

## **Colchester Borough Council Local Development Framework**

### **Statement of Common Ground – Timing**

#### **Between Mersea Homes & Countryside Properties and Colchester Borough Council**

This Statement of Common Ground has been prepared to identify areas of agreement between Mersea Homes & Countryside Properties and Colchester Borough Council on matters relating to the Borough Council's Core Strategy and the representations submitted by David Lock Associates on behalf of Mersea Homes & Countryside Properties.

#### **General Matters**

Mersea Homes & Countryside Properties have submitted specific representations expressing concerns in relation to the constraint applied to the timing of the delivery of development of the North Growth Area urban extension ('NGAUE'). Representations have been made which seek to remove the restriction which prevents development prior to 2016, and separately to recognise that the capacity of the urban extension – stated in the plan as 2,200 dwellings – should be recognised as a minimum.

A Statement of Common Ground is being prepared by Colchester Borough Council, The Highways Agency, Essex County Council, Mersea Homes & Countryside Properties in relation to infrastructure requirements for the NGAUE. That statement demonstrates that all necessary infrastructure required to serve the development is capable of being delivered subject to delivery agreements between relevant parties.

A Statement of Common Ground has been signed by Colchester Borough Council and Mersea Homes & Countryside Properties in relation to zero carbon requirements for development within the NGAUE. This statement confirms that the urban extension will be subject to the same requirements for achieving zero carbon development as other development in the Borough, in accordance with national policy requirements in place at that time, and that achieving zero carbon development does not constitute a basis for determining the timing of development.

#### **Common Ground between Parties**

All parties agree that the timing of delivery of the north Colchester urban extension should reflect the need for flexibility and for the need to respond on a 'plan, monitor, and manage' basis to meeting any shortfall in housing delivery from other identified housing sources. All parties also recognise that development should be controlled through the management of delivery, not through a constraint on the submission of a planning application and its determination.

All parties therefore agree that the Council's monitoring of housing delivery (as part of its own planning function, and in monitoring the implementation of the Core Strategy) should recognise the need to specifically trigger the release of development of the urban extension within the North Growth Area if and when such need is identified in advance of 2016.


All parties recognise that the planning lead-in time to deliver development by any stated year is a minimum of two years from the point of submission of the application, to the point of occupation of development on site. This allows for up to 8 months to allow determination of an outline planning application with EIA, and around 16 months to allow determination of reserved matters, to mobilise site works and to deliver the first dwellings for occupation. It would be appropriate for all parties to cooperate on the preparation of any planning application to ensure the proper planning of the area.

All parties therefore agree that in order to provide the greatest degree of flexibility in delivering development in accordance with RSS requirements, the Core Strategy must allow provision for the early submission and determination of an outline planning application for the North Growth Area urban extension. In order to provide for the proper planning of the area and to reflect the priority to be afforded to regeneration within Colchester Town, the determination of any outline planning application for the NGAUE could include a phasing mechanism within a S106 agreement which manages the timing of the delivery of development of the whole site. Such an agreement would constrain the commencement of development until 2016, unless otherwise agreed with the local planning authority. A change in the timing of development could thus be agreed by modification of that agreement. The Core Strategy will also make provision for managing the release of development of the urban extension within the NGAUE as one of the Core Strategy Monitoring Indicators.

All parties agree that, subject to the Suggested Minor Amendments being made to the text of certain policies and supporting text, the concerns raised by Mersea Homes & Countryside properties will have been addressed. These Suggested Minor amendments are set out in Appendix 1 attached to this Statement of Common Ground.

This agreement is made without prejudice to the submission and determination of a planning application for the urban extension forming part of the North Growth Area.


Signed:



Karen Syrett  
Spatial Policy Manager  
Colchester Borough Council



Stuart Cock  
Managing Director  
Mersea Homes Ltd



John Oldham  
Director  
Countryside Properties

APPENDIX 1 – SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS TO CORE STRATEGY

Core Strategy Section or Policy	Mersea Homes & Countryside Properties Representation	Colchester Borough Council's Response
Table H1a	<p>Table H1a identifies the timeframe for delivery of elements of Colchester's housing requirement. In doing so, it identifies the greenfield component of the North Growth Area as being delivered from 2016 onwards. We do not consider that this approach is the most appropriate in all the circumstances having considered the evidence. We consider that by allowing development of the greenfield component of the North Growth Area to commence prior to 2016, the Plan will be rendered sound.</p>	<p>Add additional text to table note - * LDF will provide housing with capacity beyond 2021 to ensure a 15 year supply in accordance with the East of England Plan. <b><i>The figures shown are intended as minimum numbers. The dates shown are subject to change should monitoring prove this is necessary.</i></b></p>
Policy H1 (Explanation)	<p>Our objections submitted against Table H1a demonstrate that delaying commencement of the NGA urban extension until after 2016 would be unsound .... Appropriate reference must be made in supporting text to Table H1b to reflect the potential for development to commence in the urban extension prior to 2016.</p>	<p>Broad locations for greenfield land releases have been identified to the north and south-west of Colchester Town, based on the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal. <b><i>It is intended that this land will come forward between 2016 and 2023 and in line with Government Policy will accommodate zero-carbon housing. Development at these greenfield locations will be guided by Area Action Plans, Supplementary Planning Documents or through master planning as part of a planning application and will be coordinated with the delivery of key transport connections. The</i></b></p>

		<p><i>timing of delivery of the Greenfield sites will be kept under review and brought forward if necessary.</i></p>
<p>Section 6, 'Housing Delivery'</p>	<p>Our objections submitted against Table H1a demonstrate that delaying commencement of the North Colchester urban extension until after 2016 would be unsound .... Appropriate reference must be made to reflect the potential for development to commence prior to 2016.</p>	<p>The Core Strategy and LDF therefore seek to identify additional provision of around 3,500 homes to ensure that over 18,760 homes can be confidently delivered between 2001 and 2023. The Core Strategy identifies broad areas of greenfield land with ample capacity for 3000 additional homes, and also identifies broad areas of previously developed land to accommodate further development (e.g. North Station Regeneration Area). It is possible that the housing provision up to 2023 could be delivered without the broad areas of greenfield land, however this land provides both <i>flexibility</i> to housing delivery and an opportunity to deliver sustainable new neighbourhoods that will contribute towards strategic facilities, infrastructure and zero carbon homes. <i>The focus of delivery will remain the regeneration of brownfield sites. The timing of the release of development of the broad areas of greenfield land will be managed through monitoring of housing delivery and will be released for development before 2016 if required to support housing delivery. Where necessary, the Council will seek to manage the release of land within the Growth Area Urban Extensions through conditions applied to any grant of planning permission.</i></p>

Appendix C – Monitoring Indicators (in relation to 'H' policies)		Housing completions per annum (net) – <b>Housing Trajectory (AMR Core Indicator)</b> (This will incorporate 5, 10 and 15 year supply details)
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