

# **Colchester Borough Council**

## **Draft Publication Local Plan (Regulation 19) – Section Two**

### **Non-Technical Summary Sustainability Appraisal Environmental Report**

**Spatial Policy Team**

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## 1. Introduction

Colchester Borough Council together with Place Services (Essex County Council) prepared a Sustainability Appraisal, incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA), on the proposed Colchester Local Plan 2017-2033. This Sustainability Appraisal Report is a key evidence base document for the Colchester Borough Publication Draft Local Plan.

This document provides a Non-Technical Summary of the Full Sustainability Appraisal / SEA for the preparation of Section Two the Colchester Local Plan. The SA report is over 500 pages in length and this Non-Technical Summary is designed to highlight the key findings of the SA in a concise, non-technical manner. Full summaries, details of policies and alternatives and the assessment tables, etc can be found in the SA Report.

The table below indicates where in the Non - Technical Summary each of the SEA requirements are referred to.

SEA Directive Requirements	Where covered in this Non -Technical Summary of the SA Environmental Report...
<b>General</b>	
a) an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	Sections 1 and 2 pages 3-7 Introduction, Scoping, SEA/SA , Review of Relevant Plans and Programmes
b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan;	Section 3 pages 7-10 Context, Baseline Objectives Section 3 pages 11-13 Likely Evolution without implementation of the Plan.
c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	Environmental Characteristics Pages 9-11
d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;	Environmental Characteristics Pages 9-11
e) the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	Review of Relevant Plans and Programmes Pages 6-7

SEA Directive Requirements	Where covered in this Non -Technical Summary of the SA Environmental Report...
<p>f) the likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors (these effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative impacts);</p>	<p>SA Framework- pages 13-20  Sections appraisal of policies 5-10 table of policies pages 21- 35  Section 11 The Cumulative and Synergistic Effects of the Local Plan (Section Two) Policies  Section 12 - Whole Plan Sustainability Impacts Pages 35 -41</p>
<p>g) the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan;</p>	<p>Section 11 The Cumulative and Synergistic Effects of the Local Plan (Section Two) Policies  Section 12 - Whole Plan Sustainability Impacts Pages 35 -41  Section 13- Conclusions and Recommendations Page 41</p>
<p>h) an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;</p>	<p>Sections appraisal of policies 5-10 table of policies pages 21- 35</p>
<p>i) a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring;</p>	<p>Section 14 Monitoring Page 41</p>

### Colchester Borough Local Plan

Colchester Borough Council adopted a Core Strategy in 2008, Site Allocations and Development Policies 2010, which are now collectively known as the Colchester Borough Local Plan. A Focused Review adopted in July 2014 amended some policies without the need for further evidence to ensure compatibility with the NPPF.

This Draft Plan now comprises a full review of the Local Plan, to which this SA Report relates. The Local Plan sets the framework for future development in Colchester Borough to 2033 and beyond. It includes a strategic vision and objectives, which will be translated into strategic policies; site allocations; and development management policies that will be used to determine planning applications throughout the Borough. The Plan is in two Sections as follows;

- **Colchester Borough Council Local Plan Section One**

Section One of the Local Plan provides a strategic approach to allocations and policies to be included in each of the three Local Plans prepared by Braintree, Colchester and Tendring Councils; representing those authorities within the Housing Market Area that have identified a requirement to explore the meeting of growth needs through strategic, cross-boundary solutions including Garden Communities.

- **Colchester Borough Council Local Plan Section Two**

Section Two provides the specific policies and allocations for Colchester Borough, including allocations and policies organised by area, so that residents will be able to easily find planning information specific to their local community.

### **The SA of the Colchester Borough Local Plan Sections One and Two**

In response to meeting the requirements of the SEA Regulations, two SAs have been produced for consultation; responding to Sections One and Two respectively. Both are available for consultation alongside the Publication Draft Local Plan.

## **2. Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

The requirement for Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) comes from a national and international commitment to deliver sustainable development.

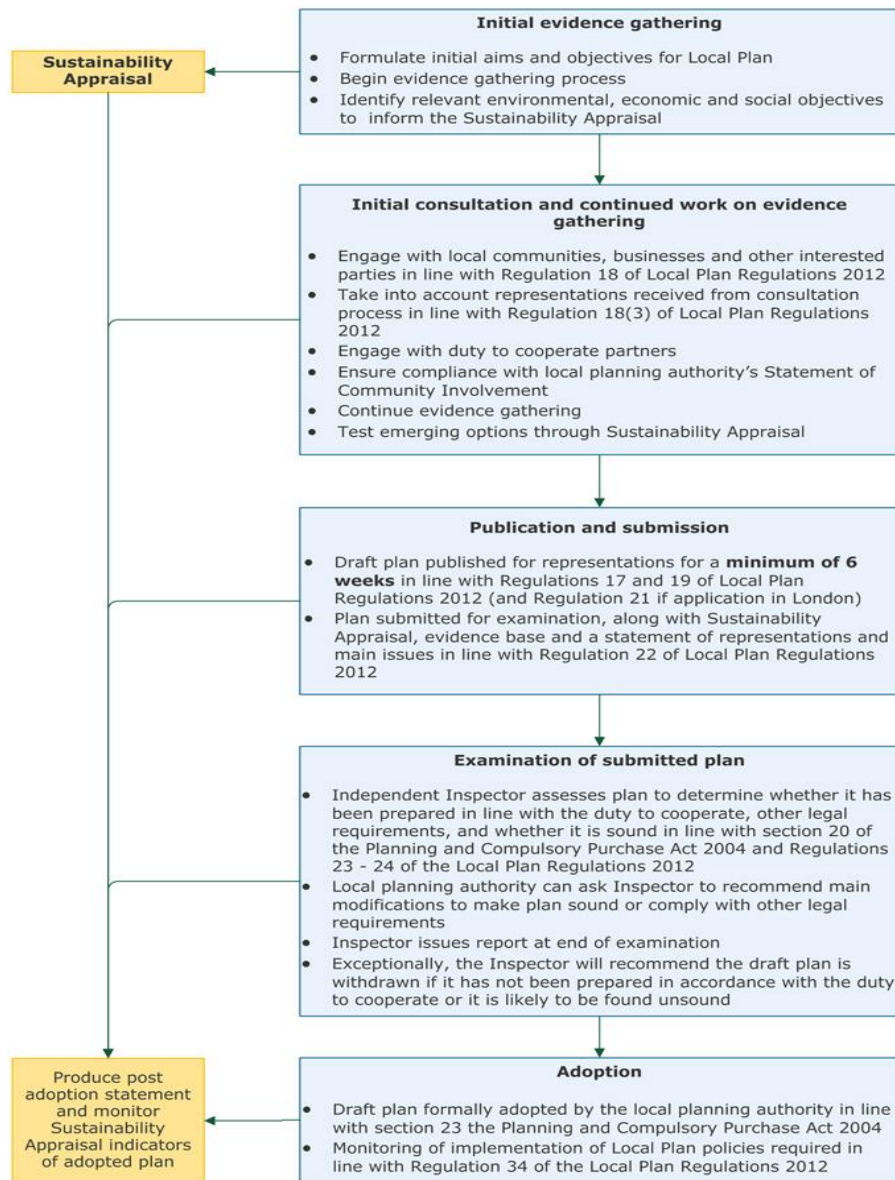
The aim of the SEA in accordance with European Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes, is to identify potentially significant environmental effects created as a result of the implementation of a plan or programme on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between all these factors.

Sustainability Appraisals examine the effects of proposed plans and programmes in a wider context, taking into account economic, social and environmental considerations in order to promote sustainable development. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended), the SA is mandatory for Local Plans.

There is a distinct difference between SA and SEA. Clearly there is some overlap between these two processes and it is therefore best practice to incorporate the requirements of the SEA Directive into the SA process. Colchester Borough Council has followed this approach as part of all SA work since 2008. Therefore all references to SA in this and subsequent reports also refer to and incorporate the requirements of SEA.

The figure<sup>1</sup> below outlines the key stages of Local Plan preparation. This includes how the SA fits into each stage of plan preparation.

**Figure 1: The Key Stages of Local Plan preparation**



## Scoping

A Scoping Report was prepared and consulted upon for five weeks between 1 July and 5 August 2014. Scoping includes the following information:

- The relationship of the plan with other relevant plans and programmes (Annex I[a]).
- The environmental protection objectives established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan and the way

<sup>1</sup> National Planning Practice Guidance, Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 12-005-20140306

those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation (Annex I [e]).

- Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan (Annex I [b]).
- The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected [Annex I(c)].
- Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including in particular those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/ECC and 92/43/EEC [Annex I(d)].

## **Issues and Options**

An Issues and Options paper was prepared and consulted upon from 16 January – 27 February 2015. These were based on national planning policy guidance, Council priorities as set forth in the Strategic Plan, existing local policies, and the current evidence base. The comments received, alongside the evidence informed the Preferred Options Consultation Draft Local Plan.

## **Preferred Options**

An SA Report accompanied the Preferred Options Draft Local Plan. It included further appraisal of options for growth, policy direction and allocations included in the document in light of updated proportionate evidence available. In addition, the appraisal of any alternative, realistic, deliverable options suggested by third parties as a result of the consultation and the evidence base were included. The Preferred Options Local Plan was consulted on for 10 weeks from 9<sup>th</sup> July until 16<sup>th</sup> September 2016. The SA was also available for consultation for 6 weeks during this time.

## **Review of relevant plans, programmes and sustainability objectives**

A review of relevant plans and programmes relevant to Section Two of the Local Plan was undertaken for the Scoping Report and updated for the Issues and Options and Preferred Options stages. The scope of documents reviewed are indicated below with a full list of documents reviewed outlined in full in Section 2 of the SA.

- International- including European
- National
- Regional
- County
- Local
- Neighbouring Authorities

The vision, aims, objectives and targets of relevant plans and programmes has influenced the sustainability framework, which helps to ensure that the sustainability framework collectively sets out what the Council and its relevant stakeholders would like to achieve in terms of sustainable development.

### 3. Sustainability Context, Baseline and Objectives

This section outlines the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected by the Colchester Borough Local Plan.

#### General Characteristics

- **Population and Housing**

Based on the 2011 Census the Borough population is approximately 173,100 with a density of 5.3 people per hectare. Recent decades have seen a trend towards an ageing population in Colchester and this will continue into the next decade. The total number of households in the Borough is 71,634 households of a mix of size and tenure. The 2007 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) observed that few households aspiring to home ownership had access to enough money to purchase a home in Colchester, and annual updates since 2007 have not found any change to this position. The 2014 SHMA found that meeting the affordable accommodation requirements of families and those with priority needs should be as important as the larger scale numerical need for smaller units for single and couple households.

Further details on general characteristics including population and housing are within the full SA in Section 2.7.1

#### Economic Characteristics

- **Transport**

Colchester is connected to a comprehensive network of major roads via the A12 and A120, which provide routes to London, the M25, Harlow and Cambridge. Four sections of the A12 around Colchester fall into the top ten busiest sections on the A12 route. The Borough also lies in close proximity to the major seaports of Harwich (20 miles) and Stansted airport (30 miles). This strategic position has meant the area has been a magnet for growth resulting in a healthy and vibrant economy. The Borough is also well served by rail as well as a good range of bus services and routes within Colchester. One of the biggest challenges to Colchester's future development is traffic growth and the dominance of the car as the main mode of travel.

Further details on transport are within the full SA in Section 2.7.2 including data on work place travel to work surveys.

- **Employment**

Approximately 75.8% of the population aged 16-64 was economically active in Colchester in 2016. Model based unemployment figures for the Borough showed Colchester's unemployment rate was 4% (which was below the 6.4% figure for the East). This percentage is based on a proportion of the Borough's economically active population. Based on the 2011 Census, figures show the largest proportion of Colchester residents (22.6%), occupied lower managerial, administrative and

professional occupations, 14.2% were employed in semi-routine occupations, and 13.5% were employed in intermediate occupations.

- **Deprivation**

The Borough is relatively prosperous, ranking 185 out of 326 districts on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (rank 1 being the most deprived) in 2015. It is estimated that approximately 5% of people in Colchester live in seriously deprived neighbourhoods.

- **Income**

In Colchester average gross household income was £27,592 in 2012, it was £30,193 in Essex, £27,980 in the East of England and £27,302 in England. There are variations in prosperity and there are pockets of deprivation in parts of both the towns and rural areas.

- **Tourism**

Tourism plays an important part in the local economy. Tourism was worth £244 million to the economy of Colchester Borough in 2012, which is a rise of 5% from the previous year. Colchester attracted just over 5 million visitor trips in 2012

- **Creative Business**

Colchester has 1,300 creative businesses providing employment to over 5,600 employees. Creative industries are a priority growth area for the town. This accounts for 18.3% of all businesses in the Borough, and includes advertising, design, film, arts and crafts, performing arts and publishing. A vision document has been created, in which the main opportunities are set out for the development of the creative industries over the next five years.

- **Regeneration**

Colchester Borough Council is leading regeneration programmes in East Colchester, North Colchester, the Town Centre and the Garrison. Together these are bringing significant transformation of the area with new housing, employment areas, community / leisure facilities and infrastructure.

Further details on economic characteristics including all of the above factors are included in the full SA in section 2.7.2

## **Social Characteristics**

- **Births and Life Expectancy**

In 2015 there were 2,242 births in Colchester with the total number of births in Essex in 2012 was 16,335. Life expectancy in the Borough has been estimated as nearly 80 years for men and over 83 years for women.

- **Education**

Primary and Secondary education is provided throughout the Borough with



79 maintained schools: 64 primaries, 11 secondaries and 4 special schools. Higher Education is provided at, Colchester Sixth Form College and the Colchester Institute. In addition it is home to the University of Essex, making the Borough a major educational base with visiting students significantly adding to the diversity of the population. The provision of day care, nursery education and out-of-school care remains an issue for the Borough, with there being more demand than formal supply.

Essex County Council has a statutory responsibility to ensure there are sufficient school places available every year, that there is diversity across the school system and that parental preference is maximised. Commissioning school places in Essex 2015/20 sets out the requirement, supply and demand for places in maintained primary and secondary schools to 2020 and is updated annually to ensure projections of demand and capacity are as accurate as possible. Educational achievement is generally good. In 2011, 16.7% of Colchester's working population aged 16 and over were qualified to level 2 standard, and 27.2% to level 4+ standard.

- **Community Facilities**

The community has access to a wide range of Council-run services and facilities, including those owned by the 31 Parish Councils in the Borough. Facilities include country parks at Cudmore Grove in East Mersea and High Woods in Colchester, a leisure centre including swimming pools and four multi-activity centres, and a 10,000 seat capacity football stadium.

- **Crime**

The latest crime data available is for the year 2012/13. This data is taken from the ONS publication regarding the numbers of offences recorded by the police, by Community Safety Partnership / local authority level, year and offence group. When comparing the latest information for Colchester with the previous year the number of recorded crimes was down by 425 (3.9%) to 10,565.

Further details on economic characteristics including all of the above factors are included in the full SA in section 2.7.3

## **Environmental characteristics**

- **Heritage**

Colchester has a rich and diverse heritage. As Camulodonum, it was the first capital of England and it is also Britain's oldest recorded town; recorded by Pliny the Elder in AD77. The Borough has a rich archaeological and cultural heritage, dating back to at least 4000BC. The Borough boasts some 2,560 listed buildings and 52 Scheduled Monuments. There are 22 conservation areas within the Borough and 4 parks within Colchester on the National Register of Special Historic Interest.

- **History and Archaeology**

Colchester Borough is known to contain Palaeolithic deposits of international importance. The very rich heritage of Colchester Borough is evident from extensive

finds over a wide timeline which are referenced in the full SA and further in the relevant evidence.

- **Landscape**

The rural landscape of the Borough has a rich ecological character influenced by geology and landform. Habitats include woodland, grassland, heath, estuary, saltmarsh, mudflat and freshwater as well as open water habitats. Many sites are recognised for their value by international and national notifications, including the coastal and estuary areas in the south east and the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the north of the Borough.

- **Biodiversity**

Colchester has a rich biodiversity with many sites designated for their nature conservation interest. Much of the coastline is designated under international and European notifications including the Mid-Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation, notified under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and Birds Directive (79/409/ECC) respectively. They are also notified as Ramsar sites under the Ramsar Convention.

In December 2013 the Blackwater, Crouch, Roach and Colne Estuaries Marine Conservation Zone was designated specifically to protect four features: seeking to maintain in favourable condition 'intertidal mixed sediments' and 'Clacton Cliffs and Foreshore' and to recover to favourable condition the 'Native Oyster' and the 'Native Oyster beds'.

There are also eight Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) notified in Colchester. These are nationally important ecological/geological sites designated under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 with further protection provided through the Countryside & Rights of Ways Act 2000.

- **Air Quality**

Whilst the Borough of Colchester is extensively rural, the majority of the population live in the towns and villages. As a result, it is the built up areas which figure most prominently in many people's lives and the appearance and quality of their urban surroundings is an important factor in their quality of life. There are four Air Quality Management Areas in Colchester, located in the following areas:

- Area 1 - Central Corridors (including High Street Colchester; Head Street; North Hill; Queen Street; St. Botolph's Street; St. Botolph's Circus; Osborne Street; Magdalen Street; Military Road; Mersea Road; Brook Street; and East Street).
- Area 2 - East Street and the adjoining lower end of Ipswich Road.
- Area 3 - Harwich Road/St Andrew's Avenue junction.
- Area 4 - Lucy Lane North, Stanway; Mersea Road; and Brook Street.

- **Waste**

In 2013/14 42.5% of all household waste collected was recycled, reused or composted. This exceeds the annual target of 40% and is higher than the previous year's figure of 41.54%.

- **Water**

Colchester's potable drinking water comes from Ardleigh Reservoir. National daily domestic water use (per capita consumption) according to the WWF is 150 litres. Nationally we are expected to reduce per capita consumption of water to an average of 130 litres per person per day by 2030.

- **Climatic Factors**

Total greenhouse gas emissions across the Borough have decreased over the past 5 years, despite an increase in population. In 2013 there was a total of 1,004.5kt of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by source. Industry, domestic and transport each produce roughly 1/3 of the total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per capita have reduced by 18.6% since 2005, which is slightly more than the Essex average reduction of 17.3%.

The short term climate change risks for Colchester are:

- Milder, wetter winters
- Hotter, drier summers;
- More frequent extreme high temperatures;
- More frequent downpours of rain;
- Significant decrease in soil moisture content in summer;
- Sea level rise and increases in storm surge; and
- Possible higher wind speeds.

Further details on environmental characteristics including all of the above factors are included in the full SA in section 2.7.4.

### **Likely evolution without the implementation of the Local Plan**

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Local Plans provide certainty to those involved in the development of land. Without a Local Plan a policy vacuum would exist and could lead to planning by appeal.

Local Plans must set the objectively assessed need for housing. Housing targets are no longer set at regional level and so without a Local Plan Colchester Borough Council will not be able to set and thus meet its objectively assessed housing need. Housing shortfall is likely to continue without a positive and proactive approach to

local housing through the Local Plan, which includes assessing the capacity and feasibility of developing existing brownfield land. A coordinated local spatial strategy to housing allocation would maximise the use of previously developed land, whilst protecting and enhancing priority habitats and species.

Co-ordinated, planned development is more likely to lead to balanced economic and residential growth in a properly integrated fashion with new infrastructure including transport improvements but also environmental, community and cultural improvements.

Monitoring has shown that the number of affordable homes delivered has reduced in recent years, principally due to viability issues. Without a Local Plan that includes a requirement and target for affordable housing very limited numbers of affordable homes would be delivered. To ensure that affordable housing can continue to be delivered in the future the Council continues to review its target based on viability and delivery.

Without a Local Plan it is likely that more dispersed patterns of development would occur, which would increase the need to travel and lead to a subsequent increase in congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

Climate change is one of the most pressing issues that we face internationally and the Local Plan can play its part in helping to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. For example, through policies that direct development to accessible locations that reduce the need to travel, a requirement for more sustainable buildings, and the provision of open space to help species adapt to a warming climate.

Without the benefits of an adopted Local Plan it will be more difficult to manage the effects of development on flood risk, although all developments would need to take account on national policy on flood risk.

Colchester Borough has a rich natural environment, which includes coastal sites notified at European and international level through to local wildlife sites, which provide habitats in the urban area. Whilst it is likely that the most important environmental sites would continue to be protected through international, Community and national law there is a risk that local wildlife sites, which do not have statutory protection, would be lost to development without a Local Plan protecting them.

With the population of the Borough increasing, pressure on recreation and wildlife areas is likely to be exacerbated. Without an up to date Local Plan, there is less opportunity to adopt a co-ordinated, spatial approach to the development of green infrastructure, i.e. open green spaces/green networks for recreation, walking and cycling networks, and wildlife.

Colchester has a rich historic environment and without the Local Plan including a positive strategy for the conservation of the historic environment there is a risk that there would be increased harm to the Borough's historic environment through the lack of a clear and up to date local planning framework.

Without a Local Plan necessary infrastructure to serve new development would not be forthcoming. Various studies have demonstrated the high cost of providing comprehensive infrastructure, with for example the Haven Gateway Partnership estimating that £2.5 billion is needed to fund infrastructure in the area to 2021. This would only be forthcoming in full if supported by planning policies ensuring adequate contributions from development.

With the population of the Borough increasing, pressures on existing schools are likely to rise. Adopting a spatial approach to the allocation of development will ensure development is located in areas where existing education capacity is good and identify those areas where new facilities are required. This will ensure that new housing development is planned in parallel with the provision of new schools/upgrades to existing facilities, and are provided within walking distance via a safe route.

In recent years a considerable amount of development in Colchester has taken place on brownfield land; protecting Greenfield land and landscape character. Development of Greenfield land will be required in the future to meet housing need. Dedham Vale AONB is located within the Borough, which is a high value landscape recognised nationally. There is concern that without a Local Plan protecting this important landscape, and its setting, or other high quality landscapes across the Borough, development will adversely affect landscape character.

#### 4. Sustainability Framework and Site Assessment Pro Forma

The SA Framework is set out below. The Framework was developed in consultation with various stakeholders early on in the SA process. The Sustainability Framework is used to assess the effects of the Plan’s policies and objectives.

##### The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Framework

Objectives	Assessment Criteria	Indicators	SEA Themes
1. To provide a sufficient level of housing to meet the objectively assessed needs of the Borough to enable people to live in a decent, safe home which meets their needs at a price they can afford	Will it deliver the number of houses needed to support the existing and growing population?	The number of net additional dwellings	Material assets Climatic factors
	Will it provide more affordable homes across the Borough?	Affordable housing completions	
		Percentage of residential completions that are two	

Objectives	Assessment Criteria	Indicators	SEA Themes
	Will it deliver a range of housing types to meet the diverse needs of the Borough?	or three bedroom properties	
	Will it deliver well designed and sustainable housing?	Number of zero-carbon homes completed	
2. To ensure that development is located sustainably and makes efficient use of land	Will it promote regeneration?	<p>Number of new homes completed at ward level within Growth/Regeneration Areas</p> <p>Amount of new employment development completed at ward level in Growth/Regeneration Areas</p>	Material assets Landscape
	Will it reduce the need for development on greenfield land?	Percentage of new and converted dwellings on previously developed land	
	Will it provide good accessibility by a range of modes of transport?	% of new development within 30 minutes of community facilities	
	Will densities make efficient use of land?	Amount of development > 30 dwellings per hectare	
	Will a mix of uses be provided?		

Objectives	Assessment Criteria	Indicators	SEA Themes
<p>3. To achieve a prosperous and sustainable economy that improves opportunities for local businesses to thrive, creates new jobs and improves the vitality of centres</p>	<p>Will it improve the delivery of a range of employment opportunities to support the growing population?</p>	<p>Amount of floorspace developed for employment, sqm</p>	<p>Material assets Population Cultural heritage</p>
	<p>Will it maintain an appropriate balance between different types of retail uses and other activities in the Borough's centres?</p>	<p>Amount of completed retail, office and leisure development delivered in the town centre</p> <p>Amount of completed retail, office and leisure development across the Borough</p>	
	<p>Will it support business innovation, diversification, entrepreneurship and changing economies?</p>	<p>Amount of floorspace developed for employment, sqm</p>	
	<p>Will it support tourism, heritage and the arts?</p>	<p>Amount of completed retail, office and leisure development delivered in the town centre</p> <p>Amount of completed retail, office and leisure development</p>	
	<p>Will it help sustain the rural economy?</p>	<p>Number of jobs created in rural areas</p>	
<p>4. To achieve more sustainable travel behaviour, reduce the need to travel and reduce congestion</p>	<p>Will it reduce the need to travel?</p>	<p>% of new residential development within 30 minutes of public transport time of a GP, hospital, primary and secondary school,</p>	<p>Population Climatic factors Air</p>

Objectives	Assessment Criteria	Indicators	SEA Themes
		employment and a major retail centre	Human health
	Will the levels of sustainable travel increase?	Percentage of journeys to work by walking and cycling and percentage of journeys to work by public transport	
	Will it improve sustainable transport infrastructure and linkages?	Percentage of journeys to work by walking and cycling and percentage of journeys to work by public transport	
5. To build stronger, more resilient sustainable communities with better education and social outcomes	Will it provide equitable access to education, recreation and community facilities?	Financial contributions towards community facilities	Population Human health Biodiversity Flora Fauna
	Will it place pressure on school places, including early years?	N/A	
	Will existing open spaces be protected & new open spaces be created?	Contributions received towards open space	
	Will it improve the skills of the Borough's population?	Number of people qualified to level 2  Number of people qualified to level 4	
6. To improve and reduce inequalities in health and	Will it reduce actual crime and fear of crime?		Population



Objectives	Assessment Criteria	Indicators	SEA Themes
wellbeing and tackle crime issues by keeping our communities safe and promoting community cohesion		All crime – number of crimes per 1000 residents per annum	Human health
	Will it provide equitable access to employment opportunities?	% of new residential development within 30 minutes of public transport time of a GP, hospital, primary and secondary school, employment and a major retail centre	
	Will it encourage healthy lifestyles?	Number of people participating in sport	
7. To conserve and enhance the townscape character, and the heritage and cultural assets of the Borough	Will it protect and enhance the heritage and cultural assets of the Borough?	<p>Number of listed buildings demolished</p> <p>Number of locally listed buildings demolished</p> <p>New Conservation Area Appraisals adopted</p> <p>New and extended Conservation Areas</p> <p>Number of Buildings at Risk</p>	Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage
	Will it create a high quality and coherent public realm linking the town's assets and spaces; connecting the heritage and contemporary?	N/A	

Objectives	Assessment Criteria	Indicators	SEA Themes
	Will it protect and enhance the historic character of the Town Centre?	N/A	
8. To value, conserve and enhance the natural environment, natural resources and the biodiversity of the Borough	Will it maintain and enhance the landscape character of the borough, including protected landscapes including the Dedham Vale AONB?	Changes in landscape character for National Character Areas (as measured by Countryside Quality Counts data).	Landscape Biodiversity Flora Fauna Soil Water
	Will it protect and enhance designated areas of the countryside and coastal environment?	Amount of development in designated areas  Number of SSSIs in favourable condition	
	Will it protect and improve biodiversity?	Amount of development in designated areas  Number of SSSIs in favourable condition  Area of land offset for biodiversity  Protected species – numbers of applications where protected  species are considered, numbers with conditions imposed to ensure working practices and works to protect/ enhance protected species, and numbers of planning applications which result in need for protected	

Objectives	Assessment Criteria	Indicators	SEA Themes
		<p>species licence in order to be carried out.</p> <p>BAP habitat - created/ managed as result of granting planning permission (monitored via planning obligations) and which meet Biodiversity Action Plan targets.</p>	
	<p>Will it improve environmental quality in terms of water, air and soil quality?</p>	<p>Quality of Rivers (number achieving ecological good status)</p> <p>Number of Air Quality Management Areas</p> <p>Contaminated land brought back into beneficial use, hectares</p>	
<p>9. To make efficient use of energy and reduce, reuse or recycle waste</p>	<p>Will it reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions?</p>	<p>Total CO2 emissions</p>	<p>Climatic factors Air</p>
	<p>Will it support the delivery of renewable energy schemes?</p>	<p>Renewable Energy Installed by Type</p>	
	<p>Will it help to reduce, reuse and recycle resources and minimise waste?</p>	<p>Amount of domestic waste recycled</p>	
<p>10. To reduce climate change impacts, support mitigation,</p>	<p>Will it reduce the risk of flooding?</p>	<p>Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of</p>	<p>Climatic factors</p>

Objectives	Assessment Criteria	Indicators	SEA Themes
encourage adaptation and protect water quality		the Environment Agency on either flood defence grounds or water quality	Water Soil Biodiversity Flora Fauna
	Will it deliver effective SUDS and improve drainage?	Number of SUDS schemes approved by ECC	
	Will it affect the amount of water available for extraction?	N/A	
	Will it promote water efficiency and reduce water usage levels per household?	Number of zero carbon homes delivered	
	Will it improve water quality?	Number of SUDS schemes approved by ECC	
	Does it conform to River Basin Management Plan Objectives?	N/A	

## 5. The Appraisal of the Vision and Objectives

The Plan's Vision and Objectives will have largely positive impacts on the Sustainability Objectives through direct adherence to tenets and aspirations of sustainability.

A number of incidences of uncertainty identified above are explained below:

Uncertain impacts have been highlighted for the Plan's Vision and Objectives' adherence to SO5, regarding education outcomes. Despite this, it should be noted that education provision is not directly within the remit of the Plan and compatibility is indirectly achieved through the Plan Objective that seeks to secure infrastructure to support new development. It should also be noted that this tenet of sustainable development in the Borough is more relevant to Section One of the Local Plan,

which has direct scope for ensuring education provision through strategic development and growth.

Uncertain impacts have also been highlighted regarding the Vision's compatibility with SO8 in enhancing the natural environment, natural resources and the biodiversity and also SO10 regarding water quality. It should be noted however that such issues need not be included as part of the main focus of the Local Plan, and that such aspirations are ensured through the Plan's Objectives.

6. The Appraisal of the Sustainable Growth Policies
7. The Appraisal of the Environmental Assets Policies
8. The Appraisal of the Places Policies – Colchester
9. The Appraisal of the Places Policies – Sustainable Settlements
10. The Appraisal of the Places Policies – Other Villages and Countryside
11. The Appraisal of the Development Management Policies

Sections 5 – 10 of the SA Report includes the full appraisals for each of the Local Plan policies and reasonable alternatives, and the reasons for choosing the preferred options. This includes appraisals of each of the site allocations and the alternatives considered. The table, below, lists each of the policies and reasonable alternatives considered and summarises the likely significant effects of each of the policies. The full appraisals can be found in sections 5-10 of the SA Report.

Policy Reference and alternatives considered	Reason for selected policy option in light of alternatives considered
<b>Strategic Policies (Part Two)</b>	
<p><b>Policy SG1 Colchester's Spatial Strategy</b></p> <p>Alternatives:</p> <p>Alternative (SG1)1 – Issues and Options, Option 1A: Development to the East and West (a separate sustainable settlement to the west of Colchester town, a separate sustainable settlement to the east of Colchester town, urban development on sites in and around the existing urban area, and proportional expansion of the Rural District Centres - Wivenhoe, Tiptree and West Mersea)</p> <p>Alternative (SG1)2 – Issues and Options, Option 2A: Development to the West (a separate sustainable settlement to the west of Colchester town, urban development on sites in and around the existing urban area, proportional expansion of the Rural District Centres – Wivenhoe, Tiptree and West Mersea)</p> <p>Alternative (SG1)3 – Issues and Options, Option 2B: Development to the West (as per 2A above, but with an additional proportional element of rural growth across the Borough's villages)</p> <p>Alternative (SG1)4 – Issues and Options, Option 3A: Development to the East and North (a separate sustainable settlement to the east of Colchester town, a significant urban extension to the north of Colchester town, crossing the A12, in addition to an extension to the north, other urban development in and around the existing urban area, and proportional expansion of Rural District Centres – Wivenhoe, Tiptree and West Mersea)</p> <p>Alternative (SG1)5 – Issues and Options, Option 3B: Development to the East and North (as per 3A above, but with an additional proportional element of rural growth across the Borough's villages)</p> <p>Alternative (SG1)6 - Development focussed within the Regional Centre of Colchester only</p>	<p>As stated in the Local Plan, <i>'The Borough clearly contains sufficient undeveloped land to accommodate required growth in alternative locations, however Sustainability Appraisal work has discounted many of these potential alternative locations on the basis of environmental constraints. As noted in the Explanation above, the preferred Spatial Strategy has evolved from firstly, consideration of the individual characteristics and capacity of different parts of the Borough and secondly, consideration of the overall linkages and functionality of settlements within the area and the best strategy for enhancing their sustainability.'</i></p>

<p><b>Policy SG2: Housing Delivery</b></p> <p>Alternative (SG2)1: A lower dwelling per year target of 903 (OAN Report, 2015)</p> <p>Alternative (SG2)2: Restrict allocations to plan period - Confine allocations to those which can be delivered entirely within the plan period.</p> <p>Alternative (SG2)3: Provide a more dispersed pattern of new development</p> <p>Alternative (SG2)4: Allocating land for growth purposes in and around 'other villages'.</p>	<p>The NPPF is clear that the HMA as whole should work to meet its OAN in full, provided that it has the sustainable capacity to do so consistent with the policies in the NPPF. The OAN Report stated that, 'pending agreement from Tendring to either meet the SNPP 2012 projections or not, it would be sensible for Braintree, Chelmsford and Colchester to plan for the high end of the ranges shown in the table.' As such, the preferred Policy SG2 was selected.</p>
<p><b>Policy SG3: Economic Growth Provision</b></p> <p>Alternatives for employment provision have been explored in the SA of Section One of the Local Plan.</p>	<p>The economic delivery target is as the result of an Employment Land Needs Assessment, (ELNA), a full review of unimplemented Strategic and Local Employment sites, as well as settlement assessments, strategic land availability assessments and policy review in the light of national guidance and other evidence as relevant in line with NPPF requirements. The Centre Hierarchy has also been updated to meet the new requirements of the NPPF in regard to national guidance's exclusion of Neighbourhood Centre designations.</p>
<p><b>Policy SG4: Local Economic Areas</b></p> <p>No alternative approaches can be considered reasonable in line with conformity to the NPPF; the Policy approach seeks to balance job and employment growth. The Policy is also suitably flexible in line with the Policy criteria for changes of use for non-Class B uses.</p>	<p>The Local Employment Areas provide an important contribution to the Colchester economy alongside the Strategic Areas. Evidence base, in the form of the updated Employment Land Needs Assessment, (ELNA) reviewed the majority of the former Local Employment Zones and suggested whether they should be reallocated, reviewed or deallocated. The sites are listed in policy SG3 and SG4 as such Policy SG4 has been selected.</p>
<p><b>Policy SG5: Centre Hierarchy</b></p> <p>No alternative approaches can be considered reasonable in line with conformity to the NPPF.</p>	<p>Approach conforms with the NPPF- no alternatives considered</p>
<p><b>Policy SG6 Town Centre Uses</b></p> <p>Alternative (SG6)1 – To not include Impact Assessment Thresholds</p> <p>Alternative (SG6)2 – To not require an Impact Assessment Threshold <i>within</i> the defined centre of Tollgate (i.e. only otherwise applying to proposals <i>outside</i> defined centres as per the requirements for other centres in the Borough).</p>	<p>The Policy has been selected as it ensures that the impact of proposals on existing, committed and planned public and private investment in a centre or centres in the catchment area of the proposal are known. The Policy also seeks to ensure that impacts on town centre vitality and viability, including local consumer choice and trade in the town centre and wider area, are minimised.</p>

<p><b>Policy SG6a Local Centres</b></p> <p>No alternative approaches can be considered reasonable in line with conformity to the NPPF.</p>	<p>Within the Colchester Borough area, Local Centres represent existing areas that have an essential role in the provision of a range of small shops and services to meet the basic needs of local communities, serving a small catchment. They contribute to minimising transport distances, provide local employment opportunities and also have an important role in ensuring sustainable communities. In line with the distribution and level of growth in the plan area, it is likely that Local Centres will need to expand proportionately to meet the needs of increased numbers of residents, and the policy has additionally been selected and included in view of this possible requirement.</p>
<p><b>Policy SG7: Infrastructure Delivery and Impact Mitigation</b></p> <p>Alternative (SG7)1 – Leave to NPPF</p>	<p>The Council fully appreciates that the delivery of new homes and jobs needs to be supported by necessary infrastructure, including a wide range of transport options, utilities, and community facilities. This issue is of particular concern to existing residents and businesses. The Council will prepare an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) based on work carried out for the current Local Plan: studies prepared for the Garden Communities; relevant Neighbourhood Plans; topic based national and local studies; and discussions with infrastructure providers. In the event that essential infrastructure cannot be appropriately delivered to support new development in spite of best efforts to secure this, the preferred policy will restrict development from being commenced or, in certain cases, from being permitted, in the absence of proven infrastructure capacity.</p>
<p><b>Policy SG8: Neighbourhood Plans</b></p> <p>Alternative (SG8)1 – No change to existing policy: to use the wording of the current policy ENV2 in the adopted Core Strategy</p>	<p>The policy exists for completeness in setting out planning procedure and legislation within the Borough in order to minimise confusion regarding relevant policies and allocations within specific areas and the weight they have in determining planning applications.</p>
<p><b>Policy ENV1: Environment</b></p> <p>Alternative: It is considered that any distinct deviation from this policy approach would not be reasonable for the purposes of consideration and appraisal within this SA. The policy ensures enhancement is sought from all development proposals to which the policy would be relevant, and reiterates the requirements of the Habitats Directive, an EU Obligation.</p>	<p>The Policy adheres to the relevant national requirements of the NPPF and also the Council's statutory EO Obligations and as such has been selected.</p>
<p><b>Policy ENV2: Coastal Areas</b></p> <p>Alternative (ENV2)1 – No Policy/Leave to NPPF</p>	<p>The NPPF provides the high level protection but Local Plan policies are required in respect of all the identified environmental issues to provide the appropriate local context and detailed policy guidance against which proposals for development should be considered.</p>



<p><b>Policy ENV3: Green Infrastructure</b></p> <p>Alternative (ENV3)1 – No Policy/Leave to NPPF</p>	<p>The Policy ensures that all future developments identified in the Local Plan adequately consider green and blue needs across the Borough. The Council could decide to not support the Colchester Orbital initiative and rely on ad hoc opportunities to protect and enhance the GI network. This would be less successful regarding the delivery of a well-connected, inter-linked GI network and it would be more difficult to realise the multiple benefits that a comprehensive GI network can deliver for both people and wildlife. Also a failure to deliver green infrastructure as part of future developments in the Borough would not satisfy the principles of sustainable development and would not accord with the national policy.</p>
<p><b>Policy ENV4: Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty</b></p> <p>Alternative (ENV4)1 – Rely on current policy and the NPPF</p>	<p>The NPPF identifies the need to protect designated landscapes such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Relying on national policy however would only provide high level protection to the Dedham Vale AONB. A more detailed Local Plan policy is needed to ensure that the local context and special characteristics of the Dedham Vale (including setting) are recognised and appropriate detailed policy guidance prepared against which proposals for development can be considered</p>
<p><b>Policy ENV5: Pollution and Contaminated Land</b></p> <p>Alternative: 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. The NPPF requires remediation and mitigation of despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land where appropriate. As such, no alternative approaches can be considered reasonable.</p>	<p>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. The NPPF requires remediation and mitigation of despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land where appropriate. As such, the policy has been selected and included within the Plan.</p>
<p><b>Policy CC1: Climate Change</b></p> <p>Alternative (CC1)1 – Retain the current adopted climate change policy</p> <p>Alternative (CC1)2 – Not include a climate change policy in the Plan</p>	<p>There is a statutory duty on local planning authorities to include policies in their Local Plan designed to tackle climate change and its impacts (Section 19 [1A] of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).</p>
<p><b>Place Policies</b></p>	
<p><b>Policy PP1 – Generic Infrastructure and Mitigation Requirements Policy PP1 – Generic Infrastructure and Mitigation Requirements</b></p> <p>Alternative: The Policy relates specifically to those common infrastructure issues that surround the Plan's allocated sites in order to ensure that they singularly and cumulatively ensure sustainable development in the Plan area in line with local characteristics and the requirements of the NPPF. As such, no other alternatives can be considered reasonable.</p>	<p>The Policy relates specifically to those common infrastructure issues that surround the Plan's allocated sites in order to ensure that they singularly and cumulatively ensure sustainable development in the Plan area in line with local characteristics and the requirements of the NPPF. As such, the policy content has been selected for inclusion within the Plan.</p>

<p><b>Policy TC1 – Town Centre Policy and Hierarchy</b></p> <p>Alternative (TC1)1: No change – retain existing Town Centre boundary and Inner and Outer Retail Cores.</p>	<p>The NPPF continues to require the Local Plan to set out its Strategy for the Town centre and a Hierarchy. As such, the Policy has been selected</p>
<p><b>Policy TC2 – Retail Frontages (Central)</b></p> <p>Alternative (TC2)1: No change – retain existing Town Centre boundary and Inner and Outer Retail Cores.</p>	<p>The NPPF continues to require the identification of Primary and Secondary shopping areas. As such, the Policy has been selected</p>
<p><b>Policy TC3 – Town Centre Allocations</b></p> <p>The policy has changed from the Preferred Options stage to reflect recent permissions. With this in mind, the Preferred Approach can not be considered an alternative approach. Please note that the individual site allocations contained within this Policy have been appraised alongside reasonable alternatives in an Appendix 1 to the full Sustainability Report.</p>	<p>This policy addresses the requirement to update allocations and policies for the Town Centre, given the need to find further areas for the development of additional Town Centre floorspace and the desirability of a mix of uses to ensure the vitality and viability of all town centre functions and uses.</p>
<p><b>Policy TC4 – Transport in Colchester Town Centre</b></p> <p>Alternative: In regard to the need for development, as allocated within the Local Plan in this area, to be supported by transport solutions to accommodate growth and ensure its sustainability, no alternative approaches can be deemed reasonable.</p>	<p>Strategic transport modelling has been undertaken which has shown a large number of links and junctions in Colchester Town Centre operating over capacity at peak times. Development will add pressure to the transport network and measures will be required to help mitigate the impact. For this reason, the policy has been selected and included.</p>
<p><b>Policy NC1 – North Colchester and Severalls Strategic Economic Area</b></p> <p>Alternative (NC1)1: Retain the existing Strategic Employment Zone allocation in this area.</p>	<p>The policy for Northern Gateway/Severalls recognises its pre-eminent position within the Borough as a preferred location for employment land. It also provides for expansion of sport facilities to create a sports-related cluster anchored by the existing Colchester United Football stadium.</p>
<p><b>Policy NC2 – North Station Special Policy Area</b></p> <p>Alternative (NC2)1: Do not designate a Special Policy area and rely on allocations and development management policies.</p>	<p>It is appropriate to draw the area more tightly to focus on issues specific to the area around North Station itself. As such, the Policy has been selected and the alternative rejected.</p>
<p><b>Policy NC3 – North Colchester</b></p> <p>Alternative: An alternative has been explored relating to the consideration of selecting alternative sites for development in this broad area. Please note that the individual site allocations contained within this Policy have been appraised alongside reasonable alternatives in an Appendix 1 to the full Sustainability Appraisal Report.</p>	<p>The Council carefully considered a number of alternative sites, but only selected those sites which firstly, accorded with the overall spatial hierarchy and strategic policies for the Borough and secondly, satisfied the criteria for sustainable and deliverable sites set by the Strategic Land Availability Assessment and the Sustainability Appraisal. The alternative sites considered included both those received through the Call for Sites process as well as a number of other sites it was aware of from earlier assessments; current development allocations which remain undeveloped, and land in broadly sustainable locations which had not been put forward for assessment elsewhere.</p>

<p><b>Policy NC4 – Transport in North Colchester</b> Alternative: In regard to the need for development, as allocated within the Local Plan in this area, to be supported by transport solutions to accommodate growth and ensure its sustainability, no alternative approaches can be deemed reasonable.</p>	<p>Strategic transport modelling has been undertaken which has shown a large number of links and junctions in North Colchester operating over capacity at peak times. Development will add pressure to the transport network and measures will be required to help mitigate the impact. For this reason, the policy has been selected and included.</p>
<p><b>Policy SC1 – South Colchester (allocations)</b> <b>Policy SC2 – Middlewick Ranges</b></p> <p>Alternatives for SC1 and SC2: The individual site allocations contained within this Policy have been appraised alongside reasonable alternatives in an Appendix 1 to the full Sustainability Appraisal Report.</p>	<p>The Council carefully considered a number of alternative sites, but only selected those sites which firstly, accorded with the overall spatial hierarchy and strategic policies for the Borough and secondly, satisfied the criteria for sustainable and deliverable sites set by the Strategic Land Availability Assessment and the Sustainability Appraisal. The alternative sites considered included both those received through the Call for Sites process as well as a number of other sites it was aware of from earlier assessments; current development allocations which remain undeveloped, and land in broadly sustainable locations which had not been put forward for assessment elsewhere.</p>
<p><b>Policy SC3 – Transport in South Colchester</b> Alternative: In regard to the need for development, as allocated within the Local Plan in this area, to be supported by transport solutions to accommodate growth and ensure its sustainability, no alternative approaches can be deemed reasonable.</p>	<p>Strategic transport modelling has been undertaken which has shown a large number of links and junctions in South Colchester operating over capacity at peak times. Development will add pressure to the transport network and measures will be required to help mitigate the impact. For this reason, the policy has been selected and included.</p>
<p><b>Policy EC1 – Knowledge Gateway and University of Essex Strategic Economic Area</b></p> <p>Alternative (EC1)1: Retain existing Strategic Employment Zone allocation.</p>	<p>The Policy recognises the role of the Knowledge Gateway and University in the provision of well-located, high quality employment land, in addition to recognising the particular roles and functions played by the University in the Borough's spatial hierarchy. It is appropriate for the Knowledge Gateway and University to be recognised as drivers of economic growth related to higher education and associated Research Park uses by allocating and safeguarding land for those purposes. Development of a specific policy for the area will facilitate an integrated approach to university expansion; development of the Garden Community; and links with East Colchester and the Town Centre.</p>
<p><b>Policy EC2 – East Colchester – The Hythe Special Policy Area</b></p> <p>Alternative: The individual site allocations that represent the quantum of housing and other land uses within this Policy have been appraised alongside reasonable alternatives, where relevant to the area, in an Appendix 1 the full Sustainability Report.</p>	<p>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. The Hythe is an established regeneration area that seeks to deliver sustainable, mixed use neighbourhoods, oriented towards the River Colne, which respects the historic character of the area as the location of the early port. Over the plan period the East Colchester - Hythe Special Policy Area provides capacity to accommodate approximately 840 new dwellings including those already committed. The regeneration of this area needs to be supported by improvements to the</p>

	transport infrastructure and services, flood mitigation and open space to ensure that the sufficient amenity space is included to support the increasing population.
<p><b>Policy EC3 – East Colchester</b> An alternative has been explored relating to the consideration of selecting alternative sites for development in this broad area. Please note that the individual site allocations contained within this Policy have been appraised alongside reasonable alternatives in an Appendix to the full Sustainability Report.</p>	The Council carefully considered a number of alternative sites, but only selected those sites which firstly, accorded with the overall spatial hierarchy and strategic policies for the Borough and secondly, satisfied the criteria for sustainable and deliverable sites set by the Strategic Land Availability Assessment and the Sustainability Appraisal.
<p><b>Policy EC4 – Transport in East Colchester</b> Alternative: In regard to the need for development, as allocated within the Local Plan in this area, to be supported by transport solutions to accommodate growth and ensure its sustainability, no alternative approaches can be deemed reasonable.</p>	Strategic transport modelling has been undertaken which has shown a large number of links and junctions in East Colchester operating over capacity at peak times. Development will add pressure to the transport network and measures will be required to help mitigate the impact. For this reason, the policy has been selected and included.
<p><b>Policy WC1 – Stanway Strategic Economic Area</b> Alternative (WC1)1: Retain existing Strategic Employment Zone allocation</p>	The policy for the Stanway Economic Growth Area provides for a continuation of the current mix of commercial uses within existing areas as well as allowing for further employment growth facilitated by the recent completion of further road infrastructure.
<p><b>Policy WC2 – Stanway</b> Alternative: The individual site allocations contained within this Policy have been appraised alongside reasonable alternatives in an Appendix 1 to the full Sustainability Report.</p>	The Council carefully considered a number of alternative sites, but only selected those sites which firstly, accorded with the overall spatial hierarchy and strategic policies for the Borough and secondly, satisfied the criteria for sustainable and deliverable sites set by the Strategic Land Availability Assessment and the Sustainability Appraisal. The alternative sites considered included both those received through the Call for Sites process as well as a number of other sites it was aware of from earlier assessments; current development allocations which remain undeveloped, and land in broadly sustainable locations which had not been put forward for assessment elsewhere.
<p><b>Policy WC3 – Colchester Zoo</b> Alternative (WC3)1: Not to provide a policy context for the Zoo expansion</p>	The zoo is a cornerstone of Colchester’s tourism attractions and has operated successfully in its current location for over 50 years. It is appreciated that tourist attractions require constant updating and that expansion around its current location has strong economic justification.
<p><b>Policy WC4 – West Colchester</b> Alternatives: The individual site allocations contained within this Policy have been appraised alongside reasonable alternatives in an Appendix to the full Sustainability Report.</p>	The Council carefully considered a number of alternative sites, but only selected those sites which firstly, accorded with the overall spatial hierarchy and strategic policies for the Borough and secondly, satisfied the criteria for sustainable and deliverable sites set by the Strategic Land Availability Assessment and the Sustainability Appraisal. The alternative sites considered included both those received through the Call for Sites process as well as a number of other sites it was aware of from earlier assessments and current development allocations which remain undeveloped; and land in broadly sustainable locations which had not been put forward for assessment elsewhere.

<p><b>Policy WC5 – Transport in West Colchester</b>  Alternatives; In regard to the need for development, as allocated within the Local Plan in this area, to be supported by transport solutions to accommodate growth and ensure its sustainability, no alternative approaches can be deemed reasonable.</p>	<p>Strategic transport modelling has been undertaken which has shown a large number of links and junctions in West Colchester operating over capacity at peak times. Development will add pressure to the transport network and measures will be required to help mitigate the impact. For this reason, the policy has been selected and included.</p>
<p><b>Sustainable Settlements-</b></p> <p><b>Alternatives:</b> The individual site allocations contained within the following Policies have been appraised alongside reasonable alternatives in an Appendix 1 to the full Sustainability Report.</p>	
<p>Policy SS1 – Abberton and Langenhoe</p>	<p>Abberton / Langenhoe is fairly well connected to the road network and is situated on the main Mersea to Colchester road (B1025). There is a primary school, post office / shop, and village hall. The sites represent appropriate growth and logical and sensible extensions to the existing built up area and contribute to the continued sustainability of the key services in the village.</p>
<p>Policy SS2 – Boxted</p>	<p>Policy reflects the recently “Made” Neighbourhood Plan which includes land allocations and the policy framework for growth.</p>
<p>Policy SS3 – Chappel and Wakes Colne</p>	<p>Chappel provides an important community function in terms of the provision of local services and facilities, including a train station in close proximity. Development of land off Swan Grove (to the east of Chappel Hill) represents a logical and sensible extension to the settlement boundary. The site adjoins the existing settlement boundary, and is well related to existing services and facilities.</p>
<p>Policy SS4 – Copford</p>	<p>Copford represents a logical location for additional growth given its proximity to Marks Tey train station and the A12/A120. The selected sites have been selected in response to a need to contribute to the continued sustainability of Copford without resulting in any coalescence of the two distinct settlements of Copford and Copford Green.</p>
<p>Policy SS5 – Eight Ash Green</p>	<p>The Policy reflects the position of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan which will make allocations for growth and provide the policy framework for the settlement.</p>
<p>Policy SS6 – Fordham</p>	<p>Fordham is well served with key community facilities including a primary school, village hall, convenience shop / Post Office and a playing field. The site allocation is considered a logical and appropriate extension to the settlement and contributes to the continued sustainability of the village’s key services.</p>
<p>Policy SS7 – Great Horkesley</p>	<p>Great Horkesley is well served by public transport and has key community facilities including a primary school, Post Office and a number of other facilities. The brownfield development of School Lane will ensure additional community facility provision and the land adjacent to Great Horkesley Manor is considered a logical and appropriate extension to the settlement. Both allocations contribute to the continued sustainability of the village’s key services.</p>

Policy SS8 – Great Tey	Great Tey is a small rural community that contains a village pub, a school and a church. The RCCE completed a Rural Housing Needs Survey in 2012 which indicated a need for 4 affordable units. The allocations within the policy at 17 and 30 dwellings will meet this affordable housing need and wider needs within the village as well as provide enhanced public open space.
Policy SS9 – Langham	The two settlement areas of Langham have a number of facilities including a community centre and shop, and a primary school with capacity. Langham's location and range of services it supports mean that both areas are considered suitable for limited proportionate growth. The Policy's allocations represent sensible extensions and additions in connecting the two settlements in order to contribute to the continual sustainability of the villages' key services. The policy reflects the requirements for addressing SWTP capacity enhancements prior to commencement of development to satisfy the requirements by the Habitats Regulations.
Policy SS10 – Layer de la Haye	Layer village is well served by community facilities, including a primary school, village shop / Post Office, a GP Surgery and two public houses. Given the constraints of natural conservation sites around the village and the threats of coalescence, the allocated site for 35 dwellings ensures a sensible and proportionate extension of the village in order to support the continued sustainability of the area and existing facilities.
Policy SS11 – Marks Tey	The Policy reflects the position of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan which will provide the policy framework for the settlement in response to growth during the plan period
Policy SS12a – Mersea	<p>West Mersea is a District Centre with a high number of key services and community facilities. Mersea has 2 supermarkets, a primary school a community centre, as well as a range of independent shops, cafes and restaurants. 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.</p> <p>West Mersea is considered to be a sustainable location for housing growth. There are currently approximately 3,200 dwellings in West Mersea. The preferred sites could deliver an additional 200 houses over the Local Plan period and represent logical extensions adjacent to the existing settlement boundary whilst also being in close proximity to the settlements services and facilities.</p>
<p><b>Policy SS12b – Coast Road</b></p> <p>Alternatives: No alternatives have been identified for this policy approach in line with the Policy's general adherence to the principles of sustainable development and the environmental protection objectives of the area.</p>	<p>Mersea is an important tourism destination in the Borough. 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.</p> <p>The Policy ensures that future development proposals on the landward and seaward side of Coast Road balance the</p>

	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.
<p><b>Policy SS12c – Caravan Parks</b></p> <p>Alternatives: No alternatives have been identified for this policy approach in line with the Policy's general adherence to the principles of sustainable development and the environmental protection objectives of the area.</p>	The caravan parks on Mersea are located adjacent to internationally designated Natura 2000 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 which has shaped the policy approach and is the principle reason for its selection.
Policy SS13 – Rowhedge	Rowhedge benefits from its own primary school, GP surgery, village shop, public houses and open space provision. Rowhedge is considered a sustainable settlement in the sense that it has a number of key services available to its residents however it is also highly constrained by a number of natural and artificial barriers. The forthcoming committed development at Rowhedge Wharf and the exceptional constraints to expansion surrounding the village renders Rowhedge unsuitable for extensive new development. The site has been allocated as it is partially using PDL, can be accommodated without causing coalescence with Colchester, or an unreasonable impact on local services and facilities.
Policy SS14 – Tiptree	The Policy reflects the position of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan which will make allocations for growth and provide the policy framework for the settlement.
Policy SS15– West Bergholt	The Policy reflects the position of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan which will make allocations for growth and provide the policy framework for the settlement.
Policy SS16 – Wivenhoe	The Policy reflects the position of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan which will make allocations for growth and provide the policy framework for the settlement.
<p><b>Policy OV1 – Development in Other Villages</b></p> <p>Alternative (OV1)1: No change to existing policy.</p>	National evidence indicates that villages in the catchment area of larger towns struggle to retain facilities, even when more housing is built. Rural communities do not provide sufficient shops, services and facilities to support significant growth, however some small villages functionally act as local service centres which the local communities rely on for basic facilities and as social hubs and can accommodate a limited amount of small scale development. The Policy ensures that appropriate development proposals 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. The Policy also ensures that development within the countryside is limited to activities that either require a rural location, help sustain a rural community and local economy and which help protect the rural character of the areas where a development is being delivered.
<p><b>Policy OV2 – Countryside</b></p> <p>Alternatives: It is essential that development is restricted in the countryside to protect the</p>	It is essential that development is restricted in the countryside to protect the landscape, character, quality and tranquillity. The policy's stance on only allowing small scale single units within the countryside is an established

landscape, character, quality and tranquillity. For this reason, alternative approaches that seek to allow the principle of development within the countryside, i.e. as would be the case within a development boundary, are not considered reasonable.	approach to development in such areas and has therefore been included and selected within the Plan.
<b>Development Management Policies</b>	
<p><b>Policy DM1 – Health and Wellbeing</b></p> <p>Alternative (DM1)1: No change to existing policy.</p> <p>Alternative (DM1)2: Relate requirement for HIA to EIA development</p> <p>Alternative (DM1)3: No requirement for HIA</p>	The quality of the built environment and its sustainability are key factors in both the direct health of and the life style choices affecting the health of residents, workers and visitors of new developments. The Local Plan recognises that most development has a potential impact upon the health services and facilities that are provided in the Borough and that through the design of new development, healthy living can be promoted. The Policy ensures that 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.
<p><b>Policy DM2 – Community Facilities</b></p> <p>Alternative: It is felt that no alternative approaches could be considered reasonable in light of the requirements to seek the retention of community facilities, or their provision through Section 106 agreements or CIL. Any deviations from the approach could be considered unreasonable in line with the approach to other infrastructure policies.</p>	The Policy ensures that the Council can deliver a comprehensive range of high quality and accessible community facilities to meet the needs of new and existing communities in Colchester. The Policy safeguards existing facilities and sets out how development proposals will be required to review community needs and provide community facilities to meet the needs of the new population and mitigate impacts on existing communities.
<p><b>Policy DM3 – Education Provision</b></p> <p>Alternative (DM3)1: No policy / Rely on the NPPF.</p>	Whilst the NPPF provides support for the principles set out in the policy it is necessary to add more specific guidance to enable policy guidance to respond to the local priorities and context. In respect of policy on education, a strong permissive steer is to support new academies and free schools in the NPPF, so it is therefore important that a policy provides further guidance to provide the opportunity to inform proposals and seek appropriate mitigation if required.
<p><b>Policy DM4 – Sports Provision</b></p> <p>Alternative (DM4)1: No change to existing policy.</p>	The current policy could have been retained but new evidence has been gathered about sport and leisure needs in the Borough which is not reflected in the current policy. As such, the new Policy has been selected as it represents the most up to date evidence
<p><b>Policy DM5 – Tourism, Leisure, Culture and Heritage</b></p> <p>Alternative (DM5)1: No policy / rely on the NPPF.</p>	The importance of the tourism, leisure and culture sectors to the Colchester economy and quality of place warrants specific policy attention to ensure an appropriate level of provision.
<p><b>Policy DM6 – Economic Development in Rural Areas and the Countryside</b></p> <p>Alternative (DM6)1: No policy / rely on the NPPF.</p>	The current Local Plan includes two policies DM6 and DM9 that guide employment uses in rural areas. Both policies have been amalgamated and amended to reflect the introduction of the NPPF and also in response to recommendations about the future use of allocated Local Economic Sites in the Employment Land Needs Assessment Report.
<p><b>Policy DM7 – Agricultural Development and Diversification</b></p> <p>Alternative (DM7)1: No policy / rely on the NPPF.</p>	Policies have been amended to reflect the introduction of the NPPF and also in response to recommendations about the future use of allocated Local Economic Sites in the Employment Land Needs Assessment Report



<p><b>Policy DM8 – Affordable Housing</b></p> <p>Alternative (DM8)1: No policy / rely on the NPPF</p> <p>Alternative (DM8)2: Set an alternative target</p> <p>Alternative (DM8)3: A 20% target on schemes of 10 dwellings or more.</p>	<p>The NPPF expects that Local Plans will provide further detail on how affordable housing will be provided given that targets need to reflect local circumstances as documented in the Council's evidence base. The updated target of 30% reflects this evidence and is considered to represent housing need and affordability aspirations.</p>
<p><b>Policy DM9 – Housing Density</b></p> <p>Alternative (DM9)1: Set Minimum / Maximum Densities</p> <p>Alternative (DM9)2: Leave to NPPF</p>	<p>The Policy has been selected in so far as it is compliant approach with the NPPF's requirements that LPAs set their own densities which reflect local circumstances, including regard to the character of the area and respond directly to site specific characteristics.</p>
<p><b>Policy DM10 – Housing Diversity</b></p> <p>Alternative (DM10)1: Set specific allocations for every type of specialist housing</p>	<p>This would increase levels of certainty that provision is made, providing greater flexibility for categories such as older people's housing that could be provided in a range of types and locations, than alternative.</p>
<p><b>Policy DM11 – Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople</b></p> <p>Alternative: No alternatives can be considered reasonable for exploration, in light of the available evidence and land promoted for such a use.</p>	<p>The Policy conforms to the requirement that LPAs provide appropriate sites to meet the needs of the gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople in the Borough as identified through the latest Gypsy and Traveller assessment work and further to guidance from Government set forth in 'Planning policy for traveller sites'.</p>
<p><b>Policy DM12 – Housing Standards</b></p> <p>Alternatives: No alternatives have been considered reasonable for exploration, in light of the available evidence within the local context as also national standards and guidance.</p>	<p>The Policy has been selected where it can be seen to set clear criteria regarding different types of dwelling including the principles of Lifetime Homes and to help the Council meet its recycling targets. In line with the standards directly meeting local needs and addressing specific requirements in the Borough, the Policy is considered a suitable and appropriate approach.</p>
<p><b>Policy DM13 – Domestic Development: Residential alterations, extensions and outbuildings</b></p> <p>Alternative (DM13)1: No policy / rely on National Guidance</p>	<p>If there was no domestic development policy included in the Local Plan there would have to be a reliance on the NPPF and PPG to inform the determination of such proposals. Given that both national policy and national guidance do not provide any detail on the types of development proposals covered in this policy, on their own they would not be sufficient to ensure development is of an acceptable standard. Although permitted development rights have increased the types and scale of development which doesn't require planning permission, the proposed policy is required to ensure development proposals for alterations, extensions, annexes, replacement dwellings and flat conversions outside of permitted development rights are carried out in a way which respects local areas as well as protecting the needs of existing and future neighbours and residents.</p>
<p><b>Policy DM14 – Rural Workers Housing</b></p> <p>Alternative (DM14)1: No policy / rely on National Guidance</p>	<p>The NPPF makes reference to the need to plan for rural workers housing needs in paragraph 55 but only at a very high level. A more detailed Local Plan policy is required to provide the local policy context clarity the criteria that applications.</p>
<p><b>Policy DM15 – Design and Amenity</b></p>	<p>The Policy adheres to the requirements of the NPPF that good design be indivisible from good planning in order to</p>

<p>Alternatives: No alternatives have been considered reasonable for exploration, in light of the available evidence and local context. Any deviation from the Policy content and requirements that could be considered a distinctly different approach (for the purposes of exploration as a reasonable alternative within this SA) would not correspond to a requirement for local design and amenity policy in the NPPF and would likely lead to unsustainable development.</p>	<p>ensure sustainable development. The Policy is locally distinct and flexible in line with differing characteristics and as such has been selected.</p>
<p><b>Policy DM16 – Historic Environment</b></p> <p>Alternative (DM16)1: No change to the policy</p>	<p>The Policy reflects the most up to date position regarding available evidence and also provides clarity in relation to the importance of the significance of the heritage asset as required by the NPPF.</p>
<p><b>Policy DM17 – Retention of Open Space and Outdoor and Indoor Sport and Recreation Facilities</b></p> <p>Alternative (DM17)1: No change to the policy</p> <p>Alternative (DM17)2: No policy and rely on the NPPF</p>	<p>The Policy adheres to national policy's requirement for Local Plans to cover the local application of evidence to ensure adequate protection and provision of open space, sport and recreation to meet the needs of the local community.</p>
<p><b>Policy DM18 – Provision for Open Space</b></p> <p>Alternative (DM18)1: No change to the policy</p> <p>Alternative (DM18)2: No policy and rely on the NPPF</p>	<p>The Policy adheres to national policy's requirement for Local Plans to cover the local application of evidence to ensure adequate protection and provision of open space, sport and recreation to meet the needs of the local community.</p>
<p><b>Policy DM19 – Private Amenity Space</b></p> <p>Alternative (DM19)1: No change to the policy</p> <p>Alternative (DM19)2: No policy and rely on the NPPF</p>	<p>The Policy adheres to national policy's requirement for Local Plans to cover the local application of evidence to ensure adequate protection and provision of open space, sport and recreation to meet the needs of the local community.</p>
<p><b>Policy DM20 – Promoting Sustainable Transport and Changing Travel Behaviour</b></p> <p>Alternative (DM20)1: Retain existing (multiple) policies as separate policies</p>	<p>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. The Policy encourages sustainable transport, particularly where growth is planned, and as such adhered directly to the NPPF</p>
<p><b>Policy DM21 – Sustainable Access to Development</b></p> <p>Alternative (DM21)1: Retain existing policy</p>	<p>Good easy access to a high quality and efficient transport network is essential to support new development and ensure that it is sustainable. The selected approach ensures this in line with NPPF requirements regarding 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.</p>
<p><b>Policy DM22 – Parking</b></p> <p>Alternative (DM22)1: Retain existing policy and rely on Essex Parking Standards</p>	<p>It is considered that there needs to be flexibility to provide appropriate car and cycle parking based on local circumstances and the maximum standard is not always considered appropriate. A flexible approach ensures that the standard is applicable locally</p>
<p><b>Policy DM23 – Flood Risk and Water Management</b></p>	<p>The Policy approach has been selected as it builds upon National guidance through the requirements to undertake</p>

Alternative (DM23)1: Retain existing policy	a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and in accordance with its findings. For this reason, the Policy approach can be considered the only appropriate approach in line with all relevant requirements of such a policy and available and up to date evidence.
<b>Policy DM24 – Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems</b> Alternative (DM24)1: Retain existing policy	The Policy approach has been selected as it builds upon National guidance through the requirements to undertake a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and in accordance with its findings. For this reason, the Policy approach can be considered the only appropriate approach in line with all relevant requirements of such a policy and available and up to date evidence.
<b>Policy DM25 – Renewable Energy, Water, Waste and Recycling</b> Alternative (DM25)1: No change to (existing) policies ER1 and DP25	The Policy has been updated to reflect the level of growth and feasibility in line with the wider Plan. It also includes local initiatives, targets and up to date measures in line with best practice. The Policy is in direct accordance with national guidance and EU Directives and therefore is an appropriate policy approach.

## 12. The Cumulative and Synergistic Effects of the Local Plan (Section Two) Policies

The cumulative impacts of the Plan’s policies (the Plan as a whole) can be seen to have minimal negative impacts and a large range of significantly positive impacts on:

**Housing growth, affordable housing and housing types of a good design** – The Plan ensures that objectively assessed housing needs will be met in the Borough in sustainable locations in accordance with the settlement hierarchy and through Neighbourhood Plans to meet some of these needs. Effective design policies will also ensure housing is of the highest quality and respond to local characteristics.

**Regeneration** – The Plan’s policies and allocations actively seek to ensure development of a mix of appropriate uses is directed to the Borough’s identified employment areas and Town Centre, generating wide benefits across the town and Borough for new and existing communities.

**Accessibility, reducing the need to travel, sustainable travel and transport infrastructure** –The need to promote and deliver sustainable transport infrastructure is a key driver behind the Borough’s spatial strategy and individual and cumulative allocations and in particular Garden Community option, aiming to increase the overall sustainability of the whole Borough and Housing Market Area.

**Employment opportunities, vitality of Centres, business innovation, rural economy and tourism** – The Plan ensures that employment and economic needs are at the forefront of the Plan’s outcomes through effective policy requirements, safeguarding provisions and also an appropriate amount of new employment land in suitable and sustainable allocations, representing the best possible outcomes in light of all reasonable alternatives.

**Education, recreation and community facilities** – Education and school capacity issues are key drivers behind the Borough’s spatial strategy and individual and cumulative allocations in particular the Garden Community option, with a mind to increase the overall sustainability of the whole Borough and Housing Market Area in this regard.

**Open space and healthy lifestyles** – The Plan effectively protects existing open space, where this represents the best possible and most sustainable option, and also ensures through policy requirements that suitable provision is included within all development as required. This is also the case for walking and cycling infrastructure.

**Skills** – The level of growth in combination with the positive impacts on employment development and new school provision, which are at the forefront of the Plan’s objectives, maximises the possibility that skills are significantly improved within the Plan area and beyond within the wider Housing Market Area.

**Heritage assets, public realm, the historic character of the Town Centre** - it is inevitable that the level of growth required may have some degree of impact on such assets with the need to develop on Greenfield land and to increase housing growth within the town centre. Despite these inevitable impacts, the Local Plan does successfully ensure that such impacts are minimised through the site selection process of the SLAA, which explored such impacts and mitigation potential in detail for each submitted site. This SA also draws the same conclusion through exploring the preferred sites for allocation against reasonable alternatives regarding impacts on the historic environment and archaeology (see Appendix 1 of the main Report).

**Biodiversity** – The Plan ensures that biodiversity features are included within policy requirements. In line with the development of the Garden Communities, significant biodiversity gains can be achieved on agricultural land that previously had no biodiversity interest. This, in combination with urban and rural requirements, will significantly contribute to enhancing the Green Infrastructure network across the Borough.

**Renewable energy** – The cumulative impacts of the Plan will be significantly positive in association with the requirements of Policy DM25 and the level of growth. The Policy ensures that such measures are maximised in their promotion, without any statutory requirements affecting the viability of any development proposals / allocations.

**Minimising waste** – The Plan will ensure that resource use and waste minimisation is integrated into all development through effective policy requirements. This will directly lead to positive outcomes as well as ensuring a wider cultural change.

**Integrating SuDS and improving drainage** – The Plan seeks to ensure SuDS are integrated into all developments through policy requirements.

**In contrast, the Plan as a whole will not have significant positive impacts on the following sustainability criteria (in each instance, commentary is given exploring any shortcomings of the Plan):**

**Greenfield / PDL** – The Plan ensures maximum use of PDL, however it is inevitable that significant Greenfield land would be required for development in line with the objectively assessed growth targets for the Plan area and the requirements that needs are met through the wider Housing market Area.

**School capacity (short-medium term)** – The level of growth in the Plan is also inevitably going to put pressure on school capacities. This is particularly the case in the short – medium term. The Plan includes policy requirements ensuring the necessary infrastructure delivery as informed by of a separate evidence base.

**Crime** – The Plan does not specifically seek to minimise crime and the fear of crime, however these are more related to specific design features which the Plan need not reiterate as they are well documented in SPDs and guidance documents adopted by the Council.

**Landscape character** – It is also inevitable that the level of growth required will have some degree of landscape impact associated with a lack of brownfield land and the need to develop on Greenfield land. Despite these inevitable impacts, the Local Plan does successfully ensure that impacts on landscape are minimised through site selection and policy requirements. (see Appendix 1 of the main Report).

**Wildlife and coastal designations** – The level of growth required will also inevitable lead to the potential for disturbance to international and national wildlife sites, which are present within the Borough. Despite this, such impacts are not the result of any inappropriate allocations individually or cumulatively at this stage. Work is being undertaken on a Habitats Regulation Assessment for the Local Plan that explores the likelihood of significant environmental effects and these findings will be factored into the Plan as appropriate.

**Water, air (including pollution and emissions) and soil quality** –it is inevitable that the level of growth required will have some degree of impact on water air and soil associated with the need to develop on Greenfield land and to increase housing growth within the town centre. Despite these inevitable impacts, the Local Plan does successfully ensure that such impacts are minimised through the site selection including the SLAA and policy requirements. (see Appendix 1 of the main Report).

**Fluvial flooding** – There will be no cumulative positive impacts arising from the Plan in so far as the Plan ensures that flooding will be minimised both through Policy requirements and the selection of the allocations for growth.

**Water quality, efficiency and availability** – Water issues, although a key consideration in overall sustainability are issues that are beyond the direct influence of the Plan and as such no cumulative effects will be realised. Such issues will be ensured through collaborative working with relevant authorities on such matters on a case by case basis and cumulatively in broad areas.

### 13. Whole Plan Sustainability Impacts

The Plan can be seen to offer significant positive impacts associated with housing, both in the allocation of a mix of housing across the Borough, and also in the formulation of relevant housing related policies that seek sustainable development in sustainable locations.

The Plan will ensure good accessibility and significant improvements to infrastructure through a series of general and site specific policies. There will be significant positive impacts on regeneration, which exists as an important focus of the Plan, particularly in East Colchester, with expected wider benefits associated with any rapid public transport improvements of a Garden Community in this broad location. The combined impacts of the contents of the Plan will however lead to significant negative losses in greenfield land, both in and around Colchester and the sustainable settlements in many instances. This can be considered inevitable at the scale of growth required and in consideration of the diminishing amount of land that is previously developed, and it should be noted that a strong emphasis on maximising the use of land as a resource resonates throughout the plan as a whole, particularly in the utilisation of such land within the Colchester settlement boundary. This focus on brownfield land coupled with the principles of the spatial strategies of both Sections One and Two in seeking to focus development within settlements proportionately and in line with a settlement hierarchy, are strongly aligned through the Plan's allocations.

The Plan can be seen to offer significant positive impacts associated with employment related assessment criteria, both in the allocation and safeguarding of employment land across the Borough, and also in the formulation of relevant employment related policies that seek sustainable development in sustainable locations. The Plan's policies and allocations can also be seen to promote and ensure the viability of the town centre for town centre uses, with secondary cumulative positive implications on tourism and heritage. Only minor positive cumulative impacts have been assessed as likely regarding the rural economy, through the Plan's focus for development allocations in more sustainable locations. There can also be seen to be some element of uncertainty surrounding the allocation of employment land in a number of those settlements in which Neighbourhood Plans will set out specific allocations.

Sustainable travel is a key principle of both the Spatial Strategies of Sections One and Two, and is well reflected in the distribution of growth through both Sections of the Plan's allocations. There is an emphasis on Colchester town as a location for development, with the development potential of brownfield land maximised, particularly through Special Policy Areas of Magdalen Street and the Hythe and also the broad location of the Garden Communities. The principle of ensuring sustainable travel is well aligned throughout the Plan in both Sections One and Two, with wider benefits expected from Garden Community requirements for a choice of sustainable transport means and rapid public transit systems which can support other smaller scale allocations along expected routes into the town centre.

The Plan's policies and allocations ensure that access is ensured to all relevant supporting services and infrastructure, as well as employment opportunities. The cumulative impacts on capacities of key services could be expected to be negative associated with the level of growth required within the Plan and the focus on Colchester for sustainable development. Despite this however, positive outcomes can be expected through growth stimulating new infrastructure and service provision, which can offer significant wider benefit; development can ensure new provision that supports not only new communities but also exist to improve current conditions and capacities. This can be seen to occur on two levels commensurate with the scope of both Sections One and Two. Section One's strong emphasis on 'infrastructure first' is ensured through the interventionist approach of the delivery model, which effectively places the Borough Council in the role of developer for the Garden Communities. This seeks to challenge those perceptions of strategic growth having significant negative impacts on infrastructure and key service capacities, such as school places and associated with healthcare.

Accessibility by sustainable means is ensured throughout both Sections of the Plan as a foremost consideration in the allocation of sites and policy content. Walking and cycling is promoted through the proximity of growth to existing employment opportunities and key services, as well as further ensured through policy content to provide such network improvements. The Plan can be considered to not have any impacts associated with reducing actual crime and the fear of crime directly, however can be expected to be a secondary effect emanating from the Plan's design related policy content. Further, such considerations can be seen to be more relevant to design briefs and any masterplans and it is recommended that such a focus is included in these forthcoming documents where specifically required.

There will be minor positive impacts on the majority of the historic environment assessment criteria. Impacts are limited in all cases due to the focus of substantial growth in and around Colchester and in consideration of the historic importance of the town centre. Although impacts can be mitigated and significance preserved in all instances through policy considerations, there is less certainty whether the enhancement of assets can be sought on a plan-wide level. Despite this however, some important benefits can be sought through regeneration policies regarding Magdalen Street and the St Botolphs Cultural Quarter cumulatively with the Plan's thematic strategic and development management policies. It should also be acknowledged that further considerations can be seen to be more relevant to design briefs and any masterplans and it is recommended that such a focus is included in these forthcoming documents where specifically required. There is not considered to be any significant positive or negative cumulative impacts on the historic environment resulting from the content of Sections One and Two in combination.

The Plan will have a number of uncertain impacts on landscapes and soil quality. This is largely related to the amount of Greenfield land that is required to be allocated for development purposes within the Plan. This can not be considered a criticism of the plan, but is reflective of the Borough's OAN requirements and the diminishing availability of brownfield land in the Borough. It should be noted in this regard that the Plan can be considered successful in its avoidance of negative

impacts in this regard, with effective policy and site assessment criteria being explored to ensure that the strategy and development allocations are the most sustainable in light of the landscape implications. The Garden Communities allocated within Section One will not give rise to any significant negative impacts due to their adherence and delivery in line with Garden City principles. Both Sections of the Plan are also likely to ensure net gains in biodiversity cumulatively, with any adverse impacts on designations associated with the level of growth avoided through relevant and appropriate policy criteria. The Plan as a whole can be considered to have uncertain impacts on air and water quality. This again can be seen as a result of the level and distribution of growth around Colchester. Policy considerations exist to minimise these impacts, however it should be noted that impacts can not be eradicated outright and impacts are largely inevitable at the strategic level. The Plan does however seek solutions to ensure 'acceptable impacts only' in regard to policy content and water quality. Regarding air quality, it should be considered that the Plan's focus on increasing sustainable transport uptake is maximised will likely assist in such a modal shift away from private vehicle use. The focus of development in and around the town and sustainable settlements only within Section Two ensures that growth is forthcoming in sustainable areas. Cumulatively this principle is strengthened at the wider plan level with Garden Community allocations having comparably better access to rail links than alternative options, coupled with the benefit of being developed in line with Garden City principles that seek the integration of other sustainable transport choices to key centres.

Regarding air quality, it should be considered that the Plan's focus on increasing sustainable transport uptake is maximised will likely assist in such a modal shift away from private vehicle use. The focus of development in and around the town and sustainable settlements only within Section Two ensures that growth is forthcoming in sustainable areas. Cumulatively this principle is strengthened at the wider plan level with Garden Community allocations having comparably better access to rail links than alternative options, coupled with the benefit of being developed in line with Garden City principles that seek the integration of other sustainable transport choices to key centres. In regard to other climate change factors, the Plan seeks to ensure energy efficiency in both Sections One and Two. Minor positive impacts will be ensured through the combined policy content regarding renewable energy, however impacts are limited where no specific allocation is seeking to ensure such integration. There will be cumulative positive impacts associated with waste minimisation through the single relevant development management policy, which will need to be complied with in all allocations including the Garden Communities within Section One.

The Plan will have no impact on flooding through the inclusion of relevant policy considerations. Regarding water efficiency and usage, this assessment criterion can be considered largely relevant to individual applications, with cumulative impacts difficult to identify at the strategic level. Water availability can be considered uncertain in so far as this can be expected to be an issue relevant to the level of the growth in the Plan. The issue has been raised for the Garden Communities which can be expected to have some cumulative negative connotations with other plan



allocations in broad areas as identified in the Plan's Water Cycle Study evidence base. There will be significant positive impacts on the integration of SuDS where this requirement is reiterated at all levels of development that can be expected within the Plan period and beyond. Uncertain impacts however exist regarding water quality, in line with the findings of the HRA.

## 14. Conclusions and Recommendations

Despite the general positive impacts of the Plan's policies, recommendations are made for some of the Plan's individual policies which relate to detailed wording. There are no recommendations which relate to fundamental issues. The relevant policies are listed below and the detailed recommendations are included in Section 13 of the full Sustainability Appraisal.

- Policy EC2 – The Hythe Special Policy Area
- Policy EC3 – East Colchester
- Policy SC1 – South Colchester
- Policy SS1 – Abberton and Langenhoe
- Policy SS12a – Mersea
- Policy DM5 – Tourism, Leisure, Culture and Heritage
- Policy DM7 – Agricultural Development and Diversification
- Policy DM12 – Housing Standards
- Policy DM15 – Design and Amenity
- Policy DM16 – Historic Environment
- Policy DM25 – Renewable Energy, Water, Waste and Recycling

## 15. Monitoring

Article 10 of the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) states that Member States shall monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes in order, inter alia, to identify at an early stage unforeseen adverse effects, and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action. In order to comply with this, existing monitoring arrangements may be used if appropriate, with a view to avoiding duplication of monitoring.

The Local Plan will itself be subjected to monitoring through the Borough Council's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) requirements. The broad scope of AMRs is such that they respond well to those likely significant effects on the environment required to be assessed under the SEA Directive (issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the these factors).

The Local Plan will only have effects on the above factors once implemented. Monitoring is not required at this stage of the plan-making process. The significant effects on the environment of the Local Plan will be required to be monitored in line with the SEA Directive once adopted, and in line with the Adoption Statement.

## 16. Consultation

We welcome your comments on the SA Report.

You may comment on any element, but we would be interested to receive your views in respect of the following;

1. Do you think the methodology of the SA is appropriate to assess impacts in the plan area?
2. Do you think the options explored reflect the most reasonable alternatives in the plan area?

Please use the Council's online consultation portal to submit your comments. Alternatively, please email comments to: [local.plan@colchester.gov.uk](mailto:local.plan@colchester.gov.uk) or post comments to:

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