



Local Development Framework Core Strategy

Examination - 24 June to 11 July, 2008

Hearing Statement in respect of Matter 8



MATTER 8

CLIMATE CHANGE, ENERGY, RESOURCES, WASTE AND RECYCLING

Whether the strategy and policies take full account of climate change and whether they will contribute to minimising the use of energy and resources in line with national and regional policies.

Tests: 4-9

Policy: ER1

ISSUES

- (a) Should there be an over-arching policy on climate change - is this important factor adequately covered?

There is extensive national planning policy guidance in the PPS1 Climate Change supplement (CBC/NAT/055). It is important that the Core Strategy DPD does not duplicate this national policy. However, the Core Strategy should demonstrate how its objectives will be carried out at the local level.

In this respect, it is not considered necessary to have a separate policy as climate change underpins the whole document. The Core Strategy builds on the Sustainable Community Strategy's vision for Colchester as a prestigious regional centre (CBC/EB/010). Reaching across all of the goals of the Sustainable Community Strategy is a commitment to carbon reduction (Core Strategy page 10). The Core Strategy takes up this approach and the whole document contributes towards the aim of reducing the Borough's carbon footprint. Climate change is identified in the Core Strategy as a principal problem and challenge to the sustainable development of the Borough (Core Strategy page 18). The issue of climate change, therefore, occupies a prominent position in the document which emphasises the importance of the issue.

Each of the policies within the Core Strategy contribute to varying degrees towards achieving carbon reduction and addressing climate change. The overall approach of the Core Strategy in emphasising Sustainable Development through directing growth and regeneration opportunities towards more sustainable locations, and developing new infrastructure and community facilities around this, will contribute significantly towards this goal. The approach of developing a Centres and Employment Hierarchy (CE1) and directing new housing growth towards the most accessible and sustainable locations (H1), build upon this overall aim of sustainable development. The commitment to

addressing climate change is also evident in the promotion of green links, cycle paths and places for people under the public realm policies, the aim of improving accessibility, changing travel behaviour and promoting more sustainable modes of travel under the transport and accessibility policies, and the conservation and enhancement of Colchester's natural environment. Policy ER1 ensures that design and construction techniques are focused on carbon reduction and the efficient use of energy and resources.

Given the overall commitment to addressing climate change expressed within national policy (in particular the PPS1 Climate Change supplement), the Colchester 2020 Sustainable Community Strategy (CBC/EB010), and throughout the vision, objectives and policies of the Core Strategy itself, it is considered unnecessary to include a separate policy addressing climate change. Achieving carbon reduction and effectively addressing climate change requires all of the policies within the Core Strategy to be underpinned by the issue. A single policy on climate change would be unable to address this important issue as effectively as the comprehensive approach taken by the Core Strategy.

In agreement with Natural England however additional wording on how the Council will respond to climate change is suggested to be added to Policy ENV1. The proposed policy changes include measures to enable the borough's biodiversity to adapt to environmental changes driven by climate change and sets out how the Council will protect both people and buildings at risk from rising sea levels and increased risk of flooding. The changes are included in the Schedule of Proposed Minor Changes and the Statement of Common Ground agreed between the Council and Natural England.

- (b) 3.2 Objectives and policy ER1 aim to reduce Colchester's carbon footprint. Pg 65 'reduce Colchester's greenhouse gas emissions'. Will this be an actual reduction (even though there will be a lot more households) or just a minimization or reduction per household?

Current targets provide for reductions per household, which should over time translate into actual total reductions. Measures such as zero-carbon homes will greatly reduce the impact of additional building on the Borough's carbon footprint. Colchester's National Performance Indicator N186 provides for a 12.6% reduction in carbon emissions by 2011 on the 2004 base figure of 7 tonnes per capita per year for the Borough. The Sustainable Community Strategy provides for a 30% reduction in the Borough's carbon footprint by 2020. Corporately, the Local Authority Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan provides for a 25% reduction in the carbon footprint of Council buildings by 2012.

- (c) Are the targets in policy ER1 consistent with national guidance?

Yes. The targets contained within policy ER1 are consistent with the Government's aim of reducing carbon emissions, promoting renewable energy and low carbon energy sources, promoting sustainable construction techniques through initiatives such as the Code for Sustainable Homes, improving recycling rates and minimising waste.

- (d) Zero carbon housing on greenfield sites after 2016 – is there a deliberate connection between zero carbon housing and the use of greenfield sites or is this coincidence? Should this be re-worded for consistency if earlier phasing accepted?

The timing of the development coincides with the Government's proposals for zero carbon housing on all new residential developments. Rewording could be included to cover the early delivery of the site as set out in the Schedule of Proposed Minor Changes – if development were to be brought forward in response to housing trajectory needs, the Government's provisions in place at that time would determine the Code for Sustainable Homes level to be achieved by development. Whilst it is recognised that the introduction of requirements for zero carbon housing alongside the development of greenfield sites will provide greater opportunity to ensure that zero carbon developments remain viable, all developments will be expected to achieve zero carbon status in accordance with national government requirements.

- (e) Are there any issues regarding water supply or treatment? Should reference be made to the Haven Gateway Water Cycle Study?

It is proposed to include a minor change to the Core Strategy to make reference to the emerging Water Cycle Study. Phase 1 of this emerging document is currently nearing completion and Phase 2 is expected in Autumn 2008. Water service providers have been consulted throughout the production of the Core Strategy and other than the above proposed minor change, there have been no issues raised regarding water supply or treatment.