

# Colchester Borough Council Local Plan Newsletter

February 2016



## Welcome to our new Local Plan newsletter!

This newsletter is designed to keep you updated on the progress of preparing our new Local Plan. Like all councils, we are legally required to prepare and maintain an up to date “Local Plan” to guide future development. We are undertaking a thorough review of our adopted planning policies and allocations which will result in a new Local Plan to guide development in our area until 2032 and beyond.

## Revised programme for reviewing and preparing the Local Plan

All councils must prepare a “Local Development Scheme” (LDS) which is an important document detailing the programme of work and documents to be produced as part of the new Local Plan. On 14 December 2015, our “Local Plan Committee” (which is made up of elected Members to oversee and approve the new Local Plan process) approved a revised LDS, which sets out our intended programme up to December 2019. [Please click here to view our revised LDS.](#)

The LDS sets out details of forthcoming consultation periods (i.e. when you can be involved in the process and tell us whether you support or object to our proposed policies and proposals), public examination (where the Local Plan will be examined by an independent planning inspector and any unresolved issues get thoroughly debated), expected date of adoption (which will be when the Local Plan becomes formal Council policy and can be used to help determine planning applications) and publication for each Local Plan document. The next steps for the new Local Plan are as follows:

- Local preferred options consultation June/July 2016
- Submission draft consultation Jan/Feb 2017
- Examination June 2017
- Adoption Oct 2017

Further details and any timetable variations will be set out on our website: [www.colchester.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.colchester.gov.uk/localplan)

## Garden settlements – update

As part of the new Local Plan process, we are considering (with neighbouring councils) the possibility of establishing new “garden settlements” to help plan for the number of new homes required up to 2032 and beyond. As part of the earlier Local Plan “[issues and options](#)” consultation in early 2015, we included several growth options including new settlements to the east and west of Colchester and a possible urban extension to the north of Colchester. Following this, we are carrying out some work to further explore this concept and the potential garden settlements that have been promoted in our area. Should we decide to proceed with a new garden settlement as part of our “preferred options”, the

detailed policy considerations for this will be prepared to be included in a separate Local Plan for that area (depending on location), once the principle has been agreed. This will allow extensive community engagement and participation early on in the process. Our work to date to join together with other local authorities to develop innovative long-range solutions to further development has been welcomed by the Government and we are receiving assistance to help explore the concept further.

## **Authority Monitoring Report**

In December 2015 we published our latest “Authority Monitoring Report” (AMR) which monitors and reports on development that has taken place in our area in the past financial year (2014/15) and our progress in preparing the new Local Plan. The report covers key themes covering progress in meeting local plan aspirations across a variety of areas including housing delivery (including affordable housing delivery), employment and commercial development and environmental issues.

In terms of housing delivery, the AMR reports that we are performing well when considered in context of the national recessionary climate and when compared to other local authorities in Essex but demonstrates the importance for new housing allocations to be made in the new Local Plan to ensure we meet the level of housing required in our area over the next 20 years. [Please click here to view the AMR.](#)

## **Update on technical evidence**

We are required to prepare a number of important technical documents to inform the preparation of our local plan. To help assesses potential future housing sites we are required to prepare a “Strategic Land Availability Assessment” (SLAA) and a “Sustainability Appraisal” (SA). In order to ensure a fair and comprehensive approach we carried out a consultation on draft frameworks for both of these processes. Following consideration of a number of comments received during this consultation we have amended the assessment frameworks. Please [click here](#) for more detailed information about these documents and our consideration of the issues raised during the consultation.

## **Call for sites**

We are carefully assessing each site that has been promoted for housing development to determine which ones would make suitable housing allocations in the ‘preferred options’ draft of the Local Plan. The preferred options consultation period in June/July will provide an opportunity to comment on our recommendations.

## **Keep up to date on the new Local Plan process!**

- Latest news and information about the new Local Plan and the preparation process will be placed on our website [www.colchester.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.colchester.gov.uk/localplan).
- Reports about the new Local Plan will be taken to the Council’s [Local Plan Committee](#). The next meetings of the Local Plan Committee will be 4 April, 13 June and 15 August 2016, 18:00, Grand Jury Room, Colchester Town Hall.

**For further information or to sign up for future newsletters please email:  
[planning.policy@colchester.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@colchester.gov.uk)**