



## Local Plan Committee

Item

7

10 June 2021

Report of	Assistant Director of Place and Client Services	Author	Laura Chase ☎ 282473
Title	Local Plan Update		
Wards affected	All		

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report is for Members' information and provides an update on the Local Plan.
- 1.2 The Council adopted Section 1 of the Local Plan, prepared jointly with Braintree and Tendring Councils, at a full Council meeting on 1 February 2021. The Planning Inspectorate (PINS) appointed two Inspectors, Jameson Bridgwater and Anne Jameson, to deal sequentially with the Section 2 Local Plans of each authority. The Inspectors have adopted a consistent approach to process and issues raised for each authority. Tendring's examination ran from 23 February and 2 March 2021, with Anne Jordan as the lead Inspector. Colchester's ran for two weeks beginning 21 April, and Braintree's is programmed for the two weeks beginning 6 July 2021, with Jameson Bridgwater the lead Inspector on both. Colchester's examination was held virtually over Zoom with livestreaming over YouTube.
- 1.3 The Council is now awaiting a report from the Inspector following the conclusion of the hearing sessions, as the Council has formally requested that he recommend any main modifications which are necessary to make the plan sound, if it is feasible that such modifications could make it sound. Any main modifications the Inspector considers are likely to be necessary for the plan to be sound will be the subject of formal consultation along with any updates to the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment as required. Modifications to the plan would be subject to a six-week consultation. This would then be followed by a final Report from the Inspector and subsequent adoption of the whole plan later in 2021.

### 2. Recommended Decision

2.1 No decision is required since the report is for information only.

### **3. Reason for Recommended Decision**

3.1 The Report provides an update on the ongoing project and no decision is required.

### **4. Alternative Options**

4.1 The option of not updating Members was rejected given the importance of Members needing to understand the latest position on Local Plan issues.

### **5. Background Information**

5.1 Section 1 of the Colchester Local Plan sets out the overarching strategy for future growth across Braintree, Colchester and Tendring, as well as including policies setting the overall housing and employment requirements for North Essex up to 2033. Section 2 of each of the three Local Plans contain more specific local policies and allocations relevant to each individual area. The adoption of the Section 1 Local Plan on 1 February 2021 this provides the basis for proceeding to examination of the Colchester-specific policies and allocations in Section 2 of the Local Plan.

5.2 Jameson Bridgwater, one of two Inspectors appointed by The Planning Inspectorate (PINS) , to lead the examinations of the three NEA Section 2 plans, held Examination hearing sessions into the Colchester Section 2 Local Plan –for two weeks beginning 20 April,. Colchester’s examination was held virtually over Zoom with livestreaming over YouTube.

5.3 The Examination allows the Inspector to evaluate if the plan is sound using the following criteria found in paragraph 182 of the 2012 National Planning Policy Framework:

- Positively Prepared – the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- Justified – the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;
- Effective – the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and
- Consistent with national policy – the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework.

- 5.4 Consideration of these issues at the examination was guided by the Inspector's Matters, Issues and Questions and the responses made to those by the Council and third party respondents. This information is available on the Council's website. [Section 2 matters, issues and questions - Colchester Borough Council](#). In examining Plans, Inspectors give the same weight to written representations as to those made orally at hearings sessions.
- 5.5 The Council has formally requested that the Inspector recommend any main modifications which are necessary to make the plan sound, if it is feasible that such modifications could make it sound. Any main modifications the Inspector considers are likely to be necessary for the plan to be sound will be the subject of formal consultation. These Modifications will also be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal which will also be published for consultation. Modifications to the plan would be subject to a six-week consultation. This would then be followed by a final letter from the Inspector and subsequent adoption of the whole plan later in 2021.
- 5.6 Two separate reports on this agenda cover the further Local Plan work now in process following the conclusion of the Section 2 examination. The report on the Local Development Scheme (LDS) updates the current position in respect of the Local Plan and notes work on the Development Plan Document needed to guide development in the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community, with a further report providing detail on that. The LDS report also details further work underway on Supplementary Planning Policy Documents on Climate Change, Planning Obligations, Affordable Housing and Custom/Self-build Housing. The report on the Garden Community provides a general update on progress.

## **6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications**

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared for the Local Plan, and is available to view by clicking on this link:
- <https://cbccrmdata.blob.core.windows.net/noteattachment/Equality%20Impact%20Assessment%20June%202017.pdf>

## **7. Strategic Plan References**

- 7.1 The Strategic Plan is relevant in particular contributing to priorities under the themes:
- Delivering homes for people who need them; and
  - Growing a fair economy so everyone benefits.

## **8. Consultation**

- 8.1 Consultation on the Local Plan is governed by a comprehensive consultation programme as set out in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and reflecting national regulations.

## **9. Publicity Considerations**

- 9.1 The Council ensures a coordinated and proactive approach to press releases on Local Plan issues given their high level of importance for guiding the future of the Borough and consequential high level of press attention.

## **10. Financial implications**

- 10.1 Staffing, consultation/engagement and evidence base consultant resources for Local Plan work are provided in the Council's budget. Costs for the preparation of the Tendring Colchester Borders Development Plan Document are being shared with Tendring District Council.

## **11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications**

- 11.1 Local Plan policies provide a basis for future development that is intended to support the health, wellbeing and community safety of Borough residents.

## **12. Health and Safety Implications**

- 12.1 No direct implications.

## **13. Risk Management Implications**

- 13.1 Development of policies to guide future development in the Borough is intended to reduce the risk of inappropriate development. It will provide consistent advice to landowners, developers, officers, Councillors and members of the public.

## **14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications**

- 14.1 The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and has committed to being carbon neutral by 2030. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. These are economic, social and environmental objectives.
- 14.2 The Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan recognises that the Local Plan provides opportunities to deliver on these objectives wherever possible through providing the most appropriate policy framework for sustainable development.