention and expansion of the Knowledge Gateway and which build on the benefits of the growing University will be supported.

There will be a need for a comprehensive approach to development in conjunction with the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community proposed to the east of Colchester, working in partnership with key stakeholders including the University.

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 town centre, the Hythe Station and surrounding area, the Knowledge Gateway and the proposed Garden Community to the East of Colchester including contributing to the Orbital route as shown on the Policies Map.

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.

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 (IDP) or subsequent evidence which will be secured to an appropriate level by way of legal agreement or through CIL as required.

In addition, contributions may be sought to promote the delivery of infrastructure and Green Infrastructure improvements specifically the East Transit Corridor shown on the and the Proposals Map and the Orbital Route, improvements to upgrading the footbridge across the railway between the Meadows 1 and the University Quays to enhance opportunities to the walking and cycling network accessing the university campus with the Town Centre. These will also help to achieve wider objectives which are also linked to University and Knowledge Gateway.

**Knowledge Gateway**

The area shown on the East Colchester Proposals Map will be safeguarded for the expansion of the Knowledge Gateway associated with the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community to allow for provision of a range for additional jobs and to accommodate expansion of the existing research and

technology uses.

Within this area, the Local Planning Authority will continue to support the growth and retention of the University Research Park. 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 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:

- (i) 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;
- (ii) Provide the opportunity to maximise the sites potential for economic growth;
- (iii) 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;
- (iv) Are generally in accordance with the most up to date masterplan / Strategy for the University and Knowledge Gateway; and
- (v) Do not generate potential conflict with the existing proposed B class uses / activities on the site.

**East Colchester/Hythe Special Policy Area**

- 6.77 The Hythe area is a former commercial harbour which includes some rundown and underused industrial land in East Colchester. Together with the University of Essex, the eastern area of Colchester has experienced a period of significant change and growth. The area provides good access to Hythe Station and is located close to the University of Essex but is currently constrained by flooding issues.
- 6.78 The Hythe is an established regeneration area that seeks to deliver sustainable, mixed-use neighbourhoods, oriented towards the River Colne, which respect the historic character of the area. Over the plan period the East Colchester/Hythe Special Policy Area provides capacity to accommodate approximately 800 new dwellings including those already committed. The regeneration of this area needs to secure the viable re-use of heritage assets and provision of a distinctive public realm. Growth needs to be supported by improvements to transport infrastructure and services, flood mitigation and open space to ensure that sufficient amenity space is included to support the increasing population. Regeneration will involve partnership working with public sector agencies, the local community, and the private sector, including support for community-based initiatives such as community land trusts. The Hythe Conservation Area includes the historic port of the Hythe, the medieval church of St Leonard's and a number of listed buildings, in addition to later infill and some modern regeneration. Development proposals must ensure that it responds to the distinctive historic character. Every opportunity should be taken to enhance heritage assets and reinforce the significance of the Hythe Conservation Area.
- 6.79 The river forms a natural corridor and amenity. Riverside walking and cycle routes which exist should be retained and extended for walking and cycling as part of a green link giving riverside traffic free routes for both commuting and leisure trips; with links to the Town Centre and Wivenhoe along the National Cycle Network Route 1, the Rowhedge Trail and links to New Town, Distillery Pond and Bourne Ponds. The river also forms an east-west barrier to movement. More links across the river are required to access local opportunities and create a cohesive development area. Opportunities should be sought to bridge the Colne to the south of Colne Causeway Bridge.
- 6.80 The area is also split by the road and rail network. Peak hour traffic congestion is severe in this area, especially at Greenstead roundabout. The rail line forms an east-west physical barrier especially for pedestrians and cyclists. Improvements are required to address congestion and severance, linking together development areas and opportunities offered by the expansion of the University and the Knowledge Gateway.
- 6.81 Much of the Hythe area is in flood zone 3. Development must respect this designation and be designed accordingly to minimise the impact of any potential flooding on people and property. The Hythe Special Policy Area also falls within Critical Drainage Areas CDA 01, CDA 02 and CDA03 as shown in the Surface Water Management Plan for Colchester. The Local Planning Authority will work with key stakeholders with responsibilities for flood risk and drainage and

developers to deliver infrastructure schemes that provide sufficient capacity in the drainage network to support new developments and regeneration and to manage flood risk. Developer contributions will be sought towards the costs of delivering flood defence/flood management solutions within these Critical Drainage Areas to help manage flood risk in this part of Colchester. Solutions should be agreed between Essex County Council (Local Lead Flood Authority), the Environment Agency, developers and the Local Planning Authority.

6.82 As a working port many of the industries based there historically were “dirty” in nature but suitably located. As the area changes it will be important not to locate residential properties on or near to contaminated land if satisfactory mitigation cannot be achieved. The major Colchester Sewage/Wastewater plant lies at the south end of the area and includes a cordon sanitaire restricting the type of development which can be located here.

6.83 The river and the quayside is a natural place for residential moorings. Boats for residential purpose will be supported if they are of appropriate quality and enhance the marine environment. Improvements will be sought to the landscape and the utility infrastructure to serve boats.

#### **Policy EC2: East Colchester / Hythe Special Policy Area**

Development within the area defined on the Policies Map as the East Colchester/Hythe Special Policy Area will be encouraged and supported where it contributes to achieving the following key objectives:

- (i) Regeneration of the area at densities appropriate to an urban area with good public transport connections and a mix of commercial, community and residential uses to provide additional jobs, homes and community and environmental enhancements, in line with the site allocations shown on the East Colchester Policies EC1-4 map, and create a strong sense of identity for the area;
- (ii) Maximise the potential benefits of the location adjacent to the University, enhanced by its expansion (Policy EC1) and supporting development associated with the University Research Park to provide significant office floor space and high-quality new jobs;
- (iii) Deliver significant public realm enhancements appropriate to local context, maximising the potential of the riverside location and improving the environment, increasing connectivity and providing convenient public access for pedestrians and cyclists;
- (iv) Ensure new developments are responsive to the distinctive historic character of the area and reinforce the significance of the Conservation Area designation through the re-use of heritage assets;
- (v) Contribute to the delivery of the East Transit Corridor which will bring significant improvements to public transport and accessibility, through enhanced services, improved links to the Town Centre and new Garden Community;
- (vi) Enhance provision of Green Infrastructure to maximise potential opportunities for biodiversity and habitat creation, benefit nature conservation and landscape, enhance connectivity including linkages with

- the new garden community and establish new areas of open space for public enjoyment including an urban park to serve the community;
- (vii) Contribute towards flood risk solutions, in accordance with Flood Risk Management policy DM23 and SWMP recommendations for CDAs 01, 02 and 03;
  - (viii) Provide for a compatible mix of uses having regard to neighbouring amenity;
  - (ix) Situate proposals for residential development away from land which is contaminated. Where necessary mitigation measures will be required to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority; and
  - (x) Support the use of residential moorings by boats of acceptable quality which enhance the marine environment and which also satisfy flood risk tests including the provision of safe access from land to the moorings in a flood event.

Development should also seek to soften the environment around the electricity sub-station to minimise its intrusive impact on the surrounding area. Opportunities to maximise the potential for comprehensive regeneration of King Edward Quay will be encouraged including exploring the potential to redistribute uses to allow for clustering of complementary uses and to respond to site constraints such as flood risk and land contamination.



### **East Colchester other allocations / policies**

- 6.84 The following areas of new residential and employment development have been allocated to areas of East Colchester, excluding the Hythe area covered by Policy EC2 on the Hythe Special Policy Area.

#### **Port Lane**

- 6.85 This site formed part of the former Paxmans Factory site. In the event of cessation of all industrial uses, the site can deliver up to 130 dwellings. Access to the site will be off Port Lane. Given the site's previous industrial use, assessment of contamination and implementation of any required remediation measures will be required. The site is located within an area of archaeological interest recorded in the Colchester Urban Archaeological Database. There is high potential for encountering early occupation remains at this location so a trial-trenched archaeological evaluation will be required to establish the archaeological potential of the site. Decisions on the need for any further investigation (excavation before any groundworks commence and/or monitoring during groundworks) will be made on the basis of the results of the evaluation. Any permission granted is likely to include a condition requiring a programme of archaeological work. This site falls within Critical Drainage Areas CDA02 & CDA03 (New Town and Colchester Town Centre Areas). Developer contributions will be sought towards the costs of delivering flood defence/flood management measures within CDA 03 as specified in the Surface Water Management Plan for Colchester to help manage flood risk in this part of Colchester.

#### **East Bay Mill**

- 6.86 This site includes a listed mill which has been badly damaged by fire. Redevelopment of the site will involve retention and restoration of this important landmark along with sympathetic development of other dwellings up to a total of 22 units, either independently or as part of a comprehensive scheme. In either case, proposals will need to be in keeping with the site's location within a Conservation Area. The site lies within a flood risk area, so it would need to in the first instance satisfy the exception test for development in such areas, and secondly if that is met, provide adequate mitigation for flood risk such as residential on upper floors only. There is high potential for encountering early occupation remains at this location so a trial-trenched archaeological evaluation will be required to establish the archaeological potential of the site. Decisions on the need for any further investigation (excavation before any groundworks commence and/or monitoring during groundworks) will be made on the basis of the results of the evaluation. Any permission granted is likely to include a condition requiring a programme of archaeological work. Development will need to ensure contamination and flood risk issues are addressed. Vehicle, pedestrian and cycles arrangements to and within the site will need to have regard to restrictions on access as well as opportunities to provide a riverside path.

### **Site off Barrington and Bourne Roads**

6.87 This 1 hectare site is comprised of vacant greenfield land within a predominantly residential area. The area was allocated for residential development in the previous Local Plan as part of a wider scheme, but this portion did not come forward. Open space delivery on the smaller remaining part of the site will need to address the shortfall in open space left over from the earlier phase of development. To address the issue of the divided ownership of the site, a scheme will need to provide a coordinated approach to secure satisfactory access arrangements, residential amenity and landscaping. This site falls within Critical Drainage Area 02. Developer contributions will be sought towards the costs of delivering flood defence/flood management measures within CDA 02 as specified in the Surface Water Management Plan for Colchester to help manage flood risk in this part of Colchester.

### **Magdalen Street sites**

6.88 Magdalen Street contains a number of older commercial buildings suitable for reuse and/or redevelopment. The area could accommodate up to 200 new residential units. The Local Planning Authority produced an updated Development Brief for the site in February 2014 to release a vision for the area to create a vibrant community. Architecturally, the Local Planning Authority will seek contemporary responses to the existing character and densities and parking appropriate to the edge of centre location. Magdalen Street is within an Air Quality Management Area and proposals will accordingly need to provide mitigation. The Local Planning Authority will expect development to be set back from the carriageway with large scale forecourts and tree planting to help improve air quality in this part of the town. Vehicular access will only be available via Magdalen Street. Pedestrian and cycle opportunities also need to be addressed as part of any future design and site layout. These sites fall within CDA 03 (Colchester Town Centre Area). Developer contributions will be sought towards the costs of delivering flood defence/flood management measures within Critical Drainage Area 03 as specified in the Surface Water Management Plan for Colchester to help manage flood risk in this part of Colchester.

### **Employment Sites**

6.89 East Colchester contains a number of historic employment sites, a number of which, have already been redeveloped for residential and mixed uses. The Whitehall Industrial Estate is the largest remaining industrial area and will be a preferred location for new employment development in East Colchester. The employment land allocation in Table SG3 includes 2.7ha in Whitehall. Sites on Barrack Street, Brook Street and Port Lane contain further small areas of employment floorspace which will be safeguarded for employment use.

### **Policy EC3: East Colchester Allocations**

Allocations shown on the policies map will be supported for residential uses. In addition to the requirements in Policy PP1, proposals will be required to satisfy the Local Planning Authority with regard to the site-specific requirements as identified below.

#### **Land at Port Lane**

Development of this site will be supported where it provides:

- (i) Up to 130 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development;
- (ii) Access via Port Lane;
- (iii) Contamination mitigation measures as required; and
- (iv) Contributes towards flood risk solutions, in accordance with Flood Risk Management policy DM23 and SWMP recommendations for CDA 03

#### **East Bay Mill**

Development of this site will be supported where it provides:

- (i) Up to 22 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development, including the Listed Building;
- (ii) Adequate access including appropriate treatment / diversion of the existing Public Right of Way;
- (iii) A satisfactory NPPF flood risk exception test and if met, provide flood risk mitigation measures;
- (iv) Protection and enhancement of the setting of listed buildings and the Hythe conservation area;
- (v) Appropriate conversion of the listed mill; and
- (vi) Satisfactory contamination mitigation measures as required; and
- (vii) An air quality assessment and mitigation against any harmful effects to the AQMA likely to be caused by proposals;
- (viii) Access to river frontage.

#### **Barrington Road/Bourne Road vacant site**

Development of this site will be supported where it provides:

- (i) Approximately 28 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development;
- (ii) A design and layout in keeping with the development on the other part of the site;
- (iii) Suitable landscaping and open space; and
- (iv) Access via Knightsfield.

### **Magdalen Street sites**

Development of these sites will be supported where they:

- (i) Accord with the Magdalen Street Development Brief (adopted February 2014);
- (ii) Include an assessment of air quality and mitigation against any harmful effects to the AQMA likely to be caused by proposals; and
- (iii) Contribute towards flood risk solutions, in accordance with Flood Risk Management policy DM23 and SWMP recommendations for CDA 03.

### **Place Farm**

Development of the site will be supported where it provides:

- (i) 2.7 ha of employment land, as shown in Table SG3
- (ii) Up to 30 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with development in the adjacent Old Heath area
- (iii) Access via Whitehall for the employment and via Rowhedge Road for the residential development.

**Local Economic Areas** as shown on the policies map will be allocated/safeguarded for economic uses in accordance with Table SG4 and policies SG3 and SG4. The following areas will be protected to retain their function and role as key clusters for a range of businesses including start-ups:

- Whitehall Industrial Estate
- Land at Barrack Street
- Land at Brook Street
- Moorside Business Park, Eastgates
- Port Lane

### **Transport in East Colchester**

- 6.90 In East Colchester the transport network is fragmented due to the historic nature of development in the area, the physical barrier of the River Colne and the railway which serves and passes through the area. There is a focus of transport routes which converge or cross each other in the Colne Harbour area creating a complexity of competing demands and movements. To the north of the area the A120 trunk road provides access to North Colchester and the A12.
- 6.91 The roads radiating out from the town centre to the east are designated Air Quality Management Areas, where vehicular transport is the major contributor to the poor air quality. Measures which help improve the air quality in the area such as sustainable transport, promotion of low emission vehicles, cleaner vehicles, smoothing traffic flows and improving the street design will be required together with mitigation against any identified impacts.
- 6.92 The Clacton Branch Line links the coastal towns and rural villages of Tendring with Colchester and the Great Eastern Mainline, with an additional branch to Colchester Town Station. Within Colchester other stations served by the branch line are Wivenhoe and The Hythe which is the closet station to the University. There are two level crossings which impact on both train and road operation.
- 6.93 The area is served by a number of high frequency bus routes, passing through the area from the Town Centre to serve the University and Greenstead. These bus services are heavily utilised routes. The Garden Community and University expansion provide the opportunity and demand for a rapid transit system in the area to link growth in east Colchester and in Tendring through the Hythe Area with Colchester Town Centre and other key destinations.
- 6.94 The National Cycle Network (NCN51) passes through the area as the Wivenhoe Trail running from Wivenhoe through to Lower Castle Park. The Salary Brook Route (also part of the proposed Orbital route) links the large Greenstead Estate through to the University and Knowledge Gateway.
- 6.95 Strategic Transport Modelling and other ongoing studies have identified locations in East Colchester where improvements to, and investment in, the transport network are required. Development that will add pressure to the transport network will be required to help mitigate the impact.

#### **Policy EC4: Transport in East Colchester**

Developments in East Colchester will be expected to contribute to a package of sustainable transport measures including walking, cycling, public transport, travel planning and the promotion of sustainable travel.

Where it is demonstrated that proposals will impact on the highway network, contributions will be sought towards mitigation and improvements, including to the following projects;

- Improvements to the A134/A137 corridor including; Greenstead Junction,

Colne Causeway, Elmstead Road Junction, Haven Road/ Hythe Quay

- Enhancements to the interchange at Hythe Station and improvements to existing public transport services, including the potential for extension to existing services and North Colchester along with the provision of a rapid transit route connecting the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community with East Colchester, the Town Centre, and North Colchester required by Section 1 Policy SP6.
- Improvements to connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders where appropriate including; existing and new bridges, links to the Wivenhoe Trail and the Salary Brook Route and other routes identified in the Essex Cycle Strategy and the Colchester Cycle Delivery Plan.

For areas with large multiple sites located in close proximity to each other the cumulative impact of all the development in the area must be considered.

6.96 There are other known improvements to, and investment in, the transport network which have been identified through the Strategic Transport Modelling and other ongoing studies, listed below. In some cases, schemes have also been identified to overcome these issues. The transport evidence base is continuously evolving and additional issues and schemes may be identified during the Plan period. The exact scale, timing and nature of this infrastructure will be determined through more detailed assessment as the planning process develops. The following requirements are linked to the transport infrastructure identified to support the Tendring/Colchester Borders Garden Community to be informed by further stages of master planning.

- Rapid Transit – any Rapid Transit system serving the Garden Community will also serve the University, associated employment areas and the Hythe and through to the town centre. It is expected that the system will have a Park and Ride stop in the A133 area.
- A120 – A133 link - It is expected that this new link will be provided as part of the Garden Community, but it will draw traffic from east Colchester and provide an alternative access to the A120 and A12 trunk route to the north of Colchester. This link will have an impact on the operation of the Greenstead Roundabout and capacity gained here should primarily be allocated to rapid transit or public transport.

## **West Colchester**

### **Stanway Strategic Economic Area**

- 6.97 The Stanway Strategic Economic Growth Area is situated at the western end of the urban area of Colchester, with good access to the strategic road network at Junction 26 of the A12. It contains a mix of commercial uses including retail and employment floorspace and is the Borough's largest District Centre. A significant amount of new commercial development has been constructed over the last decade, in part enabled by the completion of a new bypass. The 2013 Tollgate Vision Framework prepared with local landowners in the area set forth a vision for the area 'to create a sustainable and balanced place as the heart of the Stanway Growth Area and to transform the character of the Tollgate area to become a stimulating, attractive and economically vibrant hub for the growing population, building on its success as a retail and commercial destination'. There are a number of listed buildings in the area whose setting and continued beneficial use should be considered as the area continues to develop.
- 6.98 The area shown as Zone 1 of the Stanway Strategic Economic Area on the Policies Map is allocated for further employment land supporting the basis of the areas good location and potential for development of high-quality additional employment floorspace to contribute to the Borough's supply of employment land. Table SG3 shows an allocation of 1.4 ha of employment land in Stanway. Alternative uses will only be supported where they are ancillary to the employment focus of the area and they support the continued operation of the employment uses within the SEA. The retail / leisure element within the area will expand following the grant of planning permission on appeal for a range of main town centre uses.
- 6.99 The area shown as Zone 2 comprises Tollgate District Centre. It has evolved from a predominantly 'bulky' retail park into an established shopping destination with a substantial range of multiple comparison goods retailers (such as Next, Argos, Sports Direct, Boots, Currys and PC World), a Sainsbury's food/non-food superstore, and a number of food and drink uses. Tollgate competes with Colchester Town Centre for comparison goods expenditure, and this has been reinforced by the additional food / drink uses and retail-led expansion allowed on appeal. Accordingly, it is important that planning policy for Tollgate District Centre ensures that it plays a subsidiary position to the Town Centre in the centre hierarchy as set out in Policy SG5 and Table SG5. Its role and function as a district centre would be enhanced through the introduction of new services and/or community facilities.
- 6.100 In order to help manage the future growth of this centre to ensure it retains its role and function in relation to its position in Colchester's hierarchy. Further retail development will only be supported outside of the District Centre where it meets the sequential test and can demonstrate that it will not have a significant adverse impact on Colchester Town Centre (and / or any other centre) where an impact assessment is required.

- 6.101 In addition, to help protect the Centre Hierarchy with Colchester Town Centre at the apex and to manage the potential impacts of any further retail and leisure growth at Tollgate on the Town Centre, proposals for town centre uses outside of the defined centres, which are not in accordance with an up-to-date plan, above the floorspace thresholds set out in Policy SG6 (Table SG6), including change of use or variation of planning conditions, will need to demonstrate that there will not be any significant adverse impacts on the Town Centre (and /or any other defined centre), through an Impact Assessment. The retail evidence concludes that Tollgate does not require substantial new retail development to ensure its vitality and viability over the plan period. Instead, larger scale retail development should be focused on Colchester Town Centre to help strengthen its primary role as a sub-regional shopping destination.

**Policy WC1: Stanway Strategic Economic Area and Tollgate District Centre**

Any proposals within the Stanway Strategic Economic Area will be required to provide good public transport, pedestrian and cycle links ensuring good connectivity within the area and Zones, to the neighbouring communities, and to and from the Town Centre.

Development will be expected to contribute to the cost of infrastructure improvements as required, supported by up-to-date evidence in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) or subsequent evidence which will be secured to an appropriate level by way of legal agreement or through CIL as required. Such infrastructure is likely to include improvement works to Junction 26 on the A12.

All land and premises within the area allocated as the Stanway Economic Area and Tollgate District Centre will be safeguarded for appropriate commercial uses based on a zoned approach in accordance with the following principles:

**Zone 1:** as defined on the West Colchester Policies Map and incorporating the Stanway allocations listed in Table SG3 will be the primary focus for employment uses and as such, alternative uses will only be supported where they:

- (i) Are ancillary to the employment uses on the site intended to serve the function of the site as an employment area; and,
- (ii) Provide the opportunity to maximise the sites potential for economic growth and support the continued operation of existing employment uses within the economic area; and,
- (iii) Do not generate potential conflict with the existing or proposed uses / activities on the site; and,
- (iv) There is no reasonable prospect of the site being used for employment purposes.

**Zone 2:** Within the area shown on the West Colchester Policies Map, comprising the Tollgate District Centre, proposals for main town centre uses will be supported.

Proposals must be of a scale and type appropriate to the centre (having regard the Centre Hierarchy and the definitions under Policy SG5). Proposals should:



- (i) Seek to enhance the role of the centre through the introduction of new services and/or community facilities; and,
- (ii) Proposals outside the Tollgate District Centre should meet the requirements of the sequential test as set out in policy SG6 in so far as the Local Planning Authority should be satisfied that there are no suitable alternative sites located more centrally in or on the edge of the District Centre or any other centre (within an appropriately defined catchment area); and,
- (iii) Where the scale of the proposal requires an impact assessment, in accordance with policy SG6, the Local Planning Authority are satisfied that the proposal will not have a significant adverse impact on a) existing, committed and planned public and private investment in a centre or centres in the catchment area of the proposal and b) the vitality and viability of Colchester Town Centre and / or any other defined centre.

### **Stanway Residential Sites**

- 6.102 Stanway is a parished area on the western edge of Colchester and lies adjacent to the A12. Over recent years it has been the location for significant growth seeing the delivery of the former Stanway Growth Area. Approximately half of the 1800 houses allocated in this Growth Area have been delivered together with elements of infrastructure including new roads. The remaining areas of housing, including Fiveways Fruit Farm and Lakelands remain allocated in this Plan for residential development. Further infrastructure previously agreed, linked to this, will also be delivered as part of these developments including a primary school, road improvements and areas of public open space, including strategic green infrastructure associated with the minerals working restoration.
- 6.103 Stanway Parish Council has commenced work on a Neighbourhood Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan Group is considering the potential scope of the plan working with the community and stakeholders. The Local Plan therefore provides for the strategic significance of the area, particularly for economic growth and the existing commitments associated with the former growth area.
- 6.104 It is considered that there are opportunities for further development in Stanway. Sites off London Road; to the west of Lakelands; the former Sainsbury's site and at Chitts Hill are identified in this plan for additional housing growth. These sites are detailed below.
- 6.105 Existing capacity issues at the primary schools in Stanway will be addressed in the short term by planned expansion at a number of the schools. Further capacity will be created by the provision of a new primary school at Lakelands and a new school on land being allocated off London Road. Additional nursery provision will also be required to accommodate the growth.

**Land to the North of London Road**

- 6.106 Land between the A12 and London Road has been identified for 630 new dwellings over the plan period. Two sites in separate ownership are included and given the close spatial relationship of these sites it is fundamental to the success of the area that they are comprehensively planned and do not result in competing developments which could prejudice each other's delivery. The Local Planning Authority therefore recommends a masterplan is prepared to inform development proposals in this area.
- 6.107 New development proposals will be expected to deliver a new primary school with integrated early years and childcare provision. This will complement the additional school provision elsewhere in Stanway including planned expansion of the existing facilities and new provision at Lakelands. This new educational facility should be situated in an area within the sites which maximises the use of sustainable transport modes and reduces the need to pick-up and drop-off pupils by car.
- 6.108 A key component of the comprehensive planning of these sites will be the highway arrangements which must minimise the number of vehicular access points onto London Road. Furthermore, pedestrian and cycle links should be integrated as far as possible in order to maximise the connectivity of this area of Stanway and reduce the need to travel by car to access local services, facilities and public transport hubs.

**Land north of London Road- Almshouse Allocation**

- 6.109 Land is allocated north of London Road to expand the existing Rosemary Almshouse site. The site will provide for 26 Almshouse units developed in a way to reflect site constraints including retention of key trees and access.

**Land to the West of Lakelands**

- 6.110 A site to the west of Lakelands is allocated for a residential development to include approximately 250 dwellings.

**Land at Chitts Hill**

- 6.111 The site is in a sustainable location with access to public transport. It has natural existing defensible boundaries and is surrounded by areas of predominantly residential development and an existing private school with associated playing fields which are safeguarded as private open space. The proximity of the site to the mainline railway on the northern boundary and the school to the south requires a substantive landscape buffer to minimise amenity impacts.

**Land off Dyers Road including Fiveways Fruit Farm**

- 6.112 Sites off Dyers Lane including Fiveways Fruit Farm, for approximately 490 dwellings, remain unimplemented and are therefore re-allocated in this Plan as continued progress demonstrates that these sites will be delivered early in this Plan period. Those requirements, previously identified remain relevant to ensure adequate mitigation is provided against impacts including, ecology/landscaping, archaeology/heritage assets, flood risk/drainage, access and highways management, as well as ensuring adequate provision of open space and community infrastructure. The generic policy requirements are set out in Policy PP1 and the site-specific elements identified in Policy WC2 below.

**Land between Churchfields Avenue, Church Lane and Partridge Way**

- 6.113 Planning Permission is granted for 28 dwellings on this site, associated with the wider development at Lakelands. It is expected that these dwellings will be delivered during the Plan Period.

**Open Space**

- 6.114 An area of land to the east of Tollgate Road is allocated for public open space, recognising its value as a linear link with potential benefits for landscape / amenity, recreation and biodiversity interests.
- 6.115 Land between Church Lane and Maldon Road including Stanway Hall Farm and Bellhouse Pit, comprising the area of the quarry workings is reallocated for strategic open space which will be delivered post restoration of the quarry (Essex Minerals Local Plan) and previously covered by Policy SA STA5 Open Space in Stanway Growth Area. (Adopted Site Allocations Plan). The use of this for built formal, indoor and outdoor leisure uses will be limited and need to complement the nearby employment and housing allocations and the adjoining open countryside.

**Policy WC2: Stanway**

Allocations as shown on the policies map will be safeguarded for predominantly residential uses unless otherwise stated. In addition to meeting the requirements set out in Policy PP1, a new primary school will also be required on 2.1 hectares of suitable land allocated for education and childcare use to the north of London Road in a location to be decided. The primary school will be secured through a S106 agreement and will be co-located with an early years and childcare nursery. An additional 0.13 hectares of suitable land for a 56 place early years and childcare nursery will also be required in Stanway in a location to be decided. All new residential developments in Stanway will be expected to contribute towards new education facilities. Commercial developments may be expected to contribute to Early Years and Childcare facilities.

All proposals must also satisfy the Local Planning Authority with regard to the site-specific requirements as identified below.

Before granting planning consent for Land to the North of London Road and Land to the West of Lakelands, wintering bird surveys will be undertaken at the appropriate time of year to identify any offsite functional habitat. 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.

### **Land to the North of London Road**

Development of these sites will be supported where they provide;

- (i) Up to 630 dwellings of a mix and type compatible with surrounding development;
- (ii) A new primary school with co-located early years and childcare nursery places;
- (i) A comprehensively planned highways access which takes into account adjoining residential allocations in order to minimise the number of new access points onto London Road but without prejudice to the development of the adjoining sites;
- (iii) Suitable landscaping and open space provision to the north of the site to form a buffer between future residential uses and the A12;
- (iv) An integrated cycleway and footway serving the development and connecting to the existing network;
- (v) A design and layout to minimise the impacts from, and mitigate against any impacts associated with noise from the A12; and
- (vi) Suitable landscaping and open space provision to the west of the site to form a defensible boundary and visual separation from Copford.

Up to 26 additional Almshouses (for affordable housing) on land to the north of London Road will be supported where it also provides:

- (i) Safe vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access;
- (ii) A Tree Survey, to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority;
- (i) Retention of important landscape features on the northern and eastern boundaries of the site; and
- (iii) Enhancement of the street frontage and the setting of the street scene.

The best way of securing a comprehensive approach to development of these sites north of London Road is through the use of a masterplan which will be prepared prior to the first application being submitted.

Any proposals will also take into account 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 extraction be proven, the mineral shall be worked in accordance with a scheme/masterplan as part of the phased delivery of the non-mineral development.

### **Land to the West of Lakelands**

Development of this site will be supported where it provides:

- (i) Approximately 250 new dwellings;
- (ii) An ecological survey with appropriate mitigation;
- (iii) Satisfactory access to be agreed with the Highway Authority;
- (iv) Provision for retention or diversion of any existing public rights of way within the site

### **Land at Chitts Hill**

Development of this site will be supported where it provides:

- (i) Up to a maximum of 100 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development;
- (i) Substantive landscaping in particular to reflect appropriate boundary treatment to the north along the railway line and the south around the school;
- (ii) Access to the site to be restricted to Chitts Hill;
- (iii) Open space / green infrastructure provision to compliment the biodiversity and wildlife interests of the neighbouring Local Wildlife designation (CO68) at Iron Latch Lane Woods and Meadows;
- (iv) Adequate noise mitigation from the adjacent railway line; and
- (ii) Further exploration of potential archaeological significance of the site.

### **Land off Dyers Road including Fiveways Fruit Farm**

Development of this site will be supported where it provides:

- (i) A mix and type of approximately 490 dwellings;
- (ii) Proposals which accord with the agreed masterplan for the Stanway Growth Area;
- (iii) Local road improvements, including, but not limited to, the closure of Dyers Road to through traffic;
- (iv) Strategic area of open space to the south of the site; and
- (v) An ecological survey with appropriate mitigation.

### **Open Space**

Land between Church Lane and Maldon Road, including Stanway Hall Farm and Bellhouse Pit will be safeguarded for strategic open space following restoration works associated with the minerals extraction at the quarry, as shown on the Policies Map. Any built development associated with formal indoor and outdoor leisure provision will be limited in extent and closely related to allocated employment and housing areas to safeguard the more open countryside from built development.

Land to the east of Tollgate Road is allocated for public open space as shown on the Policies Map and will be safeguarded as such.

### **Colchester Zoo**

- 6.116 Colchester Zoo is an important visitor attraction in the Borough and has operated successfully in its current location for over 50 years. The Council recognises that tourist attractions require constant updating and that expansion in its current location could have strong justification. Development that provides enhanced visitor facilities and opportunities whilst having regard to the sensitive location of the zoo will be supported. The extent of any development ancillary to the zoo, such as additional retail, hotel and food and drink outlets, would need to be related to the function of the zoo and assessed against the potential negative impact on the town centre and countryside.
- 6.117 Any proposals for the expansion of the zoo, and associated facilities, should be undertaken through a Masterplan approach, taking into account the sensitive location of the zoo including the issues identified below, and the impact on the Town Centre.
- 6.118 The site is in an environmentally sensitive location adjacent to the Roman River and includes a Scheduled Monument and Gosbecks Archaeological Park. Creation of new wildlife habitats accordingly would need to have regard to the existing habitats and the landscape character of the area.
- 6.119 Additionally, the impact of increased visitor numbers would need to be carefully managed to minimise any impact on the local highway network and ensure safe access to the site via Maldon Road, including the Warren Lane junction. A comprehensive Transport Assessment would be required. Any proposals should promote access by Bus from the Town Centre and local train stations, as well as promoting local access via cycle, footpaths and equestrian routes, where appropriate and improvements to these routes where necessary. There are a number of Public Rights of Way in the area and these would need to be taken into account in any further expansion plans.
- 6.120 Colchester Zoo is located adjacent to an existing sand and gravel minerals extraction site and is in a Minerals Safeguarding Area for sand and gravel as detailed in the Essex Minerals Local Plan 2014. In accordance with national mineral policy and the Essex Minerals Local Plan, a Minerals Resource Assessment must be submitted as part of any planning application. The Minerals Resource Assessment must assess economic viability of prior extraction and be prepared using the latest PERC standard. Should the viability of extraction be proven, the mineral shall be worked in accordance with a scheme/masterplan as part of the phased delivery of the non-mineral development. Consultation with the MPA and LPA will be required to determine whether a separate minerals planning application would be required.

**Policy WC3: Colchester Zoo**

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

The area shown on the West Colchester Policies Map will be safeguarded for potential further expansion of Colchester Zoo to provide additional facilities associated with the Zoo's vision for growth. The extent of any development ancillary to the zoo, such as additional retail, hotel and food and drink outlets, will need to be related to the function of the zoo and assessed against potential negative impacts on the Town Centre.

Any proposals for the expansion of the Zoo will be undertaken through a master plan approach taking into account landscape and Scheduled Monument impact, safe access to the site via Maldon Road, existing public rights of way and accessibility by sustainable transport modes. A comprehensive transport assessment would be required. Proposals will need to ensure any necessary road improvements as required in Maldon Road and at the Warren Lane Junction are secured and delivered before expansion takes place. These works may require land and / or financial contributions. An off-road cycle route should be provided linking the Zoo with Gosbecks Archaeological Park to facilitate sustainable modes of travel.

Any proposals will include an appropriate SuDS for managing surface water runoff within the overall design and layout of the site.

Any proposals will also take into account 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 extraction be proven, the mineral shall be worked in accordance with a scheme/masterplan as part of the phased delivery of the non-mineral development.

Before granting planning consent, wintering bird surveys will be undertaken at the appropriate time of year to identify any offsite functional habitat. 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.

**West Colchester other allocations / policies**

- 6.121 The following areas in West Colchester are allocated for residential and economic uses, excluding those areas within Stanway which is covered by Policy WC2.

**Essex County Hospital site**

- 6.122 The Essex County Hospital site lies within the Lexden Conservation Area on a prominent site lying over a Roman burial area just outside the Town Centre on Lexden Road. The site contains a number of hospital buildings constructed over its two hundred year history, including a Grade II listed main building and a locally listed nurses block. In 2015, the Council received notice of the Health Trust's intention to dispose of the site for redevelopment, with the remaining hospital uses on the site being transferred to other sites. The Local Planning Authority has prepared a Development Brief for the site, adopted in December 2014, which provides guidance to ensure appropriate development of the sensitive hospital site within the Lexden Conservation Area. Parking and amenity requirements for the site will reflect the site's sustainable location near the Town Centre.

**Land at Irvine Road**

- 6.123 This 0.6ha site is located northwest and to the rear of existing residential properties on Irvine Road. The site is currently designated as a Local Site (ref CO97) and along with the Philip Morant playing fields contributes to the green infrastructure in this part of Colchester. The site is accessed via a private track, however there is no public access to this plot of land.
- 6.124 The 2016 Local Site Review concluded that this site is in favourable but declining status as an orchard with no management of the fruit trees or other vegetation in recent years. The grassland is becoming rank and the Prunus scrub, which is spreading, is already dominant in some areas. The northern edge of the site is also being managed inappropriately, from a conservation point of view. This lack of active and appropriate management if not addressed over time, will result in further decline in the ecological value of the site. This could result in it eventually being de-designated as a Local Site if it fails to meet the qualifying criteria for designation.
- 6.125 Whilst the site has some limited wildlife value, a small amount of development, of up to a maximum 8 dwellings, covering no more than 40% of the site is considered appropriate at this location. The remaining 60% of the site should be brought back into suitable condition with management to improve the sites ecological value and to ensure it continues to contribute to the local Green Infrastructure network. A detailed ecological management plan and mitigation plan should be prepared as part of any future development proposal to conserve the most valuable habitats/part at this site.



**Policy WC4: West Colchester**

Allocations shown on the policies map will be safeguarded for residential uses. In addition to the requirements in Policy PP1, proposals will be required to satisfy the Local Planning Authority with regard to the site specific requirements as identified below.

**Essex County Hospital site, Lexden Road**

Development of this site will be supported where it accords with the Essex County Hospital adopted Development Brief (December 2014).

**Land at Irvine Road**

Development of this site will be supported where it provides:

- (i) Up to 8 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development;
  - (i) Access via existing track off Irvine Road;
  - (ii) A maximum development area of 40% of the site;
  - (iii) An Ecological Management Plan and Mitigation Plan for the remaining 60% of the site to improve and enhance its ecological value.

**Transport in West Colchester**

- 6.126 The transport network in West Colchester is characterised by the A12 trunk road running east west carrying very high volumes of traffic, with access via junction 25 at Marks Tey (also giving a connection to the A120 westwards towards Braintree), junction 26 at Eight Ash Green giving access to Stanway and Tollgate. These two trunk road junctions suffer from significant peak hour queuing impacting on the village of Marks Tey and queuing back onto the A12 trunk road. The Great Eastern Mainline runs parallel to the A12, with a station at Marks Tey with a branch line to Sudbury.
- 6.127 Stanway/Tollgate currently forms a natural destination point for buses radiating out from the town centre using London Road. There are high frequency bus routes serving the West Colchester area. A small number of interurban bus services also pass through the area.
- 6.128 The National Cycle Network (NCN1) heads from the town centre through the area prior to heading southwest past the Colchester Zoo towards Tiptree. The Lexden Cycle route follows a mix of on-road and off-road routes linking the town centre to Stanway.
- 6.129 Strategic traffic modelling has been undertaken which has shown a number of links and junctions operating over capacity at peak times. Development will add pressure to the transport network and measures will be required to help mitigate the impact.

**Policy WC5: Transport in West Colchester**

Developments in West Colchester will be expected to contribute to a package of sustainable transport measures including walking, cycling, public transport, travel planning and the promotion of sustainable travel.

Where it is demonstrated that proposals will impact on the highway network, contributions will be sought towards mitigation and improvements, including to the following projects;

- Improvements to the A12 Junctions 25 and 26 to provide measures which reduce queuing at junctions.
- Improvements to the southern distribution road network to smooth the flow of traffic along this route including the Maldon Road/Warren Lane junction.
- Improvements and extension to the current bus services and routes, to serve developments and link the key attractors in the area and to the town centre. Provision of additional routes to serve the area as it develops further towards the West.
- Improvements to the existing cycle and walking network providing connections from Stanway through the Lakelands and Tollgate area to ensure that the new developments are permeable and connected to the existing services as identified in the Essex Cycle Strategy and the Colchester Cycle Delivery Plan.

For areas with large multiple sites located in close proximity to each other the cumulative impact of all the development in the area must be considered.

6.130 There are other known improvements to, and investment in, the transport network which have been identified through the Strategic Transport Modelling and other ongoing studies listed below. In some cases, schemes have also been identified to overcome these issues. The transport evidence base is continuously evolving and additional issues and schemes may be identified during the Plan period. The exact scale, timing and nature of this infrastructure will be determined through more detailed assessment as the planning process develops.

- A133/A134 Colne Bank Roundabout – scheme to improve operation of key junction on the local road network.
- A120 upgrades – ECC and Highways England have progressed regarding a new and improved A120 between Braintree and the A12. In March 2020 the government announced its Road Investment Strategy (RIS) which included a commitment to progress further development work on the A120 dualling to prepare the scheme for delivery. The A120 dualling scheme be considered for inclusion in the RIS3 programme 2025 – 2030.

## **Sustainable Settlements**

### **Abberton and Langenhoe**

- 6.131 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, and public open space. The village benefits from good road connections to Colchester being situated along the B1025 which has bus stops situated along it which are served by the Mersea Bus.
- 6.132 There are a number of constraints within Abberton and Langenhoe which restrict new development including the fact that much of the land to the south of the village lies within the Coastal Protection Belt. Furthermore there is also a current deficit of pupil places at Langenhoe Primary School so new development proposals will be required to contribute towards improvements and/or expansion of the school to accommodate new provision. Similarly, there is also a shortage of early years and childcare places across the age range in the village.
- 6.133 Land has been identified either side of Peldon Road, adjacent to the existing settlement, which represents a logical extension to the village. Development at these locations will have to be contained within the wider landscape by suitable screening and landscaping to provide a defensible settlement boundary and minimise impacts on the wider landscape. Land to the east of Peldon Road is situated close to a listed building and considerate design will be required to ensure no adverse effects on its setting result from new development at the site.
- 6.134 Development proposals in Abberton and Langenhoe will have to address existing highways issues in the village including a persistent problem with vehicles travelling over the 30mph speed limit along Peldon Road and safety concerns at the junction of Peldon Road with Layer Road. The larger proposal should be supported by a transport statement, which among other issues, should include solutions to these issues where necessary and/or appropriate. Development proposals will also be required to address congestion associated with Langenhoe Primary School through the provision of a new drop-off/pick-up area outside the school. Whilst the provision of such a facility is not normally encouraged, the specific circumstances in Abberton and Langenhoe, including its rural nature, lends itself to such a pragmatic solution.
- 6.135 Additionally development proposals will need to provide improved pedestrian links to the village, including a safe road crossing facility on Peldon Road and a new footpath from Peldon Road to the primary school. Importantly the two sites should be planned comprehensively, taking into account the opportunities presented by their locations.

**Policy SS1: Abberton and Langenhoe**

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in policy PP1, development of the sites below, as shown on the Policies Map will be supported where they meet the requirements identified for each site below;

**Land to the west of Peldon Road**

Development will be supported which provides;

- (i) 50 dwellings of a mix and type of housing for which there is a demonstrated need; and
- (ii) A transport statement to include but not limited to a safety assessment of the Peldon Road/Layer Road junction and any necessary mitigation; and
- (iii) Provision of a new drop-off/pick-up point at Langenhoe Primary School; and,
- (iv) Provision of new public footpaths to the north of the site connecting to the school and village.

**Land to the east of Peldon Road**

Development will be supported which provides:

- (i) 5 dwellings;
- (ii) A new pedestrian access route from Peldon Road to the grounds of Langenhoe Primary School;
- (iii) Provision of a new drop-off/pick-up point at Langenhoe Primary School.

Development must conserve, and where appropriate, enhance the significance of heritage assets (including any contribution made by their settings).

Designated heritage assets close to the sites include the Grade II Pete Tye Hill and Old Cottage.

Pantiles Farm on Peldon Road is allocated as a Local Economic Area and will continue to be protected for this use. Any future development proposals will be required to comply with policy SG4.

## **Boxted**

- 6.136 Boxted is a rural parish located approximately 3km to the northeast of urban Colchester. Development in Boxted is currently concentrated within three distinct settlement areas: Boxted Cross, Workhouse Hill and Mill Road. These latter two settlement areas are not considered suitable locations for new growth as they have no community facilities and are not well served by public transport. Boxted Cross is considered to be a sustainable location for limited growth only as the few community facilities that Boxted does have are concentrated in this northern part of the parish. Like the rest of Boxted, this area also has limited access to public transport. Community facilities comprise a primary school, village hall, playing field, social club and community shop.
- 6.137 The Dedham Vale AONB abuts the northeastern edge of Boxted Cross settlement boundary in the vicinity of Cooks Lane. This restricts development opportunities northwards to ensure that the qualities of the Dedham Vale AONB are protected. Development is constrained to the northwest and west by arable land and land used as orchards/vineyard. Growth opportunities are constrained to the east by the sports and recreation ground and arable land. A local wildlife designation (Local Site Co136 Black Brook), is an extensive mosaic of habitats forming an important wildlife corridor on the eastern edge of Boxted Cross and represents a further constraint on development in this direction. Development southwards is also constrained due to the desire to prevent further ribbon development along Boxted Straight Road leading to the coalescence of settlements and to discourage further housing away from existing village services and facilities.
- 6.138 Boxted Parish Council has produced a Neighbourhood Plan that covers the whole of the Parish and was made on 8 December 2016. The Neighbourhood Plan sets out a policy framework the wider Parish that all future development proposals in Boxted will have to accord with, now that the Neighbourhood Plan has been made. Development proposals will also be required to comply with Local Plan policies where relevant and outside of the scope of the Boxted Neighbourhood Plan.

### **Policy SS2: Boxted**

All development proposals in Boxted parish will be determined against and be required to comply with policies in the Boxted Neighbourhood Plan and any relevant Local Plan policies.

- 6.139 There are two Local Economic Areas on Boxted Straight Road. Development proposals affecting these sites will be required to comply with policy SG4.

## **Chappel and Wakes Colne**

- 6.140 Chappel and Wakes Colne are two parishes located 7km to the northwest of Colchester separated by the A1124 (Colchester to Halstead road) and the River Colne. Although separate Parishes they have a close inter-dependency in respect of shared community facilities split between the two settlements either side of the A1124.
- 6.141 Chappel has one core settlement area with three remote/dispersed small clusters of housing at Rose Green, Swan Street and Wakes Street. Wakes Colne is also the main settlement area with smaller dispersed clusters of housing around Inworth Lane and at Middle Green.
- 6.142 Despite being two distinct villages, both provide an important community function in terms of the provision of local services which all residents use and benefit from including the railway station at Wakes Colne. The main part of Chappel has a village shop, post office, primary school and pub.
- 6.143 A site in Chappel, to the east of Chappel Hill and to the south of the Swan Grove development is considered suitable for some limited development. This site is well located relative to the existing facilities in Chappel and within walking distance of the train station in Wakes Colne. This site could deliver 30 units which is considered appropriate given the available services in Chappel and Wakes Colne and the capacity based on constraints and opportunities. Chappel and Wakes Colne is served by Earls Colne Water Recycling Centre which has sufficient headroom capacity to serve the proposed development.
- 6.144 Suitable screening/landscaping will be needed to replace any hedgerows removed to accommodate the development and to minimise any visual and landscape impacts. A single access should be provided via Swan Grove and development will need to provide a suitable pedestrian access from the site into Chappel. Good design will be needed to complement the existing built character and to protect the setting of Hill House, Martyn's Croft and Brook Hall which are all Grade II listed buildings.

### **Policy SS3: Chappel and Wakes Colne**

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in policy PP1, development will be supported on land within the area identified on the policies map which provides:

- (i) 30 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development; and
- (ii) A single site access via Swan Grove; and,
- (iii) A design and layout which complements the listed buildings and their setting.

## **Copford and Copford Green**

- 6.145 Copford represents an appropriate location for additional growth over the plan period given its proximity to Marks Tey train station, the A12/A120, and the main urban area of Colchester. To contribute to the continued sustainability of Copford two sites have been allocated for housing development over the plan period: land to the East of Queensberry Avenue north of London Road and land to the west of Hall Road, south of London Road. These sites will deliver an additional 120 houses by 2033.
- 6.146 Copford's close proximity to Marks Tey means that it is important to seek to prevent coalescence between the two settlements to ensure that both villages retain their individual identities. Development that would not represent a logical extension to the existing built up areas of Copford will be discouraged to prevent coalescence between settlements. Development will also be discouraged in the most northern part of the village, adjacent to the A12 to protect local amenity, and open spaces and to avoid land at risk from flooding. Growth will be discouraged to the east where the character is more rural/or is open countryside and to the south to discourage further development away from existing village services and facilities and to help protect the setting of Copford Green Conservation Area.
- 6.147 Wastewater and sewage infrastructure is over capacity and it will be necessary for these issues to be resolved prior to the start of development. Copford Primary School is also currently at capacity. Contributions will be sought to replace the temporary accommodation at the primary school to meet the increased demand that the new development will generate and to improve secondary school provision where a need is demonstrated.
- 6.148 Development of land to the east of Queensberry Avenue represents a sensible and logical extension to the existing built up area of Copford to the north of London Road. The site has been proposed for allocation for residential use, but the delivery of new extra care facilities at this location would also be supported, given its proximity to existing similar facilities to the north of London Road. Access to this site will be via Queensberry Avenue or London Road, where feasible. There is a Public Right of Way running along the western boundary of the site and development proposals will need to consider a permanent diversion or upgrade to the public footpath.
- 6.149 Good design will be needed to complement the existing built character, to provide suitable screening / landscaping, to replace any hedgerows removed to accommodate the development, to minimise visual impacts on the local landscape and to protect the setting of any Listed Buildings close to the development site.
- 6.150 Development of land to the west of Hall Road represents an appropriate extension to the existing built up area to the south of London Road. Development will need to provide suitable vehicular and pedestrian access between the site and London Road into Copford. Good design will be needed to complement the existing built character and to protect the setting of Brewers Cottage, Old Mill



House and Shrub House which are Grade II Listed Buildings. The land to the south of this site is in agricultural use, therefore suitable screening / landscaping will also be needed to replace any hedgerows removed to accommodate the development and to minimise any visual and landscape impacts. The proposed site is of potential archaeological significance. It is, therefore, likely that heritage assets of archaeological interest will be found, i.e. below-ground archaeological remains and site investigations will need to be completed prior to the start of development. Detailed flood modelling will also need to be completed to assess flood risk from the Roman River.

- 6.151 The potential archaeological significance of the site should be further explored, by way of a pre-determination evaluation (geophysical survey and trial trenching), before any decision is made as to whether all or part of the site would be acceptable for development. The Local Planning Authority will, on request, provide a brief for each stage of the archaeological evaluation.
- 6.152 There is a Water Recycling Centre located to the east of Copford village. Anglian Water has indicated that there are significant water supply and wastewater infrastructure capacity issues in Copford. To address this waste and water treatment from new developments in Copford will be directed to Colchester's Water Recycling Centre. As a precautionary approach, development of these sites cannot come forward until there is sufficient water supply, network capacity, wastewater treatment and sewage infrastructure capacity to cope with the two developments. Where this cannot be demonstrated it will be necessary to seek further advice from Anglian Water.

**Policy SS4: Copford**

**East of Queensberry Avenue**

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in policy PP1, development will be supported on land within the area identified on the policies map which provides:

- (i) 70 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development;
- (ii) Access via Queensberry Avenue and/or London Road;
- (iii) The permanent diversion and/or upgrade to the existing Public Right of Way which runs along the western boundary edge of the site.

**West of Hall Road**

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in policy PP1, development will be supported on land within the area identified on the policies map which provides:

- (i) Up to 50 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development;
- (ii) A single site access via Hall Road;
- (iii) Detailed flood modelling to assess flood risk at Hall Road from Roman River; and
- (iv) A safe pedestrian footway agreed with the Highways Authority from the site to London Road to enhance connectivity with Copford.

Development must conserve, and where appropriate, enhance the significance of heritage assets (including any contribution made by their settings). Designated heritage assets close to the two allocated sites include the Grade II Copford Place and stable, Brewers Cottage, Stanway Bridge and Brook Cottage.

## **Dedham**

- 6.153 Most of the Dedham parish area falls within the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The largest settlement within the parish is the historic village of Dedham to the north. The smaller settlement of Dedham Heath lies to the south of the parish along with two smaller clusters of properties to the west and east of Dedham Heath known as Lamb Corner and Bargate Lane, respectively.
- 6.154 Dedham village has a range of services and facilities, including its own primary school, a GP, Post Office and a number of shops and services. As such Dedham is designated as a Local Centre providing a range of small shops and services which meet the basic needs of local communities, in the rural north of the borough. The other settlement clusters within Dedham parish not only lack such essential services and facilities but also have limited safe walking and cycling access to them. Dedham village therefore is considered a sustainable settlement for the purposes of the spatial strategy but the other clusters of housing in Dedham Parish are not considered to be suitable to support further residential growth.
- 6.155 Despite Dedham village's status as a sustainable settlement, it is heavily constrained by its location within the AONB. Furthermore a lack of suitable and available development land means that no growth has been proposed for Dedham village during the plan period.
- 6.156 As well as being a service centre for surrounding villages, Dedham is also a popular tourist destination. At certain times the existing roads and car parks struggle to cope with the additional traffic and the Parish Council have indicated that they would support additional car parking. Applications which help address this issue will be supported where they meet other policy objectives.
- 6.157 Dedham Heath as a smaller settlement with limited sustainability is an Other Village in the spatial hierarchy and not therefore been identified for any additional growth. The two more remote clusters of residential development to the west and east of the Heath are within the countryside and as such are not sustainable locations for growth.

## **Eight Ash Green**

- 6.158 Eight Ash Green is a rural parish located approximately 6km to the northwest of urban Colchester. Within Eight Ash Green development is mainly concentrated around Fordham Heath and Choats Corner. There is also a small cluster of housing at Seven Star Green, located to the south of Halstead Road which separates these dwellings from the key facilities in Eight Ash Green village.
- 6.159 Despite being located approximately 5km from both Marks Tey and Colchester train stations, Eight Ash Green is considered a Sustainable Settlement as it has a reasonable number of local services and facilities which serve the needs of local residents. Local facilities include a village hall, three shops, a takeaway, convenience store, beauty salon and a pub. There is also a primary school located within the Choats Corner settlement boundary.
- 6.160 The Eight Ash Green Neighbourhood Plan was made in 2019. The Neighbourhood Plan allocates land to deliver 150 new dwellings at Fiddlers Field in Eight Ash Green over the Local Plan period.

### **Policy SS5: Eight Ash Green**

All development proposals in Eight Ash Green parish will be determined against and be required to comply with policies in the Eight Ash Green Neighbourhood Plan and any relevant Local Plan policies.

## **Fordham**

- 6.161 Fordham is identified as a sustainable settlement and is a linear village with a core concentration of development which has evolved over time, including a number of small estate type developments. Although spread out, it is well served by key community facilities including, a primary school, village hall and playing field. Also within the village is a community orchard maintained by the local community as well as an area of community woodland managed by the Woodland Trust.
- 6.162 The character of the village is influenced by a few significant listed buildings and their setting and the extensive areas of well established, locally managed woodland. It is important to protect and where possible enhance these characteristics. Small scale development adjacent to Plummers Road has recently delivered an attractive enhancement to the connectivity between this area and the rest of the village via a landscaped footway set back from the road. Further enhancement to connectivity through the village would be beneficial to existing and future residents.
- 6.163 Allocation of a site to the east of Plummers Road for additional small scale growth of up to 20 dwellings is considered a logical extension to the settlement. This provides for the continued sustainability of the key services in the village and accommodates an appropriate level of growth over the plan period. Development of this site will need to respond to particular site constraints including sensitive consideration in relation to the setting of a Listed Building.
- 6.164 Fordham Parish Council has indicated a wish to deliver a rural exception site in the village to provide housing for local people. Numbers and house types will be informed by a local housing needs survey. Land adjacent to the allocated site in Plummers Road may be a suitable location for the rural exception site. Due to the nature of rural exception sites, this development will be delivered outside the Local Plan process. Despite this, if two adjacent sites are brought forward there are benefits to planning them in a comprehensive manner, for example through shared highways access, community infrastructure, affordable housing delivery and complementary design. If a rural exception site is to be delivered on the adjacent site, a masterplan will be required which demonstrates how the allocated residential site will positively and comprehensively relate to any future rural exception site. The masterplan should accompany any planning application for residential uses in this area.
- 6.165 The proposed site is of potential archaeological significance. It is therefore likely that heritage assets of archaeological interest will be found, i.e. below-ground archaeological remains. This will require further investigation initially by way of pre-determination evaluation report. Decisions on the scale of development and also the need for, and scope of, any further archaeological work, should be based upon the results of this evaluation.

**Policy SS6: Fordham**

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in policy PP1, development will be supported on land within the area identified on the policies map which provides:

- (i) Up to 20 new dwellings, the mix and type to be informed by evidence including the Fordham Housing Needs Survey and archaeological evaluation;
- (ii) Access from Plummers Road with appropriate junction improvements;
- (iii) A new footway along the frontage/behind the existing hedgerow to provide safe pedestrian access from the site linking with existing footways and the rest of the village;
- (iv) Conserve, and where appropriate, enhance the significance of heritage assets (including any contribution made by their settings). Designated heritage assets close to the site include the Grade II Plummers Farmhouse, Grade II Thrifts Cottage and Plummers Green Monument.

## **Great Horkesley**

- 6.166 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). Development has spread westwards along a number of roads off the main road. 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 is a primary school, new village hall, church and dental surgery within the main village and a petrol station, post office, shop, scout hut and the old village hall, as well as a number of public houses along the A134.
- 6.167 Great Horkesley's close proximity to the main Colchester urban area means that it is important to seek to prevent coalescence between the southern edge of Great Horkesley and the northern edge of Colchester in order to retain the individual identity of the village. Development that would not represent a logical extension to the existing built up area will be discouraged in order to prevent further ribbon development to the north along the A134 and to the west; away from existing village services and facilities and where it is more rural in character.
- 6.168 Infrastructure in the village is at capacity and will need to be improved / enhanced to support any new development. Requirements include new allotments, enhanced community buildings and a new scout hut. Improvements will also be sought to the A134 between the village and North Colchester to promote walking and cycling and to improve accessibility to services and facilities in Myland.
- 6.169 Land at Great Horkesley Manor represents a logical extension to the village between existing dwellings at the heart of the village and development would be contained within the wider landscape by a belt of trees and small brook to the east. Access will be from Nayland Road (A134) and access points will need to be kept to a minimum to avoid disrupting the flow of traffic along this busy main road. Footways, suitable traffic management and crossing opportunities will be needed as development will require school pupils to cross the main road. Appropriate design and landscaping will be required to preserve the setting of the existing manor building and the tree-lined approach road from the main road. Whilst the existing manor building is not listed it is considered to be a visually prominent local building set within large, open grounds, the character of which should be protected. There is an area of low/ medium risk of surface water flooding along the eastern boundary of the site. Site layouts should take this into account to ensure that flood risk is not increased.
- 6.170 Land off School Lane to the north of the village offers the opportunity for a small development which includes the redevelopment of a brownfield site, improved access to the old village hall and improvements to the scout hut. The site includes a listed building and care will need to be taken to safeguard its setting. The existing scout hut is in poor condition and development proposals should look to replace and/or contribute to its relocation.

## **Policy SS7: Great Horkesley**

### **Great Horkesley Manor**

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in policy PP1, development will be supported on land within the area identified on the policies map which provides:

- (i) 80 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing for which there is a demonstrated need;
- (ii) Provision of allotments;
- (iii) Contributions to enhancing community buildings;
- (iv) Provision of a scout hut with parking;
- (v) Retention of the belt of trees to the east of the site;
- (vi) Access from Nayland Road;
- (vii) Contributions towards improving walking and cycling facilities along the A134; and
- (viii) Provision of footways and suitable traffic management and crossing opportunities on Nayland Road.

Any proposals will also take into account 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 extraction be proven, the mineral shall be worked in accordance with a scheme/masterplan as part of the phased delivery of the non-mineral development.

### **School Lane**

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in policy PP1, development will be supported on land within the area identified on the policies map which provides:

- (i) 13 new dwellings;
- (ii) Development will facilitate access to the old village hall and either contribute to the replacement of the scout hut or to the enhancement of community buildings other than the old village hall;
- (iii) Access from School Lane;
- (iv) Development must conserve, and where appropriate, enhance the significance of heritage assets (including any contribution made by their settings). Designated heritage assets close to the site include the Grade II Church of England School, School House and Oak Cottage.

The designated Local Economic Area at Holly Lodge Farm shown on the policies map will be retained and any future development proposals at this site will be required to accord with policy SG4.



## Great Tey

- 6.171 Great Tey is situated north of the Roman River and is a small rural community that contains a few local amenities including a village pub, a school, and a church. Bus services operate between Great Tey, Marks Tey railway station, Tollgate Retail Park and Colchester.
- 6.172 The RCCE completed a Rural Housing Needs Survey in 2012 which indicated a need for four affordable units. The Parish Council thus acknowledge a need for lower cost/smaller houses in the village to contribute to the continued sustainability of the key services in the village and accommodate an appropriate level of growth over the plan period, two sites for housing development are allocated in accordance with Policy SS8 below.
- 6.173 Land at Brook Road is capable of accommodating 10 dwellings. The number reflects the edge of settlement location, the adjacent Conservation Area and Listed Building and the desire for single storey dwellings with a larger land take. The site is adjacent to a listed building and a Conservation Area and care will need to be taken to safeguard its setting. There is also a Public Right of Way immediately adjacent to the site. Suitable footways will be needed to link the development with the rest of the village.
- 6.174 Land off Greenfield Drive is capable of accommodating 30 dwellings with access off Greenfield Road. The site is adjacent to the existing public open space and the opportunity will be sought to extend this open space as part of the proposal to provide for a wider range of facilities.
- 6.175 Great Tey Parish Council has confirmed that it intends to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for the village, which will determine how each of the sites allocated in this local plan will be developed. The Neighbourhood Plan will develop a policy framework to guide and meet the strategic policies in this Plan and for all other development or community needs identified in the village.

## **Policy SS8: Great Tey**

### **Land on Brook Road**

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in policy PP1, development will be supported on land within the area identified on the policies map which provides:

- (i) 10 new dwellings, which shall include single storey units;
- (ii) Suitable design and screening/landscaping to maintain and where possible enhance the character and setting of the adjacent Conservation Area and listed building (Rectory Cottage) including its setting.

### **Land off Greenfield Drive**

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in policy PP1, development will be supported on land within the policy area identified on the policies map which provides:

- (i) 30 new dwellings with pedestrian and cycle access off Greenfield Drive (Harvesters' Way and/or Farmfield Road) and vehicle access from Newbarn Road; and
- (ii) A minimum of 1ha of public open space.
- (iii) The emerging Neighbourhood Plan is intended to shape the character of the development.

Tey Brook Farm is an allocated Local Economic Area as shown on the policies map and will be protected for this use. Any future development proposals will be required to comply with Policy SG4.

## Langham

- 6.176 Langham includes two settlements, 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 along with more recent development.
- 6.177 Langham has a number of facilities including a community centre and shop, public house and a primary school. Langham has limited access to public transport. Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty adjoins the village to the east, although it is separated by the A12.
- 6.178 Langham is considered an appropriate location for limited development. Accordingly, three small sites have been allocated. Approximately 10 dwellings are appropriate on Land at Wick Road in keeping with the existing detached housing adjoining and opposite. Land at Wick Road abuts the former airfield and development will need to have regard to both its landscape character and connectivity to existing footways.
- 6.179 Land at School Road represents a logical extension to the village as it lies between existing housing and employment sites and is well located for the school and community centre/shop. Two sites are allocated there providing a total of 70 dwellings, a school car park and extension to the playing fields. Whilst the Parish Council favour frontage development there is potential on these sites for an estate or green approach to layout given that they are at the heart of the village. Both sites abut the former airfield, and development would need to have regard to both its landscape character and connectivity to existing footways.
- 6.180 The 2016 Water Cycle Study identified a lack of head room capacity at the Langham Water Recycling Centre (WRC). With regards to wastewater, the report also identified the need for upgrades at the Langham Water Recycling Centre (WRC) to enable it to accept all wastewater flows from the proposed development. Discussions are underway between the Local Planning Authority, the Environment Agency and Anglian Water to resolve the above issues.
- 6.181 A joint Position Statement is currently being prepared between The Local Planning Authority, the Environment Agency and Anglian Water. The Position Statement will identify water and sewage capacity shortfalls at the Langham WRC, infrastructure upgrades needed to address these, consider the need for a review of current licences/permits and recommend any further changes needed to the policy SS9.
- 6.182 The Water Cycle Study also identified water quality issues in the receiving water bodies feeding into the Stour Estuary. This has been further considered in the Appropriate Assessment completed as part of the evidence base of the Local Plan. Any proposed WRC infrastructure upgrades and/or permit reviews identified in the Position Statement provide the mitigation needed to ensure that quality of the water bodies feeding the Stour do not deteriorate further as a result of development in Langham. The delivery of wastewater and sewage infrastructure

upgrades specified in policy PP1 will be essential in Langham as they are required as mitigation to ensure compliance with the Habitats Regulations 2010 (as amended).

### **Policy SS9: Langham**

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in policy PP1 developers could be required to demonstrate the impact of their proposals on the strategic and local transport networks, including the cumulative impact of multiple developments (in line with national guidance). Development should not commence until adequate wastewater and sewage treatment capacity is available to serve the new housing.

Development on land shown the Policies Map will be supported where they meet the requirements identified below for each site;

#### **Wick Road**

Development will be supported provides:

- (i) 10 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development;

Development must conserve, and where appropriate, enhance the significance of heritage assets (including any contribution made by their settings). Designated heritage assets close to the site includes the Grade II New House.

#### **School Road**

Development will be supported which provides:

- (i) 70 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing for which there is a demonstrated need, including smaller family homes and sheltered housing;
  - One site to the east of the Powerplus site to accommodate 40 dwellings plus a car park for the school;
  - One site to the west of the Powerplus site to accommodate 30 dwellings plus an extension to the adjacent recreation ground;
- (ii) A landscape Appraisal which will then inform appropriate design and suitable screening/landscaping to minimise any negative impact on the surrounding landscape, including visual screening around the School Road employment site and;
- (iii) A design and layout which protects and enhances the listed buildings including their setting including suitable screening/landscaping. Development must conserve, and where appropriate, enhance the significance of heritage assets (including any contribution made by their settings). Designated heritage assets close to the site includes the Grade II School Farmhouse.

The Powerplus Engineering and Whitnell Contractors site on School Road, Langham Airfield (Lodge Lane) and The Depot, Old Ipswich Road, in Langham are designated Local Economic Areas as shown on the policies map. The sites will remain allocated, including an extension to Lodge Lane, and any future development proposals at this location will be required to accord with policy SG4.

## **Layer de la Haye**

- 6.183 Layer de la Haye is an historic village, located approximately 2.5km southwest of the Colchester urban area. The village is well served by community facilities including a primary school, village shop, GP surgery, public open space at New Cut and Malting Green, and two public houses. Layer de la Haye is also well connected to Colchester by road with several bus stops providing public transport to residents.
- 6.184 Layer de la Haye is therefore considered a sustainable settlement and suitable for some additional residential growth over the plan period. However the GP surgery is currently at capacity and ECC has indicated that the school will require investment in the coming years to maintain its current capacity. Therefore new development will be required to contribute to this local infrastructure to mitigate the impact of additional residents in the village.
- 6.185 Land has been identified for residential growth for up to 35 dwellings on land adjacent The Folley. This site is in a location which integrates well with the existing settlement by utilising existing screening features and new open space can be delivered without detrimental impact on neighbouring residents and the surrounding landscape. In addition to contributing towards existing infrastructure, new development will also provide new facilities on site including areas of open space, an equipped children's play area and a footpath connecting new dwellings to existing village facilities.
- 6.186 Layer de la Haye Parish Council has carried out a local housing needs survey which has demonstrated a need for up to eight new affordable homes for occupation by existing residents or by those with a close connection to the village. Land has been identified which could accommodate a rural exception site to provide for this local need adjacent the residential allocation mentioned above. Due to the nature of rural exception sites, this development will be delivered outside the Local Plan process. Despite this, there are benefits to planning the two sites in a comprehensive manner, for example through shared highways access, community infrastructure, affordable housing delivery and complementary design. If a rural exception site is to be delivered on the adjacent site, a masterplan will be required which demonstrates how the allocated residential site will positively and comprehensively relate to any future rural exception site. If the sites are developed concurrently, the affordable housing provided for on the exception site will be discounted from the overall requirements for affordable housing on the allocated site. The masterplan should accompany any planning application for residential uses in this area. It will also be required that the overall provision shall not exceed 50 dwellings.

**Policy SS10: Layer de la Haye**

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in policy PP1, development will be supported on land within the area identified on the policies map which provides:

- (i) At least 35 new dwellings of a mix and type compatible with surrounding development, to include bungalows and small family homes;
- (ii) Primary highways access to serve the development from Great House Farm Road with secondary, non-thoroughfare access, from The Folley to serve a limited number of dwellings;
- (iii) New areas of public open space, to include an equipped children's play area; and
- (iv) A masterplan demonstrating how the development will positively and comprehensively relate to the future delivery of a rural exceptions site on adjacent land.

Any proposals will also take into account 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 extraction be proven, the mineral shall be worked in accordance with a scheme/masterplan as part of the phased delivery of the non-mineral development.

Before granting planning consent, wintering bird surveys will be undertaken at the appropriate time of year to identify any offsite functional habitat. 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.

## Marks Tey

- 6.187 Marks Tey is located at the busy junction of the A12 with the A120. Marks Tey is essentially a linear settlement that, while being sustainably located has been fragmented by the railway and A12/A120. Its good range of facilities are provided in different sections of the village with a railway station providing an interchange between mainline to London and branch services to the east, a larger area of modern housing, village hall, and the primary school to the west and retail facilities to the south of the A12.
- 6.188 Development constraints in Marks Tey include the community separation resulting from the two roads and the rail line running through the village, with only limited pedestrian accessibility currently possible over these barriers. The northeast is affected by environmental constraints including the head of the Roman River valley and associated flood risk. Any development in the area will be required to deliver SuDs to manage the risk from surface water management. In addition there may be a need for contributions towards sewage infrastructure capacity which will depend upon the scale of development which is delivered in. In addition there is a minerals and waste safeguarding zone around the historic brickworks, which is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Marks Tey also contains a significant number of grade II listed buildings, including the scheduled brick kilns and the Grade I Church of St Andrew which would need to be protected and enhanced as part of any development proposals.
- 6.189 The road infrastructure in the area is to be further developed over the plan period. The A12 is programmed in the Road Investment Strategy for widening between junction 19 at northeast Chelmsford and junction 25 at Marks Tey. Consultation on A120 route improvements between Braintree and the A12 ended in March 2017. ECC has identified a favoured route which has been recommended to Highways England and the Department of Transport. In March 2020 the government announced its Road Investment Strategy (RIS2) which included a commitment to progressing further development work on the A120 dualling to prepare the scheme for delivery. The scheme will be considered for inclusion in the RIS3 programme (2025-2030) and is now considered a pipeline project to be progressed by Highways England.
- 6.190 Future development of the area will be guided by the Neighbourhood Plan being developed by Marks Tey Parish Council.
- 6.191 The site known as Anderson's will be retained as a Local Employment Area having been reviewed as part of the Council's evidence update on employment.



**Policy SS11: Marks Tey**

Growth within the Marks Tey area will largely be guided by the following documents in addition to this Local Plan:

- (i) The Marks Tey Neighbourhood Plan will provide flexibility, including the scope for the allocation of any small parcels of land for development to be considered in the Neighbourhood Plan at the appropriate time.

The Anderson's site is allocated as a Local Economic Area as shown on the Policies Map.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the generic Neighbourhood Planning policy SG8.

## **Mersea Island**

- 6.192 West Mersea is a small coastal town located on the confluence of the Colne and Blackwater Estuaries approximately 15km from the centre of Colchester Town. West Mersea is the larger of two settlements on Mersea Island, the other being the much smaller village of East Mersea. Early development in West Mersea was concentrated around the harbour and nearby oyster pits to the southwest of the island. Development has since expanded to the north and west.
- 6.193 West Mersea is a District Centre with a high number of key services and community facilities. There are two supermarkets, a primary school a community centre, as well as a range of independent shops, cafes and restaurants but no secondary school. These services support the needs of local residents and businesses on Mersea as well as communities from the surrounding rural areas in the south of the Borough. It will be important to protect the function of the District Centre in Mersea to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the local coastal communities who use it. There are frequent bus routes serving the town to and from Colchester and serving the local secondary schools. Accordingly, West Mersea is considered to be a sustainable settlement suitable for growth during the plan period.
- 6.194 West Mersea Town Council is currently preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the town, which will determine how each of the sites allocated in this local plan will be developed. Given the current number of dwellings in West Mersea and the range of available facilities on the Island, it is considered that an appropriate level of growth across the plan period would see the delivery of approximately 200 dwellings. The Neighbourhood Plan will develop a policy framework to guide and meet the strategic policies in this Plan and for all other development or community needs identified in the town. Accordingly, the Dawes Road allocation incorporates residential and open space allocations and the Brierley Paddocks site is shown as mixed use to provide flexibility to respond to the content of the Neighbourhood plan. As well as delivering 100 dwellings and open space this site could deliver community facilities for new and existing residents if a need is identified in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.195 The Parish of East Mersea is a smaller settlement situated on the eastern side of Mersea Island. It comprises a small cluster of dwellings and a limited range of community facilities. It is also home to Cudmore Grove Country Park which is very popular with visitors at weekends and in the holidays. Due to its size and limited facilities, East Mersea is not considered a sustainable location to accommodate substantial additional growth and is defined as an Other Village in the spatial hierarchy to reflect the important community function the village provides.

**Policy SS12a: West Mersea**

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in policy PP1, development will be supported on land within the areas identified on the policies map which contributes towards expanding Mersea Island Primary School, provides suitable landscaping to screen the development to minimise any negative impact on the surrounding landscape and protect the open rural character of land within the Coastal Protection Belt, and meets the requirements for each site indicated below. Housing on both sites should address local needs which will be detailed in the Neighbourhood Plan but are likely to include starter homes and single storey dwellings.

**Dawes Lane**

Development will be supported which provides:

- (i) 100 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development;
- (ii) Public Open Space, including sports pitches;
- (iii) Children's play area/land for a sports pavilion if identified in the Neighbourhood Plan;
- (iv) A single site access off Dawes Lane.

**Brierley Paddocks**

Development will be supported which provides:

- (i) 100 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development;
- (ii) A satisfactory vehicular access;
- (iii) New public open space; and
- (iv) Community facilities if identified in the Neighbourhood Plan.

There are three existing designated Local Economic Areas in Mersea as shown on the policies map that will continue to be safeguarded for this use. Any future development proposals at these sites will be required to comply with policies SG4.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the generic Neighbourhood Planning Policy SG8 and the West Mersea Neighbourhood Plan, once adopted.

## **Coast Road, West Mersea**

- 6.196 The coastal area of the Borough around Mersea Island is an extremely rich, diverse and irreplaceable natural asset in terms of its natural and cultural features. It includes substantial parts of the Colne and Blackwater Estuaries. The ecological importance of the Colne and Blackwater Estuaries is reflected by the variety of international and European designations covering them i.e. Ramsar sites, Special Protection Areas (Birds Directive), and the Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designated under the Habitats Directive. There are also a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest designated along the estuaries. Accordingly, proposals along Coast Road will need to be screened for likely significant effects on adjacent habitats sites in accordance with Habitats Regulations 2010 (as amended).
- 6.197 Tourism makes an important contribution to both the local Mersea economy and the wider Borough economy. As a consequence, there are a number of diverse and competing interests which all need to be managed in an integrated way within the Borough's coastal zone. These include internationally important habitats, land and water-based recreation, tourism, fishing, archaeological and historic environment assets.
- 6.198 Climate change including sea level rise is also likely to increase pressure regarding the management of coastal habitats and coastal communities along the Borough's coastal fringe.
- 6.199 Future development proposals will have to balance the need to protect the important natural and cultural assets at the coast against competing development pressures and the need to support wider socio-economic needs of the Borough's coastal communities.
- 6.200 Development proposals on the landward and seaward side of Coast Road will have to further balance these issues against the need to protect and enhance the traditional maritime character of this part of West Mersea. Sequentially preferred maritime related uses which could be supported along Coast Road include boatyards, boat restoration business; ancillary uses related to boating, sailing, chandlers, fishing, specialised fish restaurants and shops, fish cookery schools and water based leisure businesses. Proposals for additional residential development on Coast Road will generally not be considered suitable or sustainable and will only be supported on upper floors where sequentially preferred maritime related uses have been discounted in agreement with the Local Planning Authority.
- 6.201 The current Essex and South Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan has shown that the West Mersea coastal frontage is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and coastal processes. Future land uses and developments along the coastal frontage will be required to demonstrate the ability to adopt a roll back approach in response to changing local climatic conditions.

**Policy SS12b: Coast Road, West Mersea**

Development proposals on the seaward and landward side of Coast Road, West Mersea, will be supported where they:

- (i) Are located within the area defined as the developed coast and the development is such that a coastal location is required;
- (ii) Enhance heritage assets, maritime uses, the traditional maritime character of Coast Road and the landscape character of the coast;
- (iii) Can demonstrate no likely significant effects on adjacent Habitats sites and, where appropriate, provide mitigation in accordance with the Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS);
- (iv) Will deliver or sustain social and economic benefits considered important to the wellbeing of the coastal communities;
- (v) Will not generate a significant increase in traffic; and
- (vi) Represent an appropriate use with regards to flood risk.

Proposals for all development and change of use on both the landward and seaward side of Coast Road will be expected to enhance the West Mersea Conservation Area and the traditional maritime character of Coast Road, as well as its role as a major yachting, fishing and boating centre. Proposals that would result in the development of existing undeveloped areas of foreshore will not generally be supported unless they accord with criteria in the Coastal Areas policy ENV2.

In exceptional circumstances, development may be permitted where it is proven that the proposal provides an over-whelming public or community benefit that outweighs all other material considerations. In such instances applications must demonstrate that the site is the only available option and be acceptable in terms of its other planning merits.

**Houseboats** - Proposals for new moorings for permanent residential houseboats will not be permitted in coastal areas including Coast Road because of their landscape and environmental impact on the internationally designated habitats. Houseboat proposals for new moorings on historical vacant sites or houseboats of historical maritime significance, may be acceptable, subject to an installation method statement being submitted which avoids impacts to saltmarsh habitats and which satisfy 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.

### **Caravan Parks**

- 6.202 There are six caravan/holiday parks on Mersea Island; Firs Chase, Waldegraves, Seaview, Coopers Beach, Mersea Island Holiday Park and Fen Farm. As these are leisure businesses, the caravans and chalets at the caravan parks should only be used as short-term holiday accommodation and not for permanent residential use. Where evidence is provided, that people are living in any of the caravan parks on Mersea on a permanent basis, the Local Planning Authority will take appropriate action.
- 6.203 The Local Planning Authority recognises the valuable contribution that the caravan parks make to the supply of holiday accommodation for visitors to Mersea and the rest of the Borough. They are also an important element of the local tourism industry and their retention and improvement is generally supported.
- 6.204 Caravan Parks are under increasing pressure to extend both the length of their opening season and also the range of activities and events operating on the sites to help sustain their business. This has the potential to impact on Mersea residents and sensitive habitats sites and any resulting need to be carefully managed.
- 6.205 The caravan parks on Mersea are located adjacent to internationally designated habitats sites and because of their coastal frontage locations can be potentially vulnerable to increased risk from flooding. As an important tourist destination, the protection of the EU designated bathing waters around Mersea is an important consideration. All tourism related development proposals including the extension of caravan parks will have to demonstrate that there is adequate wastewater and sewage treatment infrastructure in place to serve the proposed development to help protect EU designated coastal bathing waters and to satisfy EU Water Framework Directive requirements. As part of this process applicants should consult with the Environment Agency and Anglian Water at an early stage in the planning application process to ensure that sewage disposal options are fully considered.
- 6.206 All coastal tourism developments must also be sensitive to and integrate well with their sensitive coastal environment and surrounding rural landscape and respect the special characteristics of the Coastal Protection Belt defined on the policies map.
- 6.207 All future development proposals at holiday parks on Mersea located adjacent to designated habitats Sites will only be supported where a sympathetic development approach is followed. It must be demonstrated that proposals will not result in likely significant effects on the habitats Sites and where necessary appropriate mitigation measures implemented to minimise environmental impacts on neighbouring habitats sites. Mitigation proposals will need to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority and Natural England prior to development commencing.

6.208 Extensions to existing caravan parks should not impact on the amenity of residents living and working in close proximity to the parks, through increased noise or light pollution. Proposals should promote a range of measures to encourage sustainable travel for leisure to help mitigate and reduce the impact of leisure related traffic on Mersea Island.

6.209 Sites allocated as Caravan Parks as shown on the policies map will be safeguarded for this use against other less appropriate types of development.

**Policy SS12c: Mersea Island Caravan Parks**

Development proposals at caravan parks on Mersea Island, including change of use, intensification of an existing use, or change in activities on site will only be supported where they meet all of the following criteria:

- (i) Have adequate wastewater treatment and sewage infrastructure capacity to serve the caravan park and to protect the EU designated coastal bathing water quality and to help meet EU Water Framework Directive requirements;
- (ii) Help protect the integrity of habitats sites and minimise disturbance to designated breeding and wintering species using the sites. Any future extensions to caravan parks will require their own HRA and where required appropriate assessment;
- (iii) Minimise impact on the amenity of residents or businesses living or operating near the site;
- (iv) Are supported with a Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment and Flood Management and Flood Evacuation Plan; and
- (v) Are supported by measures to promote sustainable travel for leisure on Mersea.

Permission will not be granted for caravans or chalets at the caravan parks to be used as permanent residences. They should only be used for holiday accommodation at all times.

All caravan park proposals should be supported by a site specific Flood Risk Assessment and Flood Management and Evacuation Plan. Proposals for caravan extensions in flood zone 3 will not generally be supported due to the increased risk to people and property from coastal flooding.

## Rowhedge

- 6.210 Rowhedge is situated to the southeast of Colchester on the western banks of the River Colne; it is the only settlement in the parish of East Donyland.
- 6.211 The village has a strong sense of identity which is emphasised by a conservation area at its core and a number of listed buildings, predominately on the riverfront. Rowhedge benefits from its own primary school, GP surgery, village shop, public houses and public open space provision. However due to its history as a fishing village the settlement has grown from the port outwards and this has resulted in new development being situated further away from Rowhedge's historic centre where many of its limited services and facilities are located.
- 6.212 Rowhedge is bordered by the River Colne to the east, and the surrounding land's estuarine nature gives rise to a number of ecological designations which run along the coast and inland to the south of the village. The north of the village is separated from the urban area of Colchester by a relatively short, but nonetheless valuable, expanse of greenfield land. In addition to providing a valuable buffer between Rowhedge and Colchester, much of this land is designated as Coastal Protection Belt because of its high landscape value.
- 6.213 The commenced development at Rowhedge Wharf and the exceptional constraints to expansion surrounding the village renders Rowhedge unsuitable for extensive new development. However redevelopment of Rowhedge Business Centre offers an opportunity to convert low value and underused storage land with limited employment use into new housing in a sustainable location with low landscape impact. Provision of a new healthcare facility is currently being explored by North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group, however, no infrastructure has yet been formally approved for this community in isolation.

### **Policy SS13: Rowhedge**

In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified in policy PP1, development will be supported on land within the area identified on the policies map which provides:

- (i) 40 new dwellings of a mix and type compatible with the surrounding area including affordable housing in line with adopted policy;
- (ii) Ecological and arboricultural assessments of the site and mitigation as required; and
- (iii) An area of open space between the site and existing housing which will include protection of trees deemed as valuable in the arboricultural assessment.



## **Tiptree**

- 6.214 Tiptree is a large village located on the southwest boundary of the Borough and approximately 15km from Colchester itself. 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.
- 6.215 Tiptree is a District Centre with a high number of key services and community facilities. There are two supermarkets, 4 primary schools, a secondary school, a community centre, 1 GP surgery, as well as a range of independent shops, cafes and restaurants. These services support the needs of local residents and businesses in Tiptree as well as communities from the surrounding rural areas. It will be important to protect the function of the District Centre in Tiptree to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the local communities who use it. There are regular bus routes serving the village to and from Colchester Accordingly, Tiptree is considered to be a sustainable settlement suitable for growth during the plan period.
- 6.216 Tiptree is very well served in terms of educational facilities as it has four primary schools and Thurstable Secondary School within the village. There is also a Leisure Centre located at Thurstable School and Colchester United's training ground is located off Grange Road. There are four Local Economic Areas in Tiptree.
- 6.217 There are a number of constraints which limit the amount of land available for growth in Tiptree. Development to the southeast is constrained by Tiptree Jam Factory and Birch Wood Local Wildlife Site. Development in this direction would also reduce the green gap between the village and Tolleshunt Knights. Developing in this direction would also be constrained by Layer Brook which is Flood Zone 2. Expansion to the northeast of Tiptree is constrained by Thurstable School and Warriors Rest while expansion to the southwest is constrained by Tiptree Heath SSSI and Inworth Grange and Brook Meadows Local Wildlife Site.
- 6.218 Tiptree Parish Council is currently preparing a Neighbourhood Plan which will allocate sites for further growth in the Parish. In discussion with the Neighbourhood Plan Group, it has been agreed that Tiptree will deliver 600 new dwellings over the plan period given the current number of dwellings in Tiptree, the good availability and access to services and facilities, and the fact that Tiptree is a District Centre. This is considered an appropriate level of growth for Tiptree.
- 6.219 Infrastructure necessary to deliver the growth up to 2033 will need to consider cross boundary issues with neighbouring Local Planning Authorities and neighbouring Parishes. This will include acknowledgement of the additional traffic generation forecasts for the proposed new junction 24 onto the A12 as well as from the growth locations. With the northern growth location there is potential for a new road which would ultimately link the B1022 and B1023. The Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan will be expected to deliver the first phases of the road through a design which allows future completion/linkage.

6.220 Following the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan examination which concluded in October 2020, it was recommended that the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan could not proceed to referendum. The Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan Working Group are preparing a revised draft plan which will include site allocation(s) and be subject to further public consultation. The Plan will allocate final site boundaries and will include a policy framework to support the delivery of a minimum of 400 houses up to 2033 and to guide all other planning issues in the village. The Plan will be subject to examination and referendum prior to being made.

### **Barbrook Lane**

6.221 Planning Permission has been granted for up to 200 dwellings at Barbrook Lane. It is expected that these dwellings will be delivered during the Plan Period. The extent of the application site is reflected on Policy Map SS14 as an existing commitment. Within the site area there will be provision for public open space as well as land reserved for future education purposes as shown on the policies map.

#### **Policy SS14: Tiptree**

Within the preferred directions of growth shown on the Tiptree policies map, to the southwest and north/northwest, subject to existing constraints, the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan will:

- (i) Define the extent of a new settlement boundary for Tiptree;
- (ii) Allocate specific sites for housing allocations to deliver a minimum of 400 dwellings;
- (iii) Set out any associated policies needed to support this housing delivery i.e. housing mix, type of housing and density for each site allocated for housing;
- (iv) Set out the policy framework within the parish to guide the delivery of any infrastructure/community facilities required to support the development in accordance with the requirements of Policies SG7 and PP1. This will include a strategic transport appraisal with a view to confirming provision of phased delivery of a road between the B1022 and B1023;
- (v) Consider cross boundary issues;
- (vi) Identify other allocations in the Parish, including employment and open space.

Proposals for development outside of the settlement boundary, or settlement boundary defined by the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan once adopted, will not be supported. This policy should be read in conjunction with the generic Neighbourhood Planning policy SG8, policy SG3 and policies in the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan, once it has been adopted.

Before granting planning consent, wintering bird surveys will be undertaken at the appropriate time of year to identify any offsite functional habitat. 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.

- 6.222 There are currently four designated Local Economic Areas (LEAs) in Tiptree; the Alexander Cleghorn Site, Tiptree Jam Factory, the Basketworks Site and the Tower Business Park. These will continue to be protected for employment purposes. Any development proposals affecting these sites or any other sites providing an economic/employment use in Tiptree over the Local Plan period will be required to comply with policy SG4 unless they are reviewed and amended through the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan.

## West Bergholt

- 6.223 West Bergholt is a rural parish located approximately 1km to the northwest of Colchester. It is considered a Sustainable Settlement as it has a sufficient population base and a range of community facilities and infrastructure to support appropriate growth which can be physically accommodated in West Bergholt without compromising the existing settlement shape, form and character.
- 6.224 There are a number of constraints which restrict the availability of sites suitable for development. To maintain the current settlement pattern, development will continue to be located around the three main roads with facilities located centrally where possible.
- 6.225 There is currently limited inter-visibility between Colchester and West Bergholt. However, there is a relatively high potential for visual coalescence of settlements and any new built development on land to the south of the village may undermine the sense of settlement separation. Development to the south of the village towards Colchester on Colchester Road is therefore not considered suitable due to the high potential of visual coalescence.
- 6.226 Development to the north of the village on Colchester Road/Nayland Road would extend new development away from existing key facilities and into open countryside, which is not considered sustainable.
- 6.227 The West Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan was made in 2019. It sets out the planning policy framework needed to support the delivery of 120 houses to 2033 and to guide and meet all other development or community needs identified by the community in West Bergholt.
- 6.228 Pattens Yard in West Bergholt is allocated as a Local Economic Area. This site will remain allocated for this use and any future planning applications will be required to accord with policy SG4. Any development proposals affecting this site or any other sites providing an economic/employment use in West Bergholt over the Local Plan period will be required to comply with policy SG4.

### **Policy SS15: West Bergholt**

All development proposals in West Bergholt parish will be determined against and be required to comply with policies in the West Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan and any relevant Local Plan policies.

## Wivenhoe

- 6.229 Originally Wivenhoe comprised two separate settlements: Wivenhoe Cross which was centred on the crossroads of Colchester Road, Rectory Road and The Avenue; and Wivenhoe to the south which was centred on the quay. More recent development has resulted in the coalescence of these two distinct settlements into one.
- 6.230 Since the 1970's growth has included significant 'estate' development including Dene Park during the 1970s; Broomgrove to the west in the 1970/80s; Ferry Marsh in the 2000's and most recently Cooks Shipyard.
- 6.231 The town 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. This is reflected in the designation of the town as Rural District Centre. There are also frequent bus services between Wivenhoe and Colchester and a cycle path between Wivenhoe, and the University of Essex has recently been built. There is a well-used footpath and cycle route to Colchester along the River Colne (the Wivenhoe Trail), which increases the sustainable nature of the settlement and makes it suitable for additional future growth within the Local Plan period.
- 6.232 An additional 250 dwellings will be delivered in Wivenhoe by 2033. This is an appropriate number of new dwellings along with a number of new dwellings within the parish which will be allocated in the Colchester/ Tendring Borders Garden Community. There are a number of constraints which has influenced the amount of growth considered appropriate for Wivenhoe.
- 6.233 Broomgrove and Millfields schools are both operating at capacity but are currently accepting a small number of pupils from outside of Wivenhoe. There is not a secondary school within Wivenhoe with most children attending the Colne Academy in Brightlingsea or Colchester Academy in Greenstead. Wivenhoe is bordered by the River Colne to the west and south. In addition to the physical boundary that the river presents, there are also other associated constraints such as flood risk zone 3 areas, SSSI, Special Protection Area and the Coastal Protection Belt, which reduces the availability of suitable sites for new development.
- 6.234 The Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan was made in 2019. The Plan sets out the planning policy framework needed to support the delivery of 250 houses up to 2033. The Neighbourhood Plan also allocates sites for other uses identified by the local community as being important in Wivenhoe and develops the policy framework needed to support any such allocations.

**Policy SS16: Wivenhoe**

The Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan has been made and:

- (i) Identifies the settlement boundary for Wivenhoe;
- (ii) Identifies specific sites for housing allocations needed to deliver 250 dwellings with additional land for a care home outside the settlement boundary at the housing allocation, at Land Behind the Fire Station, Colchester Road, should an appropriate scheme be forthcoming;
- (iii) Sets out policies needed to support this housing delivery i.e. housing mix, type of housing and density for each site allocated for housing;
- (iv) Identifies other allocations in the Parish, including employment and open space; and
- (v) Identifies the infrastructure requirements to support new development.

Proposals for development outside of the settlement boundary will not be supported unless the Neighbourhood Plan or other Local Plan policy specifically allows for it.

All development proposals in Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan Area will be determined against and be required to comply with policies in the Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan and any relevant Local Plan policies.

## **Other Villages and Countryside**

- 6.235 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF recognises that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. Settlement boundaries 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 hierarchy (Policy SG1 and Table SG1) directs development to the most sustainable locations by defining different tiers for growth. In the first instance development is directed to the urban area of Colchester, which is the main location for jobs, housing, services and choice of means of transport. The second tier is the Garden Community and Sustainable Settlements. Other Villages and then Countryside are next. This approach was informed by evidence in the Settlement Boundary Review, which assessed the sustainability of each of the Borough's settlements, using criteria relating to the NPPF definition of sustainable development.
- 6.236 The Local Plan contributes to the economic dimension of sustainable development through the supply of employment land and retention of employment sites. Allocations and the strategy for future development ensures that development will be located at accessible locations where residents will have good access to employment opportunities and be in close proximity to regularly used services, facilities, shops, etc.
- 6.237 The Local Plan contributes to the social element of sustainable development through the allocation of 14,720 homes between 2017 and 2033, which meets the Borough's objectively assessed need for housing. Residential development in the countryside is not needed to contribute to the social element of sustainable development. Furthermore, residential development in the countryside would be functionally isolated. This would have a negative impact on the ability of residents to access social services and facilities.
- 6.238 The Local Plan contributes to the environmental element of sustainable development by protecting the Borough's landscape character, countryside and coast, and directing development to locations that reduce the need to travel and make sustainable travel a realistic option. Residential development in the countryside could adversely affect landscape character and the undeveloped nature of the countryside and coast. It would lead to reliance on the private car, increasing carbon emissions. Residential development in the countryside would have a negative impact on the environmental dimension of sustainable development.
- 6.239 National evidence indicates that villages in the catchment area of larger towns struggle to retain facilities, even when more housing is built. Colchester Town is the main provider of shopping, services, employment, and community facilities for the Borough as a whole. Elsewhere in the Borough, only Wivenhoe, Tiptree and West Mersea provide a sufficient level of shops, services and employment to maintain a reasonable level of self-containment. In general, rural communities do

not provide sufficient employment opportunities, shops, services and facilities to support significant growth.

6.240 Settlements within the Other Villages category as defined in the spatial hierarchy are small villages which functionally act as local service centres which the local communities rely on for basic facilities and as social hubs. These smaller rural villages often operate as clusters by sharing key services which help provide a strong sense of community for the communities living and working there. These settlements can accommodate a limited amount of small-scale development. Appropriate development proposals therefore, that meet a local housing need, increase rural employment opportunities, optimise the sustainability of villages by contributing towards community facilities, or which help retain the vitality and sense of community will be supported in principle where they also comply with other policies in the Plan. Policy OV1 applies to Other Villages and Policy OV2 applies to proposals in the countryside outside of settlement boundaries.

6.241 Due to the relative sustainability of the Other Villages any development in these areas would inevitably place a greater reliance on the use of the car. As a result this will generate higher levels of carbon emissions, than development located in more sustainable settlements. It is acknowledged that access to alternative modes of transport is a key indicator of sustainable development, it is not however the only factor influencing carbon footprint. Design and construction can significantly contribute to reducing the carbon footprint of residents and as such any residential development permitted in Other Villages should be provide high standards of design and sustainable construction to contribute to achieving wider sustainable development principles.

6.242 Areas outside of settlement boundaries are defined as Countryside. Within the countryside, there are a number of very small villages/hamlets and isolated clusters of dwellings which lack any community facilities or access to services and rely on nearby larger villages or towns to meet their daily needs. It is essential that development is restricted in the countryside to protect the landscape, character, quality and tranquillity. 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. The NPPF includes examples of exceptions whereby proposals for isolated dwellings in the countryside may be acceptable. The Local Planning Authority'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.

6.243 The Local Planning Authority is aware that certain buildings within the Borough benefit from Prior Approval for residential use under Class Q of the Permitted Development Order. However, this provision is in place to facilitate the speedy delivery of low-cost rural dwellings, not to add value to land and buildings. Therefore, the Local Planning Authority will not accept this as a "fall-back" position and will treat each application purely on its planning merits whether or not Prior Approval exists.



- 6.244 The Local Planning Authority is also seeking to sustain and enhance local employment and rural enterprises in the Borough. Regard should be had to policy DM6 which sets out the planning approach for economic development in rural Colchester. Regard should also be had to policy DM13, which provides criteria for proposals for residential alterations, extensions and outbuildings, and policy DM14 on rural workers housing.

**Policy OV1: Development in Other Villages**

The Local Planning Authority will support proposals that enhance the vitality of rural communities and help maintain the sense of community provided by smaller rural villages and in rural areas.

Within settlements classed as Other Villages, the Local Planning Authority will support proposals for appropriate new infill developments, development on previously developed sites, and extensions, restorations or alterations to existing buildings. Policy PP1 includes infrastructure and mitigation requirements, which may be relevant.

The design and construction of new village development must be high quality in all respects, including design, sustainability and compatibility with the distinctive character of the locality.

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.

**Policy OV2: Countryside**

Proposals for sustainable rural business, leisure and tourism schemes, development essential to the effective operation of agriculture, horticulture, forestry, equestrian use, infrastructure, renewable energy generation, and minerals or waste operations in the adopted Essex Minerals and Waste Local Plans may require a countryside location.

Policy DM6 (Economic development in rural areas and the countryside) provides further guidance. In general, 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.

Residential development proposals in the countryside, outside defined settlement boundaries, 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. Small scale rural exception sites needed to meet local affordable housing needs will be considered favourably on appropriate sites provided a local need is demonstrated by the Parish Council on

behalf of their residents, based on evidence gained from an approved local housing needs survey. Where there is an identified need for certain types of housing, schemes must demonstrate how these needs have been met.

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.

## **7. Development Management Policies**

- 7.1 The policies below will guide the development management (planning application) process. They set out how development will be managed to ensure that it contributes towards the vision and objectives, via the strategic framework put in place by the policies contained in Section 1 and those covering Sustainable Growth, Climate Change, Environmental Assets and Places in Section 2.

### **Health and Wellbeing**

- 7.2 There is a strong evidence base that shows the impact that the built environment has on the health and wellbeing of residents. This evidence base is growing and consideration must be given to how new development will support and integrate health, wellbeing and lifestyle choices through the life course of residents, workers and visitors to these new developments.
- 7.3 Most development has a potential impact upon the health services and facilities that are provided in the Borough. Likewise, through the design of new development, healthy living can be promoted. The extent of these impacts needs to be assessed to ensure that adequate health services continue to be provided for the community as a whole. For developments which have relatively little impact upon health services, an initial assessment may be sufficient to satisfy the requirements of this policy. For developments where an initial assessment indicates more significant health impacts, a comprehensive Health Impact Assessment (HIA) will be required. The Council will liaise with the NHS East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group and ECC Public Health when assessing the scope and scale of likely impacts. A HIA should be prepared following the current best practice advice and reflect the most up to date evidence. Further details on preparing HIAs can be found in the Health Impact Assessment section of the Essex Design Guide ([www.essexdesignguide.co.uk](http://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk)).
- 7.4 Primary care is adopting a Digital First approach to primary care investment. An agreed Integrated Care System Road map for Suffolk and North East Essex was introduced in 2019, many of the initiatives were brought forward as a result of the response to Covid 19 and have already proven successful. GP practices, care homes and community service providers have been using telephone/video consultations, smartphone applications to enable patients to request prescriptions and appointments. Practices within Primary Care networks will enable digital first options to improve fast access to primary care, reducing waiting and travelling time for patients, services will include outpatient follow up appointments and medication reviews. Consequently, the need for high-speed broadband access and flexibility in terms of the provision of digital health infrastructure to any new housing development is crucial in order to ensure the success of the Digital First approach.

**Policy DM1: Health and Wellbeing**

All development should be designed to help promote healthy and active lifestyles and avoid causing adverse impacts on public health through:

- (i) Ensuring good access to health facilities and services;
- (ii) Providing a healthy living environment where healthy lifestyles can be promoted including green space and creating attractive opportunities for activities including walking, cycling, horse riding and formal sport, as well as clearly seeking to improve opportunities to increase levels of physical activity within the community; and
- (iii) Providing appropriate mitigation to avoid harmful emissions.

Health Impact Assessments (HIA) will be required for all residential development in excess of 100 units and non-residential development in excess of 2500 square metres and for other developments where the proposal is likely to have a significant impact on health and wellbeing. The purpose of the HIA will be to identify the potential health consequences of a proposal on a given population, maximise the positive health benefits and minimise potential adverse effects on health and inequalities. Any HIA must be prepared in accordance with up to date advice and best practice for such assessments.

All developments with the potential to cause a deterioration in air quality will be required to provide comply with Policy ENV5.

Measures to mitigate any adverse impacts of the development will be provided and / or secured by planning conditions, Section 106 contributions or CIL.

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.

## Community Facilities

- 7.5 Community facilities are an essential element of sustainable communities providing for education, childcare, health, culture, recreation, religion and policing (see Glossary). Policies elsewhere in the plan also cover protection and provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities.
- 7.6 The Local Planning Authority needs to deliver a comprehensive range of high quality and accessible community facilities to meet the needs of new and existing communities in Colchester. Community projects such as the Community Stadium and Firstsite, have regional and national significance. Local facilities such as schools and health centres also need to be delivered to support new and existing communities.
- 7.7 The Local Planning Authority will safeguard existing community facilities and will work with partners including the local community to bring together funding from a variety of public and private sources to improve existing and deliver new community facilities. Development proposals will be required to review community needs and provide community facilities to meet the needs of the new population, which will have positive impacts on existing communities.
- 7.8 The Local Planning Authority wishes to protect viable community facilities and services that play an important role in the social infrastructure of the area and support sustainable communities. In communities where access to alternatives may be very limited, the presence of key facilities may be very important in maintaining quality of life. Examples of community sites and buildings include amenity open space, children's play areas, sports fields, village halls, local shops, leisure and cultural centres, public houses, community centres, churches, cemeteries, allotments, post offices, petrol stations, doctor's surgeries, libraries and schools, etc. In line with the NPPF the Local Planning Authority will guard against unnecessary loss of important facilities using processes such as listing facilities as Assets of Community Value where appropriate (under the provisions the Localism Act 2011).
- 7.9 The loss of any community facilities must be fully justified. The Local Planning Authority will require any application involving the loss of a facility to be supported by written evidence and applicants should contact the Local Planning Authority at the earliest stage to discuss the details. The level of detail to be submitted will vary according to the level of access to alternative facilities and the extent to which the facility contributes towards sustainable communities but could be expected to include such evidence as:
- (i) In the case of a business, the current and projected trading performance;
  - (ii) In the case of a community facility, the current and projected patterns of use;
  - (iii) The nature and condition of the building and the cost of repairs, renovations or improvements needed to allow the facility to continue in operation;

- (iv) The extent of the local catchment including the location of the premises in relation to local settlement pattern and accessibility;
- (v) The nature and location of comparable facilities;
- (vi) The potential to relocate the use into other premises in the community;
- (vii) In respect of public houses, the approaches and attempts to transfer from a chain of tied pubs to a free house;
- (viii) In the case of a business, 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. This should be for a period of not less than six months by a competent agent. Evidence should include sales literature, details of approaches, and details of offers; and
- (ix) 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.

7.10 The importance of particular facilities will vary between communities, and it is essential that the community is involved in considering the importance of any facility and the suitability of any proposals for alternative forms (and locations) of provision, and in developing means of retaining facilities, should their continued viability of operation be in doubt. Applicants proposing to redevelop or convert facilities valued by the community will be expected to consult local communities about the relative importance of the facilities which could be lost. Not all facilities satisfactorily meet the needs of local communities, and it may be that combining or rationalising facilities might be appropriate. This will be informed by the most up to date relevant evidence.

7.11 Support will be given to the provision of additional facilities where this will enhance the sustainability of community life and will meet the anticipated needs of a growing and changing population. The use of developer contributions and/or the Community Infrastructure Levy may well be appropriate in this respect. The Local Planning Authority will work with local partners, such as Town/ Parish Councils or Community Associations, to plan and manage community facilities.

#### **Policy DM2: Community Facilities**

The Local Planning Authority will seek the retention of all existing community facilities and services and allocations 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 facilities, services, leisure or cultural activities that benefit the community, will only be supported in cases where the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that:

- (i) An alternative, equivalent community facility to meet local needs is, or will be, provided in an equally or more accessible location within walking distance of the locality (800 m); or
- (ii) It has been proven that it would not be economically viable to retain the site/building for a community use; and (in both cases)

- (iii) The community facility could not be provided or operated by either the current occupier or by any alternative occupier, and it has been marketed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority in order to confirm that there is no interest and the site or building is genuinely redundant;
- (iv) The proposal involves a state funded school which is seeking to relocate into new buildings or sell assets to fund improved education services.

New development will be required to provide, or contribute towards the provision of community facilities including education, to meet the needs of new and expanded communities and mitigate impacts on existing communities, which will be secured by Section 106 contributions or CIL/equivalent infrastructure levy.

Where existing facilities can be enhanced to serve new development, the Local Planning Authority 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.

## **Education Provision**

- 7.12 Expansion to existing as well as new primary schools, secondary schools and early years provision, including special educational needs, will be required in the Borough to support the new homes and communities that are being created. The NPPF states that great importance should be placed on the need to provide new school places. It also states that local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, giving great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools. The amount of land required is specified by Essex County Council as Local Education Authority. New designations will be subject to detailed design and layout to ensure that schools are located in the best positions for new communities.
- 7.13 Existing schools and education facilities, including early years, special needs, higher and further education will be supported to ensure they are able to deliver high quality educational provision and act as hubs for their local community. Remodelling and expansion of schools and education facilities will be supported wherever possible. The loss of school grounds or school buildings themselves will only be supported where it has been proven that there is no longer an educational need for the site, now or in the future, or that improved accommodation is being provided in an alternative location. Applications for existing schools are often dealt with by Essex County Council, but in some circumstances the Borough Council will be the relevant local planning authority. The policy below will apply for decisions made by Colchester Borough Council and will be used to inform any consultation responses submitted to applications which are determined by Essex County Council, or any other appropriate agency.
- 7.14 The Local Planning Authority recognises the differences in location and design requirements between rural and urban based education proposals in the Borough and will assess applications accordingly. For example, a school with a rural based catchment must promote safe walking and cycling routes. Residential developments may need to contribute to upgrading such routes and to providing adequate and reliable public transport provision for students.



**Policy DM3: 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 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.

The Local Planning Authority will respond positively to appropriate and well-designed applications regarding the creation of new school and education facilities. As expressed in the NPPF, the Local Planning Authority will use a presumption in favour of the development of schools and educational uses. The Local Planning Authority will engage in pre-application discussions with promoters to develop a collaborative approach to suitable applications.

## **Sports Provision**

- 7.15 The existing sport, leisure and public and private open spaces within the Borough represent important assets serving the communities in which they are located (or in some instances wider areas). This importance can relate not only to their function, but also to the amenity value and contribution to the character of an area in general in providing a 'green lung', opportunities for a well-designed and inclusive public realm, and visual breaks in the built environment. If such provisions are lost to other uses it can be extremely difficult to find alternative locations particularly as open land is scarce and, therefore, at a premium.
- 7.16 Against this background, it is intended to secure the retention and enhancement of existing facilities unless a case can be made that alternative provision will be provided in a wholly acceptable manner. There are a wide range of organisations currently delivering sport and leisure facilities within the Borough including strategic sports providers such as the University of Essex, the Garrison and Colchester Institute as well as Colchester Borough Council.
- 7.17 A Strategic Sports Board has been established and a Sports Delivery Group is being formed to ensure that the delivery of sports and leisure facilities is planned and delivered in a coherent way.
- 7.18 The Local Planning Authority will work with the strategic sports providers as well as developers, schools, sports governing bodies, sports clubs, Active Essex/Active Colchester and Sport England to plan for and secure the delivery of a range of new sport and leisure facilities across the Borough over the plan period to serve residents' needs, encourage active lifestyles and increase participation in formal and informal recreation.
- 7.19 A number of documents will be used by the Local Planning Authority when assessing planning applications relating to proposed development of open space and sports facilities. These include the Sports Facilities Strategies (and subsequent updates) and Sports Development Plans prepared by other strategic sports providers in Colchester. Sport England will be consulted on any application that is likely to prejudice the use of or lead to the loss of use of land used as a playing field (whether presently used, or used within the last 5 years, or allocated for such use).

#### **Policy DM4: Sports Provision**

Colchester Borough Council will work with sports providers across the Borough to protect, enhance and deliver new sports and leisure facilities to encourage active lifestyles and to increase participation in formal and informal recreation.

The delivery of new strategic sports facilities will be focused at hub sites including the Garden Community; North Colchester; the University of Essex and the Garrison. Development at these locations will be required to contribute to the delivery of the sport and leisure needs identified in the Sports Facilities Strategies, in the respective Sports Development Plans for The Garrison, University of Essex and North Colchester (Northern Gateway).

New residential development, outside the strategic sports hubs in the Borough will also be required to contribute to the provision or enhancement of sport or leisure facilities where a need has been identified.

The Local Planning Authority will seek to secure community use as part of all new strategic sports proposals and as part of other smaller sport and leisure schemes submitted, including school sports facilities, where it is practical to do so.

A) Development, including change of use, of any existing or proposed sports ground or playing field will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that:

- (i) Alternative and improved provision will be created in a location well related to the functional requirements of the relocated use and its existing and future users; and
- (ii) The proposal would not result in the loss of an area important for its amenity or contribution to the green infrastructure network or to the character of the area in general; and
- (iii) It achieves the aims of the Colchester Sports Facilities Strategy.

B) Development proposals resulting in a loss of indoor or outdoor sport/recreational facilities must additionally demonstrate that:

- (iv) There is an identified excess provision within the catchment of the facility and no likely shortfall is expected within the plan period; or
- (v) Alternative and improved sport /recreational provision will be delivered at a location well-related to the functional requirements of the relocated use and its existing and future users.

In all cases, development will not be permitted that would result in any deficiencies in sports provision 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.

## **Tourism, Leisure, Culture and Heritage**

- 7.20 Colchester's rich historic environment and range of beautiful landscapes provides the basis for an important tourism sector which creates jobs and provides facilities, attractions and environments for visitors that also enhance the quality of life for local residents. Proposals to support this sector will accordingly be supported subject to their accordence with the Local Planning Authority's spatial hierarchy and policies. It is important to ensure that new development does not detract from the settings and features that make visitor destinations attractive and distinctive.
- 7.21 The Borough's historic Town Centre is the focal point for visitor attractions and accommodation as well as leisure and cultural facilities. In line with national policy, proposals falling within the category of 'town centre uses' as defined in the NPPF glossary will be subject to a sequential test to ensure they align with the Local Planning Authority's spatial hierarchy and centres hierarchy, which prioritises the Town Centre.
- 7.22 In rural areas, the Local Planning Authority recognises that existing visitor accommodation sites may be an acceptable location for further small-scale development although not readily accessible by public transport. In order to maximise the benefits of tourism to rural economies it is important to locate new tourism development in locations where visitors can help to support local shops, pubs and other rural services. Some leisure and cultural facilities including sports facilities such as golf courses, sports pitches and water-based attractions require significant amount of open space and accordingly can be appropriate for suitable countryside locations. Given that they also entail environmental and visual impacts from built structures, increased traffic and landscape and habitat changes, it is important to ensure new facilities are evaluated carefully in light of considerations of amenity, environmental and landscape impact and accessibility. Proposals for new or extended visitor facilities will be assessed against their ability to help deliver policies SG1, SG5, ENV1, ENV4, OV1, OV2, DM16, DM23, DM24, WC3 and other relevant policies.

**Policy DM5: Tourism, Leisure, Culture and Heritage**

Development for 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 minimising their impact on, and demonstrating how the development could make a positive contribution to neighbouring areas and provide biodiversity enhancements.

Proposals for tourism, leisure, culture and heritage development should be appropriate in scale and function to the surrounding area; be accessible by a choice of means of transport; and not cause significant harm to the amenity of people living and working nearby.

Proposals that are likely to have an adverse impact on the integrity of habitats sites or the Dedham Vale AONB will not be supported.

In locations where residential use would be inappropriate, developments of 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 or long-term occupation.

## **Economic Development in Rural Areas and the Countryside**

- 7.23 The Local Plan supports rural communities and sets out a flexible approach that maintains a balance between environmental considerations and appropriate business growth. The countryside is viewed as a good location for some businesses, particularly those specific to rural tourism. Business preference for rural sites also reflects the pleasant environment and the availability of relatively cheaper premises in comparison with built-up areas. The Borough is also coming under particular pressure for employment-based development in the countryside because there are a significant number of large agricultural buildings and other rural buildings that are potentially suitable for conversion to employment use. Improvements to broadband is also enabling more businesses to locate to rural areas. This demand needs to be considered in the context of environmental impacts and accessibility.
- 7.24 Policy SG4 sets out the Local Planning Authority's approach for appropriate land uses within all employment sites in the rural area and the criteria for consideration of proposals involving alternative use of employment land. The 'B' Use Class traditionally encompassed the majority of uses considered to constitute employment uses in planning terms. In some cases a more flexible approach around employment uses is now needed to ensure compliance with national planning policy and guidance.
- 7.25 Economic development proposals in the countryside, within a designated Local Economic Area or on a rural site serving a similar function, must contribute to the local rural economy and help sustain rural communities. The proposed use is likely to be small scale and not harm the rural character of the local area either by the nature and level of activity (including the amount of additional traffic generation on rural roads) or any other detrimental effects such as noise, fumes and pollution.
- 7.26 The loss of employment land in the Borough could affect the Council's ability to achieve its economic development objectives. The Local Plan establishes the scale and general location of land for employment purposes and states that as a general principle such land should be safeguarded. However, in accordance with the NPPF, land and premises will not be protected where there is no reasonable prospect of it being developed for an economic use.
- 7.27 Proposals for alternative uses on existing rural employment sites may exceptionally be acceptable, providing evidence is submitted in support of the alternative use and it complies with other policies in this Plan. Consideration of overall economic benefits must also extend to include addressing the future of any firms displaced through the redevelopment, including redevelopment for a new employment use. Applicants will need to demonstrate that the site is no longer usable and viable for another form of employment use, for example where continuation of the employment use would be detrimental to other planning objectives such as regeneration, protecting or enhancing the appearance of the countryside, or where other economic benefits to the area might result such as through tourism.

- 7.28 The Local Planning Authority is more likely to be supportive of the re-use and conversion of rural buildings that are adjacent to or closely related to a sustainable settlement. Conversely, change of use of isolated buildings is unlikely to be acceptable unless they would ensure the retention and preservation of a heritage asset and the use does not result in a significant increase in the level of activity and traffic generation to and from the site. Each proposal will be considered on its merits in line with this policy and other relevant policies in the Local Plan.
- 7.29 Schemes involving the re-use of historic rural buildings will be required to comply with the provisions of policy DM16. Proposals that are small-scale in nature and which respect local character are more likely to be supported, whereas those with the potential to generate traffic related problems may not be supported. There is a presumption that heritage assets will be retained rather than replaced. The replacement of heritage assets in the countryside, which have suffered deliberate neglect or damage will not be supported.
- 7.30 Preference will always be towards re-use and conversion of existing buildings where this is possible rather than the construction of new buildings. Consequently, where a building is to be replaced applicants will need to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that any available buildings are not capable of renovation and may be requested to submit a structural survey.
- 7.31 There are a number of well-established employment sites in the rural areas of the Borough, where some important local businesses are located. Companies are often seeking to expand their operations within their site and this can be more appropriate than the company seeking alternative premises outside of the Borough, in order to retain the economic and social benefits which can arise from companies located in rural areas. It will be beneficial for applications to expand existing operations to be supported by a business plan, depending on the scale of the development proposed. In some cases for the purposes of business or employment use, replacement buildings can be more appropriate than the continued use of existing buildings. There are a number of sites in the rural areas of the Borough which are visually intrusive and where redevelopment could significantly enhance the local environment.
- 7.32 Landscaping and planting should be used to mitigate the impact of new development on the countryside. Proposals for new isolated buildings in the countryside will not normally be permitted in accordance with national policies. Change of use to residential will not be supported within allocated Local Economic Areas or at unallocated rural sites providing an economic uses.

**Policy DM6: Economic Development in Rural Areas and the Countryside**

The Local Planning Authority will protect Local Economic 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 the Borough will be safeguarded for appropriate economic uses to ensure local residents have access to local job opportunities without the need to travel. Proposals for alternative uses will be supported where they comply with policy SG4.

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

- (i) 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);
- (ii) Repair and storage of vehicles and vehicle parts, including cars, boats and caravans; and
- (iii) Other employment-generating uses, such as those related to recreation and tourism, which meet local needs and/or promote rural enterprise.

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 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 these are limited to plans which are essential 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 a substantial improvement in the landscape and surroundings will be secured through replacement. New buildings should 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 only be supported in exceptional cases where there are no



appropriate existing buildings, there is no available employment land in the locality and a site/area specific business need has been adequately demonstrated.

**(E) Expansion of an existing business:**

Proposals to expand an existing employment use into the countryside will only be supported in exceptional cases 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 a Strategic or Local Economic Area or alternative rural site providing an economic function and in a more sustainable location.

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 fly tipping, the introduction of invasive species and vandalism.

## **Agricultural Development and Diversification**

- 7.33 The NPPF promotes the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses. This may well involve adaptation to new markets and ways of operation and diversification of activities.
- 7.34 The agricultural economy in the Borough is changing, as increasingly farmers are seeking to diversify in order to remain in farming. Accordingly the Local Planning Authority is seeking to encourage farm diversification schemes that are planned on a comprehensive basis to retain a viable agricultural unit by seeking additional incomes from other sources which still relate to the countryside. Whilst the Local Planning Authority will support appropriate farm diversification schemes, proposals that would harm the rural area or segregate the existing agricultural use or farm holding will be resisted. A farm shop selling products produced on the farm unit itself and which does not require a new building is unlikely to require planning permission.
- 7.35 In order to protect the quality and distinctiveness of the local landscape, the Local Planning Authority wishes to prevent un-coordinated development in rural areas and the gradual stripping of assets from farms without regard for the viability of the holding. Appropriate sustainable business proposals could include tourism, or conversion of buildings for employment and other uses related to an activity that would normally be found in rural areas. However, schemes that include or could lead to future pressure for new residential dwellings will not be permitted unless there are exceptional circumstances, in line with national policy.
- 7.36 Proposals for farm diversification should also take account of other relevant policy criteria, in particular but not exclusively, policy DM6 in relation to the re-use of existing buildings and appropriate rural employment uses; policy DM16 in relation to the re-use of historic farm buildings and policy DM21 in relation to access considerations.
- 7.37 The Local Planning Authority recognises that provisions within the General Permitted Development Order 2015 (such as Classes P, Q, R and S) are in place to enable a speedy supply of rural-based businesses and a housing stock of smaller rural dwellings, that utilises existing buildings. However, these measures should not be regarded as “fall-back” positions for speculative development by rural landowners and will not be treated as such by the Local Planning Authority. Any applications falling outside the scope of Permitted Development will be considered against other relevant policies in the Local Plan in the interests of sustainable development.

**Policy DM7: Agricultural Development and Diversification**

The Local Planning Authority 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 without the need for subdivision of the holding or separate enterprises unrelated to the existing agricultural use.

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 AONB will not be supported.

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

- (i) 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
- (ii) The development is well-related to existing buildings if no suitable buildings are available for re-use; and
- (iii) The development is secondary to the main agricultural use of the farm; and
- (iv) 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.

New agricultural buildings requiring planning permission will be guided to locations on the farm which are sensitive to their environment.

## **Affordable Housing**

- 7.38 The need for affordable housing is high in Colchester Borough, as it is elsewhere in the Eastern region. The evidence in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment supports a target of 30-35% affordable housing in new developments, but this target must be balanced with viability considerations and the fact that some sites may not deliver affordable housing for example, due to government policy thresholds. The urban area threshold is over 10 units, but a lower policy threshold of 6 or more dwellings in rural areas has been set to allow for the provision or contribution towards affordable housing in areas where larger schemes are very infrequent. Policy DM10 (Housing Diversity) provides further guidance on how developers will be expected to meet demand identified in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment for those with particular housing needs. Viability work will be updated as required to ensure the target reflects the balance between essential housing need and viability. Where 30% is not considered to be viable, applicants will need to submit information on viability. The Local Planning Authority will expect developers to meet the Council's reasonable costs associated with viability appraisals in instances where the level of affordable housing is disputed.
- 7.39 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 Local Planning Authority 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.

### **Policy DM8: Affordable Housing**

The Council is committed to improving housing affordability in Colchester. Accordingly 30% of new dwellings (including conversions) on housing developments of 10 or more dwellings (major developments) in urban areas and above 5 units in designated rural areas (in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance), should be provided as affordable housing (normally on site).

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.

This level balances the objectively assessed need for affordable housing in the Borough established by the evidence base, against the requirement for flexibility to take account of changing market conditions. At present the overwhelming need in Colchester is for affordable rented properties, which should be reflected in development proposals. For sites where an alternative level of affordable housing is proposed below the target, it will need to be supported by evidence in the form of a viability appraisal.

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

The Local Planning Authority will require developments to integrate affordable housing and market housing, with a consistent standard of quality design and public spaces, to create mixed and sustainable communities. The affordable housing provision should proportionately reflect the mix of market units unless otherwise specified by the Local Planning Authority. In schemes over 15 units the affordable housing should be provided in more than one single parcel. Elsewhere the affordable housing mix on any site should normally be “pepper potted” throughout the scheme in groups, the size and location of which should be discussed and agreed with the Local Planning Authority.

Affordable housing development in villages will be supported on rural exception sites adjacent or continuous to village settlement boundaries or where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities, provided a local need is demonstrated by the Parish Council on behalf of their residents, based on evidence gained from an approved local housing needs survey. A proportion of market housing which facilitates the provision of significant additional affordable housing may be appropriate on rural exception sites. Information to demonstrate that the market housing is essential to cross-subsidise the delivery of the affordable housing and that the development would not be viable without this cross-subsidy will be required. 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.

## **Development Density**

- 7.40 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.
- 7.41 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 Town 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.
- 7.42 However it is important that the Local Planning Authority 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.
- 7.43 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.

### **Policy DM9: Development Density**

The Local Planning Authority will support development densities that make efficient use of land and relate to the specific opportunities and constraints of proposed development sites. Proposals with development densities that encourage sustainable transport and help sustain local amenities will be supported. In particular all residential development will need to be at an appropriate density and massing, having regard to:

- (i) The character of the site and its immediate surroundings, as well as the wider locality, including where applicable the setting of important heritage assets;
- (ii) The adequacy of the access and the local road network to accommodate the traffic likely to be generated by the proposed development as well as the scope to enhance walking and cycling access to local amenities and public transport;
- (iii) The existing landscaping, trees and hedgerows on the site and the need for further landscaping;
- (iv) The provision of appropriate on-site amenities to serve the development in accordance with policy SG6 and any relevant adopted guidance including the provision of open space and sustainable drainage facilities where suitable;
- (v) The provision of appropriate parking to serve the development in accordance with the relevant standards and policy DM22.
- (vi) An adequate standard of residential accommodation being provided for future occupants in accordance with policy DM12.
- (vii) An appropriate mix and type of housing as informed by the various housing policies set out in the Local Plan.

## Housing Diversity

- 7.44 All housing developments in Colchester should be inclusive 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 support needs, and low-income households.
- 7.45 There is an important relationship between housing diversity, density and the accessibility of the location. Town Centre locations, for example, are highly accessible and can support high density flats, but they also need to accommodate a range of household sizes. Suburban locations have moderate access and should accommodate a range of housing types and household sizes. Rural locations have low accessibility and will suit low density development, but should also still provide for small and low-income households.
- 7.46 In 2011, the average household size was 2.33 persons. Approximately 29% were single person households, roughly 36% were 2 person households, and another 29% of households had dependent children. In 2021, the average household size is projected to shrink to around 2.31 persons, and single person households are likely to grow to about 35% of the total. The Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment indicates that the number of lone parent households is expected to increase the most in the Housing Market Area over the period 2015-2037, followed by one person households. Couples with children are projected to fall in number.
- 7.47 All housing developments therefore need to provide a more balanced range of housing types to reflect identified community need. The mix of housing should reflect the housing needs of the community, and therefore higher density developments in the urbanised areas still need to provide accommodation suitable to families and larger households, and low-density developments in villages still need to provide housing for small and low-income households.
- 7.48 The NPPF requires local authorities to have a clear idea of the housing needs of various subgroups in the population. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment undertaken to provide this understanding provides information on the following sub-groups:
- A. Older persons and specialist housing** – Colchester is expected to record a 60.6% increase in its population of those age 65 and over. In response to this growth, the SHMA indicates that if occupation patterns of specialist accommodation remain at current levels there is a requirement for 2,147 additional specialist units of which 2,066 should be specialist and older person's housing and 81 extra care housing. In Colchester, this means that an additional 94 specialist and extra care housing units should be provided each year. This is in addition to the requirement for housing suitable for the needs of older people which allows people to live in their own homes for as long as possible. Addressing this need will entail a number of solutions as people have



different housing requirements. As well as the adaption and design of buildings to allow people to stay in their own homes, the need may also be met through the delivery of smaller properties or small-scale residential complexes in areas where a demand can be demonstrated.

This approach, as well as increasing the stock of small-scale properties, enables older people to downsize to smaller houses and to continue to live independently in an area they know well, and also enables larger dwellings to be freed up within the housing market. An extra care scheme is planned as part of the Northern Gateway proposals.

Essex County Council is the provider of social services in the Borough. Its Independent Living Programme is encouraging the provision of specialist accommodation in Essex as a means by which older people can continue to live healthy and active lives within existing communities and for Colchester Borough has set the target of delivering 297 additional units of specialist accommodation (124 through rental and 173 through ownership) to enable older people to live independently within the community by 2020. This target is set out in the Essex County Council's Independent Living Position Statement (2016). This approach to meeting the specialist accommodation needs of older people is intended to reduce the demand for residential/nursing home care, which is a considerably more expensive way of meeting the needs of older people, and can unnecessarily restrict independence within this age group.

- B. Self-build/custom build housing** – As required by national guidance, the Council maintains a register of persons interested in purchasing self-build/custom build plots. This register requires applicants to disclose their financial capacity and the Local Planning Authority will use this information to ensure that stated demand is realistic before using it to assess demand for this housing type. The Council will work with developers and housing providers to bring forward self-build allocations to meet identified need in appropriate development sites. The Garden Community (Part One policy SP9) will provide specific allocations for self-build allocations.
- C. Gypsies and travellers** – The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment prepared for Essex local authorities provides that Colchester should provide 15 pitches to 2033 to meet need overall need. Policy DM11 provides criteria and allocations for meeting this need.
- D. Students** – The University of Essex had 11,657 students registered for the 2015/16 academic year. The University plans to expand to accommodate around 15,000 students by 2019. The University has long term plans to extend its accommodation provision to respond to increasing numbers. Additionally,

Wivenhoe, Greenstead and the Hythe areas house a number of students in both purpose-built and private rented accommodation.

- E. Hospice Provision** – St Helena Hospice currently provides hospice care for residents of Colchester and Tendring. In response to a rising need and a rising population in northeast Essex, the Hospice is considering options as to how it provides care in future. This may involve a new site, new facilities and/or different options for delivering care. The hospice service is much valued in the local community and the Council will support proposals which increase the number of patients who are able to receive care and support.

#### **Policy DM10: Housing Diversity**

The Local Planning Authority will seek to secure a range of housing types and tenures on developments across the Borough in order to create inclusive and sustainable communities. Housing developments should provide a mix of housing types to suit a range of different households as identified in the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment, whilst also realising the opportunities presented by accessible locations.

The Local Planning Authority will seek to provide for the needs of particular groups as follows:

**Older people** – The Local Planning Authority will require developers to demonstrate how their proposal will be capable of meeting and adapting to the long term needs of the increasing number of older residents. This would include the provision of dwellings constructed to meet requirements M4(2) of the Building Regulations 2015 (accessible or adaptable dwellings) as provided in the Housing Standards policy DM12, or subsequent government standards as appropriate, where there is proven need. The Council will also support proposals that make specific provision for older persons housing, subject to proposals meeting other policy requirements or the need outweighing other considerations.

**Specialist Housing** – The Local Planning Authority will support provision of schemes providing higher levels of care for specialist groups including those eligible under Essex County Council's Independent Living Programme; disabled people; people with care needs; and other vulnerable people. New development proposals for these groups will be supported where there is a proven need; they are located within settlements; and are accessible by public transport. As provided in the Housing Standards policy DM12, the Council will require a provision of dwellings constructed to meet requirements of M4(3) of the Building Regulations 2015 (wheelchair user dwellings), or subsequent government standard as appropriate, where there is proven need.

**Self-build/custom-build housing** – The Local Planning Authority will support proposals for self-build/custom-build housing, to meet demand as indicated by registrations on the Council's Self-Build Register. Registrations should accord with eligibility criteria as appropriate, which may include demonstration of

sufficient financial resources and a sufficient local connection. Proposals will be encouraged both on individual sites and as part of larger schemes, including rural exception sites.

**Gypsies and Travellers** – The Local Planning Authority will meet identified need for gypsy and traveller accommodation, with specific allocations and policy considerations set out in Policy DM11.

**Students** - Planning permission will be granted for purpose-built student accommodation subject to other policies in this plan and where:

- (i) the location is appropriate in terms of access to public transport and university and college facilities; and
- (ii) the proposal will not result in an excessive concentration of student accommodation in any one locality.

Specific proposals for University based accommodation are contained in policy EC1.

**Hospice provision** – The Local Planning Authority will support the provision of hospice care in the local community through the use of existing or new sites.

## **Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople**

- 7.49 The Local Planning Authority will seek to provide appropriate sites to meet the needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople in the Borough as identified through the latest Gypsy and Traveller assessment work and further guidance from the government set forth in 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites'. These sites need to provide gypsy and traveller communities with good access to education, health, welfare, water, sewage and employment infrastructure, bearing in mind the need to have due regard to the protection of local amenity and local environment. Sites should not be located in areas at risk from flooding and where practical to achieve be connected to the mains sewer system.
- 7.50 In August 2015 a new definition of Gypsy and Traveller was introduced via 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' which limits the definition of gypsies and travellers to those who continue to travel as part of their work. This required an update to the existing evidence base looking only at those households that fall within the new planning definition. As a result of this assessment only two pitches were identified as being needed to meet the needs of nomadic travellers. It is however still considered necessary to provide for the full need of those identifying as gypsies and travellers as they are amongst the groups identified as having particular needs in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. This is reflected in the provision of a further 13 units to meet the needs of non-nomadic travellers.
- 7.51 No current need has been identified in the Borough for accommodation for travelling showpeople, however any need that arises over the life of the plan will be addressed using the criteria based policy approach below.

**Policy DM11: Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople**

The Local Planning Authority will identify sites to meet the established needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople in the Borough.

There is an overall need for 15 pitches over the life of the plan to 2033 which takes into account the need for both the statutory requirement to provide 2 pitches for nomadic travellers as well as the additional need for 13 pitches for those identifying as gypsies and travellers.

The need for 6 pitches by 2021 can be met by 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. The need for the remainder of the plan period will be met through strategic sites and allocations within the Garden Community, to be finalised through the process of agreeing detailed allocations and masterplans for those areas.

Proposals for any further applications will be judged on the basis that sites should be located within reasonable proximity to existing sustainable settlements, and with access to shops, schools and other community facilities. Sites should also provide adequate space for vehicles and appropriate highway access.

Planning permission will be refused for the change of use of all Gypsy and Traveller sites or Travelling Showpeople yards 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.

Site selection should ensure that pitches are not located within areas at risk of flooding and are capable of being provided with appropriate drainage, water supply and other necessary utility services. For sewerage, a connection to the main sewer system will be preferable except when it is impractical to achieve.

## **Housing Standards**

- 7.52 It is important to strike an appropriate balance between providing freedom and flexibility for the housing market to operate and ensuring that a range of sites are available for different areas of the housing market. However, the different types of dwelling should be suitably designed to consider the potential needs of their perspective occupiers and the Design and Access Statements submitted with planning permissions should cover this point.
- 7.53 The revised Part M Building Regulations stipulate the minimum standard for all new dwellings which make them suitable to be visited by a wheelchair user. The Council has identified a baseline standard of a minimum of 10% of market housing and 95% of affordable housing to meet Building Regulations 2015 Part M4 (2) accessible and adaptable standards and 5% affordable homes to be Part M4 (3)(2)(b) - wheelchair user standards. This means that new affordable housing will be suitable at all stages of life. The application of these Part M requirements will be subject to consideration of the impact on viability as well as site constraints, in accordance with national policy and guidance.
- 7.54 Building for a Healthy Life is endorsed by government and is the industry standard for the design of new residential developments. The assessment tool can be used by local authorities, developers and community groups to help highlight design quality, local design constraints and opportunities for improvement. The Local Planning Authority will encourage new developments to apply the Building for a Healthy Life design standard.
- 7.55 Accessible, well-designed and easy to use waste and recycling facilities (or storage) will be needed in new developments to help the Local Planning Authority meet its recycling targets. High quality sustainable development must also include adequate arrangements for servicing and refuse vehicles, storage, parking for cars and cycles and electric vehicle charging points, in accordance with Policy DM22.

**Policy DM12: Housing Standards**

Residential development will be supported where high standards of design, construction and layout are promoted. In considering proposals for new residential development, the Local Planning Authority will have regard to the following:

- (i) New buildings or extensions should be designed to minimise the overshadowing of neighbouring properties as well as to avoid other adverse microclimatic effects;
- (ii) Acceptable levels of daylight to all habitable rooms and no single aspect north-facing homes;
- (iii) Acceptable levels of privacy for rear-facing habitable rooms and sitting-out areas;
- (iv) A management and maintenance plan to be prepared for multi- occupancy buildings and implemented via planning conditions to ensure the future maintenance of the building and external spaces;
- (v) Internal space standards demonstrated to be in accordance with the National Described Space Standards (DCLG, 2015) or any future replacement of this;
- (vi) A minimum of 10% of market housing and 95% of affordable housing to meet Building Regulations 2015 Part M4 (2) accessible and adaptable standards and 5% of affordable homes to be Part M4 (3)(2)(b) wheelchair user standards.
- (vii) Vehicle parking standards as set out in Policy DM22 including the requirements for cycle parking facilities. In the case of flats, secure cycle storage should be incorporated into flat blocks and readily located at the building entrances;
- (viii) An accessible refuse and recycling storage area, and external drying areas;
- (ix) Measures to maximise the potential of broadband provision and ensure other infrastructure requirements are met as referenced in Policy SG6; and
- (x) 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.

## **Domestic Development: Residential alterations, extensions, conversions and replacement dwellings**

- 7.56 There have been a number of changes to planning regulations in recent years which have increased the forms and scope of domestic development proposals not requiring planning permission. Further guidance on the types of development that do not require planning permission can be obtained from the government's Planning Portal website.
- 7.57 This policy should be read in conjunction with Policy DM15 (Design and Amenity). Together the policies set out the criteria for assessing planning applications for domestic development proposals which includes residential alterations, extensions and annexes as well as replacement dwellings and flat conversions. In addition to these policies the Local Planning Authority may publish further guidance relevant to domestic development which should be consulted prior to submitting a planning application.
- 7.58 The Local Planning Authority wishes to retain and promote a balanced mix of dwelling types and sizes in the Borough 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.
- 7.59 The Local Planning Authority 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 1<sup>st</sup> July 1948, or as it was originally built, if later than this date.
- 7.60 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.
- 7.61 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. Countryside means all areas outside of defined settlement boundaries.
- 7.62 In order to protect the Borough's 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.
- 7.63 The Local Planning Authority recognises the important contribution flat conversions make to the provision of smaller and more affordable dwellings in the



Borough, 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.

7.64 Domestic development proposals represent a large number of planning applications received by the Local Planning Authority. It is important to reflect the competing interests of planning applicants and other stakeholders, including those most affected by development proposals such as those occupying neighbouring dwellings.

7.65 Policy DM13 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.

7.66 From a strategic perspective the policy recognises the requirement to retain and promote a balanced housing stock by preventing smaller and more affordable properties from being either extended into a much larger property or being replaced with a larger dwelling. Existing buildings can play an important role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions through improved energy efficiency measures where appropriate. Householders should consider the opportunities for improving energy efficiency as part of proposals for extensions/ alterations. For example, improved insulation, draught proofing, orientation for solar gain, energy efficient appliances and lighting, and water saving devices.

### **Policy DM13: Domestic development**

#### **Residential alterations, extensions and outbuildings**

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

- (i) The proposal is compatible with the scale, appearance and character of the original dwelling including taking into account the cumulative impact of such development;
- (ii) The proposal does not result in the 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;
- (iii) Proposals for extensions and outbuildings are subordinate to the original dwelling in terms of design and setting;
- (iv) 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;
- (v) 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 or buildings suitable for conversion on the site in the first instance, provided the proposal meets the following criteria:

- (i) The proposal is physically attached or closely related to the main dwelling so that it cannot be subdivided from the main dwelling;
- (ii) 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);
- (iii) The proposal respects and enhances both the character of the original dwelling and the context of the surrounding area through high quality design; and
- (iv) The proposal does not result in the loss of amenity to neighbouring properties.

#### **Replacement dwellings in the countryside**

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

- (i) It is on a one-for-one basis and the property to be demolished is a permanent lawful dwelling;
- (ii) 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;
- (iii) It is of a scale appropriate to the size of the original dwelling to maintain a

- supply of smaller more affordable dwellings in the countryside;
- (iv) 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;
- (v) 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
- (vi) The flood risk sequential test will have to be applied.

### **Flat conversions**

Proposals for the conversion and sub-division of existing residential premises within settlement boundaries 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. Proposals should also be in accordance with the requirements set out in the Housing Standards policy.

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 if they meet the following criteria:

- (i) 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;
- (ii) Opportunities are taken for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions;
- (iii) Appropriate provision is made for parking, private amenity space, cycle storage and refuse storage facilities, in a visually acceptable manner;
- (iv) The internal layout minimises possible noise disturbance and/or overlooking to the immediate neighbours; and
- (v) Overall, the proposal will not result in an unsatisfactory living environment for prospective occupiers.

## **Rural Workers Housing**

- 7.67 The NPPF states that one of the few circumstances where a new dwelling within the countryside may be justified is when accommodation is required to enable agricultural or rural workers to live at or in the immediate vicinity of their place of work.
- 7.68 While the Local Planning Authority's preference is for such workers to live in nearby towns or villages, 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.
- 7.69 Such a need however must be essential to the successful operation of the rural business. Any proposal for a new agricultural/rural workers dwelling will be expected to satisfy all the criteria set out in Policy DM14.
- 7.70 The need for a rural workers dwelling could be generated by a range of traditional rural land activities such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, rural estate management, certain equestrian businesses and horticulture.
- 7.71 Applications will be subject to a functions test to establish whether it is essential for the proper functioning of the business enterprise for one or more workers to be readily available. Such a requirement might arise where a worker or workers need to be available round the clock to respond to situations where livestock/animals or agricultural processes require essential care at short notice or emergencies that could otherwise cause a serious loss of crops or products e.g. by frost or failure of automatic systems.
- 7.72 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.
- 7.73 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.

7.74 Nevertheless, the Local Planning Authority 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 Local Planning Authority 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.

#### **Policy DM14: Rural Workers' Housing**

##### **Permanent Rural Workers' Dwellings**

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

- (i) Evidence is provided to show that there is an essential functional need for a permanent dwelling;
- (ii) The need is related to a full-time worker who is primarily employed locally in agriculture, forestry or some other rural based business that requires a new dwelling in the countryside;
- (iii) The size and design of dwelling is commensurate with the needs of the rural business;
- (iv) 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;
- (v) The functional need cannot be met by another suitable and available dwelling;
- (vi) The conversion of an existing building should be considered in preference to new build;
- (vii) The proposed development is not located in a recognised area of flood risk; and
- (viii) The proposed development satisfies all other Local Plan policy requirements.

##### **Temporary Rural Workers Dwellings**

Where a new dwelling is essential to support a new activity, whether a newly created unit or an established one, it will normally, for the first three years, be provided by a caravan or other temporary accommodation.

Applications will need to be supported with the following information:

- (i) Clear evidence of a firm intention and ability to develop the enterprise concerned (significant investment in new buildings is often a good indication of intentions);
- (ii) Evidence is provided to show that there is an essential functional need;
- (iii) Clear evidence that the proposed enterprise has been planned on a sound financial basis. The evidence should include a business plan of at least 3 years duration;
- (iv) The functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on

- the unit, or any other existing accommodation in the area;
- (v) 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; and
- (vi) The proposed temporary accommodation is not located in a recognised area of flood risk.

Conditions will be attached to all permissions granted for new rural workers dwellings 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 dwelling is no longer needed to support a rural business, applications to remove the occupancy restrictions will have to submit evidence demonstrating that an essential functional need no longer exists for the property and is unlikely to in the foreseeable future. The applicant will be expected to provide details of instructions to estate agents, and the response to that advertising, demonstrating that:

- (i) The property has been continuously marketed for rent and sale for at least 12 months and advertised in that period at a price reflecting the occupancy condition;
- (ii) The advertising should include on-line advertising, local newspapers and relevant national agricultural magazines; and
- (iii) The property has been offered both for sale and to rent on the same basis as above to all farmers, horticulturalists and other rural businesses where a dwelling may be justified in the locality (i.e. having holdings within a two-mile radius of the dwelling.)

## Design and Amenity

7.75 Good design is indivisible from good planning and a key NPPF requirement for ensuring sustainable development. High quality design benefits everyday users and society as a whole, by creating desirable, functional and efficient places, which help support improved amenities, inclusive communities, economic activity and reduced environmental impact. Design quality is particularly relevant in Colchester given the need to generate local support for planned growth, complement historic assets and to ensure regeneration activities leave a lasting place-making legacy.

7.76 In Colchester, as elsewhere in the UK, there is a need to deliver high quality design, whilst still ensuring sustainable development is viable. As a result there is a need to make sure policy guidance helps achieve best practice, providing clarity and securing development which is both good enough to approve and deliverable.

7.77 The promotion of good processes will be important in raising standards, including as appropriate for guidance/development:

- Good design team selection;
- Design guidance (e.g. masterplans, design codes, development briefs and neighbourhood plans) for priority growth and regeneration areas. These might be produced by the Local Planning Authority or other key stakeholders as appropriate;
- Site and context analysis to identify issues and opportunities;
- Alternative options to test the pros and cons of alternative proposals;
- Pre-application dialogue (perhaps as part of a Planning Performance Agreement), to help identify improvements;
- Independent Design Review on appropriate schemes;
- Proposals being informed by key stakeholder consultation;
- Supporting well designed self and community led development;
- Submission of design material which allows for accurate assessment.

7.78 Requests by the Local Planning Authority for information in relation to applicant's design proposals will be reasonable and proportionate to the nature and scale of the proposal. The NPPF 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.

7.79 Development must positively contribute to the public realm, preserving or enhancing the sense of place, including historic interest, landscape, townscape, streetscape, character areas, route hierarchy, roofscapes, key views, gateways, nodes, edges, landmarks, green links and spaces. However it is important guidance does not attempt to impose architectural styles or personal tastes, though high quality traditional/contemporary designs and materials should positively respond to their physical and cultural context and be correctly interpreted through to forms and detailing. Common design risks should be

avoided such as excessive standardisation, mono-use sprawl, ungainly forms, uninspired public realm design, parking dominated streets, use of second-rate materials, poorly applied design styles, weakly defined spatial enclosure, screening as justification for poor design and a lack of townscape interest or legibility.

7.80 Retail centres can play an important role in promoting community vitality, lifestyle and well-being, yet good design and place-making is often particularly challenged by narrow private interests and competing uses. New development should contribute to centres which are compact, genuinely mixed-use, including vertically where appropriate, in particular offering viable retail and service circuits meeting local need, business uses offering local jobs, and residential dwellings providing a self-policing community presence. Centres should be highly accessible, prioritising sustainable transport, and offer a high quality public realm for pedestrians which is not vehicle dominated.

7.81 The promotion of walking, cycling and public transport will assist in creating an environment that is attractive, healthy, sociable and safe, whilst more generally helping promote sustainable forms of development. This can be achieved through good connectivity especially for strategic desire lines, high quality streetscape and landscape, shared space, filtered permeability, car-free zones and wayfinding measures.

7.82 Well thought out site plans include a consideration of how design can reduce anti-social behaviour by orientating and placing buildings, windows and access points to provide clear lines of sight and natural surveillance. Public and private open space should be clearly differentiated, avoiding piecemeal and isolated patches of public space that could be prone to vandalism.

7.83 The Local Planning Authority's Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) provide further design guidance, which is updated from time to time. Reference may also be made to relevant nationally produced guidance, such as the government's 2018 National Design Guide which sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice, and the National Design Code 2021. The Building for a Healthy Life assessment tool is promoted for use on major housing schemes. It is the industry standard, endorsed by government, for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods, helping prompt improvements, qualitative review and performance monitoring.

7.84 Internal infrastructure and services necessary for a development to function effectively should be provided in conjunction with the commencement of the development so as not to place undue strain on the existing environment and local economy.



### **Policy DM15: Design and Amenity**

All development, 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. 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 Local Planning Authority will use and/or promote a range of planning processes and tools to help achieve high quality design. Ultimately, development proposals must demonstrate that they, and any ancillary activities associated with them, will:

- (i) 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 integrate the existing built environment and other landscape, heritage, biodiversity and arboricultural assets and remove problems as part of the overall development proposal;
- (ii) Help establish a visually attractive sense of place for living, working and visiting, through good architecture and landscaping;
- (iii) Promote and sustain an appropriate mix and density of uses which are well located and integrated, optimise the efficient use of land (including sharing), contribute to inclusive communities, and support retail centres and sustainable transport networks;
- (iv) Provide attractive, well connected and legible streets and spaces, which encourage walking, cycling, public transport and community vitality, whilst adequately integrating safe vehicle access;
- (v) Protect and promote public and residential amenity, particularly with regard to privacy, overlooking, security, noise and disturbance, pollution (including light and odour pollution), daylight and sunlight;
- (vi) Create a safe, resilient and secure environment, which supports community cohesion and is not vulnerable to neglect;
- (vii) 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 possible future development;
- (viii) Minimise energy consumption/emissions and promote sustainable drainage, particularly with regard to transport, landform, layout, building orientation, massing, tree planting and landscaping;
- (ix) Incorporate 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 place-making;
- (x) 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;
- (xi) Encourage Active Design; and

- (xii) Provide a network of 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.

## Historic Environment

- 7.85 Colchester's importance as a historic town warrants a policy detailing and reinforcing the need to protect and enhance the historic environment. The policy is also applicable to heritage assets in rural areas of the Borough and will help to protect and enhance assets in these areas. In the local area there are a number of buildings which detract from the appearance of heritage assets and the opportunities for redevelopment should be encouraged.
- 7.86 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.
- 7.87 Developers will be required to make provision for the recording of any heritage assets adversely impacted by development and to make provision for full analysis and reporting, and to ensure this, and any archive generated, is publicly accessible. Provision will be required to enhance the Urban Archaeological Database and to provide for the long-term curation of the archive.
- 7.88 Where appropriate, provision will be required for interpretation and access *in situ*, where public access is possible without detriment to the site, or at a suitable off-site location, and for realising the social, cultural, economic and environment benefits of the historic environment.
- 7.89 There are a number of existing buildings and built environments within the Borough, which do not have a statutory basis for protection, but which nevertheless retain a distinctive historical or architectural character that it is considered desirable to keep. The Local Planning Authority, working with local experts, will prepare a Local List of buildings and groups of buildings, which are considered to be of particular historic or architectural merit; this will be used to ensure that when assessing applications for planning permission their particular character is considered. Conditions will be applied to allow for the inspection and recording of buildings on the Local List.
- 7.90 There are also a number of neighbourhoods within the Borough that are characterised by spacious properties built at low density within a well treed setting, or else that retain a particular "period" character. Context appraisals will be required for all development and where a proposal is within a neighbourhood with a distinctive character which it is desirable to keep, the proposal will need to demonstrate that it protects and enhances the special qualities of the area.

### **Policy DM16: Historic Environment**

Development that will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a listed building, conservation area, historic park or garden or important archaeological remains (including the setting of heritage assets) will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where the harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss. Where development will lead to less than substantial harm this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

Development affecting the historic environment should seek to conserve and enhance the significance of the heritage asset and any features of specific historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest. 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. 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 Local Planning Authority will request the removal of the features that undermine the historic environment as part of any proposed development. The Local Planning Authority will request the provision of creative and accessible interpretations of heritage assets impacted by development.

Conservation of the historic environment will also be ensured by:

- (i) Identifying, characterising, protecting and enhancing Conservation Areas;
- (ii) Protection and enhancement of existing buildings and built areas which do not have Listed Building or Conservation Area status but have a particular local importance or character which it is desirable to keep;
- (iii) Preserving and enhancing Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, including their respective settings, and other features, which contribute to the heritage of the Borough; and
- (iv) Sites of archaeological interest will be clearly identified and protected, and sites that become known, whether through formal evaluation as part of a Planning Application or otherwise, will similarly be protected according to their importance.

Heritage Impact Assessments and/or Archaeological Evaluations will be required for proposals related to or impacting on the setting of heritage assets and/or known or possible archaeological sites, and where there is potential for encountering archaeological sites so that sufficient information is provided to assess the significance of the heritage assets and to assess the impacts of development on historic assets together with any proposed mitigation measures.

## Open Space

- 7.91 Existing open spaces, green link networks and allotments provide the people of Colchester with opportunities for passive and active recreation and encourage healthy and active lifestyles. Open space also includes areas of water, which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation, and can act as a visual amenity. It is important that all residents have access to open space within walking distance of their home. Strategic green links provide valuable corridors for the movement of people and biodiversity. The green spaces along the Colne River, for example, connect the town centre, suburbs, countryside, villages and the coast. These corridors provide alternative means for people making journeys into and across Colchester. The Local Planning Authority will therefore seek to protect and enhance these important links. The Colchester Orbital project (see Appendix 1) celebrates and protects Colchester's existing green spaces and creates a sense of environmental connectivity between them.
- 7.92 The Local Planning Authority commissioned an Open Space Study in accordance with the NPPF to identify areas with deficiencies of open space. Development will be required to make contributions towards meeting these deficiencies where they will exacerbate the situation in accordance with the Local Planning Authority's adopted SPD for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (updated as required). The Open Space Study sets specific targets to guide the provision of different types of open space across the Borough.
- 7.93 The existing public and private open spaces, including allotments, within the Borough, represent important assets serving the communities in which they are located (or in some instances wider areas). This importance can relate not only to their function, but also to the amenity value and contribution they make to the character of an area in general by providing a 'green lung', opportunities for a well-designed and inclusive public realm, and visual breaks in the built environment. They also provide alternative green spaces which help alleviate pressure on internationally designated nature conservation sites. If such provisions are lost to other uses it can be extremely difficult to find alternative locations particularly as open land is scarce and, therefore, at a premium.
- 7.94 Well-designed open spaces can deliver multiple functions. As well as their value for wildlife, quality of life, health and recreation, they also provide opportunities for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) for surface water runoff management. Open space provides opportunities for climate change adaptation through the management and enhancement of existing habitats and the creation of new ones to assist with species migration, to provide shade during higher temperatures, and for flood mitigation.
- 7.95 Against this background, it is intended to secure the retention of existing facilities unless a case can be made that alternative provision will be provided in a wholly acceptable manner. Alternative provision could comprise existing provision in the locality of the type of open space as defined by the NPPF, providing there is not a deficiency in that type of open space. A number of documents including the PPG17 Audit and Assessment of the Borough's public open spaces, Colchester

Parks and Green Spaces Strategy (2008) and Colchester's Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011) and any updated evidence as appropriate, will be used by the Local Planning Authority when assessing planning applications relating to proposed development of open space and sports facilities.

- 7.96 New development can place increasing pressure on existing open spaces. Developments therefore will be expected to deliver areas of open space to meet the varying needs of residents for recreation and leisure and also deliver attractive high quality neighbourhoods for people to live in. At least 10% of the total gross site area should be provided as local open space as an integral part of new development proposals. Exceptionally, where this is not possible, particularly where a development site is small, the site developer will be expected to provide a commuted sum towards the provision of open space off site.
- 7.97 Developments should help contribute to the accessibility, quantity and quality standards set out in Appendices N, P and Q in the Local Planning Authority's PPG17 Open Space, Sport and Recreation study (or updates as required). All open space shall be provided in a timely manner (so as to enable reasonable and appropriate access by new residents to this facility); should be fully equipped in a satisfactory manner as agreed by the Local Planning Authority; and, laid out at the expense of the developer and where appropriate, dedicated to the Local Planning Authority with suitable provision for ongoing maintenance. Further guidance on the level of contributions for commuted sums and the methodology for their calculation is set out in the Supplementary Planning Document on Provision of Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities (which will be updated as required).
- 7.98 All housing developments, including higher density development, should provide new residents with access to private and/or communal open space, in addition to public open space requirements. At least 25m<sup>2</sup> per dwelling of private/communal open space will be sought for flats and maisonettes, whilst houses should provide larger private gardens. Higher density schemes will be encouraged to utilise innovative design solutions to provide open space on difficult sites.
- 7.99 The Essex Design Guide sets standards for amenity space provision for new residential developments. The Urban Place Supplement recognised these standards were not always helpful for producing good quality development in compact urban developments and this evaluation has informed the requirement of this policy that generally seeks the provision of a minimum of 25m<sup>2</sup> of high quality, private amenity space for each dwelling. It is important that new development avoids the piecemeal provision of small areas of open space and instead provides sufficiently large areas of open space to serve as accessible and attractive zones for residents' leisure activity and recreation. Green links alongside existing hedgerows and tree lines can also have high amenity value.

**Policy DM17: Retention of Open Space and Recreation Facilities**

The Council will protect and enhance the existing network of green links and open spaces and secure additional areas where deficiencies are identified. The provision of public open space in developments should be informed by an appraisal of local context and community need and up to date evidence, with a particular regard to the impact of site development on biodiversity.

A) Development, including change of use, of any existing or proposed public or private open space, including allotments, will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that:

- (i) Alternative and improved provision will be created in a location well related to the functional requirements of the relocated use and its existing and future users; and,
- (ii) The proposal would not result in the loss of an area important for its amenity or contribution to the green infrastructure network or to the character of the area in general; and
- (iii) It achieves the aims of any relevant prevailing strategy relating to open space and recreation.

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

- (i) There is an identified excess provision within the catchment of the facility and no likely shortfall is expected within the plan period; or
- (ii) 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.

In all cases, development will not be permitted that would result in any deficiencies in public 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 or which contribute to green infrastructure will not be permitted.

**Policy DM18: Provision of Public Open Space**

New residential development must provide for the recreational needs of new communities. The provision of open space helps to alleviate recreational pressure on sites of high nature conservation value (e.g. habitats sites) and also increases opportunities for participation in healthy lifestyles.

All new residential development will be expected to provide new public areas of accessible open space. Precise levels of provision will depend on the location of the proposal and the nature of open space needs in the area but as a guideline, at least 10% of the gross site area should be provided as useable open space. The Local Planning Authority will expect large sites of 5 hectares or more to provide at least one strategic area of open space within the site. This will be secured through planning obligations or CIL/equivalent infrastructure levy.

Where the Local Planning Authority accepts commuted sums in lieu of open space, the commuted sums will be used to provide additional open space or to improve existing open space in the locality of the development. Contributions may be pooled towards larger infrastructure projects and/or to provide larger areas of strategic open space where a need has been identified. A commuted sum is only likely to be acceptable in the following circumstances:

- (i) smaller developments of less than 0.5 ha, or where for some other reason open space requirements cannot be met within the site; or
- (ii) developments of dwellings which are legally secured for occupation by the elderly (where some compensating increase in private amenity space may be required); or
- (iii) in a town centre location or where it is justified by an outstanding urban design approach based on site constraints and opportunities.



### **Policy DM19: Private Amenity Space**

The Local Planning Authority will expect all new residential development to provide easy access to private amenity space and in the case of flatted development, private communal amenity space. The area of amenity space should be informed by the needs of residents and the accessibility of the location. Private amenity space and communal amenity space must be designed to optimise its use and meet the recreational needs of residents.

All new residential development shall provide private amenity space to a high standard, where the siting, orientation, size and layout make for a secure and usable space, which has an inviting appearance for residents and is appropriate to the surrounding context. All private amenity spaces shall be designed so as to avoid significant overlooking.

The following standards shall apply:

For houses:

- One or two bedroom houses – a minimum of 50m<sup>2</sup>
- Three bedroom houses – a minimum of 60m<sup>2</sup>
- Four bedroom houses – a minimum of 100m<sup>2</sup>

For flats:

- A minimum of 25m<sup>2</sup> per flat provided communally (where balconies are provided the space provided may be taken off the communal requirement).

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 accessible locations (in accordance with Policy DM9) where higher densities may be appropriate, reduced garden sizes for houses may be acceptable but a minimum of 25m<sup>2</sup> of useable private amenity space shall be provided for every home (either as gardens, balconies or roof gardens/terraces).

## **Promoting Sustainable Transport and Changing Travel Behaviour**

- 7.100 The Spatial Strategy ensures that development is located to reduce the need to travel or development is of a scale that promotes sustainable transport that is accessible for all.
- 7.101 The NPPF requires the transport system to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes while recognising that different policies and solutions will be necessary in different areas. 2011 Census data shows that car ownership is highest in the rural areas of the Borough and lower in urban areas. However, the car is still the highest mode of travel used for journeys to work, even in urban areas, and congestion and air quality affect many of the roads within the urban areas. Therefore, sustainable transport will continue to be encouraged where possible, particularly where growth is planned.
- 7.102 Good accessibility and access to a high quality and efficient transport network is essential to support new development and ensure that it is sustainable, enabling the community to access their needs (e.g. employment, shopping, schools) easily and without always needing a car. The Local Planning Authority will continue to work closely with Essex County Council, as the highway authority, Highways England, Network Rail, public transport infrastructure providers and operators or third-party organisations with the ability and resources to deliver projects in the Borough.
- 7.103 Active modes such as walking and cycling are a high priority, being an essential and highly sustainable means of transport, which also support a healthy lifestyle and a strong economy. Census data shows that 69% of people who live within Colchester Borough work within the Borough. The majority of Colchester residents live within 5km of the town centre and therefore walking and cycling have great potential as modes of transport. Travel change behaviour programmes will be pursued to encourage greater use of alternative modes. The Essex Cycling Strategy sets out the key elements of a long-term plan that will lead to a significant and sustained increase in cycling in Essex. It acts as the over-arching policy framework to enable, provide and promote cycling in Essex. To encourage walking and cycling within Colchester, and to the town centre, the Local Planning Authority will seek to make improvements to the network to remove barriers to pedestrians and cyclists and enhancing the environment to provide people-friendly streets which give priority to sustainable modes of transport. Priority, safety and convenience for walking and cycling should be ensured at the design stage of any road schemes and all users should be considered.
- 7.104 Public transport has a crucial role to play in Colchester. Providing a quality public transport network that offers a genuinely attractive alternative to the car is vital. Transit corridors that prioritise public transport over other traffic will attract people to use public transport. Park and Ride facilities that offer easy access to the town via transit corridors will also help reduce congestion. For this reason it is important to safeguard land for new public transport infrastructure, such as bus lanes, interchange facilities and junction improvements.

- 7.105 The Local Planning Authority will also seek to deliver improvements to transport interchanges and public transport gateways. At present there are over 5 million passenger movements at Colchester's railway stations each year. Enhancing transport interchanges such as the railway and bus stations will present a more attractive gateway to businesses, commuters, tourists and local residents. The Colchester Station Travel Plan aims to manage congestion in the area by investing in infrastructure; increasing accessibility; encouraging access by sustainable travel and encouraging a high level of connectivity linking the station to the town centre and other key destinations.
- 7.106 The private car will continue to be a major mode of transport. However, growth in car travel and traffic needs to be managed to reduce congestion, improve air quality and promote a high quality of life and economic growth in Colchester. Car travel demand can be more carefully managed in urban areas through the use of alternatives and new technologies. Combining demand management of car traffic with improvements to sustainable alternatives and improved street design can greatly benefit the local community, businesses and the environment. All development should consider the content of Essex County Council's Highway Authority Development Management Policies.
- 7.107 Road freight and servicing will be facilitated where appropriate to promote economic and employment growth. Support will be given for improvements to the strategic road and rail network to accommodate growth. Consideration will be given to measures that discourage the use of high emission vehicles.
- 7.108 It is recognised that different policies and measures will be required in different communities and opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas. Those living in rural areas are often most affected by lack of transport choices. Where appropriate, the Local Planning Authority will encourage connectivity by sustainable modes of transport including enhancing and promoting rural bus services.
- 7.109 There are two rail branch lines off the Great Eastern mainline in the Borough serving rural communities: the Gainsborough Line that links Marks Tey to Sudbury, serving both Chappel and Wakes Colne and Bures Stations; and the Sunshine Coast line; the Colchester to Clacton/Walton line. The Local Planning Authority will work with partners, including the Community Rail Partnership, to make the best use of rural rail stations, increase accessibility to stations and promote and increase the use of the branch lines in the Borough. The Local Planning Authority supports the aim to provide at least two trains an hour to all stations, including the rural branches.
- 7.110 The green infrastructure network in Colchester provides alternative sustainable transport corridors for people making journeys into and out of Colchester by active modes of transport. Policy ENV3 seeks to develop green infrastructure in the Borough, and the Local Planning Authority will support the development of the Colchester Orbital route around urban Colchester. The Local Planning Authority will seek opportunities from future developments where appropriate to improve

connectivity between the Colchester Orbital route, the new developments and the wider countryside. The Local Planning Authority will also seek opportunities where appropriate to improve the creation of and connectivity to the England/Essex Coast Path.

**Policy DM20: Promoting Sustainable Transport and Changing Travel Behaviour**

The Local Planning Authority will work with developers and other partners to increase modal shift towards sustainable modes by improving accessibility of development through the promotion of walking and cycling as an integral part of development, and by further improving public transport. In line with policy SG1 (Spatial Strategy), development that reduces the need to travel will be encouraged and sustainable transport will be improved to provide better connections between communities and their needs. This will be achieved by:

- (i) Safeguarding existing and proposed routes for walking, cycling and public transport, including rapid transit, park and ride, and green infrastructure, from development. New development will be expected to contribute towards maintaining continuity and enhancing these connections where appropriate;
- (ii) Focusing new walking and cycling improvements on areas of employment, education and health facilities, and on the town centre and public transport interchanges;
- (iii) Ensuring new developments are supported by quality public transport linking them to the main urban areas and major centres of employment, health and education. Access to public transport should be within walking or cycling distance of any new development;
- (iv) Reducing the need to travel by car by promoting higher densities near retail centres and public transport hubs, and encouraging mixed use development in appropriate locations;
- (v) Enhancing public transport gateways to Colchester to provide attractive entry points to, and excellent onward connections from, the rail stations in urban Colchester and Marks Tey, Wivenhoe, and Colchester Bus Station.

The Local Planning Authority will also work with partners to accommodate necessary car travel making the best use of the existing network and managing the demand for road traffic. The Local Planning Authority will support improvements to the strategic road, rail and cycle network where appropriate evidence is provided and local consultation undertaken.

Improvements will be made to the road network to support sustainable development and to reduce the impact of congestion. The demand for car travel will be managed to prevent adverse impacts on sustainable transportation, air quality, safety, local amenity and built character by:

- (vi) Encouraging a reduction in through traffic in the town centre to encourage trips to be undertaken by more sustainable modes;
- (vii) Encouraging use of new technology to better manage traffic, provide alternatives, facilitate the use of ultra-low emission vehicles and reduce

the need to travel, particularly at peak times.

Where appropriate the use of sustainable travel in rural areas will be encouraged to minimise the impact of transport on sensitive rural areas. The Local Planning Authority will seek to make best use of rural rail services through promotion and improving access at stations.

## **Sustainable Access to Development**

- 7.111 Good easy access to a high quality and efficient transport network is essential to support new development and ensure that it is sustainable. The NPPF sets out the government's approach to the location and design of developments to ensure that plans protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people. The Local Planning Authority will work closely with Essex County Council as the highways authority to help promote good access to high quality, sustainable modes of travel within and from new developments.
- 7.112 One of the best ways to encourage sustainable modes is to fully consider the needs of all users at the design stage. Public transport has a crucial role to play in encouraging sustainable travel patterns at an early stage from new developments. Walking and cycling are also a high priority being healthy, affordable sustainable modes of travel and priority, convenience and safety for both modes should be ensured through design layout and the provision of on-site facilities. The current Colchester Cycling Delivery Strategy was adopted as an SPD in January 2012. The latest version of this document should be taken into account in the design stage of new development to ensure cyclists and cycling facilities are taken into consideration through the provision of quality infrastructure, and funding promotion and cycle training to increase levels of cycling and create more sustainable and healthy travel patterns. The infrastructure appendix to the current SPD illustrates the network of existing and planned routes in Colchester.
- 7.113 Electric vehicle charging points and facilities for other ultra-low emission vehicles, or the infrastructure to ensure their future provision, should be provided within a development where appropriate to help reduce carbon emissions from transport. Providing for the future could include the provision of sufficient capacity on the electrical consumer unit and conduit to install an external charging point at a later date. Electric charging points should be provided within new commercial developments and car parks.
- 7.114 Any proposals must include sufficient information to assess the likely impact of the development. Transport Assessments or Transport Statements will be required for all developments likely to generate significant amounts of movement. Development should consider the Essex County Council (ECC) Development Management Policies which also provide further detail on the thresholds for Transport Assessments and Statements. Developers will need to demonstrate that the opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up, safe and suitable access for all can be achieved and the impacts can be effectively mitigated within the transport network. Where lower than standard trip rates are proposed development will be expected to demonstrate through a package of sustainable transport measures that the proposed trip rates can be achieved. Where significant impacts are identified, development will not be permitted when the residual cumulative impacts are severe.
- 7.115 Developers will also be required to provide a Travel Plan for developments that generate significant amounts of movement in accordance with Essex County

Council Travel Plan guidelines. Current Essex County Council guidance requires all non-residential development proposals with 50 employees or more, residential developments of 250 dwellings or more, and new schools to produce a Travel Plan. Residential Travel Information Packs will be provided to all dwellings on new residential developments. Developments that generate significant amounts of movement will also be required to become members of the Colchester Travel Plan Club which provides a range of resources to promote travel behaviour change for local business and organisations in Colchester.

**Policy DM21: Sustainable Access to Development**

All new developments should seek to enhance accessibility for sustainable modes of transport. Proposals for development should:

- (i) Give priority to the movement of people walking and cycling;
- (ii) Create safe, secure, convenient and attractive layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic, cyclists and pedestrians;
- (iii) Link the development to the surrounding walking, cycling and public transport networks taking into consideration the Cycle Strategy SPD;
- (iv) Provide and give access to quality public transport facilities;
- (v) Ensure streets and junctions are designed to provide people-friendly street environments and to give priority to sustainable transport;
- (vi) Incorporate charging facilities for electric and other ultra-low emission vehicles where appropriate, or as a minimum the ability to easily introduce such facilities in the future;
- (vii) Ensuring accessibility for those with impaired mobility; and
- (viii) Accommodate the efficient delivery of goods and services.

Access to all development should be created in a manner which maintains the right and safe passage of all highway users. Where development requires a new road or road access it should be designed to give high priority to the needs of pedestrians and cyclists.

Development will only be allowed where there is physical and environmental capacity to accommodate the type and amount of traffic generated in a safe manner. Developments that generate significant amounts of movement will require a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment in line with the thresholds set in the latest Essex County Council development management policies relating to highways. Where lower than standard trip rates are proposed development will be expected to demonstrate through a package of sustainable transport measures that the proposed trip rates can be achieved. A masterplan approach to assess cumulative impacts may be required in complex locations with closely related and located developments.

All non-residential developments that generate significant amounts of movement will be required to produce a Travel Plan in accordance with Essex County Council Travel Plan Framework guidance and where appropriate will be required to become members of the Colchester Travel Plan Club. All new residential developments and schools will be required to produce a Travel Plan or provide Residential Travel Packs in accordance with Essex County Council Travel Plan Framework guidance.



## Parking

- 7.116 The Local Planning Authority will work with partners to ensure that car parking is managed to support the economy and sustainable communities. 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.
- 7.117 The Essex Parking Standards 2009 provide the Local Planning Authority with advice and guidance on the provision and role of parking within residential, commercial and leisure areas. However, the Local Planning Authority recognises that there needs to be flexibility to provide appropriate car and cycle parking based on local circumstances. The adopted SPD will continue to inform this policy and will provide guidance on levels of parking considered necessary to serve development. Developers will be expected to provide car parking on new developments in accordance with the most up to date standards, having regard to the nature of the development and location. The parking standard will be used as a point of reference for non-residential development but a more flexible approach will be considered if the applicant can demonstrate through parking surveys and accumulation data, provision of alternative forms of transport and or use of an alternative car park that a lower level of parking is acceptable. However, a lower standard will not be permitted where local evidence demonstrates a high demand for parking spaces, i.e., convenience stores.
- 7.118 The Parking SPD will be reviewed to ensure it is applicable locally with regard to the most recent evidence and Census data regarding local car ownership and car usage.
- 7.119 Where new development requires the submission of a Travel Plan, it will be necessary to ensure that the Travel Plan integrates proposals for parking with proposals to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport. Parking for staff, visitors and operational uses will be managed as part of the Travel Plan.
- 7.120 Car free and low car development will be allowed in the Town Centre where it can be demonstrated that this is appropriate as a result of effective alternative modes of transport, and or access to a car provided through a car club.
- 7.121 Where the Local Planning Authority receives an application for a stand-alone new car park, or for the expansion of an existing car park, this will be considered on its merits based on evidence of need. Proposals should include the provision of electric charging points. In the town centre, short stay car parking will be provided where necessary to facilitate the economic and social wellbeing of the town centre. Redevelopment of existing surface car parks will be considered in the context of needing to ensure a neutral effect on the overall supply of town centre parking. Greater use of park and ride will be encouraged and additional sites will be sought that support growth, help manage congestion and can deliver more people sustainably to the key destinations in and around the town centre.

- 7.122 Encouraging the use of electric and other ultra-low emission vehicles helps reduce carbon emissions and reduces harmful emissions, particularly as Colchester has a number of transportation related air quality areas. With the growth in electric vehicles, owners will need to have suitable infrastructure to re-charge vehicles. Infrastructure needs to be installed at a variety of locations to enable effective recharging. Different chargers will be needed such as slow, fast or rapid chargers depending on location and the target market. The market and technology are still developing and the situation may change significantly during the plan period.
- 7.123 To encourage greater take up of electric vehicles more charging points are required particularly in public places or in car parks (public and private). In order to ensure that new developments are equipped with the necessary infrastructure, proposals should include appropriate provision for electric car charging points. For larger developments, details of how electric vehicle charging will be allocated, located and managed should, where applicable, be included within the relevant Transport Assessment and Transport Statement.

**Policy DM22: Parking**

The amount of car parking to be provided in association with new residential development will be assessed using the most recent local Parking Standards taking account of the following factors:

- (i) Levels of local accessibility;
- (ii) Historic and forecast car ownership levels;
- (iii) The size, type, tenure and location of the dwellings;
- (iv) The appropriate mix of parking types including opportunities for car-sharing (e.g., unallocated, on-street, visitor, car club etc);
- (v) The need to ensure facilities are incorporated for electric and other ultra-low emission vehicles.

Parking Standards for non-residential development should be agreed through joint discussions with the local Highway Authority and the Local Planning Authority in accordance with the most recent local Parking Standards, with a more flexible approach to the parking standards only considered if supported by a parking survey and accumulation data. Local evidence suggests some uses require the maximum parking standard to be applied. Non-residential development shall include provision of electric charging points. Parking for staff, visitors and operational uses 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 to support quality development.

Secure cycle parking should be incorporated into all residential 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 will be incorporated into development proposals and located near the entrance to the building. Cycle parking must be useable and function to serve its purpose and Sheffield type stands will be the preferred cycle stand.

In appropriate circumstances, namely urban locations served by sustainable travel options and alternative car parking spaces in public/communal facilities within approximately 400m, parking standards may be relaxed or car-free development may be acceptable in order to reflect accessibility by non-car modes, and/or to enhance the character of sensitive locations. The use/establishment of a car club may be required.

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.

Where possible large car parks, for example serving town 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 surface car parking will also be considered to make efficient use of land, improve the townscape and support regeneration.

Greater use of Park & Ride will be encouraged especially for trips to the town centre and other major establishments along the route of the service. Further Park and Ride sites will be developed to help support growth and give access to the town centre.

Proposals for additional car parking in Dedham will be supported where they comply with all other policies in the Local Plan.

The Local Planning Authority will work with transport providers and highways authorities to provide facilities for freight and servicing.

## **Flood Risk and Water Management**

- 7.124 National policy categorises zones of flood risk as Zone 1 (low probability), Zone 2 (medium probability), Zone 3a (high probability) and Zone 3b (functional floodplain). These flood zones are defined in Table 1 in the Flood Risk and Coastal Change National Planning Practice Guidance and are shown on the Government's Flood Map for Planning. The Environment Agency have also produced the updated Flood Map for Surface Water. Both are available on the GOV.UK website.
- 7.125 The overall aim of national policy and guidance on flood risk is to steer new development to land with the lowest risk from flooding, (Flood Zone 1) as a priority and to ensure that the development being proposed is compatible and safe over its lifetime relative to the Flood Zone it will be located in. Table 2 of the Planning Practice Guidance sets out a flood risk vulnerability classification for different land uses while Table 3 provides a 'compatibility' table for specific land uses in the different flood zones (including in Flood Zones 3a and 3b). The notes accompanying Table 3 set out the principles to be followed in relation to the application of the Sequential Test and Exception Test, including the need to consider risk from all sources of flooding and not just from rivers and sea.
- 7.126 It is important that flood risk is assessed early in the plan making process. National policy/guidance requires the production of Strategic Flood Risk Assessments to enable flood risk from all types of flooding (including an allowance for climate change) to be considered at a strategic level. The SFRA is the key piece of evidence used to allocate land in the Local Plan. The NPPF and PPG also requires Local Planning Authorities to adopt a sequential approach when allocating development sites in their Local Plans relative to their flood risk, flood vulnerability and proposed use.
- 7.127 The Sequential Test and (Exception Test where applicable) enables Local Planning Authorities to employ this sequential approach when allocating land.
- 7.128 Flood risk was considered early in the site selection process in the Colchester Local Plan. As part of the site assessment process (SLAA), greenfield sites where more than 50% fell within Flood Zone 3 were immediately ruled out. On completion of the SLAA, the Local Planning Authority commissioned a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for Colchester. The SFRA was then used to apply the Sequential and Exceptions Test (where necessary) to assist the allocation of development sites in the emerging Local Plan.
- 7.129 The application of the Sequential Test involved initially directing new development to land in Flood Zone 1 (areas with a low probability of river or sea flooding). Where there were no reasonably available sites in Flood Zone 1, reasonably available sites in Flood Zone 2 (areas with a medium probability of river or sea flooding), were then considered. Where there were no reasonably available sites in Flood Zones 1 or 2 the suitability of developing sites in Flood Zone 3 (areas with a high probability of river or sea flooding) was then considered. When considering the allocation of sites in Flood Zones 2 & 3, the

Local Planning Authority also took flood risk vulnerability of the proposed land uses and the need for the application of the Exception Test into account.

- 7.130 When applying the Sequential Test, the area of search for reasonably available sites was applied at the Borough level. The exception to this was in East Colchester Special Policy Area where the area of search for reasonably available alternative sites was restricted to East Colchester.
- 7.131 This alternative approach for East Colchester which was agreed by both DCLG and the Environment Agency in 2008 when the Core Strategy was being prepared was deemed necessary to enable the continued regeneration of this part of town. The regeneration of East Colchester is still ongoing therefore the Council will continue to apply the alternative approach.
- 7.132 The methodology for the application of the Sequential Test has been agreed with the Environment Agency. The Sequential Test Report is published as part of the Local Plan evidence base. When preparing planning applications, developers should refer to the Flood Risk Sequential Test Report, for detailed site specific measures and mitigations that need to be delivered to ensure that flood risk is properly addressed as part of development proposals.
- 7.133 The NPPF and PPG also require individual Flood Risk Assessments to be prepared in certain circumstances to assess flood risk at the site specific level. Site specific Flood Risk Assessments must therefore be submitted with planning applications for all development proposals in Flood Zone 2 or 3 and in Flood Zone 1 for sites over 1 hectare (ha), land which has been identified by the Environment Agency as having critical drainage problems, land identified in a strategic flood risk assessment as being at increased flood risk in future, or land that may be subject to other sources of flooding, where its development would introduce a more vulnerable use.
- 7.134 The NPPF and PPG also set out the requirements for the use for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to minimise the risk of flooding from new development. While all development should include SuDS within their design, only major development proposals are subject to consultation with Essex County Council as Local Lead Flood Authority. A surface water drainage strategy should therefore be submitted with all major planning applications to ensure that the need for SuDS has been properly considered as part of the planning application process. These and the Local Planning Authority's most up to date SFRA will be used to consider planning applications where relevant.
- 7.135 Development in higher risk flood zones will be restricted to certain categories where an identified need for that type of development in that location exists. The Exception Test allows for development in high risk areas but is only to be applied where there is no other option i.e. where there are large areas of land in Flood Zones 2 and 3 and the Sequential Test cannot deliver acceptable alternative sites, but where some continuing development is necessary. Advice on the Exception test is included in the PPG. Where development proceeds in areas with a known flood risk, mitigation measures will need to be delivered as part of

proposals not only to alleviate risk to people and property, but also to ensure that the development is safe over its planned lifetime.

- 7.136 Small sites (less than 1ha) in Flood Zone 1 that are surrounded by Flood Zone 2 or 3 land, i.e., dry islands, are likely to be treated in the same way as the surrounding land. Each area will have its unique characteristics and a site specific Flood Risk Assessment may be required even for those sites less than 1ha to ensure that safe access / egress exists for the development and that residents are safe during the duration of the flood period.
- 7.137 The use of SuDS to manage water run-off can be an important tool in minimising flooding by increasing the provision of permeable surfaces in an area that allow water to seep gradually into the ground rather than running directly into a drainage network, thereby reducing the risk of overloading the system. SuDS can also help reduce the impact of diffuse pollution from run-off and flooding. The effective use of permeable surfaces, soakaways and water storage areas should be incorporated in all new development where technically possible. Early consideration should be given to the potential to use SuDS to identify when/where the use of such technologies is feasible and to also identify which type of SuDS is most appropriate to local site conditions. Only where there is a significant risk of pollution to the water environment, inappropriate soil conditions and/or engineering difficulties, should alternative methods of drainage discharge of water from a site be considered.
- 7.138 Developers will be encouraged to enter into early discussions with the Local Planning Authority and the Lead Local Flood Authority and as part of discussions, maintenance and long term adoption responsibilities should be explored and agreed, where possible, as part of the SuDS approval process, prior to the start of development.
- 7.139 Colchester's Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) 2013, which only covers Urban Colchester, has identified 9 Critical Drainage Areas (CDAs) and Local Flood Risk Zones (LFRZs). Essex County Council have produced an update to the SWMP Action Plan in 2018. As of April 2018, there are now 12 CDAs and LFRZs within urban Colchester. These can be found on the Essex County Council Asset Register. These delineate the areas where the impact of surface water flooding is expected to be greatest within Colchester. It is acknowledged that the CDAs (and LFRZs) do not account for all the areas that could be affected by surface water flooding. It is therefore important that the policies seek to reduce the risk from surface water flooding throughout the whole Borough. The SWMP also encourages Essex County Council to implement similar policies, so that both authorities promote and apply best management practises regarding the implementation of SuDS and the reduction of runoff volumes.
- 7.140 All new developments in Urban Colchester falling within Critical Drainage Areas will be required to contribute towards the delivery of flood defence solutions within the respective CDAs as specified in the SWMP for Colchester.

### **Policy DM23: Flood Risk and Water Management**

The Local Planning Authority will seek to direct development away from land at risk of flooding in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance. Sites proposed for allocation in the Local Plan have been considered sequentially with respect to flood risk. The Sequential Test will be applied to planning applications for new sites coming forward that have not been allocated through the Plan.

Development will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposal meets flood management requirements in the NPPF, the PPG and policy DM23.

Development proposals will be required to deliver or contribute to the delivery of flood defence/protection measures and/or flood mitigation measures to minimise the risk of increased flooding both within the development boundary and off-site in all flood zones and to ensure that the development remains safe throughout the life of the development. Proposals that include measures to enhance the flood resilience of new or renovated buildings will be encouraged, particularly in areas with a history of local flooding.

Where proposals that require planning permission include driveways, hardstanding or paving, the use of permeable materials and landscaping will be sought to minimise the cumulative impacts of flooding from such developments.

Developments will also be required to comply with the following as indicated in the Colchester Surface Water Management Plan (or updates if appropriate):

- (i) All developments across the catchment (excluding minor house extensions less than 50m<sup>2</sup>) which result in a net increase in impermeable area are to include at least one 'at source' SuDS measure e.g., bio-retention planter box, green/brown roofs). This is to help reduce the peak volume of run off discharging from development sites. It is recommended that a SuDS treatment train is utilised to assist in this reduction;
- (ii) All major development proposals are required to reduce post-development runoff rate back to the greenfield 1 in 1 year rate, with an allowance for climate change. On brownfield sites where this is not achievable, then a minimum betterment of 50% should be demonstrated for all flood events. This approach accords with the NPPF/PPG and the most up to date UKCIP guidance). All minor sites should limit discharge rates as much as practical while considering the increased risk of blockage associated with smaller outfall orifice sizing;
- (iii) Developments located in any of the Critical Drainage Areas (CDAs) as defined in Colchester's Surface Water Management Plan or Local Flood Risk Zones (LFRZs) and redevelopments of more than one property or area greater than 0.1 hectare should seek betterment to a greenfield runoff rate;
- (iv) New developments in Critical Drainage Areas will be required to provide or contribute towards the provision of flood mitigation options via CIL/S106 contributions, identified in the Colchester Surface Water Management Plan, to reduce or mitigate the risk of flooding to existing properties located

within the CDA and to accommodate the drainage needs of the new developments.

#### **Policy DM24: Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems**

All new residential and commercial development, car parks and hard standings should incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) appropriate to the nature of the site. Such systems shall provide optimum water runoff rates and volumes taking into account relevant local or national standards; and shall ensure that the quality of runoff is consistent with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive. SuDS design quality will be expected to conform with standards encompassed in the relevant BRE, CIRIA standards and Essex County Council's SuDS Design Guide (and as updated) to the satisfaction of the Lead Local Flood Authority.

Surface water should be managed as close to its source as possible and on the surface where practicable to do so through the use of green roofs, rain gardens, soakaways and permeable paving. Maximum use should also be made of low land take drainage measures such as rain water recycling, green roofs, permeable surfaces and water butts. Appropriate pollution control measures should be incorporated as part of SuDS to reduce the risk of pollution. Including through reference to the CIRIA SuDS Manual, it must be ensured that sufficient treatment steps are provided prior to any surface water discharge. Regard should be given to both the nature of the proposed development and the sensitivity of the receiving water environment.

Opportunities should be taken to integrate sustainable drainage within the design of the development, to create amenity space, enhance biodiversity and manage pollution. Existing drainage features such as ditches and ponds should be retained on site where possible as part of SuDS schemes.

Only where there is a significant risk of pollution to the water environment, inappropriate soil conditions and/or engineering difficulties, should alternative methods of drainage be considered. It will be necessary to demonstrate why it is not achievable. If alternative methods are to be considered, adequate assessment and justification should be provided and consideration should still be given to pre- and post-runoff rates.

SuDS design should be an integral part of design proposals and clear details of proposed SuDS together with how they will be managed and maintained will be required as part of any planning application. Only proposals which clearly demonstrate that a satisfactory SuDS layout with appropriate maintenance is possible, or compelling justification as to why SuDS should not be incorporated into a scheme, or are unviable, are likely to be successful. Contributions in the form of commuted sums may be sought in legal agreements to ensure that the drainage systems can be adequately maintained into the future. The SuDS should be designed to ensure that the maintenance and operation requirements are economically proportionate.



## **Renewable Energy, Water, Waste and Recycling**

- 7.141 Climate change is an important issue, which underpins the Local Plan. New developments will need to help address the challenges of climate change and contribute positively towards the future sustainability of Colchester Borough. Policy CC1 sets out how the Local Planning Authority will achieve a low carbon future for Colchester.
- 7.142 To tackle climate change and improve sustainability, it is important for the Local Planning Authority to promote energy, water, waste and recycling efficiency and renewable energy in new developments. In its commitment to deliver sustainable communities, the Local Planning Authority is seeking to create communities that use natural resources sustainably and minimise waste.
- 7.143 The Local Planning Authority will support proposals for onshore and offshore wind farms (and associated infrastructure) and solar farms that satisfy the broad objectives set out in Policy DM25. Preferable locations include industrial areas and utilising roofs. The Local Planning Authority will also support the development of community led renewable energy schemes as part of Neighbourhood Plans and encourage the delivery of District Heating Schemes within the Garden Community and as part of future development in the Northern Gateway.
- 7.144 BRE has developed the Home Quality Mark (HQM) as part of the BREEAM family of quality and sustainability standards. The HQM will enable developers to showcase the quality of their new homes, and identify them as having the added benefits of being likely to need less maintenance, cheaper to run, better located, and more able to cope with the demands of a changing climate. The HQM demonstrates a home's environmental footprint and its resilience to flooding and overheating in a changing climate, highlights the impact of a home on the occupant's health and wellbeing, and evaluates the digital connectivity and performance of the home. The Local Planning Authority will support developers who choose to register their homes under the HQM. Non-residential development will be encouraged to achieve a BREEAM rating of 'very good'.
- 7.145 Ensuring a continual supply of water in the Borough is likely to become increasingly important in light of climate change. It will be important that water resources continue to be protected for present and future generations. They should be used efficiently to make the maximum use of the resource and to reduce the need for major new water storage facilities and related infrastructure.
- 7.146 The Water Cycle Study report concluded that development at sites shown to have potentially limited sewer network capacity should be subject to pre-development enquiry with Anglian Water to determine if infrastructure upgrades are needed prior to planning permission being granted.
- 7.147 With regards to water supply, the overall recommendation in the Water Cycle Study was the need to move towards a more water neutral position to enhance the sustainability of new development coming forward. To achieve this, the report recommended reducing water demand and retrofitting easy fit water savings

devices into the existing domestic housing stock and business premises where practical to do so.

7.148 Colchester Borough falls within an area classified as having serious water stress (See the Environment Agency 2013 'Water stressed areas final classification report' and the Joint advice to Local Planning Authorities: Optional Higher Water efficiency standard for new housing (February 2020)). The Anglian River Basin Management Plan (2015) highlights the role that increased efficiency can play in preventing deterioration in water bodies. In recognition of the increasing demand for water and serious water stress within the Borough, the Local Planning Authority will require developments to incorporate water saving measures, in line with the tighter optional requirement of Part G2 of national Building Regulations of 110/l/h/d.

7.149 The Council is seeking to minimise waste and improve reuse and recycling rates through better recycling services and public awareness programs. It has a current aspirational target of 60% recycling of household waste. At present approximately 48% of household waste is recycled. The Council will continue to improve services and information to further help increase recycling rates over the Local Plan period. New developments will be expected to support this target by employing best practice technology to optimise the opportunities for recycling and minimising waste and by providing better recycling facilities. This will include easy recycling systems for the householder as required in DM12 Housing Standards, but also recycling on the go facilities in public areas.

**Policy DM25: Renewable Energy, Water, Waste and Recycling**

The Local Planning Authority's commitment to carbon reduction includes the promotion of efficient use of energy and resources, alongside waste minimisation and recycling.

The Local Planning Authority will support residential developments that help reduce carbon emissions in accordance with national Building Regulations. The use of the Home Quality Mark will be supported. Non-residential developments will be encouraged to achieve a minimum BREEAM rating of 'Very Good'.

The Local Planning Authority will encourage the use of sustainable construction techniques in tandem with high quality design and materials to reduce energy demand, waste and the use of natural resources, including the sustainable management of the Borough's water resources.

To achieve greater water efficiencies new residential developments will be required to meet the Building Regulation optional higher water efficiency standard of 110 litres per person per day, as set out in Building Regulations part G2.

To help meet waste reduction and recycling targets, the Local Planning Authority will support proposals for sustainable waste management facilities identified in the Waste Management Plan which minimise impacts on the communities living close to the sites (noise, pollution, traffic) and on the local environment and landscape. New developments will be expected to support this objective by

employing best practice technology to optimise the opportunities for recycling and minimising waste and by providing better recycling facilities.

The Local Planning Authority will support proposals for renewable energy projects including micro-generation, offshore wind farms (plus land based ancillary infrastructure) solar farms, solar panels on buildings, wind farms, District Heating Networks and community led renewable energy initiatives at appropriate locations in the Borough, which will need to be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment and if necessary an Appropriate Assessment, to help reduce Colchester's carbon footprint.

Renewable energy schemes with potential for adverse effects on internationally or nationally designated nature conservation sites, sites or nationally designated landscapes (Dedham Vale AONB) and heritage assets, will only be supported in exceptional circumstances, where it can be demonstrated that the designation objectives for the area will not be compromised, that adverse impacts can be adequately mitigated or where it can be demonstrated that any adverse impacts are clearly outweighed by the social and economic benefits provided by the energy proposal.

All applications for renewable energy proposals 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. 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.

## **8. Delivery Strategy and Implementation**

- 8.1 The Local Planning Authority will work in partnership with a range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations to co-ordinate investment and ensure the successful implementation and delivery of the Local Plan Vision, Objectives and Policies. To achieve this aim, the Local Planning Authority will use a range of mechanisms including masterplanning, Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs), and formation of delivery bodies. This work will occur both at the strategic Garden Community level, as explained in Section 1 of the Plan, and at the more local level, as provided in the policies and allocations for sites in Colchester set forth in Section 2 of the Plan. The Local Planning Authority's Infrastructure Delivery Plan sets out the strategic infrastructure requirements of new development across the Borough along with information on delivery partners, timing and funding.
- 8.2 A key mechanism for implementing the Local Plan is the consideration of planning applications through the development management process. The Local Plan should be read as a whole and applications for planning permission will be considered against all relevant policies in the Local Plan, the NPPF and other material considerations.
- 8.3 The Local Planning Authority has assessed the Local Plan to ensure its policies and allocations support economic prosperity and development viability. As explained in Policy SG7, developers will be required to contribute towards providing and enhancing infrastructure. Planning obligations through Section 106 will continue to provide funding to mitigate negative impacts relating to a specific development. CIL will complement and not duplicate planning obligations.

## **9. Monitoring**

- 9.1 The Local Plan will need to be monitored regularly in order to assess the effectiveness of policies and identify the need for review of any or all policies. The following table of Targets and Monitoring Indicators, lists the indicators that will be used to monitor delivery and progress on plan targets. The Local Planning Authority will gather monitoring information together in its annual Authority Monitoring Report (AMR). The AMR will measure progress on the implementation of policies and the delivery of new development and supporting infrastructure using appropriate targets and indicators. The AMR will include an annual updated housing trajectory which will set out the net additional dwellings completed to date and the estimated future completions for the remainder of the Plan Period.

**Table 1: Monitoring Targets and Indicators**

<b>Policies</b>	<b>Local Plan Objectives</b>	<b>Targets</b>	<b>Key Indicators in Authority Monitoring Report</b>
SG-Sustainable Growth Policies	Ensure new development is sustainable and minimises the use of scarce natural resources and addresses the causes and potential impacts of climate change and encourages renewable energy.	Allocate sufficient employment land in line with spatial strategy and evidence base.	Permissions granted for employment and leisure by type
	Focus new development at sustainable locations to create new communities with distinctive identities whilst supporting existing communities, local businesses, and sustainable transport. Provide high quality housing of all tenures at accessible locations to accommodate our growing community.	Deliver new housing in line with spatial strategy and Objectively Assessed Need target of 920 units per annum.	Housing completions per annum (net)
	Ensure there are sufficient sites allocated in the right locations to support employment growth over the plan period.		
	Focus development at accessible locations which support public transport, walking and cycling, and reduce the need to travel.	Increase share of non-motorised transport.	Monitor modal splits and self-containment via Census; take-up of Travel Plans
	Secure infrastructure to support new development.	Delivery of infrastructure schemes identified in the Local Plan.	Key infrastructure projects delivered
	Promotion of healthy lifestyles through		

## Colchester Borough Local Plan 2017 – 2033 Section 2

Policies	Local Plan Objectives	Targets	Key Indicators in Authority Monitoring Report
	the provision and enhancement of sport and recreation facilities, public open space and green infrastructure.		
CC Climate Change Policy	Shape places and secure new development so as to minimise vulnerability and provide resilience to impacts arising from climate change, and to do so in ways consistent with cutting wider greenhouse gas emissions that are outside of the Council's own building services and operations.	The target to reduce carbon emissions by 40% from 2008 baseline data by 2020 applies to the Council's own buildings, services and operations.  New development to comply with building regulations requiring reductions in carbon emissions.	Greenhouse Gas Emissions reporting  Local Authority Carbon Management Plan
ENV Environment Policies	Protection of the countryside and coast.  Developing a green infrastructure network across the borough.  Ensure new development avoids areas of flood risk and reduce future flood risk where possible.  Protection and enhancement of landscapes, biodiversity, green spaces, air and water quality, and river corridors.	Minimise impact of new development in areas designated due to their environmental importance.  Zero applications to be approved contrary to Environment Agency advice of flood risk/flood defence grounds.  All developments to incorporate water management schemes including Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs).  Zero percent loss of Local Wildlife Sites; ancient woodland; and priority habitats and species.  Manage visitor numbers at habitats Sites at levels that do not cause damage or affect site integrity.	Amount of development in designated areas  Number of planning applications approved contrary to advice given by the EA  Number of major schemes incorporating water management schemes. Number and area of sites/habitats within the Borough  Record number of visitors to habitats sites

Colchester Borough Local Plan 2017 – 2033 Section 2

Policies	Local Plan Objectives	Targets	Key Indicators in Authority Monitoring Report
		No increase in number of Air quality management Districts (AQMDs)	Number of AQMDs
Place Policies	<p>Ensure the unique qualities of different communities and environments paying particular attention to heritage assets, in the Borough are identified, protected and enhanced through policies and allocations which ensure high quality, consistency, equity and responsiveness to local character.</p> <p>Promote high quality design and sustain Colchester's historic character, found in its buildings, townscape and archaeology.</p> <p>Improve streetscapes, open spaces and green links to provide attractive and accessible spaces for residents to live, work and play.</p>	<p>Assist communities in the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans.</p> <p>Zero percent of new developments to result in loss of Grade I and II* and scheduled monuments at risk.</p> <p>New development to contribute to open space, green infrastructure and streetscape improvements.</p> <p>Provide 30% of all housing on qualifying sites as affordable housing.</p>	<p>Number of Neighbourhood Plans adopted</p> <p>Number of listed buildings lost</p> <p>Delivery of public open space, green infrastructure and streetscape improvements</p> <p>Percentage of affordable housing units provided on qualifying sites</p>



## Glossary

**Affordable Housing** – The Council's 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.

**Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)** – Areas of high scenic quality that have statutory protection in order to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of their landscapes.

**Authority Monitoring Report (AMR)** – A report published annually by the Local Planning Authority, monitoring progress in delivering progress in Local Plan policies and allocations.

**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 management 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.

**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
- Places of worship

**Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** – A mechanism by which local authorities 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.

**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 and 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.

**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 Borough, but not to a level comparable with Colchester Town Centre.

**Edge of centre** - For retail purposes, a location that is well connected and up to 300 metres of the primary shopping area. For all other main town centre uses, a location within 300 metres of a town centre boundary. For office development, this includes locations outside the town centre but within 500 metres of a public transport interchange. In determining whether a site falls within the definition of edge of centre, account should be taken of local circumstances.

**Habitats Sites** - The network of protected sites established under the Birds Directive and Habitats Directive (includes SPA, SAC, and Ramsar sites).

**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 TCPA 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 City 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 Infrastructure** – A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

**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.

**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
- emergency services
- green infrastructure
- open space
- affordable housing
- broadband
- facilities for specific sections of the community such as youth or the elderly.

**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. Current core strategies or other planning policies, which under the regulations would be considered to be Development Plan Documents, form part of the Local Plan.

**Local Wildlife Sites** – Habitats identified by Essex Wildlife Trust as important for the conservation of wildlife.

**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, night-clubs, 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 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.

**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.

**Neighbourhood Plan** - A plan prepared by a Parish Council, Neighbourhood Forum, or other locally constituted community group, for a particular neighbourhood.

**Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAHN)** – The National Planning Policy Framework requires that local planning authorities should use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, including identifying key sites which are critical to the delivery of the housing strategy over the Plan Period. Further guidance provided in Planning Practice Guidance provides that ‘The assessment of development needs is an objective assessment of need based on facts and unbiased evidence. Plan makers should not apply constraints to the overall assessment of need, such as limitations imposed by the supply of land for new development, historic under performance, viability, infrastructure or environmental constraints. However, these considerations will need to be addressed when bringing evidence bases together to identify specific policies within development plans.’

**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.

**Original building** - A building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally.

**Out of centre** - A location which is not in or on the edge of a centre but not necessarily outside the urban area.

**Out of town** - A location out of centre that is outside the existing urban area.

**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 Practice Guidance** – Guidance and detail supporting the National Planning Policy Framework which is published online and regularly updated.

**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.

**Previously Developed Land** - see brownfield land above.

**Primary shopping area** - Defined area where retail development is concentrated (generally comprising the primary and those secondary frontages which are adjoining and closely related to the primary shopping frontage).

**Primary and secondary frontages** - Primary frontages are likely to include a high proportion of retail uses which may include food, drinks, clothing and household goods. Secondary frontages provide greater opportunities for a diversity of uses such as restaurants, cinemas and businesses.

**Ramsar Site** – An area identified by international agreement on endangered habitats.

**Recreation Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS)** – A tool used to manage and mitigate the adverse effects from new developments on habitats Sites.

**Rural Diversification (also known as Farm Diversification)** – The alternative use of land or buildings which were once used for farming purposes or rural activity such as grain store, stables or poultry shed. The Local Plan definition is “alternative use of land or buildings that remains within the farming unit in the ownership of the farmer and run from the existing house”.

**Rural exception sites** - Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents

or have an existing family or employment connection. Small numbers of market homes may be allowed at the local authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.

**Sequential Test (Retail)** – A test required to demonstrate that no other sites are available in a location which is ranked as preferable. Centre sites are sequentially preferable, followed by edge of centre sites. Sequential testing starts from the Primary Shopping Area for Retail Uses and the Town Centre Boundary for all other main town centre uses.

**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.

**Shoreline Management Plans** - A plan providing a large-scale assessment of the risk to people and to the developed, historic and natural environment associated with coastal processes.

**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 by English Heritage (now Natural England) to be of significant national value and interest to merit its conservation and management.

**Special Area of Conservation (SAC)** - A site of European Community 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.

**Starter Homes** – Newly built properties that must be sold to someone who is a first-time buyer below the age of 40, with a discount of at least 20 per cent off the market value.

**Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)** - This will set out the standards that the Local Planning Authority 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 Local Planning Authority 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 Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)** - A study prepared for the Local Planning Authority's 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 Local Planning Authority's Housing Strategy.

**Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA)** - A study prepared for the Local Planning Authority's Evidence Base further to national guidance which identifies sites with development potential for development and assesses their developability, deliverability and capacity.

**Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)** – A document produced by the Local Planning Authority 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.

**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.

**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.

**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 foot print 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 Urban Drainage (SUDs)** – A sustainable drainage system is designed to reduce the potential impact of new and existing developments with respect to surface water drainage discharges.

**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.

**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 town centres, district centres and local centres but exclude small parades of shops. At a local level, Colchester Town Centre is the cultural and commercial heart of the Borough. Colchester's Town Centre includes the historic core of Colchester and is characterised by a mix of retail, residential, office, community facilities and other uses. See **Main Town Centre Uses** for a list of town centre uses.

**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, a C3 use would refer to a residential use.



**Appendix 1 – Policies Maps Index**

<p><b>Colchester Borough Local Plan Policy Map</b></p> <p><b>Colchester Borough Local Plan Policy Map (Insets)</b></p> <p><b>Colchester Urban Area</b></p> <p>Colchester Town Centre – Policy TC1-4  Colchester Town Centre Retail Frontages  North Colchester – Policy NC1  North Colchester – Policies NC2-4  South Colchester – Policies SC1-3  East Colchester – Policies EC1-4  West Colchester – Policies WC1-5  West Colchester – Policy WC3</p> <p><b>Sustainable Settlements</b></p> <p>Abberton and Langenhoe – Policy SS1  Boxted – Policy SS2  Chappel and Wakes Colne – Policy SS3  Copford and Copford Green – Policy SS4  Dedham and Dedham Heath – Policy SG1 and OV1  Eight Ash Green – Policy SS5  Fordham – Policy SS6  Great Horkesley – Policy SS7  Great Tey – Policy SS8  Langham – Policy SS9  Layer de la Haye – Policy SS10  Marks Tey – Policy SS11  Mersea Island – Policy SS12b  Mersea Island – Policy SS12a, SS12b and SS12c  Rowhedge – Policy SS13  Tiptree – Policy SS14  West Bergholt – Policy SS15  Wivenhoe – Policy SS16</p>	<p><b>Other Villages</b></p> <p>Aldham – Policy OV1  Birch and Layer Breton – Policy OV1  Easthorpe – Policy OV1  Fingringhoe – Policy OV1  Great Wigborough – Policy OV1  Little Horkesley – Policy OV1  Messing – Policy OV1  Mount Bures – Policy OV1  Peldon – Policy OV1  Salcott – Policy OV1  Wormingford – Policy OV1</p>
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## Appendix 2 – Superseded Policies

Core Strategy Focused Review Version (July 2014), Site Allocations Adopted October 2010, Development Policies Focused Review Version (July 2014) - Superseded by the Colchester Local Plan 2013-2033

New Policy Number	Policy ref on 2017-2033 Local Plan	Replaces Policy
<b>Section 1</b>		
<b>SP1</b>	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development	SD1
<b>SP2</b>	Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS)	-
<b>SP3</b>	Spatial Strategy for North Essex	H1
<b>SP4</b>	Meeting Housing Needs	H1
<b>SP5</b>	Providing for Employment	CE1
<b>SP6</b>	Infrastructure and Connectivity	SD2
<b>SP7</b>	Place Shaping Principles	-
<b>SP8</b>	Development and Delivery of New Garden Community in North Essex	-
<b>SP9</b>	Tendring/Colchester Borders Garden Community	-
<b>Section 2</b>		
<b>SG1</b>	Colchester's Spatial Strategy	H1
<b>SG2</b>	Housing Delivery	H1
<b>SG3</b>	Economic Growth Provision	CE3/DP5
<b>SG4</b>	Local Economic Areas	CE3/DP5
<b>SG5</b>	Centre Hierarchy	CE1
<b>SG6</b>	Town Centre Uses	DP6
<b>SG6a</b>	Local Centres	CE2c/DP7
<b>SG7</b>	Infrastructure Delivery and Impact Mitigation	SD2/SD3
<b>SG8</b>	Neighbourhood Plan	ENV2
<b>ENV1</b>	Environment	ENV1/DP 21
<b>ENV2</b>	Coastal Areas	ENV1/DP23
<b>ENV3</b>	Green Infrastructure	ENV1/PR1
<b>ENV4</b>	Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	ENV1/DP22
<b>ENV5</b>	Pollution and Contaminated Land	DP1
<b>CC1</b>	Climate Change	ER1
<b>PP1</b>	Generic Infrastructure and Mitigation Requirements	DP3
<b>TC1</b>	Town Centre Policy and Hierarchy	CE1
<b>TC2</b>	Retail Frontages	DP6
<b>TC3</b>	Town Centre allocations	SA TC1
<b>TC4</b>	Transport in Colchester Town centre	TA4/DP18
<b>NC1</b>	North Colchester and Severalls Strategic Economic Areas	CE1/SA NGA1/SA NGA3
<b>NC2</b>	North Station Special Policy Area	SA TC1
<b>NC3</b>	North Colchester	-
<b>NC4</b>	Transport in North Colchester	TA4/DP18
<b>SC1</b>	South Colchester Allocations	CE3*
<b>SC2</b>	Middlewick Ranges	-
<b>SC3</b>	Transport in South Colchester	TA4/DP18
<b>EC1</b>	Knowledge gateway and University of Essex Strategic Economic Area	CE1/SA EC7
<b>EC2</b>	East Colchester / Hythe Special Policy Area	SA EC2/SA EC3 Area 1/ SA EC4 Area 2/SA

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New Policy Number	Policy ref on 2017-2033 Local Plan	Replaces Policy
		EC6 Area 4
<b>EC3</b>	East Colchester	SA H1/ SA EC1/SA EC5 Area 3 CE3
<b>EC4</b>	Transport in East Colchester	TA4 / DP18/SA EC8
<b>WC1</b>	Stanway Strategic Economic Area	CE1/ SA STA1/ SA STA3
<b>WC2</b>	Stanway	SA STA1/SA STA5
<b>WC3</b>	Colchester Zoo	-
<b>WC4</b>	West Colchester	-
<b>WC5</b>	Transport in Colchester	TA4 /DP18/SA STA4
<b>SS1</b>	Abberton and Langenhoe	CE3*
<b>SS2</b>	Boxted	-
<b>SS3</b>	Chappel and Wakes Colne	-
<b>SS4</b>	Copford	-
<b>SS5</b>	Eight Ash Green	-
<b>SS6</b>	Fordham	-
<b>SS7</b>	Great Horkesley	CE3*
<b>SS8</b>	Great Tey	CE3*
<b>SS9</b>	Langham	CE3*
<b>SS10</b>	Laver de La Haye	-
<b>SS11</b>	Marks Tey	CE3*
<b>SS12a</b>	West Mersea	-
<b>SS12b</b>	Coast Road West Mersea	DP23
<b>SS12c</b>	Mersea Island Caravan Parks	DP10/ DP21/DP23
<b>SS13</b>	Rowhedge	-
<b>SS14</b>	Tiptree	SA TIP2
<b>SS15</b>	West Bergholt	-
<b>SS16</b>	Wivenhoe	-
<b>OV1</b>	Development in Other Villages	ENV2
<b>OV2</b>	Countryside	ENV2/DP9
<b>DM1</b>	Health and Wellbeing	DP2
<b>DM2</b>	Community Facilities	DP4
<b>DM3</b>	Education Provision	SD3
<b>DM4</b>	Sports Provision	DP15
<b>DM5</b>	Tourism, leisure, Culture and Heritage	DP10
<b>DM6</b>	Economic Development in Rural Areas and the Countryside	DP5/DP9
<b>DM7</b>	Agricultural Development and Diversification	DP8
<b>DM8</b>	Affordable Housing	H4
<b>DM9</b>	Development Density	H2
<b>DM10</b>	Housing Diversity	H3
<b>DM11</b>	Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	H5/SA H2
<b>DM12</b>	Housing Standards	DP12
<b>DM13</b>	Domestic Development	DP11/DP13
<b>DM14</b>	Rural Workers Dwellings	H6
<b>DM15</b>	Design and Amenity	UR2/DP1
<b>DM16</b>	Historic Environment	UR2/DP14
<b>DM17</b>	Retention of Open Space	DP15
<b>DM18</b>	Provision of Open Space and Recreation Facilities	PR1/ PR2/DP16

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New Policy Number	Policy ref on 2017-2033 Local Plan	Replaces Policy
<b>DM19</b>	Private Amenity Space	DP16
<b>DM20</b>	Promoting Sustainable Transport and Changing Travel Behaviour	TA1/TA2/TA3/DP17
<b>DM21</b>	Sustainable Access to development	PR2/TA2/DP17
<b>DM22</b>	Parking	TA5/DP19
<b>DM23</b>	Flood Risk and Water Management	ENV1/ DP20
<b>DM24</b>	Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems	DP20
<b>DM25</b>	Renewable Energy, Water Waste and Recycling	ER1/DP25

\* Please note that the housing allocation elements of the policy are new and do not supersede adopted policies. However, these policies include reference to Local Employment Areas and this part of the policy supersedes adopted policy CE3.