

Transportation Topic Paper

Colchester's Core Strategy



Colchester Borough Council

November 2007

Colchester's Core Strategy, Colchester Borough Council

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1. Introduction

This Topic Paper compiles the transport information, appraisal and outcomes of the plan-making process and Sustainability Appraisal for the Core Strategy. The paper focuses primarily on transport infrastructure delivery, but also touches on the decisions made on the selection of the major growth areas in the spatial strategy.

This paper has been closely developed in partnership with Essex County Council and in consultation with the Highways Agency.

This topic paper covers the following aspects of the Core Strategy:

- context for transport and characteristics
- evidence base
- transport infrastructure package
- infrastructure funding and delivery
- review and monitoring

2. Regional and Local Context

This section briefly sets out the relationship of the local Core Strategy with the Regional and Sub Regional plans.

2.1. Draft East of England Plan

Within the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the East of England Plan, Colchester Borough has been identified for a minimum of 17,100 additional dwellings by 2021, and as a major strategic employment centre 14,200 new jobs. With the issuing of further guidance to demonstrate 15 years of housing supply this increases the 17,100 to 18,760 new dwellings by 2023.

As part of the Haven Gateway Sub region Colchester urban area is identified as a Key Regional Centre for Development and Change, and a Regional Transport Node.

2.2. Regional Transport Strategy¹ Objectives and Outcomes

The proposed Policy T1 of the RTS gives a clear priority to increase travel by sustainable modes while reflecting the functionality of the region's transport networks in support of the spatial strategy. The Core Strategy sets out how these will be applied at the local level. The Transportation and Accessibility Policies fit well with these objectives through the location of development in areas which aim to reduce the need to travel; change travel behaviour through travel planning; promote walking cycling and public transport as sustainable modes of travel; improve the transport network to improve the public realm; recognise the need to manage the demand and

¹ East of England Plan, The Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the Draft Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England and Statement of Reasons

improve the strategic network; and allow more flexible car parking standards to recognise location and accessibility.

2.3. The Haven Gateway

The Regional Spatial Strategy sets out a number of sub regions including the Haven Gateway, which is recognised as a Growth Point by Government. The Gateway is to provide 57,600 additional dwellings and 50,000 new jobs by 2021, with major housing and employment growth planned for Colchester. Policy HG3² recommends that the transport priorities for the sub region should focus on the urban centres of Colchester and Ipswich and on the strategic infrastructure and services to and from the Haven Ports.

The Haven Gateway Partnership has developed the HG3 policy and is charged with producing appropriate guidance and co-ordination to ensure that local development documents meet the objectives of the RSS and that the implementation and delivery bodies have the appropriate strategies and resources to achieve the overall vision for the area. The Haven Gateway Partnership has published its Framework for Growth and sets out the transport issues that need to be tackled, including:

- managing capacity and congestion problems on the strategic road network;
- increasing the proportion of freight carried by rail to and from the ports of Felixstowe, Harwich and Ipswich;
- improving rail passenger services;
- tackling congestion and achieving a modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport, especially in the urban areas of Colchester and Ipswich;
- ensuring the new housing and employment sites are well related to each other, to relevant services and to sustainable transport networks;
- minimising the impact on sub-regional and local road networks of freight movements, especially to and from the ports.

2.4. Essex second Local Transport Plan 2006-11

The Accessibility and Transportation Policies of the core strategy are consistent with the overarching aims of the Essex Local Transport Plan³. The Core Strategy Accessibility and Transportation Policies draws from the LTP, specifically the Colchester and Haven Gateway area strategy section.

2.5. Colchester Vision and Objectives

The Core Strategy sets out the Council's strategic spatial planning objectives. The spatial vision sets out where the Borough Council wants to be in 2021 and articulates ambitious aspirations for Colchester to become a sustainable and prestigious regional centre surrounded by thriving villages and countryside. The objectives provide specific direction for the Spatial Strategy and Core Policies.

² East of England Plan, the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the Draft Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England and Statement of Reasons

³ Essex Local Transport Plan 2006/2011

Accessibility and transport is a key part of the borough becoming a sustainable and prestigious regional centre. The Core Strategy sets out 20 objectives grouped within 8 different themes. The main objectives relating to transport and infrastructure are:

- Focus development at accessible locations which support public transport, walking and cycling, and reduce the need to travel.
- Develop Colchester as a Regional Transport Node, improving transport connections and gateways within the borough and to the wider region.
- Provide excellent public transportation, walking and cycling connections between centres, communities and their needs.
- Improve the strategic road network and manage traffic and parking demand.

Transport is a “derived demand” and has an impact or is impacted on by a number of themes. Accessibility and Transportation (A&T) policies can be linked to many of the other themes and objectives either directly or indirectly. The diagram below illustrates the influence between the A&T policies and other policy areas. It is not intended to give priority and can be flexible depending on the policy, infrastructure, or initiative that is being delivered.



Figure 1 Sphere of Influence of Accessibility and Transportation with Core Strategy Policies

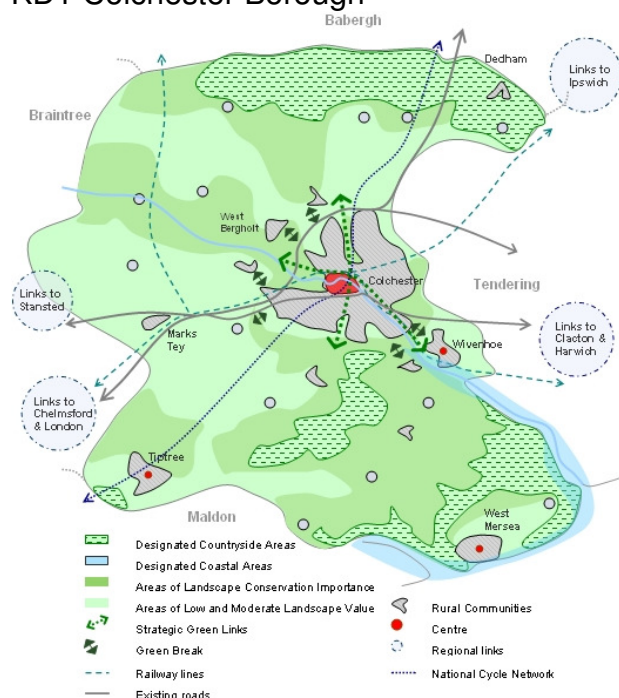
3. Development Location and Growth

Development in Colchester is planned to guide sustainable development that meets the needs of local communities and future generations. Development will be supported with facilities and infrastructure to create a prestigious regional centre and

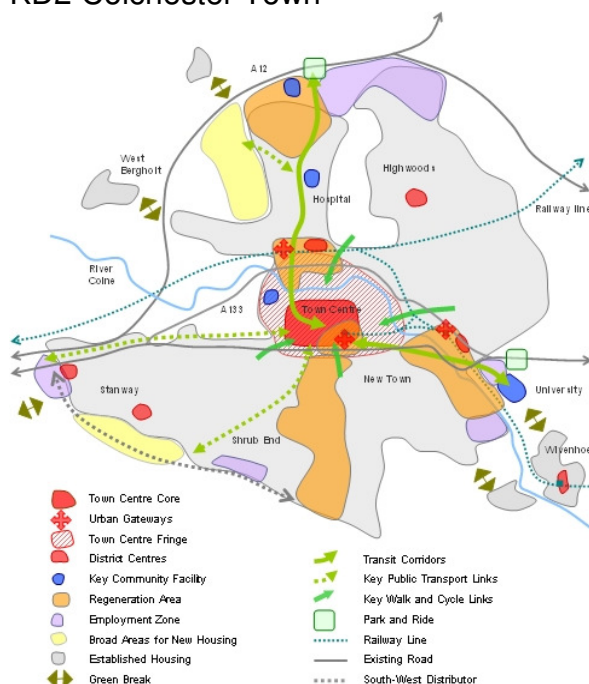
sustainable community and fulfil its role as a Key Centre for Development and Change and as a Regional Transport Node.

The Key Diagrams (see below) contained within the Core Strategy set out the development spatially. A key factor in locating the development is the accessibility to existing services and facilities. This is explored more fully in the Housing Topic paper. The urban areas are in principle the places where the greatest scope exists for efficient public transport and more use of walking and cycling, and the East of England Plan Inspector concluded for a number of reasons that “people will have to use cars less in the future”.

KD1 Colchester Borough



KD2 Colchester Town



The preferred policy (SD1) option for development location seeks to direct development towards accessible and previously developed locations and encourage regeneration using a sequential approach. New employment and economic growth is also focused on accessible locations and previously developed land. The town centre and the Urban Gateways are seen as the most accessible locations and will be the focus for retail, office and mixed use development.

The spatial approach confirmed in the Sustainability Appraisal leads to the majority of the housing development being focused upon Colchester urban area in five major growth areas:

- Town Centre – the cultural and economic heart of the Borough. A highly accessible area with a large range of services and the key employment and retail area

- North Growth area – a rapidly growing area with good access to the station, the hospital and the A12 with new public transport infrastructure and services already secured through the planning process
- South Growth area – accessible to the Town Centre with current approvals for regenerating old Garrison buildings and land
- East Growth area – major regeneration of old industrial port land with good access to the Town Centre, Hythe Station and the University
- Stanway Growth Area – including a small urban extension located adjacent to permitted growth

Common with other successful sub regional urban centres traffic congestion is experienced at certain times of the day on different parts of the network. It is recognised that there are limitations with parts of the network. However the transport policies set out to overcome these through a combination of reducing the need to travel, demand management, promotion of alternatives to the car, making best use of the existing network and limited infrastructure improvements. The Borough Council and its Local Strategic Partnership recognise this change in policy and have active travel planning programmes for both existing and future developments. The Government's "Sustainable Travel Towns" project appears to be having some success in changing habits. Despite sustainable development, travel will continue to happen and a package of measures is set out in section 6 to provide for this in the most sustainable way.

At the sub regional level, the reliable operation of the strategic road and rail network is especially important in the Haven Gateway to connect it and the expanding international ports to their major markets including London.

4. The Existing Transport Characteristics

4.1. Local Travel Patterns

There are 94,800⁴ trips work related trips in the Borough. Of these:

- 53,400 people live and work in the borough
- 21,700 leave the borough
- 19,700 come into the borough

72% of people live and work locally which is a high proportion compared with other Essex towns, with 63% travelling by car. 52%⁵ of trips are less than 5km resulting in many short internal movements. The town centre (Castle Ward) is the most important employment area and also includes two major post-16 educational institutions. Within the urban area there is a mix of single and dual carriageway roads, with a radial focus on the town centre. There are a few radial interceptors and all main junctions are at grade with roundabouts or signals. This complex mix of

⁴ 2001 Census Travel to Work Patterns

⁵ Census 2001 East of England Travel to Work, Distance and Modes of Transport, Cambridgeshire County Council

movement and network leads to congestion being experienced at certain times of the day.

Within the urban area of Colchester there is a good level of bus service with a majority of weekday services being operated commercially. Travel to work by bus is 7% within the Borough. In the urban areas 95% of households are within 400m of at least an hourly bus service between 7am and 9am. On certain routes peak hour frequencies are 10 minutes, with the Councils having worked with the operators to introduce Quality Bus Partnerships. Parts of the network give bus priority either through lanes or through traffic signal technology; however the operation of some bus services is hampered by traffic congestion.

Walking and cycling are particularly strong in the urban wards with 17% using these sustainable modes to travel to work. This rises to around 30% in the town centre where there is a mix of historic residential areas and high employment opportunities. Some of the footways and in certain cases shared footways and cycleways run parallel to the road network. Advance stop lines are provided at some traffic signals for cyclists. Open space and Castle Park in the town centre provides a car free route for walking and cycling. The National Cycle Network runs through the heart of the town connecting north east Essex and mid Essex.

4.2. The Rural Area

Outside of Colchester urban area the district settlements and villages are mainly dependant on the car for access to goods and services. The quantity and intensity of movement is low when compared to the urban area. In the majority of rural wards the travel to work is greatest within the ward itself. The most important external employment destination for the rural wards is Castle Ward in the town centre.

Travel to work by car is on average 67% for the rural wards. "Working at home" is generally the second largest category – in some wards this is over 12%. Depending on the location of the ward, travel by train is the next highest category rather than by bus. Walking and cycling to work are somewhat lower than the urban areas at 8%.

The proportion travelling to work by bus in the rural areas is 4%. Bus services in the rural areas are usually extensions of the urban services. Many rural services are subsidised by Essex County Council.

4.3. Tendring Travel to Work Patterns

Of the 19,700 people who come into the borough to work 8,800 come from Tendring district directly to the east of Colchester Borough. This is over three times greater than from any other single district. A third of the 8,800 are employed in Colchester town centre (Castle Ward) with 87% travelling to work by car. This high level of car use puts severe pressure on the eastern approaches to the Colchester urban area. All other travel modes are 5% or less.

4.4. The Strategic Network

The strategic road and rail network are multi-purpose, serving European, National, Regional and Sub-Regional needs. High volumes of people movement are mixed with freight, generally accessing the Haven Gateway Ports and the main economic centres of Colchester and Ipswich. The strategic trunk road network (A12, A120) experience high traffic flows. Congestion occurs especially in the morning and evening peaks⁶. The rail network to the west of Colchester also operates at capacity,⁷ with heavily used high-frequency commuter services to London.

5. The Evidence Base

The Borough Council with its key partners has developed an evidence base of documents which substantiates the transport infrastructure requirements outlined in the Core Strategy. The evidence base provides information on work that has already been completed, as well as work that is ongoing.

The completed studies⁸ included in the evidence base are set out below:

- Cuckoo Farm Park and Ride feasibility study
- A133 Colchester Central Corridor consultation material
- Essex Traffic Monitoring Report 2005
- Essex second Local Transport Plan 2006-11
- Vehicle Parking Standards (EPOA 2001)

In addition to these completed studies work continues on:

- Transport Model for Colchester
- North-South capacity improvements (A133/A134)
- East Transit Corridor
- Town Centre Car Parking Strategy
- North Station Development Area design brief
- Gateways to the Town
- South-West Distributor
- East Colchester Master plan
- A133 Colchester Central Corridor Improvements
- Historic Town Centre Improvements

⁶ East of England Plan Consultation: Operational Assessment of Strategic Highway Network, HA, Faber Maunsell Aecom, May 2005

⁷ East Anglia Rail Utilisation Strategy – Network Rail

⁸ Cuckoo Farm Park and Ride feasibility study; A133 Colchester Central Corridor consultation material; Essex Traffic Monitoring Report 2005; Essex second Local Transport Plan 2006-11; Vehicle Parking Standards (EPOA 2001)

Transport Assessments from permitted and future developments will also be used to evidence transport infrastructure requirements. Transport Assessments⁹ included in the evidence base are as follows:

- Garrison-new military/urban village development
- Stane Park-employment development
- Northern Approaches Phase Three and associated development

Further to these supporting studies Essex County Council has commissioned a comprehensive programme of modelling to assess the impact of the LDF allocation on the existing network. The initial output from this work is submitted within the evidence base.

Work will continue on refining the modelling in order to further develop the package of transport infrastructure required to support the core strategy.

6. Transport Infrastructure Package

This section sets out the package of transport infrastructure which is required to unlock and support the major development areas identified in the Spatial Strategy. Colchester Borough Council has worked with its key partners to identify the package of transport infrastructure necessary to deliver the Core Strategy. This package is detailed within the table below.

The information contained within the table is based on our current understanding of the likely growth profile and infrastructure requirements, and is therefore indicative and subject to monitoring and refinement throughout the LDF process.

In addition to the package of transport infrastructure identified in table 1, further local transport improvements are required to support sustainable development, including:

- Travel planning
- Walking and cycling
- Public transport
- Green links
- Public realm initiatives

⁹Garrison-new military/urban village development; Stane Park-employment development; Northern Approaches Phase Three and associated development

Table 1 - Infrastructure Trajectory

Period	Residential Development Delivery*	Infrastructure to Unlock and Support Development	Infrastructure cost	Funding Streams	Funding Stream Status
	(Dwellings)		(estimated cost at current prices)		
Up to 2011	9000	Colchester to Clacton branch line re-signalling	£100m	Network Rail	Secured
		North Park & Ride	£6m	LTP + Growth Point Funding + RFA	Secured / Subject to Bid / Regional Prioritisation (Category 1b)
		North Transit Corridor	£4m	Developer Funding	Secured
		Hythe Rail Station Improvements	£1.6m	Growth Point Funding, Developer Funding, Network Rail, ECC, CBC	Subject to bid / Secured
		Colne River Pedestrian / Cycle bridge	£0.3m	Developer Funding	Secured
		A133 Central Corridor Upgrade (Stage 1)	Up to £8m	LTP + Growth Point Funding + Developer Funding	Secured / Subject to Bid
		Northern Approaches (phase 3) & A12 Junction (junction 28)	£20m	Developer Funding	Secured
Up to 2016	4200	Historic Town Centre Improvements	£2m	Developer Funding + LTP	Secured
		East Transit Corridor	£4m	Developer Funding + ECC + CBC	To be secured
		New Bus Station	£5m	Developer Funding	To be secured

Period	Residential Development Delivery*	Infrastructure to Unlock and Support Development	Infrastructure cost	Funding Streams	Funding Stream Status
Up to 2016 cont/d		Southway Pedestrian / Cycle Bridge	£1m	Developer Funding	To be secured
		Colchester Town Rail Station Improvements	£0.5m	Developer Funding	Secured
		Colchester North Rail Station Improvements	Up to £5m	Developer Funding + Network Rail + CBC	To be secured
Up to 2021	4200	East Park & Ride	£6m	DfT / RFA, CBC + ECC	To be secured - Regional Prioritisation (Category 1b)
		North-South Capacity Improvements (A133/A134)	£19m	Developer Funding	To be secured
		South-West Distributor	up to £20m	Developer Funding	To be secured
		A133 Central Corridor Upgrade (Stage 2)	up to £60m	DfT / RFA	To be secured - Regional Prioritisation (Category 1b)
		A12 Junction Improvements	up to £15m	Developer Funding	To be secured
*Dwelling Delivery figures based on Core Strategy tables H1a and H1b					

Strategic Trunk Road Improvements

The London to Ipswich multi modal study recommended proposals which were to be developed to improve the strategic trunk road network. At this current time these improvements have been included in the East of England Regional Funding Allocation programme. These improvements include:

A120 Improvements Braintree to A12 (RFA category 1a scheme)

A12 Capacity and Widening between the M25 and Colchester (RFA category 1b schemes).

7. Funding and Delivery

Partnership working is essential to deliver Accessibility and Transportation Policies. The core strategy sets out in Policy SD2 the delivery approach for facilities and infrastructure. The Borough and County Councils have been very successful in securing developer funding and infrastructure through the existing section106 process. A number of section106 agreements¹⁰ are included as evidence. The policy recognises that new development will need to appraise and provide transport infrastructure, including contributions to strategic transport infrastructure that support sustainable development and the wider community. The Borough Council will continue to use planning obligations but will increasingly move toward the use of standard charges, to ensure that new development makes a contribution to the provision of facilities and infrastructure. The Borough Council has been working closely with Essex County Council, the Highways Agency, Network Rail, and the bus and rail operators in developing the Core Strategy.

Potential funding streams have been identified for the package of transport infrastructure detailed in section 6. Many of schemes listed require a mix of public and private funding. Where appropriate, funding will come through developer agreements, the Local Transport Plan and Major Scheme Business Case submissions to the Government. The Borough Council will, in certain circumstances, use its resources to support the implementation of infrastructure. As part of the Haven Gateway Growth Point Area, funding is being sought through the Growth Point funding initiative for transport infrastructure to enable growth to take place.

8. Review and Monitoring

Continual review is fundamental element of the new planning system. It is important to check that the core strategy is being implemented correctly and that the outcomes match objectives, and to be able to modify the strategy if needed. The new planning system provides for separation of components of the LDF to allow each part to be reviewed and amended individually, which enables a more rapid and responsive system. The Borough Council will undertake annual monitoring of the implementation of the Core Strategy, and of other parts of the LDF as they are developed, and will amend documents as required. The transportation work will be reviewed in light of any modifications to the strategy.

¹⁰ Section 106 Agreements :

Land known as ARC Pit, Stanway, Colchester

Land lying to the North of Colchester Lane, Stanway, Colchester;

Phase IIA Agreement re: Land North of Colchester Essex;

Proposed Tesco Superstore at Greenstead Roundabout, Colchester;

Relating to Land at Colchester Garrison Essex;

Land at Stanway, Colchester;

Land North East of Colchester known as former Severalls Hospital & Cuckoo Farm