

# Local Plan Committee Meeting

**Grand Jury Room, Town Hall, High Street,  
Colchester, CO1 1PJ  
Monday, 15 August 2016 at 18:00**

The Local Plan Committee deals with the Council's responsibilities relating to the Local Plan

## Information for Members of the Public

### Access to information and meetings

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**COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**Local Plan Committee**  
**Monday, 15 August 2016 at 18:00**

**Member:**

Councillor Martin Goss  
Councillor Nick Barlow  
Councillor Nigel Chapman  
Councillor Nick Cope  
Councillor Andrew Ellis  
Councillor Adam Fox  
Councillor John Jowers  
Councillor Sue Lissimore  
Councillor Gerard Oxford  
Councillor Martyn Warnes

Chairman  
Deputy Chairman

**Substitutes:**

All members of the Council who are not Cabinet members or members of this Panel.

**AGENDA - Part A**  
(open to the public including the press)

**Members of the public may wish to note that Agenda items 1 to 5 are normally brief.**

**1 Welcome and Announcements**

- a) The Chairman to welcome members of the public and Councillors and to remind all speakers of the requirement for microphones to be used at all times.
- (b) At the Chairman's discretion, to announce information on:
  - action in the event of an emergency;
  - mobile phones switched to silent;
  - the audio-recording of meetings;
  - location of toilets;
  - introduction of members of the meeting.

**2 Substitutions**

Members may arrange for a substitute councillor to attend a meeting on their behalf, subject to prior notice being given. The attendance of substitute councillors must be recorded.

**3 Urgent Items**

To announce any items not on the agenda which the Chairman has agreed to consider because they are urgent, to give reasons for the urgency and to indicate where in the order of business the item will

be considered.

#### **4 Declarations of Interest**

The Chairman to invite Councillors to declare individually any interests they may have in the items on the agenda. Councillors should consult Meetings General Procedure Rule 7 for full guidance on the registration and declaration of interests. However Councillors may wish to note the following:-

- Where a Councillor has a disclosable pecuniary interest, other pecuniary interest or a non-pecuniary interest in any business of the authority and he/she is present at a meeting of the authority at which the business is considered, the Councillor must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest, whether or not such interest is registered on his/her register of Interests or if he/she has made a pending notification.
- If a Councillor has a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at a meeting, he/she must not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter at the meeting. The Councillor must withdraw from the room where the meeting is being held unless he/she has received a dispensation from the Monitoring Officer.
- Where a Councillor has another pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at a meeting and where the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgement of the public interest, the Councillor must disclose the existence and nature of the interest and withdraw from the room where the meeting is being held unless he/she has received a dispensation from the Monitoring Officer.
- Failure to comply with the arrangements regarding disclosable pecuniary interests without reasonable excuse is a criminal offence, with a penalty of up to £5,000 and disqualification from office for up to 5 years.

#### **5 Have Your Say!**

a) The Chairman to invite members of the public to indicate if they wish to speak or present a petition at this meeting – either on an item on the agenda or on a general matter relating to the terms of reference of the Committee/Panel not on this agenda. You should indicate your wish to speak at this point if your name has not been noted by Council staff.

(b) The Chairman to invite contributions from members of the public who wish to Have Your Say! on a general matter relating to the terms of reference of the Committee/Panel not on this agenda.

- |    |  |              |
|----|--|--------------|
| 6  | <b>Minutes</b><br>To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2016  |              |
| 7  | <b>Local Development Scheme</b><br>See report by Head of Commercial Services   | 6 - 33       |
| 8  | <b>Brownfield Land Register Publication</b><br>See report by the Head of Commercial Services   | 34 - 40      |
| 9  | <b>Essex Rural Strategy</b><br>See report by Head of Commercial Services   | 41 - 82      |
| 10 | <b>Colchester Northern Gateway Masterplan Review</b><br>See report by Head of Commercial Services  | 83 - 147     |
| 11 | <b>Community Infrastructure Levy - Consultation on Viability</b><br>See report by Head of Commercial Services  | 148 -<br>195 |
| 12 | <b>Exclusion of the Public (not Scrutiny or Executive)</b><br>In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public, including the press, from the meeting so that any items containing exempt information (for example confidential personal, financial or legal advice), in Part B of this agenda (printed on yellow paper) can be decided. (Exempt information is defined in Section 100I and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972). |              |

## **Part B**

(not open to the public including the press)

## Local Plan Committee

15<sup>th</sup> August 2016

Item  
**7**

Report of	Head of Commercial Services	Author	Karen Syrett 01206 506477
Title	Local development Scheme		
Wards affected	All		

### The Local Plan Committee is asked to agree changes to the Local Development Scheme

#### 1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 To agree changes to the Local Development Scheme (LDS).

#### 2. Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 The plan making process is regulated by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended by the Localism Act 2011 (part 6, Planning, section 111 Local Development Schemes) which governs the production of development plan documents including the LDS through the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 2.2 The LDS is an essential tool used to keep the Local Plan up to date and provide details of consultation periods, public examinations and expected dates of adoption and publication for each document. The Council previously reviewed the LDS in December 2015 for work up to 2019. The scheme now needs to be updated to extend its time period to reflect the latest work on the Local Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy as well as a number of Neighbourhood Plans.

#### 3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 The Committee could decide not to update the Local development Scheme or to make amendments to it. The Council is required under the Localism Act 2011 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 to publish up to date information on the preparation and revision of development plan documents direct to the public through the LDS.

#### 4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 A local development scheme is required under section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Planning Act 2008, the Localism Act 2011 and the Housing and Planning Act 2016). This must specify (among other matters) the local

development documents which are to be development plan documents, the subject matter and geographical area to which each development plan document is to relate, and the timetable for the preparation and revision of the development plan documents. It must be made available publicly and kept up-to-date. It is important that local communities and interested parties can keep track of progress. Local planning authorities should publish their local development scheme on their website.

- 4.2 Colchester Borough Council first adopted a LDS in May 2005, with various revisions published at regular intervals to reflect changes in governing regulations and work programmes. The current LDS project chart which covers the period 2016-2019 was last reviewed by Local Plan Committee in December 2015. A new LDS is now required to extend the timetable beyond 2019 and to reflect the latest developments in Colchester's plan-making.
- 4.3 The LDS sets out which documents will form part of the Colchester Local Plan along with the timetable for the preparation and review of each document. The LDS is also reviewed annually as part of the Council's Authority Monitoring Report.
- 4.4 The current revisions to the LDS are required to show the dates for developing a new Local Plan, which unusually comprises a joint Part 1; as well as other joint development plan documents. Another significant revision is on the Community Infrastructure Levy. Work on this project was delayed due to concerns surrounding viability of developments and the resulting impact on housing delivery. The Government then commenced a review of the Community Infrastructure Levy and the outcomes are still awaited.
- 4.5 The LDS sets out which documents will be prepared and in what time frame. The revised LDS (which can be found in Appendix A) provides the scope and further details with regards to each document and includes the Project Chart which outlines the timescales proposed and shows how each document will be progressed over the next 3 years. Below is a summary of the proposed changes which are further explained within the LDS itself:
  - Local Plan Review including
    - Preferred Options consultation July - September 2016
    - Submission Draft consultation February/March 2017
    - Examination of Part 1 September 2017
    - Interim Report
    - Examination Part 2 -
    - Final report
    - Adoption October 2017
  - Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule, to be prepared in tandem with the Local Plan
  - Joint Development Plan Documents for Garden Communities

- Neighbourhood Planning,
  - Boxted – Referendum September 2016
  - Myland – Referendum September 2016
  - West Bergholt – Plan Area adopted in July 2013
  - Wivenhoe – Plan Area adopted in July 2013,
  - Stanway – Plan Area adopted in June 2014
  - Tiptree – Plan Area adopted in February 2015
  - Eight Ash Green – Plan Area adopted in June 2015
  - Copford – Plan Area adopted in August 2015
  - Marks Tey – Plan Area adopted in September 2015
- Revised timetable for the preparation of the Planning Obligations SPD to be prepared in tandem with the Local Plan and CIL
- Evidence base documents and updates which will be necessary to support the Local Plan Review,
- Changes to the text of the LDS to reflect the range of documents outlined above.

4.6 In earlier versions of the LDS, the Council was required to specify details of each Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) intended to be produced. Changes to the Regulations no longer require Supplementary Planning Documents to be included on the LDS. Currently, the only SPD programmed for the next three year period is one on Planning Obligations. This has been shown to demonstrate the links between all the documents which contribute to the Colchester Local Plan. Future additional SPDs as well as further guidance notes and development brief documents may however be produced by the Spatial Policy Team without formal modification of the LDS because of their non-statutory status in the decision making process.

## **5. Proposals**

5.1 The Local Plan Committee is asked to agree changes to the Local Development Scheme.

## **6. Strategic Plan References**

6.1 Effective strategic planning supports the Strategic Plan Action Plan which includes a commitment to make Colchester a vibrant, prosperous, thriving and welcoming place.

## **7. Consultation and Publicity**

7.1 Public consultation on the LDS is not specifically required by the Regulations. Each document highlighted in the LDS will be subject to specific public consultation in line with the statutory regulations at the appropriate time. Attention could well be focused on plans listed in the LDS resulting in publicity for the Council but the Preferred Options are currently subject to consultation and the LDS reflects these.



## **8. Financial Implications**

8.1 None.

## **9. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications**

9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared for the Local Plan and is available to view by clicking on this link:-

<http://www.colchester.gov.uk/article/4962/Strategic-Policy-and-Regeneration>

or go to the Colchester Borough Council website

[www.colchester.gov.uk](http://www.colchester.gov.uk) and follow the pathway from the homepage: Council and Democracy > Policies, Strategies and Performance > Equality and Diversity > Equality Impact Assessments > Strategic Policy and Regeneration and select Local Development Framework from the Strategic Planning and Research section.

9.2 There are no particular Human Rights implications.

## **10. Community Safety Implications**

10.1 None

## **11. Health and Safety Implications**

11.1 None

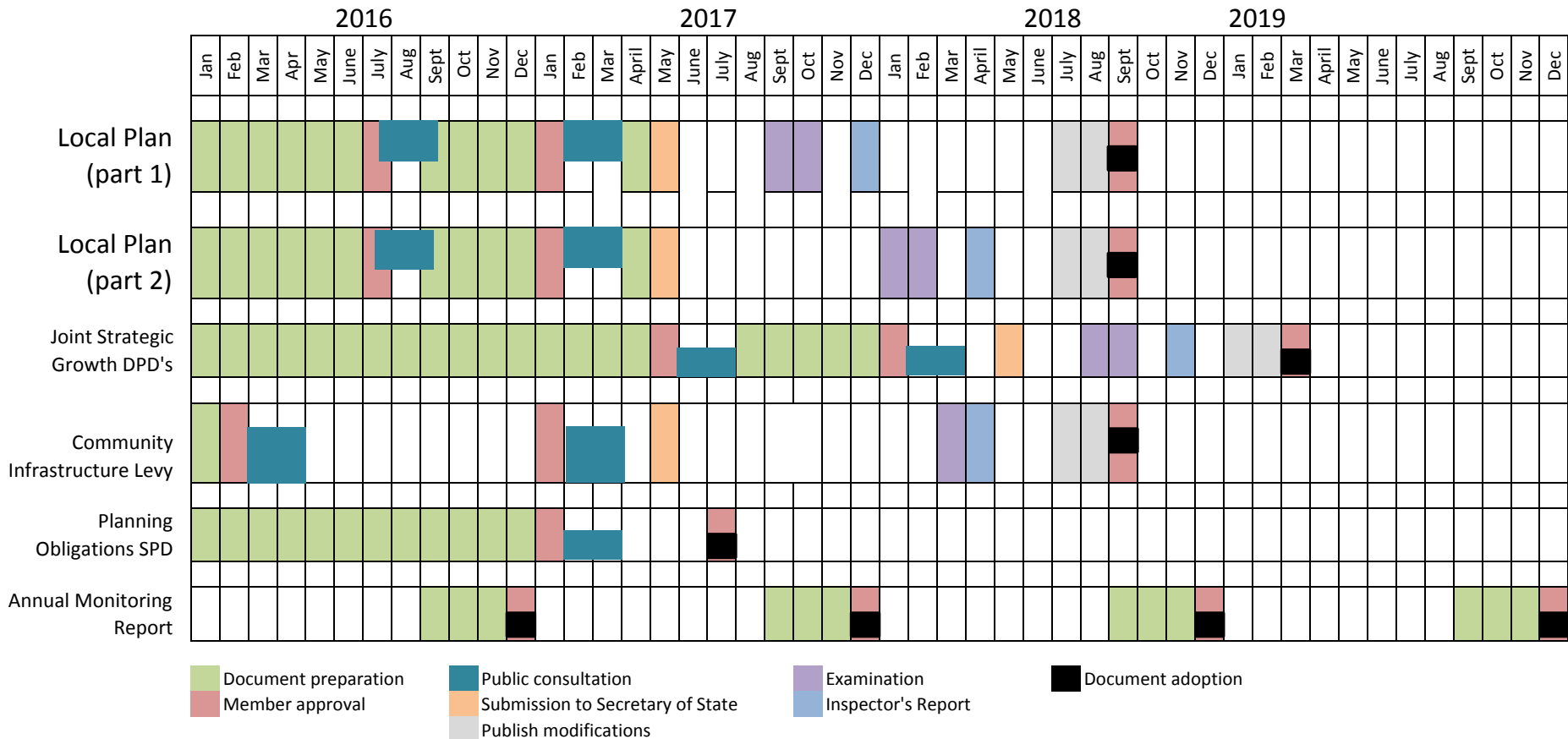
## **12. Risk Management Implications**

12.1 None.

## **13. Disclaimer**

13.1 The information in this report was, as far as is known, correct at the date of publication. Colchester Borough Council cannot accept responsibility for any error or omission.

# Local Development Scheme 2016 - 2019





# **Colchester's Local Development Scheme 2016 – 2019**

**August 2016**

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# 1. Introduction

The Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the council's timetable for adopting new plans to guide development in the Borough. This LDS covers the period 2016 to 2019.

Colchester Borough Council first adopted a Local Development Scheme (LDS) in May 2005 with various revisions published since then. The latest revision was in September 2013 which this current version (December 2015) now supersedes. Earlier versions of the Colchester LDS were prepared under the requirements of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008.

Since 2011, the production of an LDS has been guided by the requirements of the Localism Act 2011, section 111 which amended section 15 of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and is supported by the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

## Documents to be produced

The Local Development Scheme will;

- Provide a brief description of all the Local Plan documents, and Neighbourhood Plans to be prepared and the content and geographical area to which they relate.
- Explain how the different documents relate to each other, and especially how they relate to the adopted and forthcoming Local Plan.
- Set out the timetable for producing Local Plan documents – giving the timings for the achievement of the following milestones:
  - consulting statutory bodies on the scope of the Sustainability Appraisal
  - publication of the document
  - submission of the document
  - adoption of the document
- Provide information on related planning documents outside the formal Local Plan, including the Statement of Community Involvement, Authority Monitoring Report and adopted guidance.

## Review of the LDS

Progress of the scheme is reviewed at least annually as part of the Colchester Borough Council Authority Monitoring Report (usually published each December).

## 2. Planning context

The Council has a good record in meeting the milestones set out in the earlier versions of the LDS and our past delivery rates inform the future programme for the preparation of Local Plan documents up the end of 2019.

Earlier plans were completed further to the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Framework Act 2004 and were known as Local Development Framework documents. Under this Act, Colchester adopted a full suite of Local Development Framework documents, including a Core Strategy (2008), Development Policies (2010) and Site Allocations (2010).

Following a change of government in 2010, a new set of Town and County Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations came into force in April 2012 (and amended in November 2012) and these revert to the former terminology of a 'Local Plan'. The purpose of the documents, however, remains the same whether they are called Local Development Frameworks or Local Plans.

Local Plans need to be in conformity with national policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012), with further guidance in the regularly updated Planning Practice Guidance available online. <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/>

The Council completed a Focussed Review of its Local Plan documents in July 2014 to bring selected policies into conformity with the NPPF.

For minerals and waste matters, Essex County Council are the authority responsible for production of the Waste and Minerals Local Plans, which form part of the Development Plan. At present the adopted plan for Essex is;

- The Essex Minerals Local Plan (2014)
- Waste Local Plan (2001) (pre-submission consultation for Revised Waste Plan programmed 2016)

More details on the waste and minerals development document can be found on the Essex County Council website [www.essex.gov.uk](http://www.essex.gov.uk) following the links from planning to minerals and waste policy.

### **3. Documents to be prepared during 2016 to 2019- overview**

**(see separate table – to be inserted)**

## **Phasing of work for Local Plan documents**

The Project Chart at the front of this document shows the main milestones as set out in the Regulations for the production of each of the documents we intend to prepare in the next three years. The tables later in the document set out each stage of plan preparation and the amount of time the Council expects each stage to be completed. The LDS is kept under review to reflect any changes in local circumstance and/or Government policy.

The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 came into force on 6 April 2012 and provide the guidance for the production of Local Plans and associated documents in England.

### **New Local Plan**

The Council is undertaking a thorough review of its adopted policies and allocations which will result in a new Local Plan to guide development until 2033 and beyond. An Issues and Options consultation was carried out in January/February 2015, with Preferred Options consultation in summer 2016 and submission in 2017.

### **Community Infrastructure Levy**

Colchester Borough Council expects to progress adoption of a Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule in tandem with the Local Plan. Adoption of a Charging Schedule will allow the Council to charge a standard levy to some developments to fund additional infrastructure.

### **Neighbourhood Planning**

The Localism Act 2011 and the publication of the NPPF in March 2012 placed greater emphasis on developing plans at the local level through Neighbourhood Planning. Neighbourhood Plans are to be produced by local communities and once complete (subject to examination and local referendum) they can become part of the local authorities' development plan and have a significant influence on the future growth and development of particular areas.

The first stage of developing a Neighbourhood Plan is to designate a neighbourhood area. A number of parishes in Colchester have now achieved this stage, as shown below. Once a neighbourhood area has been agreed, preparation of a neighbourhood plan can be carried out by a parish or town council, or in the case of unparished areas, a neighbourhood forum. Further Neighbourhood Plans will be added as required when they are brought forward by local communities when the LDS is revised in future.

<b>Area</b>	<b>Date Area agreed</b>	<b>Current Stage</b>
Boxted	October 2012	Referendum scheduled 15.9.16
Myland and Braiswick	January 2013	Referendum scheduled



		15.9.16
West Bergholt	July 2013	Preparation of draft plan
Wivenhoe	July 2013	Pre-submission plan published
Tiptree	February 2015	Preparation of draft plan
Stanway	June 2014	Preparation of draft plan
Eight Ash Green	June 2015	Preparation of draft plan
Copford	August 2015	Preparation of draft plan
Marks Tey	September 2015	Preparation of draft plan

### **Supplementary Planning Documents**

Supplementary Planning Documents supplement policy contained in the Local Plan. They cannot set new policy but are treated as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications across the Borough. Although SPD's are not subject to examination, they are produced in consultation with the community and other interested parties and are still subject to regulations regarding their consultations. In earlier versions of the LDS, the Council was required to specify details of each Supplementary Planning Document intended to be produced. Changes to the Regulations no longer require Supplementary Planning Documents to be included on the LDS. Currently, the only SPD programmed for the next three year period is one on Planning Obligations. Future additional SPDs may however be produced by the Spatial Policy Team, if approved by Local Plan Committee, without formal modification of the LDS because they do not form part of the development plan. Appendix 1 lists the existing SPD documents and the proposed Planning Obligations SPD.

### **Other Local Development Documents**

#### **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)**

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) provides a first step in plan making as it outlines the processes for consultation and engagement during the production of future documents of all types. The SCI was originally submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in October 2005 and adopted by the Council in June 2006. It was subject to minor amendments in 2008 following changes to the regulations and was also revised further early in 2011. In January 2013 a further revised SCI was published for consultation which focused primarily on consultation procedures for planning applications. The latest SCI revision was adopted in March 2013 following consideration of the consultation responses.

The production of an SCI is in part governed and directed by guidance and requirements at the national level. Should the regulations change or new examples of best practice be introduced the Council will update the SCI accordingly. At this time, the Council is not aware of any need to update the SCI during the next three year period.

### **Authority Monitoring Report**

The Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) is published each December to show progress with Local Plan targets.

### **Adopted Guidance Notes**

Guidance notes and other documents are produced as required by the Council to assist in explaining protocols, and other technical matters. They are non-statutory documents that are essentially informative and may be used to assist the determination of planning applications or in other areas where planning decisions are required. These include guidance on topics such as air quality, contaminated land and archaeology. They may also contain site specific guidance. The current Guidance Notes are listed in Appendix 1 and information on additional guidance will be added as it is completed to the Council's Adopted Guidance webpage.

This chart illustrates the amount of time assumed to be required for each phase of plan making. (Please note the timings below are indicative only and reference should be made to the LDS Project Chart and profiles for specific details and timescales)

## 4. Local Plan Documents to be prepared during 2016 to 2019- detailed profiles

Details of the documents we intend to produce in the next three years follow in the tables below. The timetable for the production of documents reflects previous experience. The Planning Inspectorate (PINS) are also consulted about the production timetable specifically with regards to documents which require submission of the document to the Secretary of State and a formal examination in public.

### Local Plan

<b>Subject and Scope</b>	This document will develop the overall strategic objectives and areas for growth in the Borough. The Local Plan will combine the policies and allocations currently found within the Core Strategy, Development Policies and Site Allocations documents. The Local plan is split into Part 1 (joint strategic plan with Braintree DC and Tendring DC) and Part 2 (specific to Colchester)
<b>Geographical area</b>	All Colchester Borough and cross border work with Tendring and Braintree
<b>Status</b>	Local Plan document
<b>Chain of conformity</b>	Must be in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework.
<b>Timetable for production</b>	
<b>Document preparation-overall timeframe including work to date</b>	January 2014 – October 2017
<b>Member approval – Preferred Options</b>	July 2016
<b>Consultation on Preferred Options and Sustainability Appraisal</b>	July - September 2016
<b>Member approval – Submission Draft</b>	January 2017
<b>Publication Draft of Local Plan document and Sustainability Appraisal for consultation</b>	February/March 2017
<b>Submission of DPD and summary of comments received to Secretary of State</b>	May 2017
<b>Independent examination of Part 1</b>	September 2017
<b>Publication of Interim Report</b>	December 2017

<b>Independent examination of Part 2</b>	January/February 2018
<b>Inspector's report</b>	April 2018
<b>Consultation on modifications</b>	July/August 2018
<b>Adoption</b>	September 2018
<b>Production arrangements</b>	Led by Spatial Policy group; input from all internal CBC service groups and Essex County Council as appropriate. The SCI outlines how external parties and members of the public will be involved.
<b>Timetable for review</b>	The Local Plan Full review will set the overall spatial strategy for the Borough and will be reviewed within 5 – 10 years of adoption.

## Strategic Growth Development Plan Document(s)

<b>Subject and Scope</b>	This document(s) will include policies and allocations to support strategic allocations for new development. These are likely to be Joint Plans produced with Tendring DC and/or Braintree DC
<b>Geographical area</b>	As specified in the Local Plan. Preferred Options show broad locations to the east and west of Colchester
<b>Status</b>	Local Development Plan Document
<b>Chain of conformity</b>	Must conform with the broad allocations in the Colchester Local Plan and the relevant Local Plan of adjacent local authorities if appropriate. The plan will update the allocations for the relevant area of the Borough. .
<b>Timetable for production</b>	
<b>Document preparation</b>	January 2016 – April 2017. Some community engagement in this period.
<b>Member Approval – Preferred options</b>	May 2017
<b>Publication and 6 week consultation</b>	June/July 2017
<b>Member Approval – Submission document</b>	January 2018
<b>Pre-Submission consultation</b>	February/March 2018
<b>Submission of DPD and summary of comments received to Secretary of State</b>	May 2018
<b>Independent examination</b>	August/September 2018
<b>Inspector's report</b>	November 2018
<b>Consultation on modifications</b>	January/February 2019
<b>Adoption</b>	March 2019
<b>Production arrangements</b>	Spatial Policy group in CBC will lead with input from internal CBC service groups, adjacent local authorities and Essex County Council as appropriate. The SCI has determined how external parties and members of the public will be involved.
<b>Timetable for review</b>	The Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) will assess the effectiveness of the policies and allocations.

## Community Infrastructure Levy

<b>Subject and Scope</b>	Community Infrastructure Levy
<b>Geographical area</b>	Colchester Borough
<b>Status</b>	CIL charging schedule, governance arrangements, implementation plan, installment policy and other associated documents
<b>Chain of conformity</b>	Must conform with Local Plan as well as the NPPF.
<b>Timetable for production</b>	
<b>Previous consultation on draft documents</b>	July – September 2011 and November – December 2011
<b>Member Approval of draft Schedule</b>	February 2016
<b>Publication and 6 week consultation</b>	March/April 2016
<b>Submission of Charging Schedule and summary of comments received to Secretary of State</b>	May 2017 to align with Local Plan submission timeframe
<b>Independent examination</b>	March 2018
<b>Inspector's report</b>	April 2018
<b>Consult on Modifications</b>	July/August 2018
<b>Adoption</b>	September 2018
<b>Production arrangements</b>	Spatial Policy group. Input from internal CBC service groups and Essex County Council as required.
<b>Timetable for review</b>	It is anticipated that the regulation 123 list (infrastructure items) will be reviewed and updated as required on an annual basis. The charging schedule and other CIL documents will be reviewed as required. The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) will assess the effectiveness of CIL charges.

## Authority Monitoring Report

<b>Subject and Scope</b>	This document provides an analysis of how the Colchester planning policies are performing against a range of established indicators.
<b>Geographical area</b>	Colchester Borough
<b>Status</b>	Annual production, non-statutory but meets need to show evaluation of policies.
<b>Chain of conformity</b>	None
<b>Timetable for production – same process followed each year</b>	
<b>Project work</b>	September – November
<b>Member Approval</b>	December
<b>Publication</b>	December
<b>Production arrangements</b>	Spatial Policy group. Input from internal CBC service groups and Essex County Council as required.
<b>Timetable for review</b>	The AMR is produced in the autumn of each year and is presented to the last Local Plan Committee meeting in the calendar year.

## Supplementary Planning Documents to be adopted

<b>Planning Obligations SPD</b>	
<b>Title</b>	Planning Obligations SPD
<b>Role and content</b>	To provide further details on the collection of the planning obligations received by the Council as a result of planned developments across the Borough.
<b>Status</b>	SPD
<b>Chain of conformity</b>	The SPD will support the policies within the Local Plan and the Community Infrastructure Levy
<b>Geographic coverage</b>	Whole Borough
<b>Timetable and milestones in months:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member approval for consultation – Feb. 2016</li> <li>• Public consultation – February/March 2017</li> <li>• Adoption – July 2017</li> </ul>
<b>Arrangements for production</b>	Colchester Borough Council (CBC) to lead with significant input from Essex County Council. Public consultation to include a press release, advertisement and letters/emails.
<b>Post production - Monitoring and review mechanisms</b>	CBC to monitor after adoption through a review of planning applications.



## 5. Evidence Base

The 'evidence base' is a key feature of the Colchester Local Plan. It seeks to ensure that the development plan's proposals and policies are soundly based. To ensure this a number of specialist studies and other research projects are, or will be undertaken. These will also be important in monitoring and review, as required by the AMR.

Some documents will also be published that are not specifically for planning purposes but are important in informing the process (eg. the Colchester Borough Council's Strategic Plan and other service strategies).

Each document will be made publically available at the appropriate time in the process, usually on the Council's website ([www.colchester.gov.uk](http://www.colchester.gov.uk)). All will be made available at the relevant examination. These documents will be reviewed in the AMR to see if they need to be reviewed or withdrawn. Other documents may also be produced as needed during the process.

The table on the following pages identifies the reports and studies that will be used to provide a robust and credible evidence base for the Local Plan. This list will be added to if additional work is required.

### Integration with other Strategies

The Local Plan has a key role in providing a spatial dimension for many other strategies and helping their co-ordination and delivery. The Council works closely with other public bodies and stakeholders to satisfy the Duty to Co-operate on strategic matters and the evidence base reflects collaborative working with other authorities and stakeholders as needed.

### Documents to be produced as Evidence Base for Local Plan Documents

Title	Purpose and Scope	Timescale and review
Strategic Environmental Assessment & Sustainability Appraisal	To provide sound evidence base for all documents (except some guidance notes).	Sustainability Appraisal work will be undertaken alongside the formulation of policy documents.
Townscape Character Study	To provide a sound basis for the SHLAA and built environment policies.	Completed June 2006.
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment	To provide evidence for housing land availability and distribution in relation to Local Plan requirements.	Completed Dec. 2015
Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)	Joint study with Braintree, Tendring and Chelmsford Councils. This updates the SHMA for Colchester undertaken in 2008. It assesses local housing markets and provides evidence on Objectively Assessed Housing Need. Ongoing work as required.	Completed July 2015. Further work on Affordable Housing need completed Dec. 2015.
Employment Land Needs Assessment	The study looks at existing sites and future needs to at least 2032.  Further detailed work to be undertaken to inform Local plan production	Completed January 2015  2016
Retail study	The study analyses retail catchment areas and capacity to assess shopping patterns and assess the future capacity for retail floorspace in the Borough.  Further work required to inform the Local Plan and ensure most up to date information is used.	Report completed March 2013  2016
Infrastructure Delivery Plan	To assess capacity and requirements for infrastructure to support growth to 2032	Work to be completed in phases- initial work to inform Preferred Options June 2016, further phase to inform submission document January 2017
Landscape Character Assessment	To provide evidence for countryside strategies and housing allocations.	Assessment completed November 2005.
Haven Gateway Green Infrastructure Study (HAGGIS).	To ensure there are sufficient open space, sport and recreational facilities, that they are in the right places, are of high quality, attractive to users and well managed and maintained.	Study completed April 2008.

Colchester Green Infrastructure Study	To provide additional detail at the local level	Work completed in October 2011.
PPG17 Study	To assess provision and requirements for open space and indoor/outdoor recreational facilities to 2021	PPG17 Study completed February 2008.
Sports Pitches and Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy	To update the PPG17 study and assess requirements for playing pitches and indoor sports facilities	July 2015
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	To update 2007 and recommend mitigation measures	Completed December 2015
Water Cycle Study	To assess provision and need for water and waste infrastructure	Spring 2016
Transport Model for Colchester	To enable area-wide traffic and public transport modelling to take place including the future traffic scenarios to be predicted and transport solution to be tested  Further work required for Preferred Options	December 2015  2016
East Transit Corridor study	To investigate options for a high-speed, high-frequency public transport link between the University, East Colchester regeneration area and the Town Centre.	Initial stage of feasibility study complete Nov. 2015
Review of Local Wildlife Sites	Update 2008 review of existing local wildlife sites	Review of 2008 work to be completed December 2015
Historic Environment Characterisation	This project design presents a programme of work to characterise the historic environment of Colchester Borough	Work completed November 2008.
CIL Viability work	To assess the impact of a Community Infrastructure Levy on the viability of schemes across the Borough	Initial work commenced in 2011, further analysis to be completed in 2016
Demographic and Household Projections	To inform decisions on future Borough growth and Objectively Assessed Housing Need. Joint Essex project led by Essex Planning Officers Association	Phase 7 work published May 2015
Essex Wide Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment	An Essex wide study commissioned by the Essex Planning Officers Association to provide information on the appropriate number of gypsy and traveller pitches to be provided	Completed in Nov 2009. Review completed Summer 2014. Further work underway reflecting national changes.

## 6. Monitoring and review

### Monitoring

The development plan system is a continuous process with monitoring and review being fundamental aspects to the delivery of a successful plan. Since the introduction of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, it has been a requirement that an Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) will be published by the end of December each year. The AMR has been used to inform the review of this Local Development Scheme.

The AMR will analyse the period of the previous April to March of the current year. The report will:

- Set out how the Council is performing in the production of documents against the timescales and milestones set out in the previous years LDS;
- Provide information on how the strategies/policies/targets in the Local Plan are being achieved;
- Advise on whether any documents need reviewing;
- Review progress on SPDs and whether any new ones are required or old ones withdrawn or reviewed;
- Advise on the need to update the LDS as appropriate; and
- Provide information on the 'State of the Borough'.

As required by the Regulations, the LDS will be monitored annually, informed by the AMR and a report produced and submitted to the Local Plan Committee for revision should changes be required.

### Review of Local Plan Documents

Following the initial adoption of development plan document, it is anticipated that subsequent reviews will be in the form of a rolling programme following recommendations from the Local Plan Committee.

The AMR will provide information regarding the performance of each document as well as identifying areas where strategies/policies/targets are not being achieved. The outcomes will be dependent on a variety of influences such as changes to Government policy or pressures for development(s) across the Borough.

# 7. Resources and Risk Assessment

## Professional Officer Input

The Local Plan process will be led by the Spatial Policy Team as part of Commercial Services at Colchester Borough Council.

The Spatial Policy Team consists of Planning Policy and Transportation Policy, lead by the Place Strategy Manager who will be responsible for the overall project and policy direction. The team also includes a planning policy manager and four planning officers, who will be responsible for various elements of the Local Plan process and policy. Transportation officers will also be heavily involved in the production of the Local Plan, working alongside colleagues from Essex County Council.

Additional staff resources will be brought in to the process from time to time as required from other professional groups within the Council and outside agencies as follows:

## Commercial Services

Housing Policy,  
Enterprise,  
Regeneration,  
Leisure, Tourism and Cultural services.

## Other CBC Services

Development Management,  
Environmental Protection,  
Research and Engagement,  
Community Strategies,  
Operational Services,  
Elections.

## Others

Highways England (strategic highways matters)  
Essex County Council (other highway matters, education, planning etc)  
Rural Community Council for Essex (to promote/facilitate links with parish councils)  
Consultants have been commissioned to develop elements of the evidence base and this is continuing.

## Consultee groups

The Statement of Community Involvement sets out in detail who we will consult and at what stage in the production of all documents. The SCI covers both plan making and decision taking so all aspects of the Council's statutory planning functions have been included within the SCI.

## Risk Assessment

### Risks

There are several factors which may impact upon the ability of the Council to keep to the timetable for the production of documents. The table below considers and deals with the main risks.

Issue and level of Risk	Comment and proposed mitigating measures
<b>Significant public opposition to plan proposals.</b>  <b>High Risk, Medium Impact</b>	<p>The production of the Local Plan and specifically the allocation of land is likely to be contentious. Whilst every effort will be made to build cross-community consensus, there is a high risk of significant public opposition.</p>
<b>Inability of PINS to deliver examinations/reports to timetable.</b>  <b>Low Risk, Medium Impact</b>	<p>The capacity of the Planning Inspectorate is an issue given the demands on its limited resources.</p> <p>There is also uncertainty as to the Governments plans for planning policy.</p> <p>PINS may not be able to provide Inspectors at the appropriate times.</p> <p>If problems do occur, caused by factors outside the council's control, we may have to accept some slippage of the timetable. The LDS would need to be amended accordingly.</p>
<b>Loss/turnover of staff</b>  <b>Medium Risk, High Impact</b>	<p>The Spatial Policy Team have benefitted from low turnover in recent years, but there is currently a national shortage of planning officers.</p>
<b>Financial shortfall</b>  <b>Medium Risk, High Impact</b>	<p>Any review of documents is a costly exercise, involving preparation of an evidence base, production of documents, consultation and examination.</p> <p>In previous years the Council has allocated funds through the Housing &amp; Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG) and its Service and Financial Planning process to allow for the preparation of the Local Plan. In the longer term no HPDG funding is available. Additional Council expenditure will be subject to scrutiny.</p> <p>Examination costs may inflate due to the length/complexity of the Examination. This will be kept under review.</p>
<b>Changing Political Priorities</b>  <b>High Risk, Medium Impact</b>	<p>This document has been considered and approved by Local Plan Committee which has a cross party representation of members. Elections in the borough could result in political changes and/or there could be changing priorities. Any future changes in the documents to be produced can be dealt with at the annual review.</p>

<p><b>Legal Challenge</b></p> <p><b>Low Risk, High Impact</b></p>	<p>A legal challenge may be lodged to any document within six week of adoption. The degree to which this will happen is uncertain due to the untried nature of the system emerging. However, a challenge will only succeed if the Council (or Inspector) has made a mistake in procedure or in fact.</p> <p>To avoid a legal challenge, every effort will be made to ensure that procedures are followed and facts are correct.</p>
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# Appendix 1

## **SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE/DOCUMENTS AND PLANNING GUIDANCE NOTES** **Status and Programme as at December 2015**

### **Existing Supplementary Planning Documents**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Approval Date</b>
<b>Extending Your House</b>	November 2005
<b>Provision of Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities</b>	July 2006
<b>Backland and Infill Development</b>	December 2010
<b>Community Facilities</b>	September 2009, revised July 2013
<b>Car Parking Standards (ECC)</b>	September 2009
<b>Shop front Design Guide</b>	June 2011
<b>Affordable Housing</b>	August 2011
<b>Cycling Delivery Strategy</b>	January 2012
<b>North Colchester Growth Area</b>	June 2012
<b>Street Services</b>	October 2012
<b>Better Town Centre</b>	December 2012
<b>Sustainable Drainage Systems Design Guide</b>	April 2015

### **Proposed Supplementary Planning Documents**

<b>Planning Obligations Guidance</b> (to align with Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule)	Adoption 2017
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### **Existing Guidance Notes**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Approval Date</b>
<b>Dedham Village Design Statement</b>	November 2007
<b>Langham Village Design Statement</b>	November 2007
<b>Wivenhoe Town Plan</b>	October 2008
<b>Boxted Joint VDS and Parish Plan</b>	June 2010
<b>Little Horkesley Village Design Statement</b>	August 2010
<b>Myland Design Statement</b>	August 2010
<b>West Bergholt Parish Plan</b>	December 2010
<b>Stanway Joint Design Statement and Parish Plan</b>	March 2011
<b>West Bergholt Village Design Statement</b>	December 2010
<b>Dedham Parish Plan</b>	December 2011
<b>Eight Ash Green Parish Plan</b>	July 2011



<b>Eight Ash Green Village Design Statement</b>	November 2013
<b>Essex Design Guide and Urban Place Supplement (ECC)</b>	Published 1997 (Design Guide), Urban Plan Supplement (2005)
<b>Dedham Vale AONB Management Plan</b>	2004, revised 2010
<b>Essex County Council Rights of Way Guidance</b>	January 2011
<b>Air Quality Management Guidance Note</b>	August 2012
<b>Tollgate Vision Statement</b>	July 2013
<b>Stanway Southern Sites Access Development Brief</b>	December 2013
<b>Developing a Landscape for the Future</b>	September 2013
<b>Essex County Hospital Design Brief</b>	December 2014
<b>Magdalen Street Development Brief</b>	February 2014
<b>Magdalen Street Sidings Development Brief</b>	August 2014
<b>Archaeology Guidance</b>	October 2015

## Local Plan Committee

15<sup>th</sup> August 2016

Item  
**8**

Report of	Head of Commercial Services	Author	Chris Downes 01206 282476
Title	Brownfield Land Register Publication		
Wards affected	All		

### The Local Plan Committee is asked to note the publication of the Brownfield Land Register

#### 1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 To note the publication on the Council's website of the Brownfield Land Register.

#### 2. Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 To make members aware of publication of a Brownfield Land Register for Colchester.

#### 3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 There are no alternative options – the report is for information only.

#### 4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The 4 April 2016 Local Plan Committee noted a report informing members about the Council's participation in a pilot scheme for brownfield land registers. The registers will provide the public, including house builders with up-to-date and publicly available information on all brownfield sites available for housing locally. The intention is that the registers will help housebuilders identify suitable sites quickly, speeding up the construction of new homes. They will also allow communities to draw attention to local sites for adding to the register, including in some cases derelict buildings and eyesores that are primed for redevelopment and that could attract investment to the area.
- 4.2 The April Committee report noted that councils taking part in the brownfield pilots will inform future government guidance on the operation of the brownfield registers. Registers will eventually become mandatory for all councils under proposals going through Parliament in the Housing and Planning Bill.
- 4.3 The Council has now compiled a Brownfield Land Register containing 35 sites in line with the following key principles:

- Based on Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) process, including annual reviews of potentially suitable sites. Authorities will also be expected to look at other relevant sources and ask landowners and others to volunteer sites for consideration
- Potential brownfield sites should comply with the NPPF definition of previously developed land
- To be regarded as suitable for housing, potential sites must be:
  - Available – Deliverable or Developable
  - Capable of supporting 5 or more dwellings or more than 0.25ha
  - Capable of Development – free from constraints or constraints exist but can be mitigated.
- Sites that meet these criteria have been placed on the register. This will include sites which already have planning permission.
- Registers to be kept under review, regularly updated and made publicly available
- Data on each site to be in a consistent standard format and published to Open Data standards.

4.4 As required by the Pilot scheme, the Council published the register on its website at the beginning of July 2016 and submitted feedback forms on the process. The Register can be viewed on the Council's website, [View Brownfield Land Register - DataShare](#). The Datashare section of the Council's website contains data published by the Council which is available for all to use for their own information and data compilation purposes.

#### 4.5 Permission in Principle (PiP)

The Productivity Plan 2015 set out the Government's intention to legislate to grant automatic permission in principle on brownfield sites identified in the new brownfield registers, subject to the approval of a limited number of technical details. This measure features in the Housing and Planning Act and will enable 'permission in principle' to be granted for housing-led development sites listed on the new brownfield registers or allocated in Local Plans.

4.6 As noted in the April Committee report however, the idea that these brownfield sites might be granted permission in principle does not form part of the Brownfield Land Register Pilot and further details are awaited on this aspect. There will be a statutory requirement to consult on sites granted PiP, once it is introduced. If a site is very complex, very contaminated, etc, it would not be suitable for PiP. Technical details will need to be approved and at that stage a local authority can seek mitigation and contributions. The Government see this process as the way to ensure 90% of brownfield land or sites – still to be determined – will have permission by 2020.

4.7 The Council was well-placed to prepare a register given it had already gathered much of the information required through housing monitoring work and assessment of potential sites for the new Local Plan. The

analysis of potential sites resulted in a final Brownfield Register containing 35 sites, listed in Appendix 1. This relatively low number reflected the fact that much of the brownfield land in the Borough has already been reused and redeveloped. 29 of the sites are in the urban area of Colchester, primarily East Colchester; 1 site is in West Mersea, 1 in Rowhedge, 1 in Wivenhoe and 2 are in Tiptree. The full register also includes all known information on planning status, site constraints, site capacity, and ownership. It would be expected that further information on issues such as contamination requiring more detailed investigation would be carried out at the Permission in Principle or planning application stage.

- 4.8 The Register will be revised if required to respond to feedback from the Pilot project and will then be regularly updated as part of the Council's work in maintaining an up-to-date database on housing land in the Borough.

## **5. Proposals**

- 5.1 The Local Plan Committee is asked to note the publication of the Brownfield Land Register.

## **6. Strategic Plan References**

- 6.1 Effective strategic planning supports the Strategic Plan Action Plan which includes a commitment to make Colchester a vibrant, prosperous, thriving and welcoming place.

## **7. Consultation and Publicity**

- 7.1 Consultation on Brownfield Land Registers will be discretionary and for each local authority to decide how and if it is undertaken. CBC will signpost users of its website to the Brownfield Register, and further publicity on the Register should follow on as part of development of the Local Plan and associated consultation.

## **8. Financial Implications**

- 8.1 The Council has been awarded £10,000 government funding to help the establishment of the brownfield register.

## **9. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications**

- 9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared for the Local Plan and is available to view by clicking on this link:-  
<http://www.colchester.gov.uk/article/4962/Strategic-Policy-and-Regeneration>  
or go to the Colchester Borough Council website  
[www.colchester.gov.uk](http://www.colchester.gov.uk) and follow the pathway from the homepage: Council and Democracy > Policies, Strategies and Performance > Equality and Diversity > Equality Impact Assessments >

Strategic Policy and Regeneration and select Local Development Framework from the Strategic Planning and Research section.

9.2 There are no particular Human Rights implications.

**10. Community Safety Implications**

10.1 None

**11. Health and Safety Implications**

11.1 None

**12. Risk Management Implications**

12.1 Taking part in the Pilot will ensure the Council is fully informed of national policy and will minimise the risk of challenge for not having an appropriate Register.

**13. Disclaimer**

13.1 The information in this report was, as far as is known, correct at the date of publication. Colchester Borough Council cannot accept responsibility for any error or omission.

## Appendix 1 – sites on Colchester Brownfield Land Register

	SiteReference	SiteName	SiteAddress
1	COL/01	ST BOTOLPHS CUTLURAL QUARTER	ST BOTOLPHS CULTURAL QUARTER, EAST OF QUEEN STREET
2	COL/02	AREA EAST OF MANSON ROAD	AREA EAST OF MASON ROAD, COWDRAY CENTRE, OFF COWDRAY AVENUE
3	COL/03	BRITANNIA WORKS SITE	BRITANNIA WORKS SITE, (CAR PARK OFF BRITANNIA WAY), FRONTING ST JULIAN GROVE
4	COL/04	BT REPEATER STATION	BT REPEATER STATION AND LAND ADJACENT TO GUILDFORD ROAD FACING EXETER DRIVE
5	COL/05	BRITISH TELECOM SITE	BRITISH TELECOM SITE NORTH OF COWDRAY AVENUE
6	COL/06	EAST BAY MILL	GARAGES AND LAND AT EAST BAY MILL
7	COL/07	FORMER GYM ARENA SITE	FORMER GYM ARENA SITE,CIRCULAR ROAD EAST, COLCHESTER CO2 7SZ
8	COL/08	BETWEEN ALBANY GARDENS AND DISTILLERY LANE	BETWEEN ALBANY GARDENS AND DISTILERY LANE, (PART OF GAS WORKS AND TIMBER DOCK LAND)
9	COL/09	KING EDWARD QUAY AND HAVEN ROAD (SOUTH)	LAND AND BUILDINGS BETWEEN KING EDWARD QUAY AND HAVEN ROAD SOUTH OF DISTILLERY LANE
11	COL/10	176-192 MAGDALEN STREET	LAND AND BUILDINGS BETWEEN NUMBERS 192 AND 176 MAGDALEN STREET
12	COL/11	LAND, BUILDINGS AND FORMER CBT BUS DEPOT	LAND, BUILDINGS AND FORMER CBT BUS DEPOT FRONTING MAGDALEN STREET AND MILITARY ROAD
13	COL/12	DOVERCOURT BP PETROL STATION AND GARAGE	DOVERCOURT BP PETROL FILLING STATION AND GARAGE INCLUDING NUMBER 79 MAGDALEN STREET
14	COL/13	GARAGE 74-78 MILITARY ROAD	GARAGE 74 TO 78 MILITARY ROAD AND LAND TO REAR
15	COL/14	RAILWAY SIDINGS NORTH OF MAGDALEN STREET	LAND NORTH OF MAGDALEN STREET (RAILWAY SIDINGS)
16	COL/15	83-102 MAGDALEN STREET	LAND AND BUILDINGS FROM AND INCLUDING 83 TO 102 MAGDALEN STREET
17	COL/16	SCRUBLAND BETWEEN RIVER COLNE	SCRUBLAND BETWEEN RIVER COLNE AND HYTHE QUAY OPPOSITE THE

		AND HYTHE QUAY	SPINNAKER P.H.
18	COL/17	GASWORKS AND FORMER TIMBER DOCK	GASWORKS AND FORMER TIMBER DOCK, LAND NORTH AND SOUTH OF WHITEHALL ROAD
19	WIV/01	1 THE AVENUE	1 THE AVENUE, WIVENHOE QUAY
20	TIP/01	BT BUILDINGS, CAR PARK AND SMALL GARDENS	BT BUILDINGS, CARPARK AND SMALL GARDENS AREA, STATION ROAD
21	COL/18	DERELICT COAL YARD DEPOT	DERELICT COAL YARD DEPOT. HYTHE STATION ROAD BETWEEN RAILWAY LINE AND RIVER COLNE
22	COL/19	LAND COVERING HAWKINS ROAD	LAND COVERING HAWKINS ROAD FROM THE RIVER COLNE TO RAILWAY LINE UP TO HYTHE STATION ROAD
23	COL/20	GARDEN HOUSE	GARDEN HOUSE. ADJACENT TO MAUDLYN ROAD. HYTHE QUAY
24	COL/21	26 HYTHE QUAY	26 HYTHE QUAY
25	COL/22	28 HYTHE QUAY	28 HYTHE QUAY
26	COL/23	80 MAGDALEN STREET	80 MAGDALEN STREET. COLCHESTER
27	COL/24	PARKING LAND USED BY ROBERTSONS VAN HIRE	PARKING LAND USED BY ROBERTSONS VAN HIRE BETWEEN 145 AND 149 MAGDALEN STREET
28	COL/25	ESSEX COUNTY HOSPITAL SITE	ESSEX COUNTY HOSPITAL SITE. LEXDEN ROAD. COLCHESTER
29	RHE/01	ROWHEDGE PORT	ROWHEDGE PORT, SOUTHERN END OF HIGHSTREET, ROWHEDGE
30	COL/26	RESIDENTIAL GARAGES REAR OF 1 STALIN ROAD	RESIDENTIAL GARAGES REAR OF 1 STALIN ROAD
31	COL/27	SITE REAR OF THE CO OPERATIVE STORE	SITE REAR OF THE CO OPERATIVE STORE, 90 WIMPOLE ROAD
32	TIP/01	RESIDENTIAL PARKING AREA OFF GROVE ROAD	RESIDENTIAL PARKING AREA OFF GROVE ROAD, WITH ACCESS ADJACENT TO 22 GROVE ROAD
33	COL/28	COAL YARD SITE	COAL YARD SITE WITH ACCESS BETWEEN 49 AND 51 ARTILLERY STREET

34	COL/29	23 ST JULIAN GROVE	23 ST JULIAN GROVE
35	MER/01	FORMER UNDERWOODS GARAGE	FORMER UNDERWOODS GARAGE WEST MERSEA



## Local Plan Committee

15<sup>th</sup> August 2016

Item  
**9**

Report of	Head of Commercial Services	Author	Karen Syrett 01206 282476
Title	Essex Rural Strategy		
Wards affected	All		

**The Local Plan Committee is asked to note the publication of the Essex Rural Strategy along with the summary of the vision, aims and priorities.**

### 1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 To note the publication of the Essex Rural Strategy along with the summary of the vision, aims and priorities which provides a reference and overview.

### 2. Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 To make members aware of publication of the Strategy.

### 3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 There are no alternative options – the report is for information only.

### 4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 Essex is made up of almost 1500 square miles, 72% of this is considered to be rural. Around 36% of the population of Essex call these rural areas home. In Colchester approximately 30% of the population live in areas classified as rural. This compares to 80% of the population in Uttlesford and at the other end of the spectrum, Basildon, Castle Point and Harlow which have almost no resident population in areas that are classified as rural.
- 4.2 The challenges of living in the rural parts of the county include the increased distances to key services and the access to main transport links. Other differences between urban and rural parts of the county include house prices, house types, travel to school. There is almost no difference in the proportional breakdown of hours spent travelling by people in Urban and Rural communities.
- 4.3 The Essex Rural Partnership brings together organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors to co-ordinate action on the major economic, social and environmental issues facing rural Essex.

- 4.4 To kick start the production of the Strategy, the Essex Rural Partnership invited representatives of rural communities, including District and Parish Councillors, to a consultation event in July 2015. This event mapped out the key issues of concern for communities in rural Essex and identified overarching themes for the strategy. The consultation event also helped to develop a survey (Essex Rural Strategy Questionnaire) of people living and working in rural Essex, which was conducted in 2015 with over 1,600 responding, around 70% of them rural residents. The findings of this survey have determined the strategic priorities.
- 4.5 The new strategy sets out 38 priorities across 10 chapters, highlighting what is important for those who live and work in rural Essex, and for the environment. The ten themes are as follows;
- Chapter 1: Harnessing the potential in our rural economy
  - Chapter 2: Education and skills for life
  - Chapter 3: Farming for the future
  - Chapter 4: Attracting visitors to rural Essex
  - Chapter 5: Celebrating our culture and heritage
  - Chapter 6: Securing a place to live
  - Chapter 7: Accessing the services we need
  - Chapter 8: Thriving and pro-active communities
  - Chapter 9: Feeling safe and reducing crime
  - Chapter 10: Protecting and promoting our natural environment.
- 4.6 The new vision for the strategy is of 'A county which engages, values and respects its rural environment; and where rural communities fully contribute to and benefit from a healthy, prosperous and connected Essex.' It is intended that this will be achieved by focussing on 4 aims: prosperity, well-being, connection and innovation.
- 4.7 A six-step plan details how delivery will be achieved. At the launch of the Strategy several of the speakers made reference to the short-term future being a time of great change and uncertainty, and highlighted the importance of a united strategic direction whilst working in such an environment.
- 4.8 Some of the challenges for rural communities which are highlighted in the report are relevant to the production of the local plan: how we support the needs and recognise the contribution of an ageing population; how we ensure that improved broadband is augmenting and not displacing the face-to-face interactions in village halls, local shops, pubs and green spaces that are the lifeblood of rural communities; how we deliver affordable housing; and how we tackle pockets of rural deprivation and ensure everyone can access opportunities and services.

## **5. Proposals**

- 5.1 The Local Plan Committee is asked to note the publication of the Essex Rural Strategy which provides useful background evidence. The Strategy will be added to the Council's website along with a link to other documents referenced by the Essex rural partnership  
[http://essexruralpartnership.org.uk/Essex\\_Rural\\_Strategy.aspx](http://essexruralpartnership.org.uk/Essex_Rural_Strategy.aspx)

## **6. Strategic Plan References**

- 6.1 Effective strategic planning supports the Strategic Plan Action Plan which includes a commitment to make Colchester a vibrant, prosperous, thriving and welcoming place.

## **7. Consultation and Publicity**

- 7.1 None.

## **8. Financial Implications**

- 8.1 N/A.

## **9. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications**

- 9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared for the Local Plan and is available to view by clicking on this link:-  
<http://www.colchester.gov.uk/article/4962/Strategic-Policy-and-Regeneration>  
or go to the Colchester Borough Council website  
[www.colchester.gov.uk](http://www.colchester.gov.uk) and follow the pathway from the homepage: Council and Democracy > Policies, Strategies and Performance > Equality and Diversity > Equality Impact Assessments > Strategic Policy and Regeneration and select Local Development Framework from the Strategic Planning and Research section.

- 9.2 There are no particular Human Rights implications.

## **10. Community Safety, Health and Safety and Risk Management Implications**

- 10.1 None

## **13. Disclaimer**

- 13.1 The information in this report was, as far as is known, correct at the date of publication. Colchester Borough Council cannot accept responsibility for any error or omission.

# Respecting our Past, Embracing our Future:

## A Strategy for Rural Essex

## Our Vision, Aims and Priorities



**The Essex Rural Partnership** brings together organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors to co-ordinate action on the major economic, social and environmental issues facing rural Essex.

Established in 2002, the Essex Rural Partnership has met regularly since then, providing a forum to exchange information, develop collaborative projects and encourage a co-ordinated response to important policy issues. It also provides a rural evidence base, available to all member organisations. As an independent body, Essex Rural Partnership is well-placed to lobby on the strategic issues that matter to people who live and work in the county's rural areas. In 2012 Essex Rural Partnership was awarded membership of Defra's national Rural and Farming Network, enabling it to engage directly with Government.

**Our vision:** A county which engages, values and respects its rural environment; and where rural communities fully contribute to and benefit from a healthy, prosperous and connected Essex.

### What we want to achieve: Aims

- 1. Prosperity.** To build a dynamic and sustainable rural economy, where businesses and communities are mutually supportive, and where all the assets and benefits of rural Essex are actively promoted to encourage investment.
- 2. Well-being.** To enable everyone in Essex to enjoy our rich and diverse environment, and support rural residents to live well and access health services when they need them.
- 3. Connection.** To support the development of rural broadband and rural transport, while championing rural networks and facilities.
- 4. Innovation.** To promote new approaches to service access and delivery for rural communities, with a focus on mobilising community assets.

# Our priorities for 2016-2020

## Harnessing the potential in our rural economy

- 1 a) We will continue to provide both support and challenge to the superfast broadband programme to help address inadequate broadband and mobile connectivity – in particular, we expect to see the Rural Challenge pilot looking to reach out to other parts of rural Essex.
- b) We have also become increasingly aware of the limited information that we have about our rural economy, and will be working with partners to address this, as we develop our new evidence resource.
- c) We will seek to maximise the benefits of programmes and projects which encourage economic growth and job creation. We will also identify, support, and where appropriate lead on, opportunities to bring new programmes to Essex.
- d) We will work with partners to remove barriers to diversification for land-based businesses.
- e) We will encourage use of redundant buildings, especially those with historical merit, and we will explore the potential for under-utilised and redundant buildings to be adapted to support rural development.

## Education and skills for life

- 2 a) We will engage with Government to ensure it delivers in Essex on its pledge to increase apprenticeships in rural areas to support food, farming and small tourism businesses, and support high quality apprenticeships in our communities.
- b) We will engage with local authorities and academy providers to ensure the long term future of rural schools.

## Farming for the future

- 3 a) We will help to promote and develop a food and farming sector that is resilient to global commodity price fluctuations by creating a dynamic and forward looking business environment and infrastructure.
- b) We will support the food and farming sector to meet the challenges of climate change by exploring approaches that either protect against the negative impacts or enhance the positive aspects of climate change.
- c) We will encourage developments that support and enhance the food supply chains across the county to help integrate local food production with the wider Essex population.

## Attracting visitors to rural Essex

- 4 a) We will facilitate sustainable tourism development.
- b) We will work with Visit Essex and local partners to promote rural Essex, package the tourism offer and give it an identity.
- c) We will support the development of the England Coast Path in Essex.

## Celebrating our culture and heritage

- 5 a) We will continue to work with partners on creative approaches to ensuring our historic buildings remain at the heart of rural communities, for example, in the use of church spaces for community groups and shops.
- b) We will develop closer links to national bodies to ensure their programmes are aware of and engaged with issues and opportunities in rural Essex.
- c) We will assist in promoting our heritage to a wider audience.

## Securing a place to live

- 6 a) We believe that the shortage of affordable housing in rural areas can only be addressed if a range of housing types and tenures, including provision of housing for rent, can be made more widely available.
- b) We believe that provision of affordable housing should be guided by up to date evidence of local need and should prioritise meeting the needs of local residents.
- c) We recognise the importance of the Rural Housing Enabler service but in view of the changing strategic context would encourage providers that support the service to explore new approaches to delivering affordable homes.

## Accessing the services we need

- 7 a) We will encourage the development of effective rural proofing processes for use by local service providers.
- b) We will support initiatives that improve access to health care, support independent living and reduce isolation and loneliness in rural areas.
- c) We will encourage the development of innovative and sustainable transport solutions, which are responsive to the needs of dispersed rural populations.
- d) We will ensure that support is available to facilitate community enterprise and other initiatives that strengthen the provision of essential local services.
- e) We will encourage non-commercial solutions to providing the transport that is necessary to reach essential and valued services.

## Thriving and pro-active communities

- 8 a) We will encourage initiatives that promote leadership from parish and town councils and local voluntary organisations.
- b) We will encourage the devolution of responsibilities to local communities in appropriate circumstances.
- c) We will promote the benefits of Neighbourhood Planning and other measures that give communities greater influence over their future development.
- d) We will support those who give of their time to keep community facilities available for those who live and work in rural areas.
- e) We will encourage de-regulation to reduce barriers to volunteering.

## Feeling safe and reducing crime

- 9 a) We will encourage the Police and Crime Commissioner for Essex and Essex Police to support community safety initiatives that address the specific needs of rural communities and businesses.
- b) We will support communities in taking local action to make their homes and environments safer.
- c) We will support initiatives which bring benefits to rural areas.
- d) We will work with other partners to ensure our residents feel safe. This will include Essex Trading Standards and Essex Civil Protection and Emergency Management.

*continued overleaf...*

## Our priorities for 2016-2020 continued...

### Protecting and promoting our natural environment

- 10
- a) We will use our influence with Defra and DECC to ensure the voice of Landowners - as 'custodians of our landscape' is represented, and funding mechanisms do not have unintended impacts upon Rural Essex.
  - b) We need to interact fully with organisations such as EPOA (Essex Planning Officers Association) and statutory bodies (e.g. Environment Agency and Natural England) and the local environmental bodies (like Essex Wildlife Trust, the National Trust and the RSPB) at a strategic/national level.
  - c) We need to ensure that the Essex Rural Partnership continues to be both 'Champion' of the rural economy, environment and society, extending our membership to those organisations/decision makers whose actions impact directly upon the environment.
  - d) We will support initiatives that record and protect the unique biodiversity found in rural Essex, and which enable this to add value to tourism and benefit economic prosperity.
  - e) We will engage with Natural England and the designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in our county to ensure that ongoing boundary reviews are to the benefit of rural Essex.

### What happens next: Delivering in partnership

The next four years promise to be both exciting and challenging times for rural communities in Essex.

#### TO PLAY YOUR PART IN ENABLING THIS STRATEGY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE, PLEASE:

- Visit our website and find out how you can get involved with the partnership
- Sign up to our Newsletter to keep up-to-date on the latest developments
- If you are a member of the partnership (or want to be), support our meetings, help us to deliver our priorities
- Share our strategy with your networks... and do get in touch to tell us what you think

#### CONTACT:

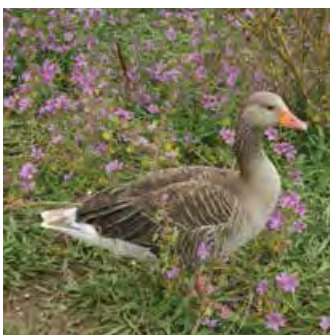
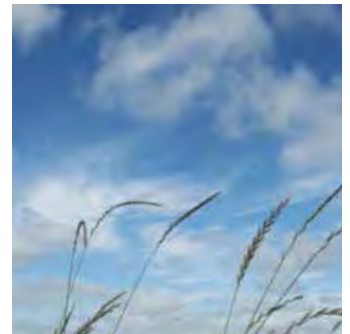
RCCE, Threshelfords Business Park, Inworth Road, Feering, Essex CO5 9SE.

E-mail: [info@essexruralpartnership.org.uk](mailto:info@essexruralpartnership.org.uk) Tel: 01376 574 330

A copy of *'Respecting our Past, Embracing our Future: A Strategy for Rural Essex'* can be found on our website, [www.essexruralpartnership.org.uk](http://www.essexruralpartnership.org.uk) along with supporting documents and evidence.



# Respecting our Past, Embracing our Future: A Strategy for Rural Essex



# FACTS ABOUT RURAL ESSEX



**72%**  
of land area in  
Essex is classified as rural



**350,000**  
residents in  
rural Essex  
(1/4 of the  
workforce)



**78**  
Sites of Special  
Scientific Interest



**75,000**  
Children living in rural Essex



**50%**  
of parishes  
have no shop or  
post office



**11 MILLION**  
Day visitors to Essex countryside annually



**4,000**  
miles of public  
rights of way

Footpath

Businesses & industries  
based in rural Essex

**22,500**



Access to regular bus services  
Rural **42%** Urban **96%**



- 21% of deprived people in Essex live in rural areas.
- On average, people living in the most rural areas travel 45% further per year than those in England as a whole, and 53% further than those living in urban areas.
- A greater percentage of total annual mileage was made using a car in the most rural areas (58%) than in urban areas (49%).
- People living in villages and dispersed areas travel an average of 10,000 miles per year, compared to 6,400 miles for urban residents.



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The Essex Rural Partnership brings together organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors to co-ordinate action on the major economic, social and environmental issues facing rural Essex.

Established in 2002, the Essex Rural Partnership has met regularly since then, providing a forum to exchange information, develop collaborative projects and encourage a co-ordinated response to important policy issues. It also provides a rural evidence base, available to all member organisations. As an independent body, Essex Rural Partnership is well-placed to lobby on the strategic issues that matter to people who live and work in the county's rural areas. In 2012 Essex Rural Partnership was awarded membership of Defra's national Rural and Farming Network, enabling it to engage directly with Government.

**The Essex Rural Partnership works across Greater Essex, an area which boasts a unique mix of rural environment and high quality access to urban markets.** 72% of Essex is rural, its 350 miles of coastline are the longest of any English county, yet the M11 and M25 motorways and a number of other major trunk roads provide easy access to London and other urban centres. Essex is home to two London airports (Stansted and Southend) and two international ports (Harwich and Tilbury), which offer unrivalled access to continental Europe and beyond.



Our 2020 Vision for Rural Essex commented that ‘the debate continues as to whether rural issues require special attention’. The Essex Rural Partnership was established in 2002 because we believe that they do, and over the past five years we have been winning that argument.

Nationally, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for the Environment launched a ten point plan in summer 2015 ‘to harness the enormous economic potential England’s rural areas have to offer’. Regionally, our South East Local Enterprise Partnership published its rural strategy in 2015, setting out plans to address ‘fundamental issues for our rural economy, communities and environment’. The government’s financial settlement for local authorities has recognised the special challenges of delivering services in dispersed rural areas.

Recognition of the potential of the rural economy and for innovative approaches to rural services is welcome, but needs to be balanced with care for the rural environment and culture. In reality, preservation and growth are often two sides of the same coin, with many rural businesses depending on this heritage – whether, for example, that’s the 400 listed Church of England buildings in Essex, the 350 miles of coastline, 4000 miles of public rights of way or 78 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI’s). Rural Essex is, of course, all about the quality of its natural environment, and whatever we do to realise rural potential must involve custodianship of our rural environment.

Above and beyond that, of course, rural Essex is all about the people who live and work and visit here. There is much prosperity in our rural communities, and many advantages to rural life. The Essex countryside attracts as many as eleven million day visitors each year, many of them from our towns and cities. There is also significant deprivation, which can be more difficult to identify and address in sparsely populated areas than towns and cities. People may also face difficulties in accessing services when they need them, which is particularly relevant for the growing numbers of older people in rural areas. For younger people, the lack of availability of affordable housing is a real challenge.

The views of people living and working in rural Essex have been at the heart of this review of our strategy, and we are extremely grateful to everyone who has contributed their time and ideas. We have also undertaken a detailed analysis of the best available evidence to inform our plans, as well as the policy environment we need to work in and with. This review builds on our 2020 Vision by identifying some key strategic priorities for the Essex Rural Partnership up to 2020. We look forward to working with you to achieve this shared ambition for confronting the challenges, making the most of significant opportunities and ‘harnessing the enormous potential’ of our rural areas in Essex.



## Vision, aims and approach

**Our vision:** A county which engages, values and respects its rural environment; and where rural communities fully contribute to and benefit from a healthy, prosperous and connected Essex.

### What we want to achieve: Aims

1. **Prosperity.** To build a dynamic and sustainable rural economy, where businesses and communities are mutually supportive, and where all the assets and benefits of rural Essex are actively promoted to encourage investment.
2. **Well-being.** To enable everyone in Essex to enjoy our rich and diverse environment, and support rural residents to live well and access health services when they need them.
3. **Connection.** To support the development of rural broadband and rural transport, while championing rural networks and facilities.
4. **Innovation.** To promote new approaches to service access and delivery for rural communities, with a focus on mobilising community assets.

### How we'll do it: The Partnership's role

1. **Voice.** By providing rural Essex with a strong and influential voice in local, regional and national policy, with a focus on our rural environment, economy, services and housing.
2. **Engagement.** By engaging the whole rural community in the partnership's work, recognising its diversity, and including young people and the disadvantaged.
3. **Knowledge.** By listening and learning about what works for rural communities, bringing people together to share their experience and insight and curating an evidence resource for rural Essex.
4. **Promotion.** By championing and developing a compelling narrative for and about rural Essex.

# Delivery: Making it happen

Six key steps will support the journey from strategy to delivery:

**Step 1:** We will undertake a root and branch review of the Essex Rural Partnership's (ERP's) structures and processes, with a view to reinvigorating its work, broadening its membership and maximising its impact and effectiveness.

**Step 2:** We will produce an annual work programme to ensure that the partnership is fully engaging with key developments that will impact Essex's rural communities and that our limited resources are focussed on our key strategic priorities and on interventions that are timed and designed to have maximum impact.

**Step 3:** We will lead the development of an 'Essex rural pledge' which we will be inviting all individuals and organisations with a contribution to make to achieving our vision and ambitions to sign up to, and which will raise the visibility and profile of the partnership and Rural Essex.

**Step 4:** We will develop a map of local, regional and national agencies that we will need to engage and influence to achieve our strategic ambitions for rural Essex and develop an influencing strategy. We will develop and support 'ERP ambassadors' to broaden the visibility and representation of rural Essex.

**Step 5:** We will hold discussions with partners to agree on the best achievable evidence resource we can provide for rural Essex within our current resources, and deliver this through the ERP website.

**Step 6:** We will provide an annual 'outcome report' to ERP members, which will be available on the ERP website. This will report on our progress in developing the partnership and delivering our strategic priorities.





## Progress: Six key achievements

We are building on a strong record of progress and impact in providing support, voice and representation for rural Essex.

### 1. Securing membership of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (Defra's) Rural and Farming Network

ERP secured a seat for Essex on Defra's Rural and Farming Network, which succeeded the Ministerial links with Regional Rural Fora in 2012. Whilst most other areas in the country were represented by a group covering a larger area, Essex was one of two counties in the initial membership to gain a county-level representation.

### 2. Helping to initiate LEADER funding activity in Essex and ensuring good county coverage

ERP led the way in establishing a new LEADER Local Action Group in Essex, which is now delivering £1.8million to rural businesses and communities. ERP also supported the creation of neighbouring Local Action Groups, working cross-border into Essex, to ensure maximum county coverage and to eradicate gaps between eligible areas. In total, rural Essex has access to £7.2million funding across four Local Action Group areas.

### 3. Representing rural interests on the South East LEP

ERP lobbied the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) to take rural issues seriously, and to make sure that Essex was fully represented in all rural discussions. As a result, ERP is represented on the SELEP-wide Rural Strategy Group, giving rural Essex a strong voice and helping to influence future SELEP activities and available funding.

### 4. Hosting Ministerial visits to promote the needs of rural Essex

ERP hosted two ministerial visits to the county. This gave us an opportunity to lobby Defra ministers on issues of concern to rural people and businesses in Essex. We were also able to demonstrate the rurality of our county, which is often seen as an urban neighbour to London.

### 5. Production of a Woodland Strategy

ERP wrote and published a Woodland Strategy for the county. This was the first of its kind and offered a vision and aims to help achieve an expanding woodland resource in Essex.

### 6. Services in Rural Essex – rural services survey

In 2010 ERP undertook a countywide survey to ascertain the level of service provision and to monitor service decline (or increase) in rural areas. The survey reached out to all parishes in the county and achieved response rates of over 60% on both occasions. The resulting reports provided an information base and identified trends in service provision.

# Consultation: What you've been telling us

To kick start the engagement process, the Essex Rural Partnership invited representatives of our rural communities, including District and Parish Councillors, to a consultation event at Foakes Hall in Great Dunmow in July 2015. This event mapped out the key issues of concern for communities in rural Essex and identified overarching themes for the strategy. The consultation event also helped us to develop a survey (Essex Rural Strategy Questionnaire) of people living and working in rural Essex, which we conducted in 2015 with over 1,600 responding, around 70% of them rural residents. The findings of this survey have determined our strategic priorities.

The people of Essex told us that...	...So we will
Better broadband is important for rural businesses and service access (but not everyone owns or feels comfortable with new technologies).	<p><b>Voice:</b> Be the eyes, ears and voice of rural communities on broadband and mobile receptivity. We will monitor progress, raising any concerns you have nationally and making sure the Essex Superfast Broadband Project is engaging with and listening to rural Essex.</p> <p><b>Connection/innovation:</b> Work with our partners to explore innovative ways to ensure that everyone in our rural communities benefits from new technologies in ways that improve their day-to-day lives.</p>
Our rural landscapes and communities are what is most special about rural Essex, and you generally feel safe, but litter is a problem, and you worry about road safety.	<p><b>Voice/evidence:</b> Represent your road safety concerns to councils and continue to work with the Police and Crime Commissioner and police service and develop ties to the National Rural Crime Network.</p> <p><b>Vision:</b> Capture your voices in developing a narrative for rural Essex, working closely with our tourism industry.</p> <p><b>Engagement and innovation:</b> Sort out the litter problem – this is something we can and should get to grips with.</p>
It is more expensive living in rural areas than in towns and cities, and there is a real need for more affordable housing for young people ... a lot of you also feel you pay too much for your energy bills.	<p><b>Evidence:</b> We will capture the views and experiences of young people and families looking for homes in rural Essex to inform policy and practice. We will map affordable housing provision as part of the new evidence resource.</p> <p><b>Voice:</b> The government has made a clear commitment to affordable housing and we will keep the pressure up to deliver for rural communities, and encourage local partners to commit to targets.</p> <p><b>Innovation:</b> Our members are running innovative schemes to reduce rural energy bills, and we will continue to support these initiatives.</p>
New housing provision to be developed sensitively, providing affordable housing in a way that is appropriate to rural communities, avoids over-development and is supported by transport and other services.	<p><b>Voice/engagement:</b> Work with District and Borough Councils to ensure a strong rural voice and perspective is shaping local development and housing plans. Support Parish Councils to have their say.</p> <p><b>Innovation:</b> Identify examples of good housing development in rural areas, looking to learn lessons from research and practice in Essex and elsewhere.</p>

The people of Essex told us that...	...So we will
Access to services is not a problem for people with their own transport, and voluntary services can often be accessed locally, but older people and people with disabilities can become isolated and lonely.	<b>Connection/Innovation:</b> Work with partners on new approaches to community transport, and learn from other rural areas.
	<b>Engagement/evidence:</b> Capture the views and experiences of people who may be isolated in rural communities, and find out what they think would help most.
There is a particular concern about ensuring that everyone in our rural communities has timely access to health services.	<b>Voice:</b> Ensure that the rural Voice is heard in the development of health services in Essex by developing our relationship with Clinical Commissioning Groups, Healthwatch Essex and public health teams, and bodies like the Health and Wellbeing Boards.
	<b>Innovation:</b> Explore innovative approaches to health and wellbeing, with a focus on prevention, community resilience and the role of technology.
Many people have to travel outside their local community to access leisure facilities and (for example) to buy their groceries and use the post office - there is a lack of public service presence within villages, and some people have issues getting appointments with GPs.	<b>Voice/evidence:</b> Continue to collect and monitor the evidence on access to services, and ensure it is seen by decision makers. Ensure the rural voice is represented in key discussions about health and social service delivery and reform in Essex.
	<b>Innovation:</b> Inform the development of LEADER projects in rural Essex to support local shops and facilities, and engage with the Essex Community Foundation on the role of the voluntary sector. Explore innovative approaches to improving access to GPs, including the role of new technologies in managing common health problems.
People generally feel safe in rural communities, but they are concerned about traffic and road safety.	<b>Voice:</b> Engage with transport and highways planning at County and Borough level, and meet regularly with the Police and Crime Commissioner on rural safety issues.
	<b>Innovation/evidence:</b> Review evidence on improving road safety in rural areas and develop approaches.

**Engagement:** Finally, we had an excellent response to our rural survey and engagement events. However, young people were not so well represented. We need to do more to involve younger people and young families in our work, and to ensure the full diversity of our rural communities is reflected in the Essex Rural Partnership, including those who may be marginalised or disadvantaged. This will be another challenge and focus for us in developing work to 2020. We note, for example, the opportunity for the Essex Rural Partnership to engage with Essex's Children's Strategic Partnership to discuss issues for young people in rural areas, as well as with the four children's locality partnerships across Essex. The new Essex Children and Young People's Strategic Plan recognises that rural isolation is an issue for some young people in our county.

*The full findings from our 2015 survey of rural Essex are available on the ERP website. An 'Action Plan' for Partnership activity over the next four years is also available on the ERP website.*



## Essex Rural Strategy Questionnaire - Results in brief

### Key priorities

1. Access to health services
2. Broadband connectivity
3. Improved traffic, road safety and speed control
4. More affordable housing

### Some key findings

- People value the landscape and communities of rural Essex.
- People in rural areas feel safe, either always or most of the time.
- The general perception is that it costs more money to live in rural Essex compared to living in towns within Essex.
- A large number of rural residents say that local young people struggle to get on the property ladder in their community.
- Over half of rural respondents believe they are spending too much money on their energy bills.
- Most residents consider elderly people and people with disabilities living in rural Essex as the most vulnerable to isolation and loneliness.
- A high proportion of Essex rural residents have their own transport and have no problems accessing services.
- A high percentage of rural Essex residents travel outside of their village at least once a week to purchase groceries, fresh fruit and vegetables, newspapers, items at the post office, eat a hot meal out and access a cash machine.

### Some current issues

- Accessibility and transport
- Fear of over-development in communities without adequate transport infrastructure.
- Public service presence in rural communities, including GPs and police.

As well as listening to rural residents and businesses, we have reviewed and refreshed our strategic priorities to take account of policy developments.

In reality, of course, policy is changing all the time. One of the key roles of the partnership is to influence, monitor and discuss these changes, ensuring that our members and rural communities are heard by policy makers, know what is happening, what the implications are for them and can engage and respond effectively. We have excellent opportunities to shape discussions at senior levels in Government, including as a member of Defra's Rural and Farming Network.

The Essex Rural Partnership applauds the growing recognition of the importance of rural issues, nationally and regionally, and will continue to work with you and our friends and colleagues in other rural areas to shape and inform this policy agenda.

We note, for example, three broad policy trends which will be significant to the delivery of our 2020 vision for rural Essex.

- 1. The Government is taking the rural economy seriously.** In August 2015, it published 'Towards a one nation economy: A 10-point plan for boosting productivity in rural areas'. The plan provides a national focus and drive for many issues highlighted in our 2020 Vision, and which are key to our strategic priorities now. These include, for example, extensive, fast and reliable broadband services, modern transport connections, expansion of rural apprenticeships, enterprise zones in rural areas, better regulation and planning for local businesses, affordable housing and accessible child care.
- 2. The Government is engaging with the challenges of delivering services in rural communities.** For example, in announcing the financial settlement for local government in February 2016, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government increased the 'Rural Services Delivery Grant' to councils in sparsely populated areas fivefold to £80.5 million in 2016/17 in recognition of the extra costs of delivering services. In Essex only three districts benefit from this grant – namely Braintree, Maldon and Uttlesford – and (when viewed alongside other funding changes) the actual impact is unclear. Understanding the implications of such funding changes, and identifying where representation arguing for change might need to be made, is something that ERP is actively pursuing.
- 3. The Government is reforming local government funding.** HM Treasury's Financial Settlement (February 2016) announced an additional £93 million of funding for rural authorities in recognition of the financial pressures resulting from changes to mechanisms for allocating funding to local government and the potential impact of these changes on rural services. The Rate Support Grant will be phased out by 2020 in favour of new powers for local authorities to retain business rates. It remains to be seen how this will play out in practice, but it has a particular relevance for rural communities. ERP will be keeping a close eye on developments and their impact.

At a regional level, the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) has published a rural strategy for 2015-20, which sets out a vision and a set of strategic objectives for 'a growing rural economy with a highly skilled workforce in full employment', along with the establishment of new businesses and the development of existing ones. The South East Local Enterprise Partnership is a strategic body bringing together the public and private sectors across Essex, Kent and East Sussex to support economic growth. There are significant overlaps between our priorities and its rural objectives and the partnership has a close and productive relationship with SELEP.

*Links to key documents are available on the ERP website.*

# Considering the evidence

## What the evidence says...

Nearly three quarters of Essex is 'rural', with a quarter of the working age population living in rural areas. From national data, we know that rural communities are older, with less than half of rural residents younger than 45, and many over 70. People in rural areas are more likely to say their health is good or very good than their urban counterparts, and life expectancies are generally better. Nationally, however, a higher percentage of residents in rural areas are providing unpaid care of an hour or more each week.

Agriculture – with construction – accounts for the highest number of businesses. It is not the biggest employer in rural Essex, with more people working in areas like retail, construction, health and education. Agriculture appears to be contracting, but we need to take a closer look. Businesses are smaller, with over three quarters employing less than five people, and more self-employment and home working than in towns and cities. Rural tourism brought in nearly 11 million day visitors in 2014.

Rural Essex is generally peaceful and prosperous. Its residents tend to be better qualified than in urban Essex. Levels of long term unemployment are lower, although people over 50 are more often affected. There is evidence of deprivation which is exacerbated by expenses associated with rural living (for example, fuel costs) and difficulty in accessing services where people and families do need help and support.

Rural households in Essex tend to travel further to access goods and services, although generally not further than in other parts of rural England. In 2011, six in ten were within two kilometres of their nearest GP, nine in ten of their local primary school, and around a quarter of their nearest secondary school. National data says that rural residents travel around 50% further than urban residents, and are more dependent on cars. They may also find it harder to access services by bicycle. Nationally, the percentage of children in rural areas with reasonable access to secondary school by bicycle is 28% compared with 56%

in urban settlements. Bus availability is also significantly worse in rural than urban areas of England.

On average, house prices are higher than in urban Essex or rural areas in the East of England and England as a whole. Nationally, there are significantly more holiday and second homes in rural areas of the country. Around three quarters of residents in rural England are living in owned accommodation.

## What the evidence doesn't say...

Perhaps the most striking finding from the work the Partnership has been doing to gather together all the evidence on rural Essex is what is missing.

A lot of the available analysis of Essex's rural economy relies on findings from the 2011 Census, which means figures on key issues like business profiles, education and skills are five years out of date. Extracting figures for Essex from the available national data is often a laborious and error-prone process. There are significant gaps in available information on key issues like broadband development, rural tourism and access to rented and social housing.

A key part of our work on an evidence resource for rural Essex will be to engage with national and local government on the quality and availability of rural data. The more we know about what is happening in rural Essex the better we can represent our rural communities, and assess and highlight the rural impact of policies and service models.

There are also challenges in understanding and interpreting the data we have. In particular, it would be helpful to be able to separate out people who live in rural Essex but do not work there from those who work there too. This is not possible with a lot of the statistical resources that are currently available.

*A full evidence report to accompany this strategy is available on the ERP website, along with the findings of our 2015 survey of rural residents and businesses.*

## Rural Essex: Key messages from the evidence

- Over a third of people in Essex live in rural areas.
- A quarter of the working population live in rural areas.
- More than half of people in rural England are 45 or older.
- In 2013-14 the population of rural Essex increased by about 60,000.

### Prosperity

- Average earnings are higher in rural Essex than urban areas of the county.
- House prices are higher in rural Essex.
- 5,000 homes are off the mains gas grid and vulnerable to fuel poverty.
- Transport costs account for about 12 per cent of weekly disposable income in remote rural areas.

### Growth and innovation

- Rural areas add £210 billion 'Gross Value Added' to the national economy.
- Productivity in rural areas is 17% lower than in urban areas.
- Around 22,500 businesses are located in rural Essex.
- Nearly a quarter of workers in rural areas work from home.

### Well-being

- People in rural areas tend to live longer and are more likely than their urban counterparts to describe their health as 'very good' or 'good'.
- 1 in 8 residents in rural Essex provide unpaid care to family or friends.
- Sixty per cent of rural households in Essex are within two kilometres of a GP's surgery, but some have much further to go.

### Connection

- Over 11 million day visits were made to the Essex countryside in 2014.
- By February 2016 fibre optic broadband had been expanded to 77% of rural Essex, with a commitment to 95% coverage.
- Residents of rural Essex are more likely than those in urban areas to own a car or van, and to have two or three vehicles, but about 1 in 10 households do not have their own transport.
- In 2012, only half of households in rural England had a regular bus service, compared to 96% of urban households.
- 28% of children in rural areas have 'reasonable' cycle access to secondary school compared to 56% in urban areas.





- 1.1. A 'thriving economy' is at the heart of our 2020 Vision for Rural Essex. Business is one of the keys to the well-being of rural communities and a critical contributor to Essex's economy. Our rural businesses contribute to vibrant, resilient and connected rural communities too. Farming is critical for rural communities, but it is not the largest employer and is only one component in a diverse economy, which is also the home to many innovative new businesses.
- 1.2 Our 2020 Vision set out a range of issues and actions. It placed a particular emphasis on our role in four key areas:
  - Supporting the expansion of broadband coverage;
  - Developing a compelling narrative to bring out what is special and unique about rural Essex, not only to support rural tourism, but also to inspire potential investors with a vision of our county and its countryside;
  - Providing focus, co-ordination and platform for a wide range of partners involved in developing the rural economy in Essex;
  - Acting as a conduit for sharing information about training and skills opportunities.
- 1.3 There is real progress to celebrate, and significant work left to do, to fully realise our ambitions for 2020. On broadband, we have supported the Superfast Essex programme, with over 50,000 homes and businesses benefiting to date. We particularly welcomed the Rural Challenge pilot project which is working with Gigaclear PLC to bring Fibre-to-the-Premises technology to more than 4,500 properties in Epping Forest.
- 1.4 While we do not know as much about rural tourism as we would like, we do know that the Essex countryside welcomed over 11 million day visitors in 2014.
- 1.5 We have celebrated Essex's success in securing further investment through the Rural Development Programme for England. Essex Rivers Local Action Group secured £1.8 million for a LEADER programme to provide support for rural businesses and community enterprises in Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Colchester, Maldon and Rochford. This is one of four initiatives across Essex, making available £7.2million and working in the rural economy in support of our 2020 vision, and with a particular focus on small and micro-businesses and developing rural tourism.
- 1.6 The Partnership has contributed to debates at national and regional level. We have welcomed the Defra plan for productivity in rural areas, and look forward to providing support and challenge as this is implemented. This highlights the £210 billion of value created in 'predominantly rural' areas across England in one year, and explains that rural areas in England support 15% of all jobs and around half a million businesses. The Defra plan echoes ERP priorities including extensive, fast and reliable broadband, high quality mobile communications and education and training, including expanding rural apprenticeships. These things are all key if we are to deliver the Government's ambition to drive up rural productivity in our county.



- 1.7 Our agenda has also been supported by the first rural strategy of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, the business-led body responsible for driving economic growth across East Sussex, Essex, Kent, Medway, Southend and Thurrock. This sets out a vision for 'a growing rural economy with a highly skilled workforce in full employment' with 'the establishment of new businesses, the development of existing ones, increased job opportunities and a thriving culture of entrepreneurship to support this vision'. We look forward to monitoring and supporting progress across the South East in implementing this strategy.

### OUR PRIORITIES FOR 2016-20

- 1a We will continue to provide both support and challenge to the superfast broadband programme to help address inadequate broadband and mobile connectivity – in particular, we expect to see the Rural Challenge pilot looking to reach out to other parts of rural Essex.
- 1b We have also become increasingly aware of the limited information that we have about our rural economy, and will be working with partners to address this, as we develop our new evidence resource.
- 1c We will seek to maximise the benefits of programmes and projects which encourage economic growth and job creation. We will also identify, support, and where appropriate lead on, opportunities to bring new programmes to Essex.
- 1d We will work with partners to remove barriers to diversification for land-based businesses.
- 1e We will encourage use of redundant buildings, especially those with historical merit, and we will explore the potential for under-utilised and redundant buildings to be adapted to support rural development.

*Related chapters: 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9*



- 2.1. Our 2020 Vision for rural Essex set out our ambition to ensure all rural residents are able to access training and education at all stages of life 'whether they are school leavers, in work or considering a career change', and that provision caters for all levels and types of skill and knowledge.
- 2.2. Providing the best possible educational experience for children and young people in rural areas along with the skills development to support our rural economy are at the heart of our 2020 Vision. Equally, we are passionate that everyone in our rural communities should have opportunities to learn new things and expand their horizons. We also need to continue to develop the resources to educate communities, visitors and businesses about our natural environment, rural history and traditions, which is closely linked to our ambitions for expanding rural tourism.
- 2.3. The ERP is committed to retaining rural schools wherever possible. As well as providing a good education, these schools can play an important role in bringing together our rural communities. We recognise that demographic change is reducing the demand for places in some of Essex's village schools and that there is a need to respond flexibly and innovatively to this. Can more schools work more collaboratively – for example, in 'school clusters' - to ensure their long-term future, while improving access to staff and creating new opportunities for joint learning and curriculum development? What further opportunities are there for diversifying the use of school buildings in our communities?
- 2.4. We will also be monitoring the impact of academisation on rural schools. Rural schools may be more sustainable if they join academy chains, and this can bring similar benefits to other kinds of 'school cluster'. There is, however, a risk that academy chains will not consider smaller rural schools to be financially viable. As well as continuing to engage with local authorities, the ERP will engage with academy providers to make the case for our rural schools and to support them to develop good and sustainable models for rural education.
- 2.5. We will also be highlighting rural education through our work on rural connectivity. Getting children to and from school safely – and healthily too – is a key objective for our transport system. Broadband is an important educational asset.
- 2.6. While rural Essex is generally well qualified, the picture is complicated by the fact that many people who live in rural Essex do not work there, and not all will have skills or experience relevant to the particular needs of the rural economy. In some rural districts there is a notable skills shortage, evidenced with higher than average levels of workers with no qualifications, when compared to the national average of 8.8%, including Maldon (13.2%) and Tendring (16.4%). This is not consistent across the county, however, as some other districts rate better than the national average. Despite a largely positive educational and skills profile for our rural areas, the Government has recently said that businesses in rural areas are more likely than their urban counterparts to outsource work, withdraw from markets and experience delays in developing new products and services as a result of skills shortages.



- 2.7. The Government's 10 point plan for rural productivity highlights the importance of education and skills, and the potential impact of existing government programmes, including 'fairer funding for schools' and apprenticeships. It makes a specific commitment to triple apprenticeships in food and farming, and help 'small tourism businesses to provide more, high quality apprenticeships'. A new apprenticeship levy on large employers is being introduced in April 2017 to deliver 3 million apprenticeship starts by 2020, with the potential to boost the rural economy.
- 2.8. Our ambitions have since been echoed in the South East Local Enterprise Partnership's Rural Strategy, which includes a commitment to 'develop the skills of the rural workforce and provide opportunities for people to work, learn and achieve'. Practical steps to deliver this prospectus include: skills hubs (including at Writtle); ensuring career pathways specific to rural business needs are available to students; access to transport for post 16 year olds attending Further Education colleges; and piloting innovative ways to deliver services to rural communities, including web and digital learning.

#### OUR PRIORITIES FOR 2016-20

- 2a We will engage with Government to ensure it delivers in Essex on its pledge to increase apprenticeships in rural areas to support food, farming and small tourism businesses, and support high quality apprenticeships in our communities.
- 2b We will engage with local authorities and academy providers to ensure the long term future of rural schools.

*Related chapters: 1, 8*



## Chapter 3: Farming for the future

- 3.1. From the high point of 147 metres at Chrishall common in the north west of the county the landscape of Essex unfolds with a range of soil types that have been adapted for agriculture over the centuries. The thinner chalk soils of the North West provide an open farming landscape that gives way to a gently undulating, chalky boulder clay plateau, the undulations being caused by the numerous small-scale river valleys that dissect the underlying geology. These glacial deposits are principally used for combinable crops while the river valleys support many grazing livestock.
- 3.2. Further south the soils change to a thin band of gravelly deposits that originally supported heathland; beyond this the heavy London clay provides a poorer quality soil that becomes waterlogged in winter and cracks and shrinks alarmingly in summer. Better quality grade one soil is found in areas that contain alluvial deposits from the Thames and other rivers in the area as they formed and changed position over time. These have led to pockets of intensive horticulture and specialist production.
- 3.3. The quality of these soils mean Essex is primarily an arable county with the focus on cereal production and combinable crops. The county accounts for 17% of the Eastern region's farmland.
- 3.4. The county's total farmed area in 2010 was 253,198 hectares (ha) spread over 2,323 holdings. This gives an average farm size of 109 ha, or 269 acres, which is 30% larger than the English average. Overall 69% of Essex is farmland. Arable cropping covers over 76% of Essex farmland with wheat being the most important crop, covering 43% of the farmed land. Nationally Essex has 3% of the farmland but has 6% of the wheat crop. Oilseed rape is the second most important crop covering 16% of the arable land.
- 3.5. While Essex is no longer a big cattle and sheep producing area, the county still has 38,900 ha of grassland, some 15% of the farmed area. Much of this is coastal grazing and meadowland along the various river valleys that drain across the county.
- 3.6. According to Natural England figures, in November 2012 there were 979 agri-environment agreements in place in Essex, with 153,134 hectares of the county managed under one or more of these agreements. There are over 4,000 miles of public rights of way across the county.
- 3.7. The gross value added of agriculture in Essex stands at £111 million (Defra 2010), representing 1.8% of England's total. In 2010 there were over 8,000 people directly employed in farming within the county.
- 3.8. Key grain processing sites include flour mills at Tilbury (Allied and ADM), Chelmsford (Marriages), Maldon (Greens) and Mistley (EDME) with major maltings at Witham (Bairds) and Mistley (Crisp Anglia Maltings). Major cereal and oilseed export facilities exist at Harwich and Tilbury, where cargoes up to 50,000 tonnes can be handled. Milk is currently processed at Hatfield Peverel and Dagenham and there are a number of abattoirs across the county.



- 3.9. Important pockets of horticulture exist: Tiptree is a major producer of fruit and preserves and is involved in innovative growing techniques, product development and community and education initiatives. The Lea Valley has traditionally been the heart of fresh food production for London and still has the largest concentration of glasshouses in the UK employing over 2,500 workers. For a period the Lee Valley held the largest concentration of glasshouses in the world. While the scale under glass has since contracted, output has been maintained through innovation and notable productivity gains. Further east, Tendring and Colchester have a number of innovative salad and root crop growers. Water resource is critical to these growers and they have demonstrated the kind of forward thinking crucial to future economic success.
- 3.10. Essex has a reputation for production of certain foods which are unique to, or have special association with, a particular area, including salt (Maldon) and oysters (Mersea Island and Maldon). There is also an abundance of local breweries and vineyards, helping to improve the quality of the food and drink that Essex offers to residents and tourists alike. Whilst some of these products are available direct from the producer, and some are distributed via larger retailers, there are also a large number of farm shops and farmers markets, helping to rebuild the connection between the food people eat and the farm where it was produced.

OUR PRIORITIES FOR 2016-20

3a We will help to promote and develop a food and farming sector that is resilient to global commodity price fluctuations by creating a dynamic and forward looking business environment and infrastructure.

3b We will support the food and farming sector to meet the challenges of climate change by exploring approaches that either protect against the negative impacts or enhance the positive aspects of climate change.

3c We will encourage developments that support and enhance the food supply chains across the county to help integrate local food production with the wider Essex population.

*Related chapters: 1, 4, 9, 10*



- 4.1. Tourism is a key economic driver and employer which contributes £2.9billion to the local economy and creates 55,000 jobs. There is a need to create low-impact sustainable tourism that cherishes, not destroys, and which builds environmental awareness as well as contributing to the local economy and supporting jobs. It must take into account the needs of the environment, local residents, businesses and visitors.
- 4.2. Our 2020 Vision for rural Essex set out a desire to promote Essex as a visitor destination. We identified a need for further promotion and awareness of the county and its countryside and attractions, giving it a sense of place and its own identity.
- 4.3. The diverse Essex rural landscape has so much to offer but it needs to be clearly packaged for the visitor so that they know what they can experience when they are in the county. The attractions, outdoor pursuits, pubs, restaurants, tea rooms, farm shops and accommodation providers need to work together on a collaborated product which sells the destination experience. The visitor needs to know what is unique about the Essex countryside to entice them to visit over competitor destinations. There is a need to work with Visit Essex to ensure consistency of messaging and co-ordination of activity.
- 4.4. The rural landscape and product is for visitors and residents alike to enjoy and local residents should be encouraged to enjoy what is on their doorstep. It is important to ensure economic growth is maintained and that the rural tourism product is developed, sustained and of a high quality in order to attract visitor spend. There are many opportunities for product development working with local farmers and existing businesses on diversification and expansion and land owners and planning authorities on new products.
- 4.5. As well as countryside recreation, Essex has a rural coastline which, at over 350 miles, is the longest coastline in the UK. The coast attracts a large number of visitors, accounting for over 15% of tourist visits within the county. Whilst the coastline is punctuated by seaside towns, including Clacton-on-Sea, Maldon and Southend-on-Sea, it is predominantly rural in nature. The England Coast Path is expected to be completed by 2020, and this will include new stretches of pathway along the Essex coast, providing new right of access for walkers. Work on the northern section, beginning near Manningtree, has already commenced, with further phases moving south towards Tilbury, all expected to be in preparation by 2018-19. This will create a pathway along the full length of the Essex coastline.
- 4.6. Amongst specific attractions rural Essex boasts are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's), castles, zoos, farm parks, gardens, railway preservation societies, windmills and historic buildings, including the 7th century Chapel of St Peter-on-the-wall at Bradwell-on-Sea.
- 4.7. Tourism should not be seen in isolation but should help to support the other key areas for example, the local economy, food and agriculture, education, culture & heritage, health, communities, and the natural environment.

- 4.8. The challenges of rural tourism in the county also need to be acknowledged, for example access, quality, lack of awareness, perception, lack of accommodation, the impact of external influences (e.g. foot and mouth) and the fragmentation of the industry. Some specific practical considerations have also been raised by ERP members, including the potential to review seasonal occupancy conditions, which can restrict the use of caravans and chalets for holiday makers to the March to October period.
- 4.9. In the Rural Strategy of SELEP, published in 2015, one of the strategic objectives for the rural economy is to 'Support the development of sustainable rural tourism to maximise the rich cultural, historical, landscape, health and wellbeing visitor offer'.
- 4.10. Tourism is also identified as one of the priority areas for support through the four Leader areas covering Essex (Essex Rivers, Wool Towns, Heritage Coast and Eastern Plateau), which offer financial support to businesses wishing to expand and increase employment.

#### OUR PRIORITIES FOR 2016-20

- 4a We will facilitate sustainable tourism development,
- 4b We will work with Visit Essex and local partners to promote rural Essex, package the tourism offer and give it an identity.
- 4c We will support the development of the England Coast Path in Essex

*Related chapters: 1, 3, 5, 7, 10*





- 5.1. Rural Essex has a rich and varied cultural heritage, and rural communities are living cultures too. This heritage includes, for example, battlefields and gardens, country parks and scheduled buildings and monuments. Its landscapes inspired John Constable's paintings and now provide idyllic rural settings for successful television programmes. It includes some of the oldest recorded settlements in Britain. Rural life is changing and developing and there are real opportunities to build on this heritage for new times.
- 5.2. Essex is not home to a wealth of large properties owned by large national charities, when compared to neighbouring counties, but it does boast some interesting built and natural heritage which is available for public access. Houses of note include Layer Marney Tower, Ingatestone Hall and Hylands House; whilst non-built attractions with cultural interest include RHS Hyde Hall gardens near Chelmsford and Beth Chatto gardens near Colchester. English Heritage owns the majestic Audley End House (used as a backdrop for music events in summer months) as well as some smaller properties, and The National Trust owns and maintains Paycocke's Barn in Coggeshall and historic Hatfield Forest in Uttlesford. There are also buildings of architectural interest scattered throughout our towns and villages, such as Thaxted Guildhall.
- 5.3. Parish churches continue to provide the most visible and distinctive landmarks for many villages and rural settlements. Two thirds of Church of England churches (10,199) are in rural areas of England. Essex contains around 400 listed CofE church buildings, as well as non-conformist chapels and Roman Catholic churches. Rural schools also contribute to the cultural life of village communities.
- 5.4. Rural Essex also features a number remarkable barns including those at Cressing Temple where the Barley barn has been dated to 1205 and is the oldest standing timber framed barn in the world. The wheat barn at the site was built in 1257, a similar age to the National Trust owned Grange Barn at Coggeshall.
- 5.5. Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) estimates that there are 10,000 village halls in England, with a total asset value of around £3 billion, which is 'the largest network of community owned facilities in rural Britain' (see below). Three quarters provide venues for artistic and cultural activities.
- 5.6. Heritage sites, listed churches, village halls, rural schools and, of course, the natural landscape enable a distinctive rural culture to flourish and attract visitors to rural Essex. Rural life needs to change and develop too, and there are challenges in adapting this heritage for new times – for example, in how church and school buildings and facilities are being used for and by local communities and visitors.
- 5.7. Our 2020 Vision set out a number of ambitions for rural heritage and culture. We made a commitment to our heritage features and buildings and their upkeep. We welcomed the Essex County Records Office's coverage of heritage issues. We pledged support for measures to maintain and improve the rich diversity of rural Essex, including heritage and culture. We gave our support for farmers, land managers and landowners who manage their land in ways that improve biodiversity, geodiversity and heritage diversity.

- 5.8. Key aspects of this agenda for rural Essex are being taken forward by researchers and campaigners nationally, including the Church of England's strategy for growing the rural church ('Released for Mission'), and RCCE's focus on Village Halls. There are also opportunities to work with The National Trust and Historic England. For example, Historic England – which is an arm's-length public body of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport – has a programme of work on rural heritage, including a National Farmstead Assessment Framework and a strategy for working with places of worship.
- 5.9. Essex's LEADER programme also presents new opportunities to make the most of our rural heritage – for example, to support our tourism offer.

#### OUR PRIORITIES FOR 2016-20

- 5a We will continue to work with partners on creative approaches to ensuring our historic buildings remain at the heart of rural communities, for example, in the use of church spaces for community groups and shops.
- 5b We will develop closer links to national bodies to ensure their programmes are aware of and engaged with issues and opportunities in rural Essex.
- 5c We will assist in promoting our heritage to a wider audience.

*Related chapters: 4, 8, 10*



## Chapter 6: Securing a place to live

- 6.1. The Government has recognised the importance of developing rural housing, and there are good opportunities for ERP to inform and shape policy. The issues are not straightforward, with a need for a range of housing options, recognising the diverse needs and resources of individuals and families in our rural communities, as well as the challenge of balancing development with custodianship of the rural environment.
- 6.2. Our 2020 Vision for Rural Essex called for the provision of “sufficient affordable housing in rural areas to meet the immediate needs of those with local links”. With house prices in the county averaging £290,753 (Rightmove, January 2016) in 2015 rising to £450,300 in a rural district such as Uttlesford (Hometrack, August 2015), improving the provision of such housing is essential in order to directly address the aspirations and life chances of local people and their families. At present, people on lower incomes are being priced out of the market in rural areas where they have jobs and extended families. This has knock on consequences for the economy and for the sustainability of communities.
- 6.3. The Rural Housing Enabler service provided by Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) in partnership with registered housing providers, local authorities and parish councils has continued to make progress in providing small scale schemes based on the evidence of housing needs surveys and developed on exception sites provided at a discount by philanthropic landowners. This is encouraging, but the report of the Rural Housing Policy Review Group, sponsored by Hastoe Housing Association, illustrated that in 2015 just 2,279 new affordable rural homes had been built nationwide in the previous year, when a fair share would have been 7,500.
- 6.4. The Government has indicated its commitment to increasing the availability of housing in rural areas, whilst pledging to protect the Green Belt and countryside. The 2016 to 2021 Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme will facilitate an increased supply of shared ownership and other affordable homes in England through a £4.7 billion capital grant. At the end of 2015, the Government also announced £1.1 million of new funding to support two new garden towns, including one in North Essex. The creation of garden towns will impact on rurality, and we will be keeping a close eye on developments.
- 6.5. In the Housing and Planning Act which received the royal assent in May 2016, the Government commits to augment this by providing 200,000 Starter Homes across the country, offered at a 20% discount for first-time buyers under the age of 40. The Chancellor’s autumn statement committed £2.3 billion to deliver 60,000 such homes by 2020/21.
- 6.6. Registered providers have expressed concern that the Government’s focus on starter homes, which has been underscored by its announcement that such homes will in future qualify as ‘affordable housing’, could impede the provision of other forms of housing for people in rural communities who are not yet in a position to buy a home. However, in a significant concession to the rural lobby, the Act removes the original proposal that rural exception sites (on which most affordable rural schemes have been developed) would be required to include starter homes.



- 6.7. Concerns have also been voiced around the Act's other flagship proposal, the extension of the Right to Buy to housing association properties. Without adequate protection for rural schemes, the principle of providing affordable homes in perpetuity would be extremely difficult to sustain and consequently there would be less incentive for landowners to provide discounted sites.
- 6.8. In the light of this rapidly changing context, which is further complicated by changes to the way funding for affordable schemes is made available by the Homes and Communities Agency, it is essential that registered housing providers and other partners explore new methods for delivering affordable homes. This is happening already, with cross-subsidy likely to be an increasingly important delivery mechanism. There are some excellent examples of this in Essex; including housing associations building small numbers of open market bungalows or family houses alongside affordable rental properties. Innovative approaches such as the creation of Community Land Trusts also require investigation.

### OUR PRIORITIES FOR 2016-20

- 6a We believe that the shortage of affordable housing in rural areas can only be addressed if a range of housing types and tenures, including provision of housing for rent, can be made more widely available.
- 6b We believe that provision of affordable housing should be guided by up to date evidence of local need and should prioritise meeting the needs of local residents.
- 6c We recognise the importance of the Rural Housing Enabler service but in view of the changing strategic context would encourage providers that support the service to explore new approaches to delivering affordable homes.

**Related chapters: 1, 7, 8, 9, 10**



- 7.1. Accessing the right services at the right time can be more of a challenge in rural communities, but equally they may benefit most from the wider trend towards new service models, including diversification to make the most of buildings and facilities and approaches that identify, support and mobilise community assets and networks.
- 7.2. Our 2020 Vision for Rural Essex said that “People in rural areas should have affordable and readily available access to essential services, transport and infrastructure”. Since then, the national debate over the provision of public services has intensified, with the Government’s long-term commitment to reducing public expenditure matched by an ambitious agenda for public service reform, which has already included reorganisation of the NHS. The way in which many public services are delivered in rural Essex, as elsewhere, looks set to undergo further change in the years ahead.
- 7.3. This debate has particular resonance in rural areas, partly, because of the demographic profile – 23% of the rural population of Essex are of pensionable age – but also because of the inherent cost and complexity of delivering services to small, dispersed populations.
- 7.4. Rural Proofing has been advocated periodically for more than a decade as a means of recognising these particular complexities. The current Government reaffirmed its commitment to the process in December 2015, when it published its response to the independent review of Rural Proofing conducted by Lord Cameron of Dillington. Rural Proofing aims to achieve equity rather than equality for rural areas with respect to the development and implementation of new policies and programmes. The test will be to see how consistently this is applied in future and to secure its acceptance as a process to be used by local service providers.
- 7.5. The public consultation that prefaced the refresh of this strategy highlighted anxiety around access to health services, particularly primary care, and concerns about the increasing risk of loneliness and social isolation, especially for elderly people and people with disabilities living in rural areas. This could intensify given demographic trends which suggest that across England as a whole the over 65 population will grow by 27% in the ten years to 2021.
- 7.6. In 2013, Essex County Council commissioned an independent enquiry into the future of health and social care in the county which resulted in the publication of the ‘Who will care?’ report. One of the outcomes from this was the creation of the Community Agents Essex service, run by a partnership of Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE), Age UK Essex, British Red Cross and Essex Neighbourhood Watch, and funded by the County Council. The service, which operates in urban and rural areas, helps vulnerable elderly people retain their independence. Through early intervention it can also reduce the demand on public services.
- 7.7. As other services are reduced in rural areas, so providing affordable and flexible transport solutions will become more important. Levels of car ownership are traditionally higher in rural areas, where ownership of more than one car can be a necessity rather than a luxury even for families on low incomes. Essex County Council recently completed a review of its contracted bus services which primarily serve rural areas. This has signalled a greater focus on demand responsive transport, drawing on the success of the Dengie Dart service, run by a private operator on the Dengie peninsula in Maldon district since 2011.

- 7.8. Rural communities have a proud tradition of stepping in to run services that in an urban area would be provided on a commercial or statutory basis. In Essex today, there are a string of community-run shops (many including a sub-post office) and even some pubs, sustained by the efforts of volunteers. If more communities are to have the confidence to take action in this way, they will require accessible advice and support, including financial assistance, and a light-touch regulatory regime.
- 7.9. Village Halls endure in rural communities when other services disappear and with sustained support for the volunteer trustees that manage them, they could be used more to host services that would otherwise be lost to the community.
- 7.10. Rural libraries are less prevalent than they once were, but a proportion of the 74 static libraries in Essex are found in villages, particularly in the north of the county. As well as access to reading material, all libraries offer free internet and WiFi access. Some libraries are being developed as community hubs, enabling them to be used by community groups; others offer job clubs whilst others play host to local services. For those communities without a static library, the mobile library services visits on a fortnightly basis.
- 7.11. The improved availability of high speed broadband in rural areas, particular through the *Superfast Essex* programme, provides an important opportunity to explore ways in which technology can be used to improve access to services.

#### OUR PRIORITIES FOR 2016-20

- 7a We will encourage the development of effective rural proofing processes for use by local service providers.
- 7b We will support initiatives that improve access to health care, support independent living and reduce isolation and loneliness in rural areas.
- 7c We will encourage the development of innovative and sustainable transport solutions, which are responsive to the needs of dispersed rural populations.
- 7d We will ensure that support is available to facilitate community enterprise and other initiatives that strengthen the provision of essential local services.
- 7e We will encourage non-commercial solutions to providing the transport that is necessary to reach essential and valued services .

*Related chapters: 1, 6, 8, 9*





- 8.1. Our 2020 Vision for Rural Essex recognised that “active and inclusive communities are essential to maintain sustainability in rural areas.” It further recognised that effective local leadership is critical if communities are to fully realise their potential. There is a great deal of inspiring community activity to celebrate and build upon.
- 8.2. Parish and Town Councils which provide the most local tier of government across almost the entire rural area of Essex, are well placed to offer such leadership. Many Councils in Essex play an active role that extends beyond their immediate, statutory responsibilities, and some rural councils have received formal accreditation under the new, nationally recognised Local Council Award Scheme. This is managed by the Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC), which retains 100% of councils in membership. In keeping with the current political focus on devolution and localism, some larger councils are exploring opportunities to take responsibility for services previously provided by the principal authorities.
- 8.3. Community Led Planning, as championed by Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE), and supported by the Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC), is a popular way of empowering local communities. It encourages the parish council and other community interests to work together to produce a coherent plan for the future. More than 150 communities in Essex have engaged in Community Led Planning, principally through the production of Parish Plans.
- 8.4. The 2011 Localism Act initiated a change of focus for community led planning with its introduction of statutory Neighbourhood Planning. This gives communities the power to prepare a Plan for their area which will give them the ability to influence development locally, subject to compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework (another provision of the Localism Act) and the Local Plan. A Neighbourhood Plan cannot propose less development than advocated by the Local Plan and to be adopted it has to be approved by a referendum. After a cautious start, an increasing number of Essex parishes are now engaging in Neighbourhood Planning.
- 8.5. The Localism Act also introduced a raft of new ‘community rights’ with the aim of giving communities more power to shape their own future. These include the Community Right to Buy, which encourages communities to register assets of community value – sites that provide a service or facility of value to the community – in order to delay any prospect of immediate disposal.
- 8.6. Every facet of community life in rural Essex is heavily dependent on volunteers. This includes the running of clubs and societies, the provision of care and support to the vulnerable, and the management of facilities such as village halls. Most halls are registered charities, maintained and managed not by the local authority or parish council but by volunteer trustees. According to ACRE’s latest national survey of halls published in 2014, such volunteers cumulatively devote 9.6 million hours to this task every year.
- 8.7. Village Halls continue to provide a focal point for community life in rural areas, catering for activities for all ages and interests, hosting meetings and events for the whole community and increasingly providing a base for services that might otherwise have been lost to the village. The ACRE survey also showed that nationally nearly a quarter of halls are more than 100 years old. This emphasises the continued need for funding to support redevelopment and modernisation. In this respect, the contribution made in Essex by the County Council’s Community Initiatives Fund (CIF) has been quite outstanding.

- 8.8. According to ACRE, the average age of a village hall trustee is 58. Many retired people bring invaluable professional skills and experience to the management of halls and indeed many other community activities. However, for future sustainability it is essential more younger people are encouraged to volunteer. In an age of lengthy commutes to work and irregular working hours, this will be a formidable challenge.
- 8.9. The Volunteer Essex website helps to match volunteers with opportunities to volunteer in their local area. It also offers advice and guidance for potential volunteers and for organisations looking to recruit volunteers.
- 8.10. For communities to thrive their residents need to be empowered. This often requires support from infrastructure organisations in the voluntary sector, who can provide advice, training and practical support. More locally, the Local Council sector, using their wealth of powers, can articulate the needs, wants and aspirations of the community to fund local groups and locally based activities.

#### OUR PRIORITIES FOR 2016-20

- 8a We will encourage initiatives that promote leadership from parish and town councils and local voluntary organisations.
- 8b We will encourage the devolution of responsibilities to local communities in appropriate circumstances.
- 8c We will promote the benefits of Neighbourhood Planning and other measures that give communities greater influence over their future development.
- 8d We will support those who give of their time to keep community facilities available for those who live and work in rural areas
- 8e We will encourage de-regulation to reduce barriers to volunteering.

*Related chapters: 2, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10*



- 9.1. **A safe and secure environment is an essential pre-requisite for a thriving community.**
- 9.2. Crime levels are relatively low in most rural areas, but perception of crime can be a problem, particularly given the changing requirements of modern policing; only 31% of people responding to our survey are confident that they feel safe in rural areas all of the time. Police and Community Support Officers (PCSOs) had proved a useful resource in many rural areas, but the number of PCSOs in the county was reduced from 250 to 60 last year in a strategic transformation programme announced by Essex Police in response to reductions in funding.
- 9.3. Parish Councils and voluntary groups are able to initiate and manage other projects which can help to make rural communities safe places to live. One example is Community Speedwatch, which enables volunteers to compliment the work done by the Police Force to enforce speed limits in built-up areas. Our survey showed that 61% of Essex residents have felt unsafe due to traffic conditions in rural areas over the last 12 months. Another example is Neighbourhood Watch (and the other Watch schemes, including Farm Watch and Horse Watch) where volunteers are able to assist the Police in sharing information to best protect people and property.
- 9.4. Rural crimes, such as hare coursing, may not make the headlines, but are still evident and in some places in Essex incidents are increasing. Diesel theft and theft of agricultural machinery are also a problem for farmers and landowners. Essex is known to suffer badly from fly-tipping, which creates a particular nuisance (and cost) for landowners.
- 9.5. Rural policing is still a concern with 51% of respondents to our survey citing a lack of police presence as a reason why they have felt unsafe over the last 12 months.
- 9.6. There have been more positive developments. Essex's first elected Police and Crime Commissioner, Nick Alston, established a Forum on Rural Crime to facilitate better engagement between Essex Police and representatives of the farming and wider rural community. The Forum is briefed by Essex Police on the operation of specialist schemes such as Farm Watch and on the development of a dedicated team of Rural Special Constables, who have a brief to focus on specifically rural crimes such as hare coursing and the theft of agricultural machinery.

#### OUR PRIORITIES FOR 2016-20

- 9a **We will encourage the Police and Crime Commissioner for Essex and Essex Police to support community safety initiatives that address the specific needs of rural communities and businesses.**
- 9b **We will support communities in taking local action to make their homes and environments safer**
- 9c **We will support initiatives which bring benefits to rural areas.**
- 9d **We will work with other partners to ensure our residents feel safe. This will include Essex Trading Standards and Essex Civil Protection and Emergency Management.**

**Related chapters: 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10**

- 10.1 Many natural environments are the product of the interaction between nature and humans. This is definitely the case in Essex, where all the landscape has at some time been directly or indirectly influenced by humans. Whilst human intervention is inevitable, our Vision for Rural Essex is to ensure that activity within the rural landscape is undertaken in a harmonious manner, never losing sight that a thriving rural economy and rural social benefits are dependent upon a natural environment that is biodiverse and that is also 'thriving'.
- 10.2 Essex has a variety of habitats, with the largest area of classification being arable and horticultural at 60%, and a further 18% being improved grassland.
- 10.3 There are 10 RAMSAR sites (Wetlands of International Importance) in Essex, the largest being Foulness, covering almost 10,000 ha, and the smallest being Lee Valley at just over 81 ha; this is also the only site in a district without a coastline.
- 10.4 There are 1,608 Local Wildlife Sites in Essex, covering over 15,000 ha. Distribution ranges from just 39 in Rochford up to 251 in Braintree. There are also 48 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), with Epping Forest, Braintree and Colchester claiming 27 of them, and 162 Special Roadside Verges (SRVs). 40% of the SRVs in Essex are found in Uttlesford, although this is also the only district with no LNRs in its boundary.
- 10.5 There are 78 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and 6 National Nature Reserves (NNRs) in the county, covering almost 38,000 ha in total.
- 10.6 Less than 7% of land area in Essex is woodland. Epping Forest is the largest ancient woodland of the 907 recorded in the county. There are over 5 million trees on the national tree map, with the districts of Braintree, Epping Forest and Uttlesford being home to over 700,000 each. Despite these figures, Chelmsford has the largest area of accessible woodland – and also boasts the greatest area of parks and public gardens.
- 10.7 The 2020 Vision for Rural Essex evidence base recognises that a healthy natural environment is the foundation of sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal wellbeing. It is also important to accept that an individual's or organisation's perception of what constitutes a natural environment, its potential use, preservation and access will vary according to their priorities. This is the reason a holistic approach has been taken in our 2020 Vision, ensuring Environmental considerations are embedded within the six overarching priorities of this document.
- 10.8 Our 2020 Vision for the Natural Environment encompasses (but not necessarily exclusively) the following four key areas:
  - Protecting natural value through legislation and the planning system (National Planning Policy Framework);
  - Planning for low carbon infrastructure;
  - Protection of our natural environment focussing on protecting and improving our woodland, restoring our rivers and water bodies, managing our marine environment, biodiversity offsetting, and environmental land management schemes.
  - Reconnecting people and nature

- 10.9. The ability to influence and shape planning policies through Local and Neighbourhood Plans, is vital in shaping the Essex Landscape up to 2020 and beyond. By considering the benefits provided to society and our continuing economic prosperity through a vibrant and diverse natural environment it is possible to rank our environment equally against other competing considerations. Our 2020 Vision provides a focus as to the value of the natural environment and the ecosystem services and benefits it delivers for society.
- 10.10. In line with National and International policies our 2020 Vision through the evidence base has considered the changing climate and the need to reduce energy consumption and move to a low carbon economy. Where suitable the use of renewable technologies should be encouraged.
- 10.11. Our 2020 Vision supports those organisations whose role it is to manage and preserve our natural environment. It is clear from our consultation that residents do value the natural environment, this is the reason our 2020 Vision ensures residents are connected to the natural environment, because if they are not they will not embrace and protect all that makes the natural environment of Essex unique and irreplaceable.
- 10.12. Natural England is currently reviewing boundaries of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). In the case of Dedham Vale AONB the proposal is to extend into Suffolk, whilst the proposal for Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB is that the designation be extended across the Stour into Essex. ERP is supportive of the extension of these designations, which both protect our natural landscape and encourage use and enjoyment through leisure and tourism activities.
- 10.13. There are 42 volunteer groups being supported across Essex to clear public rights of way as part of the County's PROW network. Some parishes are improving public rights of way at their own expense, with a whole range of community groups supporting work that is vital in opening our natural environment and supporting rural tourism – for example, the Bridleways Association, the Ramblers Association, The Green Lane Association, The Friends of Cockaynes Wood, Hike Essex, The Wivenhoe Society and the Friends of the Flitch Way.

#### OUR PRIORITIES FOR 2016-20

- 10a We will use our influence with Defra and DECC to ensure the voice of Landowners - as 'custodians of our landscape' is represented, and funding mechanisms do not have unintended impacts upon Rural Essex.
- 10b We need to interact fully with organisations such as EPOA (Essex Planning Officers Association) and statutory bodies (e.g. Environment Agency and Natural England) and the local environmental bodies (like Essex Wildlife Trust, the National Trust and the RSPB) at a strategic/national level.
- 10c We need to ensure that the Essex Rural Partnership continues to be both 'Champion' of the rural economy, environment and society, extending our membership to those organisations/decision makers whose actions impact directly upon the environment.
- 10d We will support initiatives that record and protect the unique biodiversity found in rural Essex, and which enable this to add value to tourism and benefit economic prosperity
- 10e We will engage with Natural England and the designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in our county to ensure that ongoing boundary reviews are to the benefit of rural Essex

*Related chapters: 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9*



# What happens next: Delivering in partnership

The next four years promise to be both exciting and challenging times for rural communities in Essex. The Government's focus on rural productivity and the rural economy is an opportunity for our Partnership – working with other rural counties – to place some of the key issues identified in the 2020 Vision on the agenda nationally. The South East Local Enterprise Partnership rural strategy runs through to 2020, and provides a new link through to businesses and employers in Essex, as well as to work with our near neighbours in East Sussex and Kent.

Our LEADER projects in Essex provide a real lever to support and drive our rural economy. The continued roll out of superfast Broadband could revolutionise approaches to rural issues, including new ways of accessing services and support.

There will be challenges too, of course. We need to ensure rural Essex has a voice during a period where resources will be tight and there will be larger scale changes which will impact on rural communities, whether that is reductions in public spending, housing development or the integration of health and social care. We will ensure that partners have a voice in those discussions. We are also keen to develop our partnership to ensure all sections of the rural community are heard, and particularly our young people.

Other challenges for rural communities include: how we support the needs and recognise the contribution of an ageing population; how we ensure that improved broadband is augmenting and not displacing the face-to-face interactions in village halls, local shops, pubs, restaurants and green spaces that are the lifeblood of rural communities; and how we tackle those pockets of rural deprivation and ensure everyone in our rural community can access opportunities and services.

What happens next partly depends on how we work together to shape and realise our vision for the future at a time of change. Our Partnership is committed to continuing to play its role by bringing together key organisations to consider, debate and act on major issues affecting rural Essex, and to support and encourage partners to work together towards this shared vision. We will be producing a short annual update, to let you know how we are progressing with this strategy.

## TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN, PLEASE:

- Visit our website and find out how you can get involved with the partnership
- Sign up to our Newsletter to keep up-to-date on the latest developments
- If you are a member of the partnership (or want to be), support our meetings, help us to deliver our priorities
- Share our strategy with your networks... and do get in touch to tell us what you think

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Produced by Rural Community Council of Essex  
 with support from Essex County Council.

Rural Community Council of Essex  
 Registered Charity No. 1097009  
 Company Limited by Guarantee No. 4609624

15 August 2016

Report of	Head of Commercial Services	Author	Simon Cairns 01206 508650
Title	Colchester Northern Gateway Master Plan Review		
Wards affected	Mile End and Highwoods		

**The Local Plan Committee is asked to endorse the urban design principles set out in the review of the Master Plan for the Northern Gateway through adoption as guidance.**

## 1. Decision(s) Required

The Committee is asked to:

- 1.1 Endorse the urban design principles set out in the proposed Master Plan Review for the Northern Gateway through adoption of the Masterplan as guidance.
- 1.2 Agree that this review of the Master Plan should form the urban design framework and should then become a material consideration in the consideration of planning proposals in the Northern Gateway Area.
- 1.3 Note that further amendments to the Master Plan may be required at a later date following the conclusion of the current Local Plan preferred options process, and that following any significant amendment, the Master Plan will be brought back to members for approval.

## 2. Reasons for Decision

- 2.1 The Master Plan was first prepared four years ago and was endorsed by the Local Plan Committee for the purposes of public consultation in June 2014. Since then there has been significant change with road and facility development taking place, and further developments have been submitted as planning applications. The Local Plan has been reviewed and is currently out to consultation until mid-September 2016. As a consequence there is a need to update and review the master Plan in order to ensure it is fit for purpose, conforms to the policy framework and reflects responses received to the public consultation carried out between July and October 2014.
- 2.2 The intention behind the Master Plan is to help coordinate the development of the Colchester Northern Gateway area so that in design terms it creates a strong sense of place and an attractive destination. It was always intended that, wherever practical, new development should follow the urban design principles it sets out. The current review is intended to fulfil this purpose as the remaining land and buildings in the area are developed.

- 2.3 The master plan review is intended to bring the document up to date both in terms of the current development and future proposals and with regard to planning policy. The land use elements of the local plan options are reflected broadly in the master plan and the urban design principles relate to this.

### **3. Alternative Options**

- 3.1 The alternative option is not to review the Master Plan but to retain the existing version and to use it to help guide the consideration of future planning applications. However, this would entail using out of date information and would undermine the usefulness of the master plan as an aid to good planning and development management. The review has enabled a reconsideration of the basic principles in the light of evolving aspirations for the area and a strengthening of the value of the Master Plan as a tool. It has also provided evidence in applications for external funding which the Council regularly submits. The use of a master plan that is not up to date would clearly be limited. It was therefore decided to undertake the current review and to synchronise with the preparation of the Local Plan which itself references the master plan. Not to undertake review would have meant the potential use of out-of-date and less relevant material that could undermine the integrity of the proper planning process.

### **4. Supporting Information**

- 4.1 In June 2014 the Local Plan Committee authorised public consultation on proposals for the development of the land in the Northern Gateway. The draft Framework document was prepared by consultants Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners who were commissioned to undertake the master planning exercise and design-led workshop sessions with officers, followed by public consultation in 2014. The resulting Framework outlined general land use and urban design principles intended to guide development on the 84 hectares of land in the area adjoining Junction 28 and the Community Football Stadium owned by the Borough Council.
- 4.2 There were nine consultation events between mid-July and mid-September 2014 attracting over 760 people, and responses from 70 questionnaires from people living in the CO4 postcode area. Their comments were presented to the Local Plan Committee at its meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2014. The key issues raised are summarised in Appendix 1 to this report; the review addresses the issues raised wherever practicable.
- 4.3 The first version of the Master Plan was entitled *Cuckoo Farm Northern Gateway Vision* (June 2012). The area of interest was later extended to include the land at Mill Road sports pitches and the land to the north of the A12 which was outside the formal settlement boundary of Colchester. Cabinet approved the following Vision in September 2012:

Cuckoo Farm - Northern Gateway will be an attractive and sustainable destination for sports, leisure and business complementing the wider plans for the growth of new communities at Severalls Hospital and other sites in North Colchester.

These activities will generate a wide range of jobs and be supported by a number of activities including retailing and employment.

Northern Gateway will be an accessible, green location forming a welcoming gateway to Colchester.

The area will have a distinctive character founded on good urban design principles, with an emphasis on creating excellent buildings, streets and spaces defined by high quality architecture.

The area will benefit from a network of walking and cycling routes which create clear and attractive links into surrounding areas.

4.4 This translated into four key ambitions:

- I. A new Gateway for Colchester
- II. A cutting edge Destination for Sport and Leisure
- III. A Distinctive Place defined by Memorable buildings and spaces
- IV. An exemplary approach to Sustainability

4.5 It set out several design 'opportunities' or challenges which remain the focus of the current master plan review:

Elevated junction: major opportunity to enhance the sense of arrival.

Lack of visibility/profile: development could enhance the site's visibility and profile to passing (A12).traffic

Car-dominant form: new infrastructure will play a key role in unlocking potential. Careful design will ensure that pedestrians and cyclists feel welcome.

Integrated land parcels: promote the type of streets and spaces to ease which are conducive to pedestrian and cycle movement

Buildings, spaces and streets: design proposals will establish appropriate relationships between buildings, spaces and streets.

Stadium parking: opportunity to make better use of the car park by encouraging shared parking with new occupiers who experience demand at different times from the stadium.

Integrate the park and ride site: given its location the proposed park and ride site will be integrated into the development

Landscape legacy: Northern Gateway benefits from a distinctive network of mature field hedges and trees which have the potential to shape the future character of the Cuckoo Farm - Northern Gateway.

An attractive place: Through careful management, development will create an attractive and distinctive sense of place which will meet the aspirations of the Council and elevate Cuckoo Farm - Northern Gateway above the traditional out of town model.

4.6 From this, the 2012 Master Plan set out key design principles:

- ❖ Respond to the existing landscape structure
- ❖ Establish a central boulevard which unifies Northern Gateway
- ❖ Use planting to reinforce spaces and connections
- ❖ Promote a sustainable movement strategy
- ❖ Establish flexible and accessible building plots
- ❖ Define a clear framework for key buildings, spaces and views

## 5. Proposals

- 5.1 The Council has been working with Gillespies, an international landscape, planning and urban design consultancy to prepare a public realm strategy for the whole of the northern gateway. The aim is to provide a parkland and informal recreation setting for the formal sports facilities on the northern side of the A12 and for the commercial leisure and employment uses on the southern side. The public realm strategy is in draft form and will take the Master Plan principles further to the creation of attractive public space. Clearly in order to complete this work it is important to have an up-to-date Master Plan, and Gillespies were subsequently appointed to undertake this task in May 2016.
- 5.2 The Brief for Gillespies' was to
1. Update the current Masterplan documents to reflect on site progress over the last three years and to provide a framework for future discussions with developers
  2. To update the Master Plan to reflect the Council's emerging development aspirations
  3. To ensure the emerging public realm strategy is an integral part of the Masterplan vision and suite of supporting documents, for example the central spine boulevard taking into account access routes, important corners, views, crossroad nodes, building forms etc; incorporating historic hedgerows, mature trees and the Tower Lane boundary; building plots and range of appropriate uses
  4. To build upon the existing Master Plan vision by developing some high level design principles for the area including heights, massing, sustainability etc.
  5. To re-examine the broad phasing plan and next steps.
- 5.3 Gillespies have been required to work alongside the Council's appointed transport consultants for the Northern Gateway, JMP, as well as the ecology and arboricultural consultants, leisure consultants and architects as appropriate. They have also engaged in discussion with key developers, including Turnstone, whose full and reserved matters planning applications for a range of leisure-related uses on the plot adjoining the east of the football stadium is currently under consideration. The proposals accord broadly with principles contained in the National Planning Policy Framework, the Local Plan Preferred Options and the ideas expressed in the draft Myland and Braiswick Neighbourhood Plan. The intention is to create a place of regional importance whilst acknowledging local community needs and aspirations.
- 5.4 The Review of the Master Plan therefore takes the original concepts and guiding principles and has tested them against current planning and design circumstances. It takes on board the proposals for the broad land use zones in the Local Plan Preferred Options and consultants have illustrated overall design guidance that would apply across the land use zone character areas. Sustainable energy use, water conservation and construction are key principles.
- 5.5 The draft Master Plan Review is attached at Appendix 2. It has five principal components: (i) The central spine comprising the Leisure Promenade and The Boulevard; (ii) The Circus: a central crossing point of the Boulevard over the Northern Approach Road; (iii) the A12 crossing point and principal access into the gateway; (iv) parkland for informal recreation around the principal sports areas on the northern side; and (v) Strong urban form with frontages creating focal points for views, landmarks and nodes for public art. Each is detailed below.



- 5.6 (i) The Boulevard:
- The concept has been retained as the creation of a pedestrian and cycle friendly link. It would have two different 'characters' on either side of the NAR roundabout. The Leisure Promenade would extend west along Stadium Way; the eastern route would be called 'The Boulevard' and would lead as a pedestrian and cycling priority area through the employment and mixed use zones to the residential areas along Mill Road.
  - The Boulevard will have dominant frontages giving this linear space grandeur identified primarily as the employment sites on either side.
  - The Boulevard will open out at key points to receive the north-south pedestrian routes, access from Axial Way or to provide a setting for key buildings.
  - Soft landscaping will help define these opened out passive recreation areas and will be supplemented with public art. At some of these points The Boulevard will be 'crossed' by the existing and enhanced hedgerows which run SW/NE across the whole site as a relic of former agricultural use.
  - It has been proposed to strengthen the edge of the Turnstone site on the Leisure Promenade using trees to try to achieve the continuity of presence of this important route and urban feature along Stadium Way.
- 5.7 (ii) The Circus will be created as The Boulevard crosses over the Northern Approach Road, expanding the public realm and creating two plazas on the southern side. It is a dominant node with scope for public art linking in the new, proposed and existing commercial leisure and employment mixed uses.
- 5.8 (iii) Connectivity over the A12. It is essential to improve pedestrian safety by working with the transport consultants, Essex County Council and Highways England to improve the pavement areas and to achieve safe crossing over the A12 slip roads. Longer term options include a wide underpass beneath the A12 itself, and eventually a new bridge crossing remains the aspiration if funds and circumstances permit.
- 5.9 (iv) Parkland primarily on the northern side sees the creation of informal routes and will permit connection to existing footpath and bridle ways. Landscaping will include protection and enhancement of the striking oak trees and hedgerows, the integration of public art and incorporation of informal sitting areas.
- 5.10 (v) Strong Urban Form: The Master Plan sets out the preferred heights, building massing, key landmarks, lighting and views to which building lines and frontages will be required to conform. Character will respect the rural hinterland and be more informal around the sports pitches north of the A12 and become more 'urban' to the south of the A12. Density and plot ratios will increase along the boulevard and around The Circus with a residential cluster fronting the community open space at Mill Road, incorporating local ancillary facilities such as a coffee shop or community meeting space. To the west uses will be more commercial and deliver a high number of jobs and training opportunities.

## 6. Strategic Plan References

- 6.1 The scheme will “Promote Colchester to attract further inward investment and additional businesses, providing greater and more diverse employment and tourist opportunities”
- 6.2 The scheme will “Regenerate our Borough through buildings, employment, leisure and infrastructure” by providing a new high quality destination, together with employment growth.
- 6.3 The proposal contributes to the Council’s aim to “Become commercially focused and even more business-like in order to be free of government grant by 2017” by delivering a substantial new income stream.
- 6.4 The proposed development will support the Council’s objective to “Create the right environment for people to develop and flourish in all aspects of life both business and pleasure” by creating a new sports and leisure hub, within which new businesses can be developed as well as residents using the facilities during their leisure time.
- 6.5 The preferred development is expected to “Promote Colchester’s heritage and wide ranging tourism attractions to enhance our reputation as a destination”
- 6.6 The proposed legal and financial structures will support the Council’s ambition to “Be clear about the major opportunities to work in partnership with public, private and voluntary sectors to achieve more for Colchester than we could on our own.
- 6.7 It is anticipated that the preferred scheme will make a significant contribution to the Council’s wish to “Cultivate Colchester’s green spaces and opportunities for health, wellbeing and the enjoyment of all”

## **7. Consultation**

- 7.1 As outlined in section 4.1 there was extensive consultation on the first draft of the Master Plan. Since that time the Council has shared the emerging draft principles with key sports and community stakeholders as part of the engagement process for the Northern gateway sports project as a whole. No further public consultation is proposed at this stage.

## **8.0 Publicity Considerations**

- 8.1 None directly though the Master Plan is referenced as a requirement in the Local Plan Preferred Options.

## **9. Financial Implications**

- 9.1 None arising directly from the Master Plan though implementing some of the design ideas such as the boulevard may involve the Council in infrastructure expenditure and for which funding applications have been submitted.

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

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was prepared for the Northern Gateway Sports Project when it was presented to the RIF committee on 16<sup>th</sup> March. This EQIA is also relevant to the master planning work. The link to this is:  
<http://www.colchester.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=20664&p=0>
- 10.2 There are no especial Human Rights implications.

## **11. Community Safety Implications**

- 11.1 The landscape proposals and design of the public realm which are being developed alongside the Master Plan will be subject to community safety scrutiny to ensure there are no intimidating spaces or areas unlit that become vulnerable; the buildings will include safety and surveillance provision.

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

- 12.1 Development of the Northern Gateway will provide significant opportunity to help address the health and well-being of the existing and new communities. It will provide a range of opportunities for sport, recreational and health outdoor activity. It will also increase opportunities for participation in physical activity and in sport and other leisure pursuits, many free through the creation of parkland setting as set out in the master plan.

## **13. Risk Management Implications**

- 13.1 Using the Master Plan as a mechanism to provide comprehensive approach to the planning of the Northern Gateway will help to produce sustainable development and reduce the risk of inappropriate and unco-ordinated development. The Master Plan also serves to promote the high quality of standard of design and innovation the Council expects in this major growth area.

## **Appendix 1: Principal Issues raised during public consultation on draft Northern Gateway Master Plan July-September 2014**

### **Highways & Traffic**

The extent to which the proposals could add new traffic to local roads in Mile End and to the north in Boxted (Straight Road and Langham Road and connections)

*It is expected that the majority of vehicles accessing the site will do this via the A12 or the NAR3. Only local traffic is likely to use other roads to visit the site and many of these will already make journeys into Colchester to access similar facilities to those on the site. Traffic around Mill Road will decrease at times due to the relocation of the Rugby Club.*

The extent to which the proposals would impact on traffic in the wider area, particularly the Northern Approach Road and North Station Bridge

*The Northern Approach Road has been specifically designed to take the additional growth in the north of Colchester. The North Station Bridge is acknowledged as a potential barrier to the free flow of traffic though this area is controlled by traffic signals. Bus priority lanes in the vicinity of this area may encourage greater use of public transport to access the site.*

How can local people be confident that up to date full and detailed traffic modelling is undertaken to accurately assess likely traffic impact (and whether this can be adequately mitigated)

*Individual developments within the site are likely to require highway impact studies as part of the planning process; these will model the traffic at the time of the planning application. The new highway infrastructure already in place has been designed to take the additional growth in the area.*

Will the Council re-examine solutions for the Weston Homes Community Stadium entrance from Boxted Road which is currently closed to through traffic but provides bus drop off from Boxted Road. There were comments for and against opening to general traffic from people north and south of the A12

*The Council is not intending to re-evaluate this at the current time.*

Delivery of comprehensive and co-ordinated links from the development to public transport, including NAR3 to Park & Ride and the NAR2/Mill Road junction and NAR2 busway.

*The Master Plan has been designed with clear links to public transport; the sports hub is close to the Park & Ride providing opportunities to use the Park & Ride when available. In addition as the number of facilities and residents in the area increase, it is expected that bus services will begin to serve the area. The Master Plan includes sites for proposed bus stops.*

The extent and potential impact of new car parking being proposed for facilities north of the A12.

*It is proposed that the new facilities will have adequate parking for the day to day use of the facilities, based on current and projected numbers using the Mill Road ground. There may also be the opportunity for onsite overflow parking. Continuing discussions are being held with*

*Essex County Council to use the Park & Ride facility when special events result in additional vehicles.*

### **Open Space and Countryside**

The level and type of development north of the A12, which currently serves as a boundary between the urban area of Colchester and the open countryside.

*The Master Plan respects the difference between the north and south of the A12, the site to the north of the A12 will have limited build development and will be predominantly set out for sports pitches with significant landscaping, to contain the site.*

The extent to which floodlighting and sports activity could create a nuisance to residents in Boxted.

*A noise and amenity report will be undertaken as part of the planning application. However the site is located 1.8 miles from Boxford and the area is already affected by the noise from the A12. Lighting will need to be carefully controlled given its countryside location and to prevent any distractions to drivers on the A12.*

The extent to which the loss of open space at the Mill Road Sports Ground represents a loss of amenity for residents in the vicinity.

*While it is accepted that the scheme will involve the loss of open space, Mill Road Sports Ground is predominantly set out as sports fields and has little wider amenity value except for dog walking. The new "village green" area at Mill Road, while smaller, will provide a more useable area of public open space including footpaths through the site. The existing sports ground also causes some loss of amenity due to noise and on street parking which would be resolved by its relocation.*

The extent to which existing landscape and flora will be destroyed.

*It is the intention to protect as far as possible the existing hedgerows and trees within the wider site, although some may be lost to allow for access into sites and for optimum use of the site. The site has been previously used for intensive agriculture and has limited ecological value.*

Ensuring safe and convenient linkages are made to existing and/or enhanced footpaths, cycle routes and bridleways beyond the site in the countryside beyond.

*As the Council does not own the land to the north of the site, the extent to which further off road routes can be created to provide access to the wider countryside is limited. However the Council is willing to work with adjacent landowners if they have an interest in creating such links.*

Ensuring a range of free sports and leisure activities including use of the lake.

*The latest proposals provide a small balancing pond to the north of the A12 but this is unlikely to be suitable as a recreational facility. However the site will provide extensive walking, cycling and equestrian routes and children's play opportunities as part of the landscaping scheme. These elements will be free for the public to use.*

How and when the Council will be able to deliver the associated expensive infrastructure as shown, given viability constraints.

*Much of the highway infrastructure for the development is already in place. The Council proposes to fund the sporting infrastructure through the redevelopment of part of the Mill Road*

*Sports Ground as well as grant funding from Sports England and various sports governing bodies. The Council is also in the process of applying for external funding to forward fund some elements of the required infrastructure. While a new bridge over the A12 is an aspiration, the Master Plan acknowledges that this may not be possible in the medium term due to the costs involved.*

How the Council will resolve the potential conflict in expectations and desires from different sectors of the community.

*This is a sports led scheme with the priority for providing good quality sports facilities and ensuring that existing users of Mill Road Sports Ground are relocated. Other requirements and desires of the community will need to be secondary to this. However the Master Plan shows how other community needs will be provided for as part of the scheme.*

How various communities will be involved in and have influence over the evolution of the plans.

*The site is predominantly located in Mile End; Myland Community Council has been heavily involved in the proposals as well as undertaking their own neighbourhood plan. The local community will also have the opportunity to comment on the proposals as part of the new local plan consultation process.*

Clear and transparent resolution of any potential conflict of interest between the Council as landowner and the Council as local planning authority.

*The Council has to follow the same planning process as all other developers and in order for planning permission to be granted any development will need to be in accordance with local and national planning policy. All planning applications where the Council is either landowner or developer are required to be determined by Planning Committee, ensuring that there is additional scrutiny of the proposals.*

## **Uses and activity**

Ensuring that the uses selected will not cause harm to the town centre and/or harm to the amenity of residents already living in the vicinity of the CNG.

*The commercial leisure elements of the proposal will include some restaurant uses which require large units and therefore are not generally found within the town centre. Any retail elements will be ancillary to other uses. The uses proposed through the Master Plan are unlikely to be detrimental to the amenity of the local community.*

Ensuring that the NAR3 does not become a barrier to movement of people across the Gateway

*A major road through the site is acknowledged as a barrier to movement through the site and prevents a continuous boulevard feature. However pedestrian crossings will be provided, including the recently installed Pegasus crossing suitable for horses.*

The role and function of the hub needs to be clear. Consultees questioned whether the hub would achieve expected levels of activity and would benefit the local community.

The sports hub is designed to provide alternative sports facilities for the users of Mill Road Sports Ground plus additional facilities principally for cycling and a multi-use sports hall which will be used by badminton, table tennis and indoor cricket. The Council has been liaising with local sports clubs and governing bodies and there is a clear need for additional and improved facilities. In particular the sports hub will allow the Rugby Club to fulfil their ambition to develop.



In design terms, the introduction of tall buildings was questioned.

*The design of the building to the north of the A12 will be low key to acknowledge their countryside location. In the south of the A12 taller buildings will be more appropriate, there are 4 storey apartments already facing onto the NAR3. It is expected that the new residential development will have an urban rather than suburban character which will include the use of taller buildings.*

Ensuring appropriate levels and management of evening entertainment uses.

*The leisure uses will be located away from existing properties and entertainment uses are likely to be limited to the stadium. Any evening entertainment use of the sports hub is likely to be infrequent or within the Rugby Club building.*

The extent and justification for new housing within the site, particularly if it is at the expense of existing local open space.

*Residential development is required on the Mill Road Sports Ground to help pay for the sports development to the north of the A12. The new sports facilities will be a significant improvement to those at Mill Road and provide for a wider range of sports. Although the open space will be reduced, that which remains will be good quality public open space far more suitable for amenity use. Without the residential development Mill Road Sports Ground is likely to remain as it is, providing limited sports facilities and no public amenity space.*

## **Appendix 2: Draft Master Plan**

# Colchester Northern Gateway

## Master Plan Vision Review

### **Draft**

July 2016

GILLESPIES



**VIBRANT**  
**PROSPEROUS**  
**THRIVING**  
**WELCOMING**

## Contents

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# Introduction

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This Master Plan review for Colchester Northern Gateway has been prepared by Gillespies on behalf of Colchester Borough Council.

Colchester Northern Gateway will play an important role in the growth of Colchester into an increasingly competitive place, with a diversified offer. The vision is for a vibrant, accessible, green, leisure orientated mixed use location.

It will be characterised by a mix of leisure uses, green surrounding and a civic heart to provide focus and to unify the community and visitors. The intention is to create a new sustainable destination that promotes growth and investment for the entirety of Colchester.

The Council has been working with Gillespies to prepare a public realm and urban design strategy for the whole of the Northern Gateway.

The aim is to provide a parkland and informal recreation setting for the informal sports facilities on the Northern side of the A12 and a masterplan strategy of commercial and employment uses on the Southern side.



THE SITE - COLCHESTER NORTHERN GATEWAY COVERS AN AREA OF APPROXIMATELY 112HA.  
THE AERIAL PHOTO ABOVE OF CNG IS BEEN TAKEN IN 2014



Context

Purpose of the Report  
Strategic Position  
Overview of the Process  
2012 Master Plan Vision  
Emerging Southern Site Framework  
Reviewed Master Plan Principles

## Context Purpose of the Report

This report represents a review of the existing Master Plan Vision for the Northern Gateway, originally published in June 2012 by the Colchester Borough Council.

The report suggests a broad set of design principles but does not have status or weight in planning terms.

The report has the following objectives:

- To present a review of the masterplan vision produced in 2012.
- To identify the urban design and landscape principles and key moves which will achieve this vision and create a distinctive location.
- To define a broad master plan framework as a basis for the development of more detailed proposals

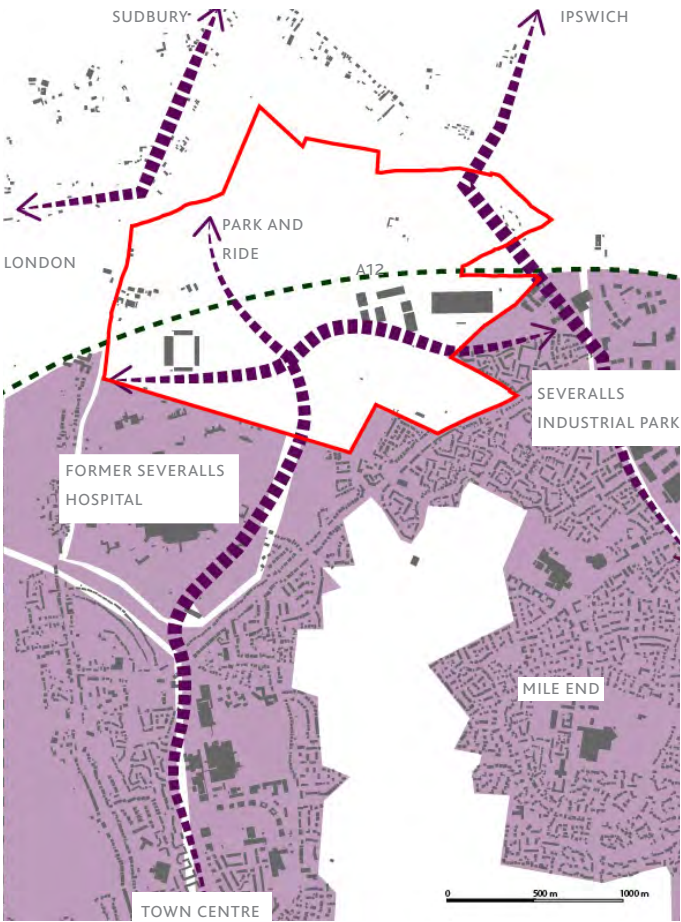


# Context Strategic Position

The adjacent plan highlights the strategic position of Northern Gateway within Colchester. The site is situated to the immediate south and north of the A12 which provides an important link to London and Ipswich.

The Park and Ride facility provides a direct connection through Northern Gateway to the railway stations and the town centre .

Northern Gateway has been promoted for development by the Council for a number of years. Now that proposals for Severalls Hospital are underway there is an even greater emphasis on the creation of a distinctive, high quality development which contributes to the identity and role of North Colchester.

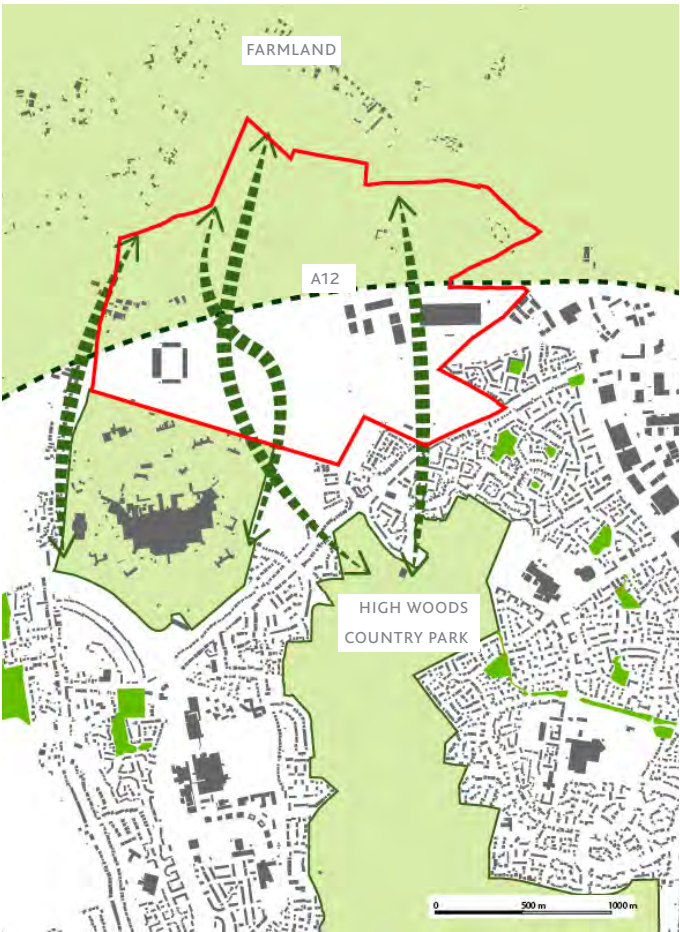


MAIN URBAN LINKS

# Context Strategic Position

In addition to excellent road links, Northern Gateway also benefits from connections to an established network of green routes, parks and wild spaces, north to the Essex Way, and south to the town centre via High Woods Country Park

It is conveniently located in close proximity to large green areas, which makes it an ideal linking point between Colchester and its green surrounding. It is walking distance from High Woods Country Park, as well as green farmlands and fields to the north of the A12.



MAIN PEDESTRIAN LINKS

# Context Overview of the Process

## 2012 MASTER PLAN

A number of key moves have been identified in the previous Vision for the Northern Gateway:

- Respond to the existing landscape structure
- Establish a central boulevard which unifies Northern Gateway
- Use planting to reinforce spaces and connections
- Promote a sustainable movement strategy
- Establish flexible and accessible building plots
- Define a clear framework for key buildings, spaces and views

This master plan review will endeavour to preserve the key moves where possible

## EMERGING SOUTHERN SITE FRAMEWORK

Since publication of the Master Plan Vision in 2012, some plots on the site have been granted planning permission.

The layout of these developments is not in line with the Master Plan Vision, creating a new situation on the site.

Further changes since the Master Plan Vision published in 2012 include:

- the decision to keep the roundabout on Via Urbis, which is contrary to the Master Plan Vision
- the decision to include the site north of A12 into the master plan, predominantly by moving the Rugby Club to the north of A12.



# Context 2012 Master Plan Vision



The diagram above is been extracted from the draft framework document prepared by consultants Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners who were commissioned to undertake the masterplanning exercise and design led workshop with officers during October and November 2011, followed by public consultation in 2014

Context Emerging Southern Site Framework

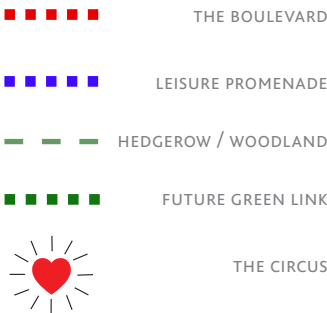


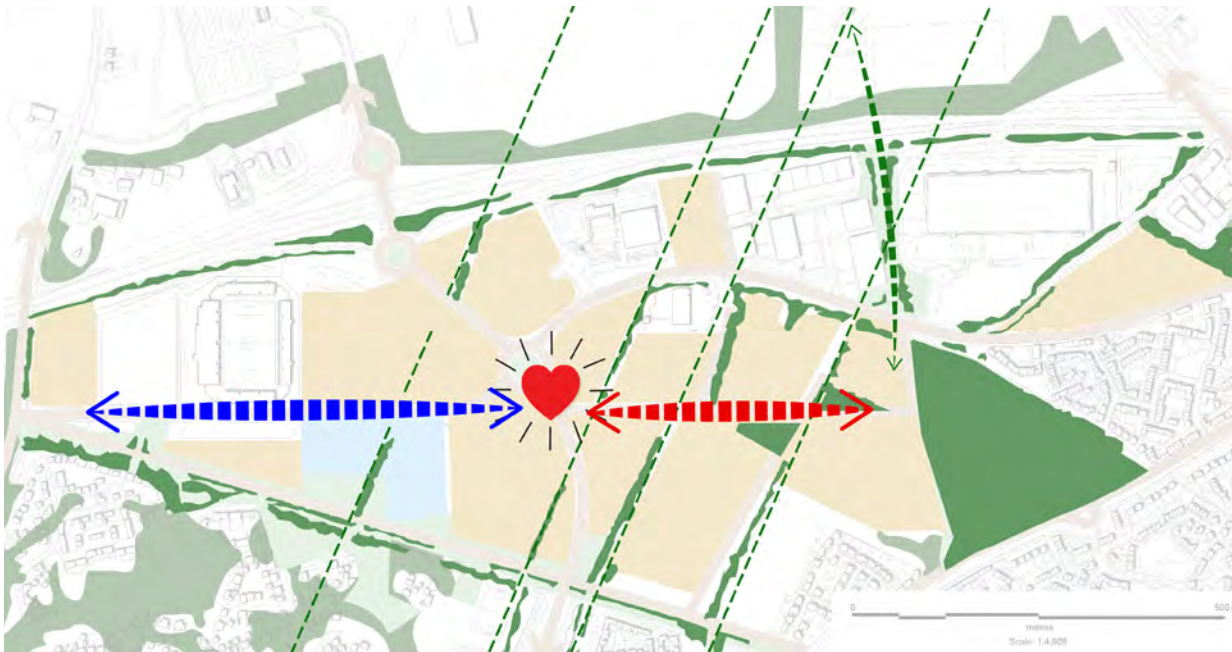
# Context Reviewed Master Plan Principles

The new site configuration, created by new developments and the decision to retain the roundabout limits the key move from the 2012 Vision of establishing the Central Boulevard from being established.

To adapt and retain the idea of Allies and Morrison Central Boulevard it is proposed to establish a two part central spine, comprising of The Boulevard to the east, and the Leisure Promenade to the west. A generous public plaza on either side of the roundabout should be created where these two intersect.

Where possible, it is recommended to retain the existing hedgerows, and follow their lines in any future division of the site into plots.





ADOPTED PRINCIPLES UPON THE EMERGING SITUATION



# Key Principles

Reviewed Master Plan Concept  
Master Plan Elements  
Master Plan Plots  
Buildings and Views  
Zones and Local Amenities



# Key Principles Reviewed Master Plan Concept

CNG master plan strategy aims to provide coherent and clear links between the parkland, sport and informal recreational area in the North to the southern commercial and leisure

At the intersection of the Leisure Promenade and the Boulevard, close to the new public space we called The Circus, a new leisure trail will lead north toward the Rugby Centre and south towards the High Woods Country Park. The leisure trail will benefit from new landscaping, with clearly signposted leisure destinations along it, spanning the site both south and north of the A12.

Secondary green links, to more leisure destinations, and potentially water based leisure activities is planned to the east of the site, linking the new village green with the recreational to the north of the A12. Public realm should form a backbone to the development, with focal areas capable of acting as informal community spaces.

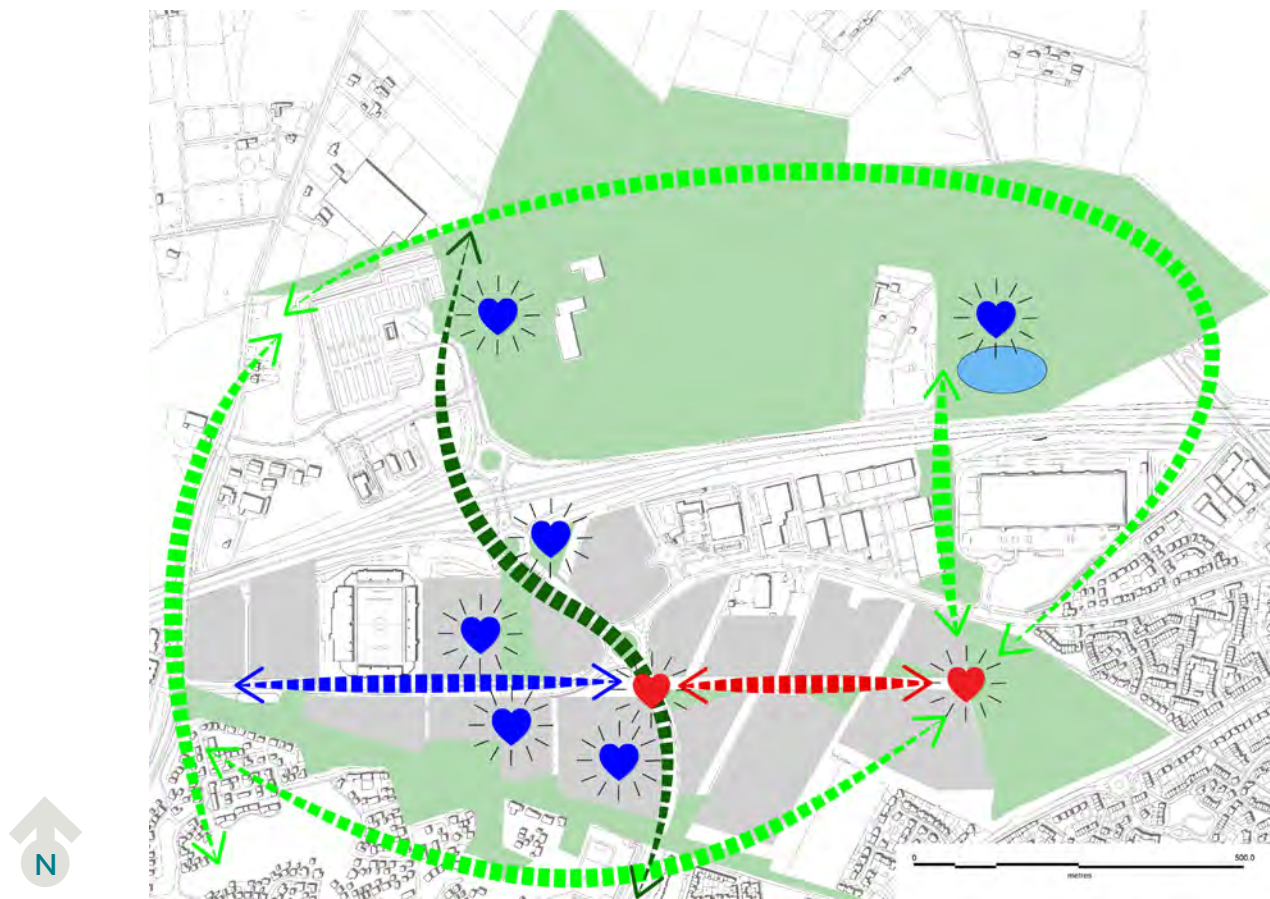
The master plan strategy delivers appropriate site - wide sustainability measures from sustainable drainage systems (SUDs) to sustainable development forms



LEISURE PROMENADE



THE BOULEVARD



REVIEWED MASTER PLAN CONCEPT

# Key Principles Master Plan Elements

## FOLLOWING EXISTING HEDGEROWS

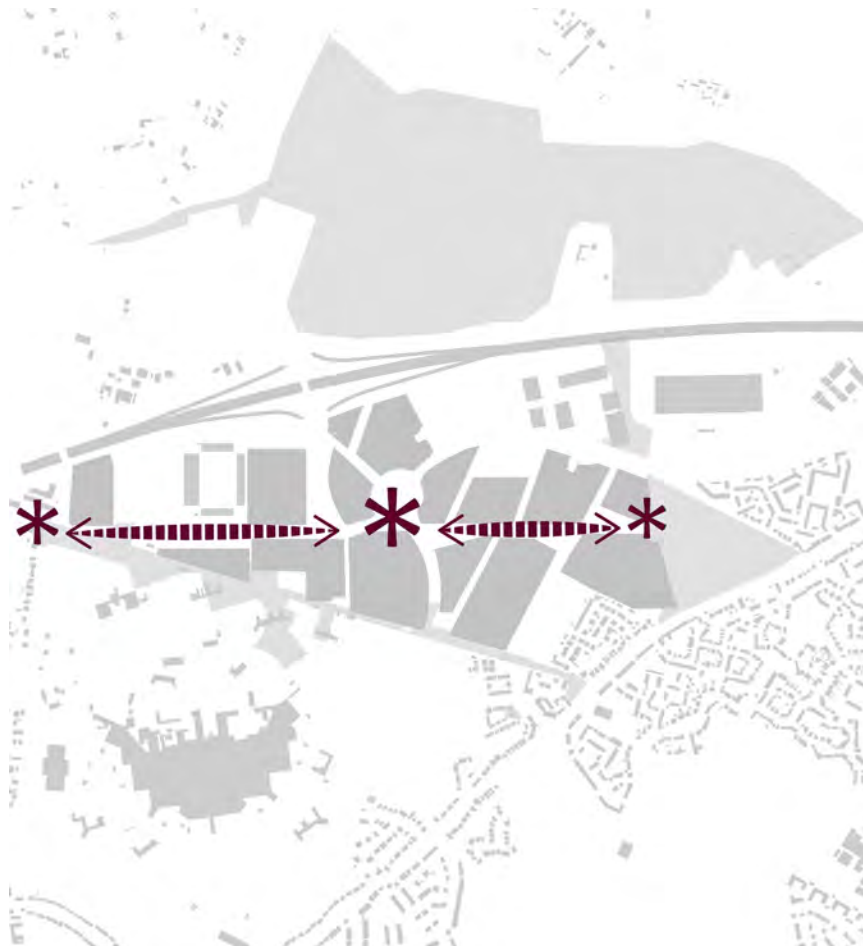
Respond to the existing landscape structure: it is the aim to preserve as many of the established hedgerows on the site as possible, and to orientate development plots in a way to allow pedestrian and cycle routes along these hedgerows.



#### LEISURE PROMENADE + THE BOULEVARD

Due to new constraints and the already emerging leisure orientated nature of the western part of the site, the central spine should have two clearly distinguished corridors: the *leisure promenade* which will be focused on the *movement* and the *boulevard* which will be focused on the *place*.

The western part of the spine will constitute a Leisure Promenade, with a more open feel to it, while the eastern part will form the newly established Boulevard with clearly defined building frontages and open spaces.



# Key Principles Master Plan Elements

## CIRCULATION VEHICULAR AND PEDESTRIAN

The Boulevard should have clearly defined frontages creating a more urban feel than the differently landscaped less dense leisure promenade.

New prominent artworks should be located on the bridge over A12 and should be designed to be taller than the surrounding buildings and visible from some distance.





#### REDUCING DENSITY + PERMEATING LANDSCAPE

Create a logical framework for residential, leisure and landscape elements

The building height should increase in the south-eastern area, gradually reducing towards the north-west in order to allow the green landscape to permeate, especially amongst the leisure-orientated developments.





# Key Principles Master Plan Elements

## WALKING DISTANCE

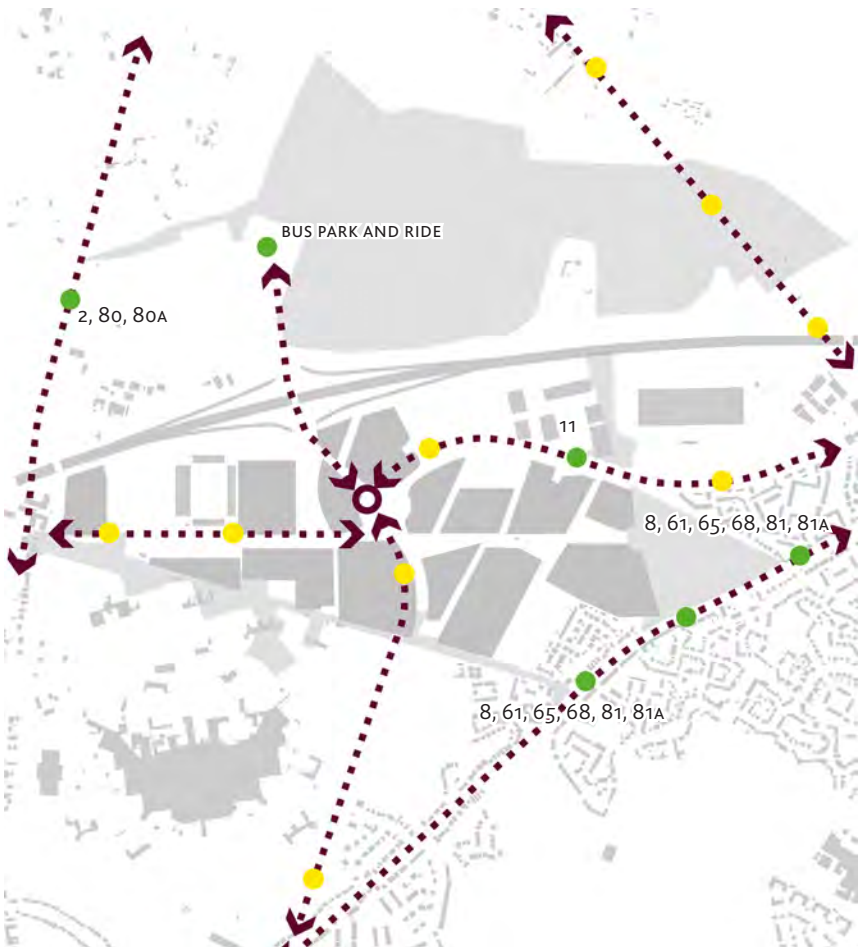
The movement strategy for the Colchester Northern Gateway is envisaged in such a way as to provide plenty of opportunities for walking, cycling and jogging. The network will serve not only to aid the connectivity on the site, but also to be used for recreation, reinforcing the identity of the Northern Gateway as a leisure destination



NEW BUS - ROUTES AND BUS STOPS

The master plan incorporates the bus stops location pattern which will be considered by standard spacing and walking distance. The optimal spacing between bus stops involves a balance of customer convenience and operating efficiency. The location of the new bus stops will be negotiated with the Council and bus operators

-  BUS ROUTES
-  NEW BUS STOPS
-  EXISTING BUS STOPS



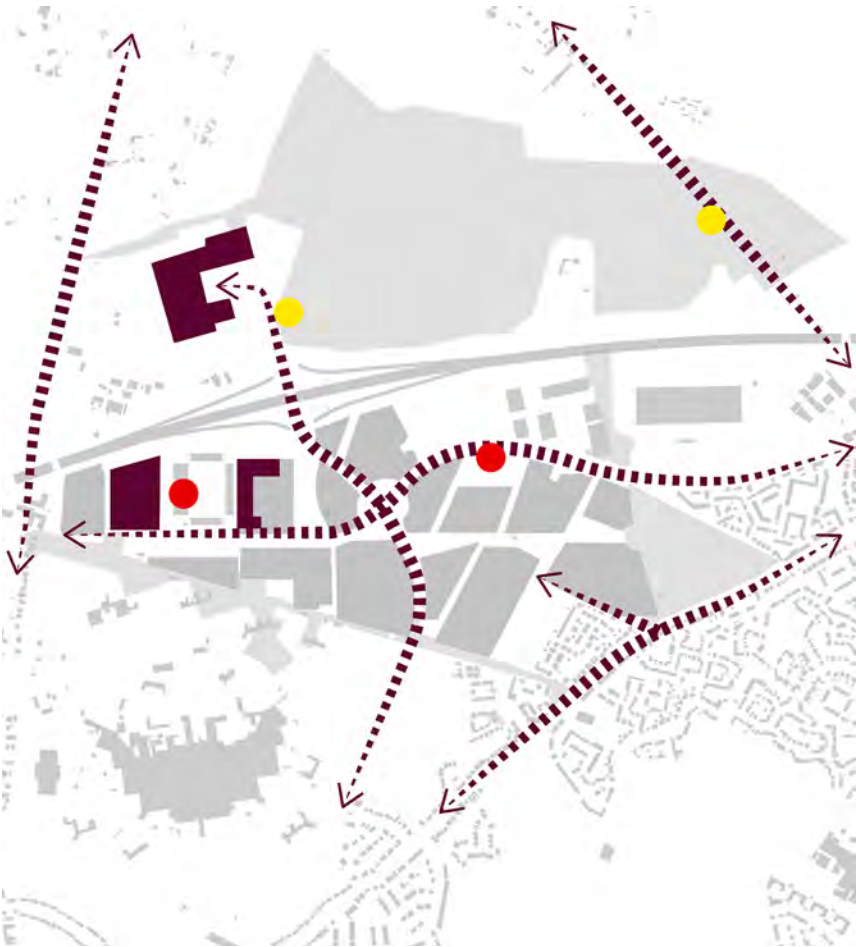
# Key Principles Master Plan Elements

## CAR PARKS AND ELECTRIC VEHICLES CHARGING

The master plan incorporates two existing electric vehicles charging points and proposes two new ones in the new car-parks. .

Electric vehicle charging points are located at relatively equal distances from each other in order to facilitate easy walking to the desired destination

- EXISTING CAR PARKS
- EXISTING ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINTS
- NEW ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINTS



# Key Principles Master Plan Plots

Zones are orientated in such a way to take full advantage of the existing hedgerows, whilst allowing for a meaningful central spine, and vehicular access to each of the plots.

- PARCELS TO BE DEVELOPED
- UNDER CONSTRUCTION



2012 MASTER PLAN PLOTS



REVIEWED MASTER PLAN PLOTS



# Design Principles Buildings and Views

Key buildings should be located around The Circus between the Leisure Promenade and the Boulevard, framing the two newly formed public spaces to the south side and the whole of the curved elevation around the Circus.

Northern Gateway's proposed artworks located on the bridge should be commissioned as new icons for Colchester, will mark it in the cityscape and will be highly visible from the A12.

This will enhance the creation of a destination and is important to establishing CNG as a place with prominence. The new images for Colchester will be highly visible from the existing transport infrastructure and present Colchester from A12.

Landmark frontage should be located around the Circus. This will create a visual link with the new iconic artwork, and provide a clear gateway when entering Colchester from the A12, opening the views towards the two new public plazas and further towards The Boulevard, the leisure promenade and the stadium.



Important building elevation



Indicative zones



The Boulevard



Leisure Promenade



Key Frontages



Key views



Secondary significant views



New Public Spaces



The Circus



Artwork






















GILLESPIES MASTER PLAN BUILDINGS AND VIEWS

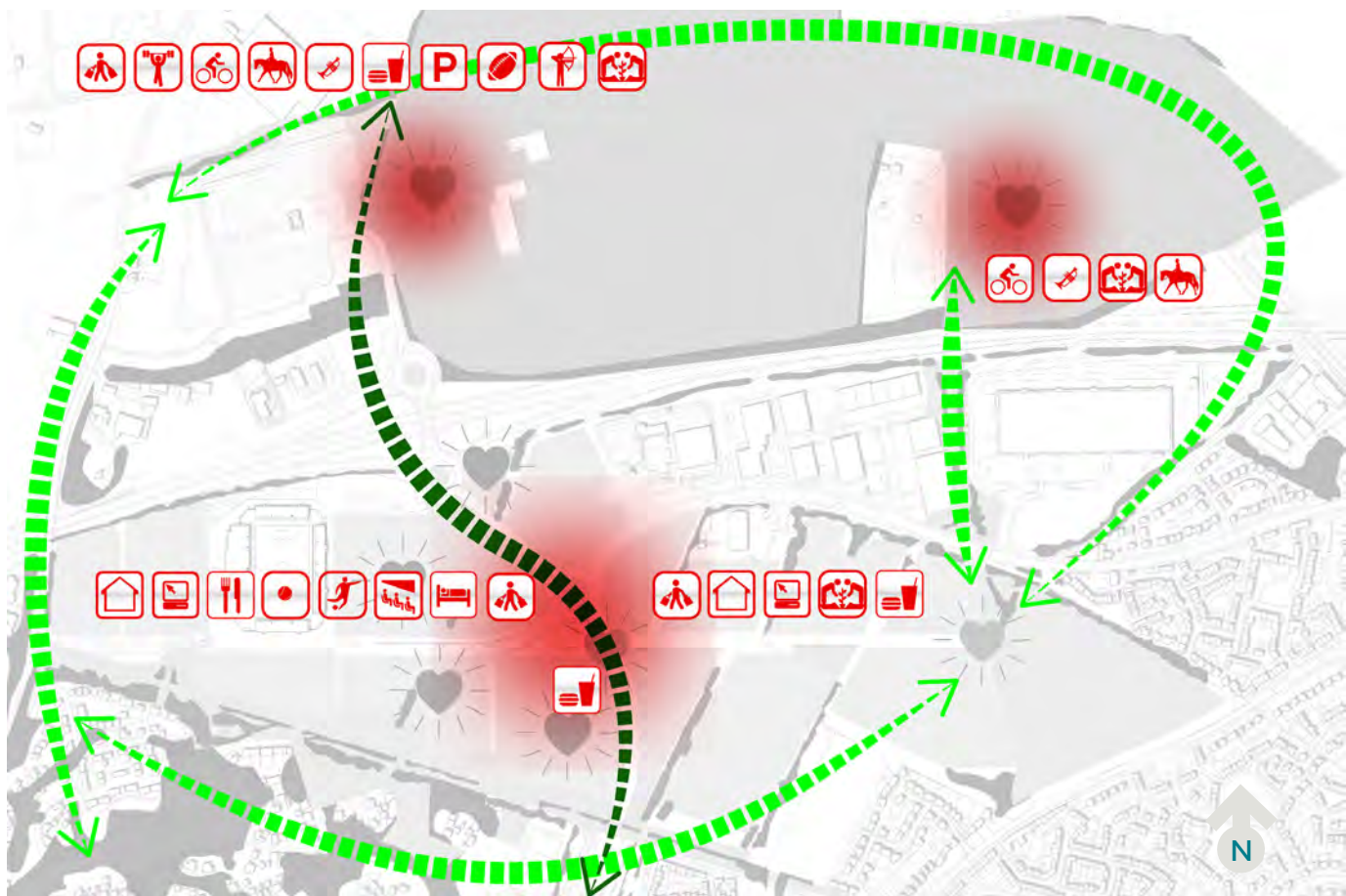


# Design Principles Zones and Local Amenities

The Master Plan for the Colchester Northern Gateway is based around the delivery of a mixed use scheme capable of providing a major leisure destination for the town. However, to ensure uses within the master plan are compliant with this aspiration and accord with the objectives of this document, all uses as identified are categorised below:

- Sport and Recreation
- Commercial Leisure
- Employment and Mixed Use
- Homes
- The uses included within the master plan should consist primarily of leisure and associated uses relevant to the Northern Gateway and its central boulevard, *The Boulevard*, offering plenty of opportunities for residents in the area and attracting tourists and visitors from the town centre and a wide regional hinterland
- Other limited uses such as ancillary commercial and residential uses should be permitted where they add to the vitality of the scheme.
- This spatial master plan has been design to address people’s everyday needs to live, work and spend leisure time in Colchester Northern Gateway. The objective lies in meeting current demands for space by individual groups, creating flexible and adaptable spaces to satisfy different needs and generating new potential place creation

	Cycle / Pedestrian route		Food and drink
	Equestrian route		Restaurant
	Archery		Ancillary commercial
	Fitness and wellbeing		Hotel
	Football		Event space
	Tennis		Community / Health
	Rugby / Football		Park and Ride
	IMAX		Residential
			Workspace



# Design Principles Zones and Local Amenities

In order to strategically balance day and night time offer of sport and recreation, commercial, leisure, employment and mixed uses, the emerging destination should attract visitors and residents after dark, creating evening and night time economies

It is important that Colchester Northern Gateway is an attractive destination during all seasons.

It is expected that spring / summer months will be busy for the area, and that there will be a contraction and consolidation during the winter months when visitors numbers are lower.

There should be a versatile range of uses that can be attractive at different times of year.



NIGHT LIFE EVENTS AND USES



DAY LIFE ACTIVITIES

-  Cycle / Pedestrian route
-  Equestrian route
-  Archery
-  Fitness and wellbeing
-  Football
-  Tennis
-  Rugby / Football
-  IMAX
-  Food and drink
-  Restaurant
-  Ancillary commercial
-  Hotel
-  Event space
-  Community / Health
-  Park and Ride
-  Residential
-  Workspace



# Design Guidance

General Height  
Hierarchy of Frontage  
Public Open Space Hierarchy  
Pedestrian Circulation  
Vehicular Circulation



# Design Guidance General Height

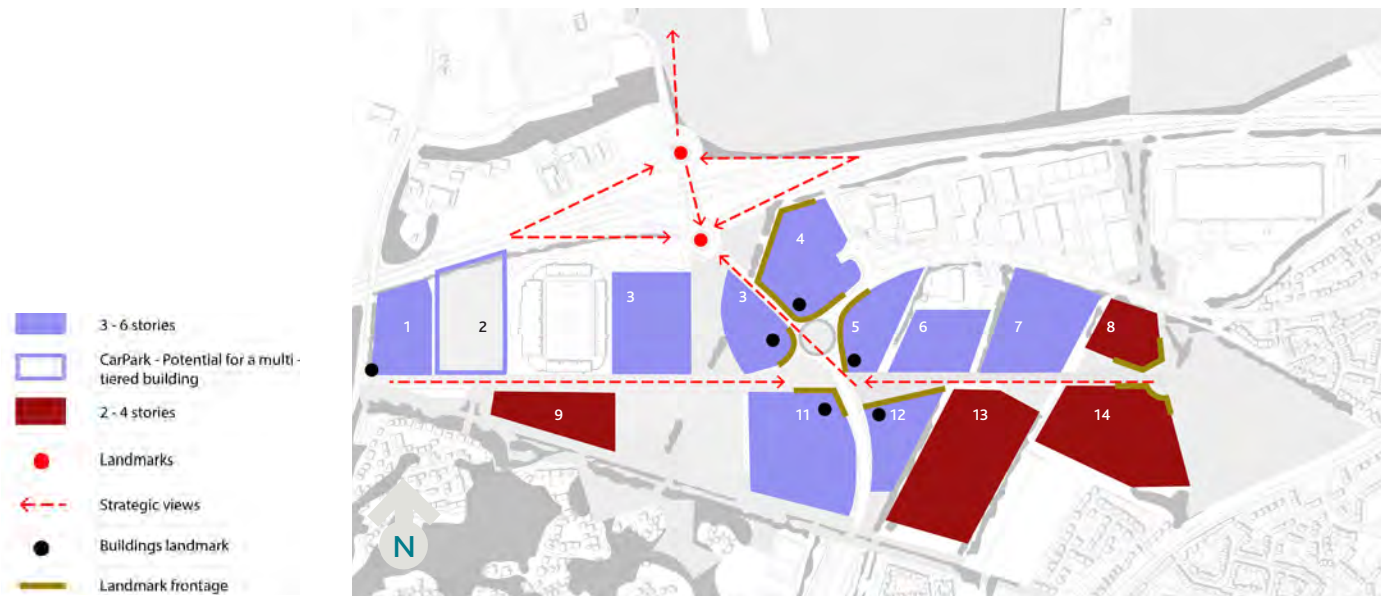
Most of the zones are allocated 3-6 stories height. Heights might increase for parcels 5, 11, 12 to relate to their context between the Pedestrian Boulevard and major traffic routes.

Parcels 9, 8, 13 and 14 are designated lower building heights in order to respond to the more green setting, lower density. Heights should crescendo to a maximum height at The Circus, the Via Urbis roundabout.

For the predominantly residential plots we have allocated two types of density:

**Low Density Residential:** this should be a mixture of housing types with medium plots and garden sizes. It should include a range of house types, including detached and semi-detached.

**Medium Density Residential:** this should have smaller plot sizes. The alignment of buildings should be formal, close to street edge, slightly set back from the street. The plots with predominantly leisure and commercial uses will be given design guidance in terms of the Floor Area Ratio and plot coverage.



## Design Guidance Hierarchy of Frontage

There are three frontage types proposed for the NCG. The building frontage hierarchy is required in order to guide the location of elements, such as main entrances, ancillary commercial frontage, fire exits, vehicular access and service doors. The hierarchy of frontages will ensure that an appropriate architectural response is made for facade of the building.

- **Primary frontage:** these are key frontages of particular importance as they front main squares, The Boulevard, and prominent corner conditions.
- **Secondary frontage:** these frontages face onto the main existing streets and pedestrian thoroughfares. They will mostly incorporate residential entrances, secondary access to commercial and business spaces
- **Tertiary frontage:** found along quieter streets and routes.



# Design Guidance Public Open Space Hierarchy

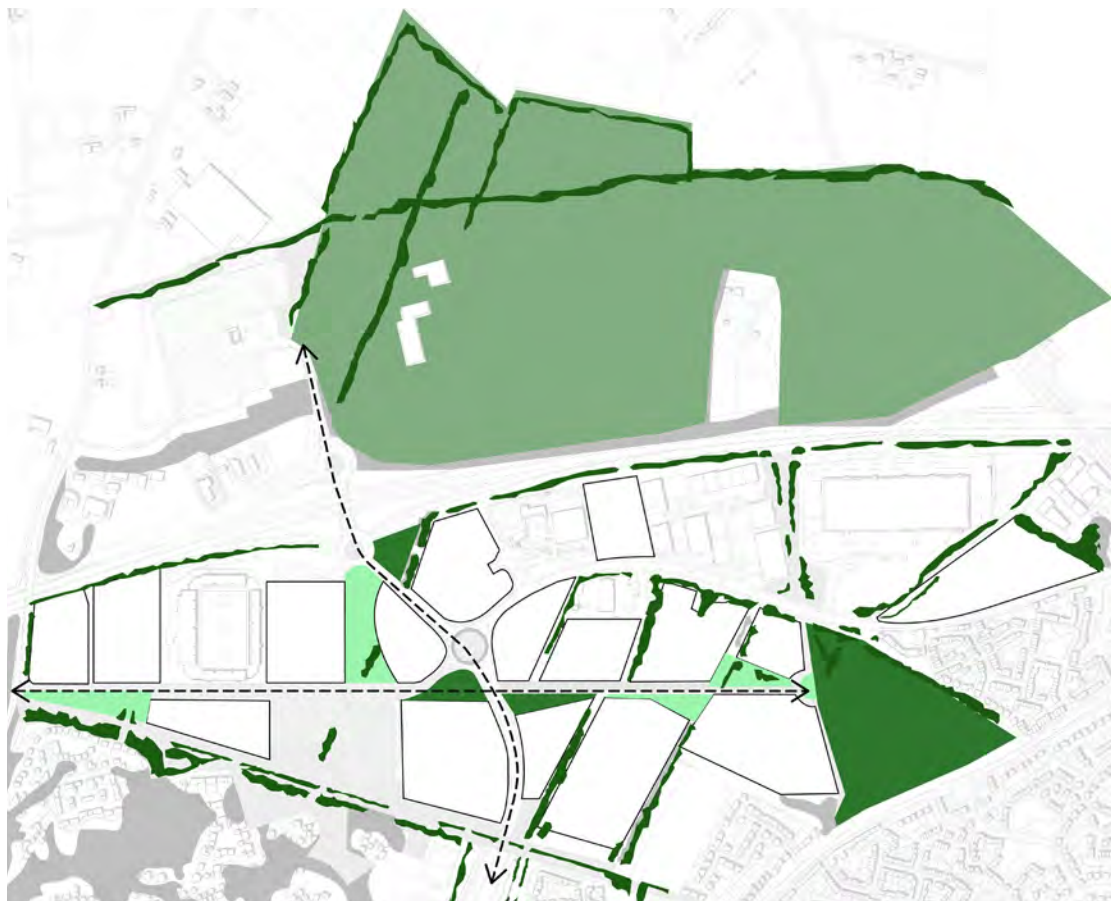
Within the development area south of the A12 there are different new public spaces each to be designed with a different and identifiable character:

- The Circus, Main Plaza East and Main Plaza West are the key connective element, creating a link between the Leisure Promenade and the Boulevard, to ensure they are integrated and create a sense of one place. It is furthermore a focal point, a place of arrival and meeting and orientation and it will also be highly visible from the vehicular entrance via A12.
- “Village Green” provides much needed green space not just for the new communities, but the existing communities to the east. It should provide a pleasant and lively 'stitch' between those communities. It is the heart of the residential community, providing space for leisure, community purposes and local gatherings
- Tertiary open spaces will add character to the Boulevard / Leisure promenade and will provide informal gathering and spill-out spaces.
- Tower Lane to the south provides a pleasant walking and cycling link and forms part of the green loop that links north and south of the A12

The emerging landscape and public realm strategy is an integral part of the Master Plan Vision and it also represents its spine and backbones.

For example the landscape design of the boulevard and the leisure promenade will take into account access routes, important corners, views, buildings plots and a range of appropriate uses incorporating historic hedgerows, mature trees and the Tower lane boundary.







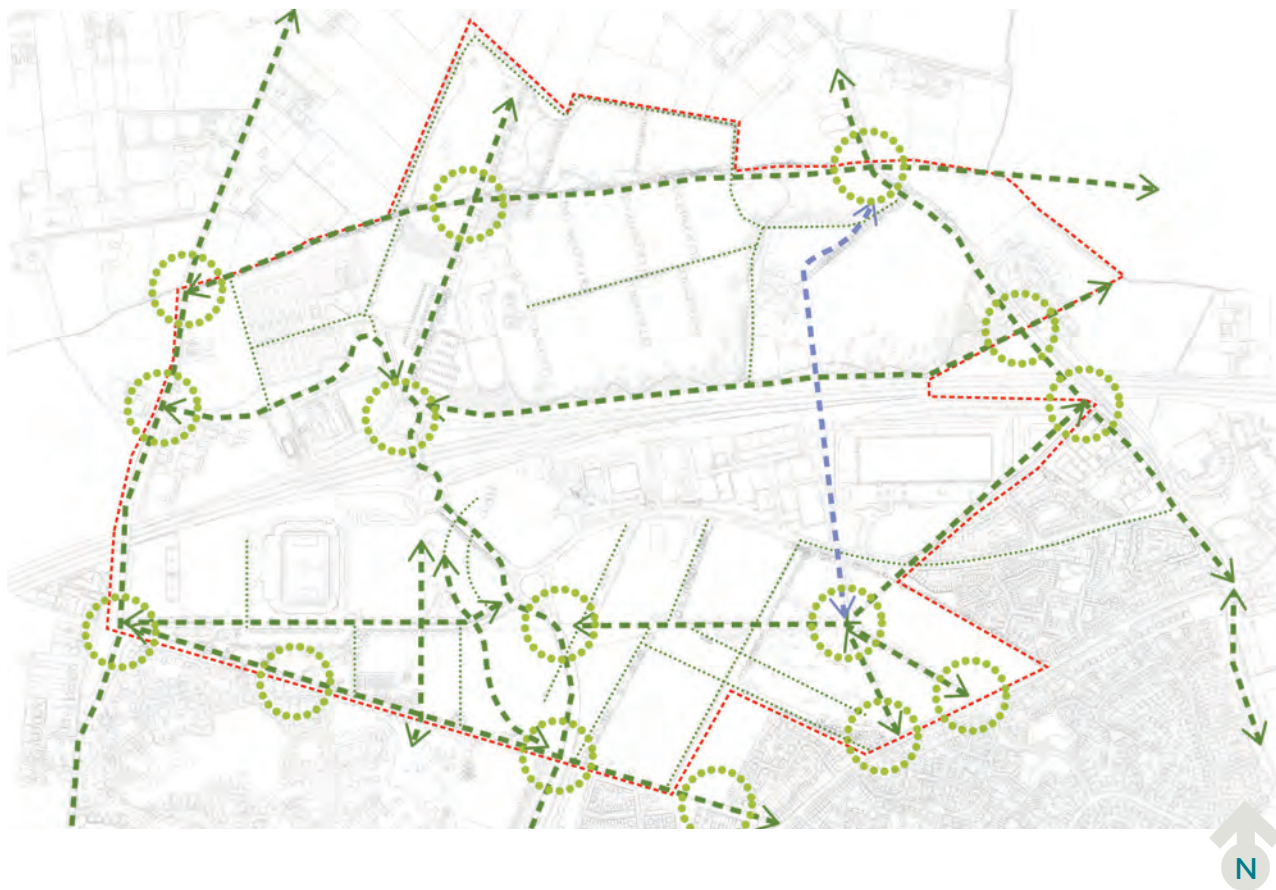
# Design Guidance Pedestrian Circulation

The public realm of the Northern Gateway will be developed to ensure clarity and safety of movement between pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Appropriate signage and material changes will be implemented to ensure safe passage of pedestrian traffic at all times.

Pedestrian pavements will take into account roughness of material and adequate slip resistance to ensure comfortable and safe walking experience. The use of tactile and hazard warning paving will be proposed in compliance with British standards and building regulations.

Key pedestrian gateways between routes and primary entry points should be clearly defined through the use of building scale and proportions

-  FUTURE PEDESTRIAN ROUTE
-  PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN ROUTES
-  SECONDARY PEDESTRIAN ROUTES
-  PEDESTRIAN GATEWAYS
-  SITE BOUNDARY













# Design Guidance Vehicular Circulation

The key vehicle routes are already established by the current road structure which consists of several key north-south routes at the site boundary: Via Urbis Romanae connecting northern and southern parts of the site and connecting to the A12, and Axial way connecting east-west through the southern part of the site.

New road links are required to serve the plots to the east of Via Urbis Romanae. Shared surfacing will be considered in areas of predominant pedestrian priority where vehicles can either be limited or controlled in the hours of access.

The Boulevard will be pedestrian / cycle only, while the vehicular access to the plots to be developed will be ensured through a new secondary streets network

Car parking is provided on plot in the southern part of the site, in the north the park-and-ride and rugby clubs have significant parking. There is the potential for a new car park in the north-east of the site which will reduce walking distance in this area.

	PROPOSED BUS STOP
	EXISTING LOCAL BUS STOP
	TRUNK ROAD
	ROAD NETWORK
	POTENTIAL VEHICULAR ROUTES
	CAR PARKS
	FUTURE CAR PARK LOCATION
	SITE BOUNDARY



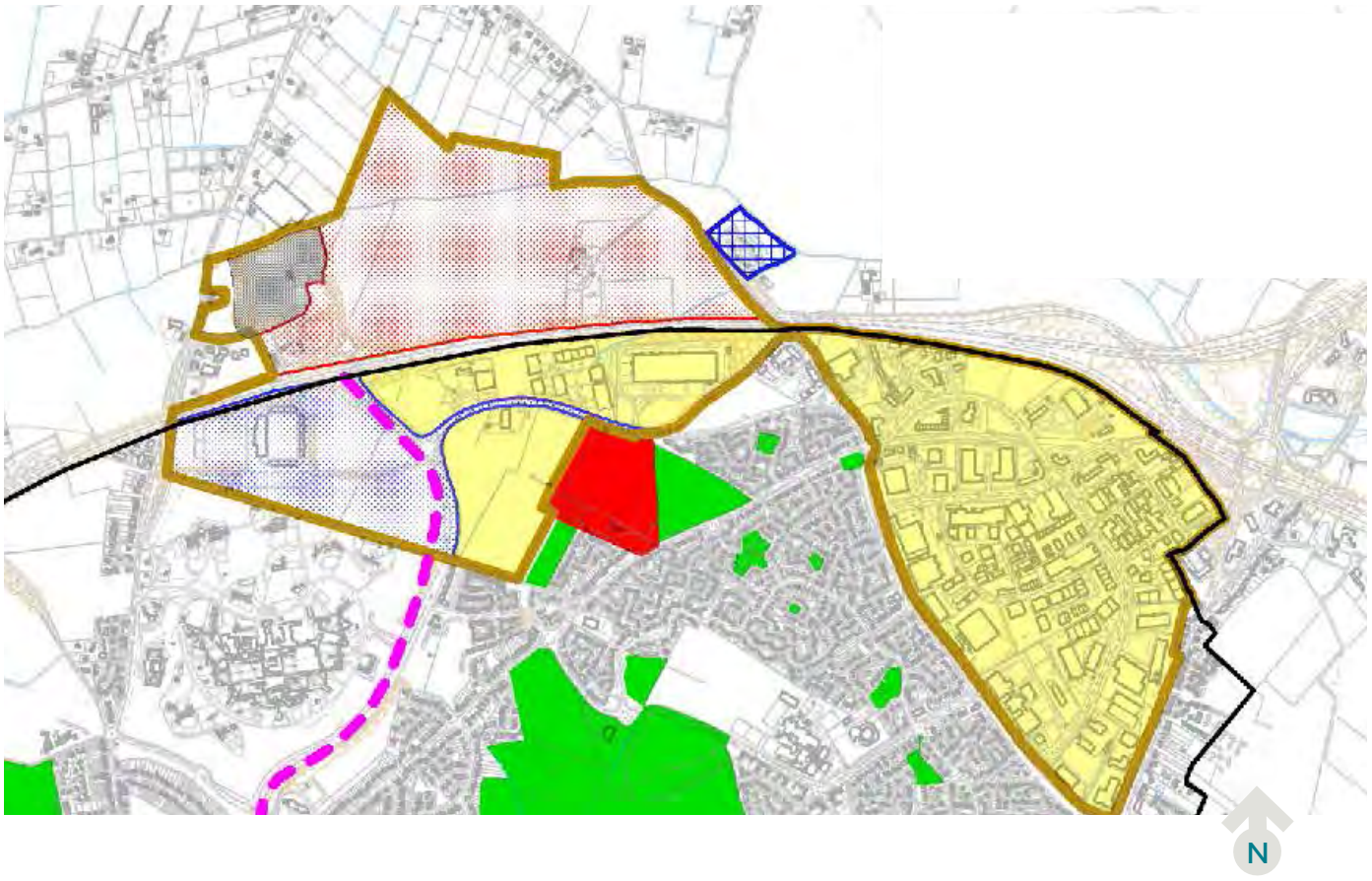
# Zone by Zone Character Areas

Colchester Local Plan Preferred Options  
Sport and Recreation  
Commercial Leisure  
Employment and Mixed Uses  
Homes

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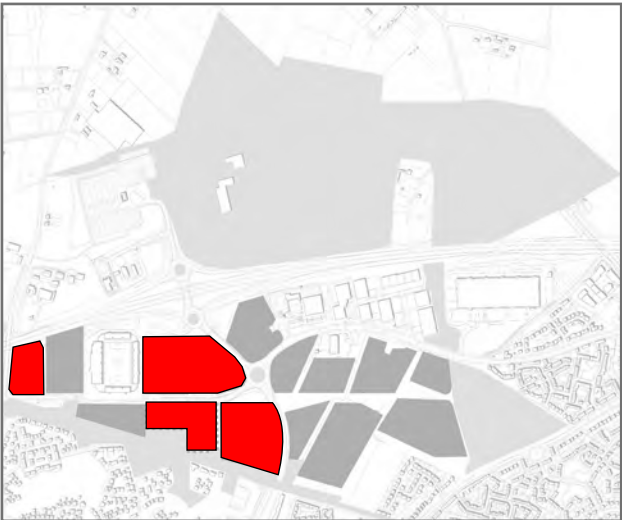
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# Zone by zone Character Areas Sport and Recreation



EXAMPLE OF LEISURE PROMENADE

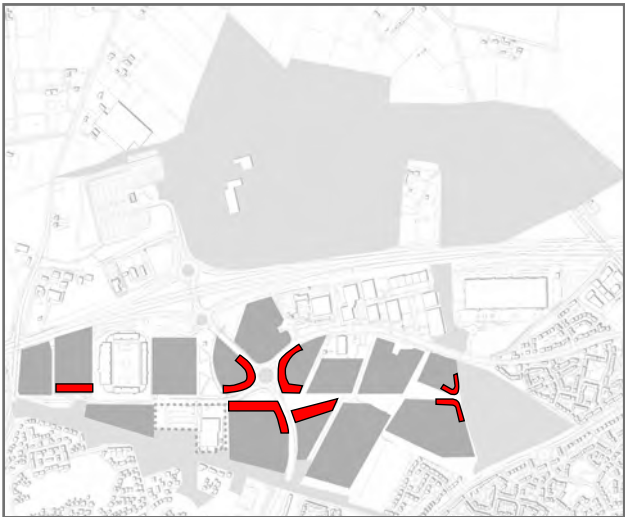


EXAMPLE OF PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE



EXAMPLE OF PUBLIC SPACE FOR EVENTS AND PERFORMANCES

# Zone by zone Character Areas Commercial Leisure



Commercial activities should be located as per the diagram on the right hand side. These are envisaged to be complementary to the leisure and employment offer of the Colchester Northern Gateway.



EXAMPLE OF PUBLIC CENTRAL SPACE



EXAMPLE OF THE BOULEVARD SITTING AREA



EXAMPLE OF THE BOULEVARD AND ACTIVE FRONTAGES

Zone by zone Character Areas Employment and Mixed Uses



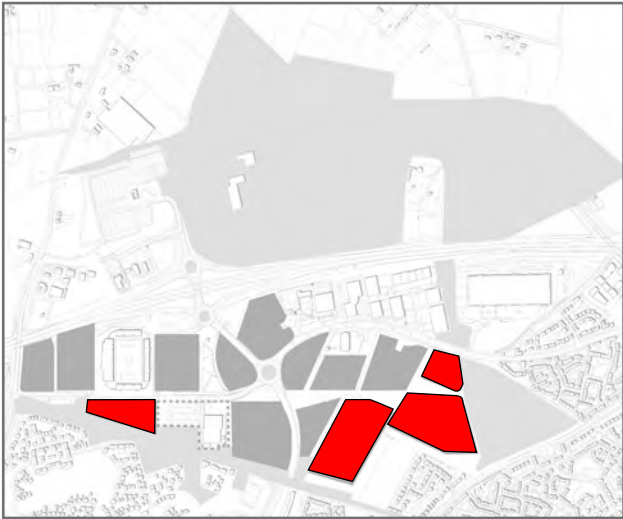
EXAMPLE OF MULTI-STORY PARKING



EXAMPLE OF PUBLIC SPACE ALONG THE BOULEVARD



# Zone by zone Character Areas Homes



EXAMPLE OF RESIDENTIAL AREA PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

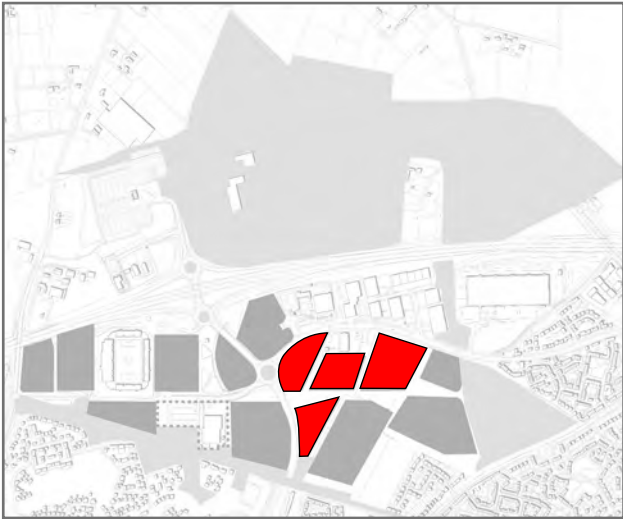


EXAMPLE OF LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL AREA



EXAMPLE OF SUDS WITHIN THE RESIDENTIAL AREA

Zone by zone Character Areas Homes



EXAMPLE OF PUBLIC SPACE ALONG THE BOULEVARD



EXAMPLE OF MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL AREA



EXAMPLE OF SUDS WITHIN MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL AREA

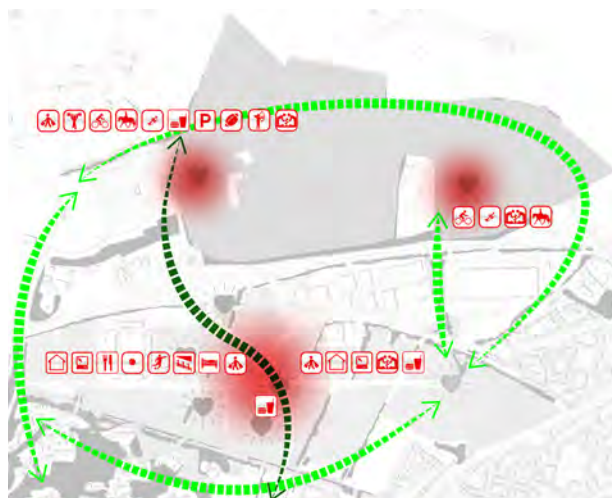
# Conclusion Next Steps

This document provides a review of the 2012 Masterplan Vision and consolidates this Vision with current developments on site.

Together with the Landscape Strategy this document is the first step in developing more detailed guidance for the site, expanding on the initial masterplanning concepts established in the 2012 Vision Document.

Key next steps for the Council are outlines below:

- Develop more detailed guidance for the site, based on initial masterplanning concepts established in this document, developed to the level of a masterplan showing building massing and heights, as well as detailed design guidelines.
- Consider site allocations through the Local Plan review.



CNG MASTER PLAN STRATEGY



CNG LANDSCAPE STRATEGY



REVISION NO.	ISSUE DATE:	PREPARED BY:	APPROVED BY:
03	01/08/2016	CATERINA AVITABILE	GORANA SHEPHERD
OX5426 COLCHESTER NORTHERN GATEWAY			GILLESPIES

15 August 2016

Report of	Head of Commercial Services	Author	Daniel Cameron 506025
Title	Community Infrastructure Levy – Consultation on Viability Evidence Base		
Wards Affected	All		

**The Local Plan Committee is asked to note the responses received following the conclusion of the recent consultation exercise carried out on the latest update to the Community Infrastructure Levy Viability Evidence Base.**

## 1. Decision Required

- 1.1 That members note the responses received following the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) consultation exercise which ran over six weeks in March and April 2016.
- 1.2 Members are further asked to note the areas identified for further investigation as a result of both consultation responses and officer recommendation.

## 2. Reasons for Decisions

- 2.1 To ensure the Committee is aware of the results of consultation on CIL

## 3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 There are no alternative options – the report is for information only.

## 4.0 Supporting Information

- 4.1 In 2011 Colchester Borough Council commenced work on implementing a CIL. Two stages of consultation were undertaken. A Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule was published in July 2011 and following this a Draft Charging Schedule was published in November 2011.
- 4.2 At the point of submission a number of Inspector decisions which had a direct bearing on how the Levy was to be applied were released. The most relevant required CIL to be viable at the same time as delivering policy compliant affordable housing; this led to this policy being reviewed as part of the Core Strategy Focussed review in 2014. At the same time Local Plan Committee concerns over the impact of CIL on development viability for small housebuilders lead to a review of the CIL viability evidence base. These two processes have taken time to complete.

- 4.3 An item was brought before Local Plan Committee earlier this year to outline the updated CIL viability evidence base conclusions. This report advocated the following CIL charges:
- Residential development outside of Colchester - £150/m<sup>2</sup>;
  - Residential development within Colchester - £0/ m<sup>2</sup>;
  - All other uses would be CIL exempt.
- 4.4 Over the six week consultation period running through March and April 2016 eight formal consultation responses were received. These came mainly from Planning Agents and Housing Developers as detailed below:
- Terence O'Rourke;
  - Mersea Homes;
  - Pomery Planning Consultants on behalf of a number of local companies;
  - Savills on behalf of Redrow;
  - Cirrus Land LLP;
  - Persimmon;
  - Myland Community Council; and
  - Natural England.
- 4.5 The response from Natural England made no comment on the updated CIL Viability Evidence Base as they felt it would have no impact upon their statutory purpose and will therefore not be considered in summation of the responses. The other consultation responses will be examined in more detail below.

### **Consultation Responses**

- 4.6 The response from Terence O'Rourke was critical of the methodology employed by our consultants with regard to the drawing up of the charging zones. They act as agent to the main developer of the Lakelands site in Stanway and have recommended that this site be removed from any CIL charge.
- 4.7 Mersea Homes were supportive of some form of CIL being levied within Colchester and of the desire to promote the development of brownfield land but have made a number of suggestions. Particularly they suggest re-examining the viability of a retail charge and examining whether a lower CIL could be supported across the entirety of the borough. Further they have suggested a more detailed analysis of the charging zones to more fully reflect the realities of Colchester's housing market and that this should be used as a basis for altering the charging zones. They have also suggested that allowances for strategically important sites be made within any subsequent documents.
- 4.8 Pomery Planning Consultants have put forward a response on behalf of a number of small and medium housebuilders listed below:
- Vaughn & Blyth;
  - Lexden Restorations Ltd;
  - East Anglian Group;
  - Mansfield Developments Ltd;
  - Barkely Projects LLP;
  - Harding Homes Ltd;
  - Glenmoor Developments;
  - Land Residential Ltd;
  - RF West Ltd;
  - Oak Home Developments Ltd;
  - South East Developments Ltd; and
  - C & K Developments Ltd.

- 4.9 They also accept that some level of CIL charge is appropriate but have engaged an independent quantity surveyor to assess the report produced by BPS. Their report is critical of the zone map as they feel it is unclear. They object to the lack of a brownfield CIL as they feel this is an attempt to direct development away from certain areas in favour of others. They suggest that there is scope for a CIL charge to target retail development. With regards to the methodology of the BPS report they have concerns regarding how average house sale prices and average land values have been reached. They also note that the information on build costs is out of date and cannot be relied upon. Of particular note is their conclusion that a blended £30/m<sup>2</sup> CIL charge may be supportable across the borough for residential development.
- 4.10 The response from Savills is made on behalf of Redrow. They note that the emergent Local Plan is yet to be adopted and that some of the figures used by BPS in their report are now out of date. They note that the post code analysis of house prices within the BPS report is too simplistic and that more detailed analysis would yield a more definitive picture of house prices within the borough. They recommend adoption of an instalment policy should CIL be adopted and finally would welcome the opportunity to meet directly with the Council to discuss the issues further.
- 4.11 Cirrus Land LLP have not commented in too much detail, they note that no infrastructure list detailing what will be funded through CIL has been included within the evidence base document and recommend that a zero CIL rate should be applied to strategic sites.
- 4.12 Persimmon's response notes that when coming to publish a Draft Charging Schedule attention will have to be paid to a number of items including having full regard to the emergent Local Plan and any identified growth options, and revised viability assessments making use of up to date figures. Again there is support for focussing development onto brownfield sites although it is noted that further viability evidence may be required.
- 4.13 Myland Community Council has commented that they have concerns over whether development in Colchester will be able to support CIL and deliver affordable housing. To combat this they suggest that developers profit be directly diverted to procure affordable housing on a community need basis and that New Homes Bonus money is given directly to those communities affected by development as any CIL receipts passed to parish, town or community councils is likely to be low.
- 4.14 They have further suggested that local councillors be invited to join any panel set up to direct CIL spending and that given the small sample sizes involved, any CIL charge for Zone 2 should be abandoned.

### **Analysis of Responses**

- 4.15 The consultation responses received highlight a number of issues that should be addressed before progressing further with a CIL strategy. Given that CIL should be adopted following approval of an NPPF compliant Local Plan, this leaves sufficient time to investigate these issues and make any necessary amendments before publishing a Draft CIL Charging Schedule.
- 4.16 In particular it is worth addressing the following items:
- The approach to CIL charges for strategic sites;
  - Whether a retail CIL can be supported;
  - Reviewing the work behind the charging zones map;
  - Investigating whether a lower blanket CIL across the entire borough is achievable;
  - Review of the assumptions and methodologies sitting behind the calculations within the BPS evidence base document;

- What the CIL infrastructure list will contain;
- The nature of any instalment policy utilised; and
- Whether CIL will affect the delivery of affordable housing.

4.17 With regards to charges on strategic sites, an infrastructure list and an instalment policy, these are all items which will be considered as part of a Draft Charging Schedule. Strategic sites will be identified through the Local Plan site allocation process. Once the Local Plan is further progressed it will be possible to determine an appropriate response. An infrastructure list as required by the CIL regulations and an instalment policy will also be brought forward in line with the Draft Charging Schedule. With regards to the instalment policy, allowing for large CIL contributions to be paid over a period of time will give developers of large sites the confidence to more accurately manage the cash flow of a given project and approach any CIL due with greater confidence.

4.18 Further work into the blanket CIL, a possible retail CIL, the charging zones map and the background assumptions within the BPS report can all be taken forward as a matter of course and discussed with our consultants, of particular interest is the approach outlined within Savills response as this allows for a very nuanced understanding of house prices within the borough to be created. Given the time lag between completion of the BPS report and the consultation exercise, it stands to reason that some assumed costs will have changed in the intervening period. These will be updated within any Draft Charging Schedule.

4.19 Regarding the delivery of affordable housing all viability calculations for determining potential CIL charges have been calculated to ensure that 20% affordable housing is still deliverable on site; therefore there is would be no issue with a site delivering both CIL and affordable housing. This will be reviewed as part of the Local Plan process and will reflect updated viability evidence.

## **5. Recommendations**

5.1 It is recommended that Committee agree the additional work detailed at 4.16 and 4.18.

## **6.0 Financial Implications**

6.1 There are no financial implications for the Council which may arise as a result of this decision. There is an existing budget to update the evidence base for CIL and the Local Plan.

## **7. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications**

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared for the Local Plan and is available to view on the Colchester Borough Council website by following this pathway from the homepage: Council and Democracy > Policies, Strategies and Performance > Diversity and Equality > Equality Impact Assessments > Commercial Services > Local Plan.

## **8. Consultation and Publicity Considerations**

8.1 No consultation or publicity considerations are required as a result of this paper.

## **9. Risk Consideration**

9.1 There are no inherent risks for the Council as a result of taking this decision.

## **10. Strategic Plan References**

- 10.1 The Strategic Plan has four headline themes. Through the collection of CIL the Council would generate funding to support many forms of infrastructure within the borough.
- 10.2 Under the 'Prosperous' theme, this would support:
- Provide opportunities to increase the number of homes available including those that are affordable for local people.
  - Ensure transport infrastructure keeps pace with housing growth to keep the Borough moving.
- 10.3 Under the 'Thriving' theme, this would support:
- Cultivate Colchester's green spaces and opportunities for health, wellbeing and enjoyment of all.
- 10.4 Under the 'Welcoming' theme, this would support:
- Improve sustainability, cleanliness and health of the place by supporting events that promote fun and wellbeing.

## **11. Community Safety Implications**

- 11.1 There are no community safety implications raised as a result of this report.

## **12. Appendices**

- 12.1 The following documents are appended for member's information:
- Consultation response from Terence O'Rourke;
  - Consultation response from Mersea Homes;
  - Consultation response from Pomery Planning Consultants;
  - Consultation response from Savills on behalf of Redrow;
  - Consultation response from Cirrus Land LLP;
  - Consultation response from Persimmon; and
  - Consultation response from Myland Community Council.



Daniel Cameron  
Planning and Contributions Officer  
Spatial Policy Team  
Colchester Borough Council  
Colchester  
Essex, CO1 1ZE

11 April 2016

Our Reference: 100371

**By email**

Dear Mr Cameron,

**Reference: O&H Properties Ltd representation to Colchester Borough Council's Community Infrastructure Levy Viability Update Consultation**

This representation is made on behalf of O&H Properties Ltd in respect of their interest at Lakelands, Stanway.

Whilst we recognise the need to update the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) evidence base ahead of a charging schedule being progressed alongside the new Local Plan we write to object to the methodology being used to inform the proposed charging zones.

Specifically, we are concerned with the spatial coverage of Zone 2 - Rural Greenfield Areas as this subjects all of the sites that lie within it to a CIL Charge of £150 per sqm for net additional development. The proposed coverage of Zone 2 includes sites that share characteristics with brownfield sites, such as former mineral working sites. Subjecting sites like these to the same CIL charge as greenfield sites could adversely impact upon the economic viability of any future development proposals. We consider that these sites should be removed from Zone 2 and should instead be identified as lying in Zone 1.

The original 2011 CIL evidence report (Roger Tym and Partners) and 2012 BPS review looked at two potential charging zones: Zone 1 urban and Zone 2 rural. The 2016 update reworks the zones so that Zone 1 broadly equates to brownfield sites and Zone 2 to previously undeveloped greenfield land. A zero CIL charge is recommended for development falling within Zone 1 compared to £150 per sqm for development in Zone 2.

Paragraph 2.5 explains that the intention of these revised definitions is that they would effectively, "capture development on previously undeveloped sites within the urban area and similarly previously developed areas within the rural post code areas" so that is more reflective of the viability facing these forms of

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development. However, the proposed geographical coverage of the zones does not tend to support this.

Postcode areas, which reflect house price data, are being used as a basis for determining the extent of each zone as set out at Appendix 1 of the update. Lakelands, Stanway is located in postcode area CO3 8 and would therefore fall within Zone 2 - Rural Greenfield Areas. Any future development at Lakelands could therefore be subject to a CIL charge of £150 per sqm under the proposed regime. Lakelands was formerly in use as a quarry and therefore shares characteristics with brownfield sites. Indeed, significant enabling and preparatory works have already taken place on site to enable development to take place. Requirements in these areas also need to be considered in determining the viability of any future development at Lakelands. In light of this it is inappropriate that Lakelands would be subject to the same CIL charge as rural greenfield sites where such works would not be required.

Therefore, we would propose that Lakelands is removed from inclusion in Zone 2 and included in Zone 1 or an alternative zoning approach is adopted where sites in Zone 2 that have had a previous use that could impact on viability are subject to a lower CIL charge to reflect site specific circumstances.

We would also highlight that any emerging charging schedule should provide for payment kind to include payment in land, as provided for by Regulation 73 (amended in 2011), or payment in infrastructure, Regulation 73A (2014 Regulations). Payments in installments should also be provided for.

I trust that the comments above are of use and please do not hesitate to contact me ([alex.chapman@torltd.co.uk](mailto:alex.chapman@torltd.co.uk)) if you would like to discuss any element of these further.

Yours sincerely,

Alex Chapman  
Senior Planner

cc

Pippa Cheetham

O&H Properties Ltd

Colchester Borough Council  
Planning Department  
Rowan House  
33 Sheepden Road  
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15<sup>th</sup> April 2016

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Colchester Borough Council Planning Policy

merseahomes

Dear Sirs

Thank you for asking us to consult on the CIL evidence base report by BPS dated October 2015. We are pleased to make the following comments -

1. In 1.5 we note that the Council have dropped the possibility of CIL payments for retail uses. Whilst I can understand this position I would still suggest the situation is reviewed across all commercial uses. For example it may well be that large leisure uses such as Cinemas would be able to contribute.
2. In 2.4 (a) of the report it states that CBC wish to promote Brownfield development which we agree with.
3. With regard 2.5 our interpretation of the housing market is that prices are often higher in the rural areas but it is very location specific. For example house prices in Zone 2 Dedham/West Bergholt are far higher than those of West Mersea/Rowhedge but they are all said to be rural Zone 2. Conversely some Zone 1 Urban areas have high values like Lexden. In addition some Greenfield sites are very expensive to deliver due to new expensive infrastructure being required whereas Brownfield sites often have existing services to tap into. Because of this we think it is too simplistic to suggest no CIL in Zone 1 but a considerable CIL in Zone 2 as there would be far too many anomalies.
4. Our recommendation is to therefore reduce the CIL to a level that allows it to be spread across all development but at the same time collect a similar amount of money. This can be assessed using the SHLAA which would analyse where development is likely to come from based on your Zones so that the income outcome can be set at a neutral level. This would then ensure a level playing field without a post code lottery.
5. In addition it is likely that specific large strategic site (in excess of 500 units) will need to be excluded from CIL due to their ability to deliver infrastructure on site.
6. We agree with 2.7 in that build costs have risen disproportionately.

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2406127  
vat  
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7. We agree with 2.11 in that some viability has come under additional pressure but feel the same could be said with regard some rural areas as well hence our suggested alternative blanket approach. As is suggested in the report this should still not stop schemes coming forward as Affordable Housing can balance out difficult sites.
8. We therefore disagree with recommendation 2.12
9. The recommendation in 2.15 to charge £150 sqm is not agreed with us, as mentioned above we would prefer a much lower blanket fee.
10. In 3.3 it seems to be saying that rural developments that are previously developed will also be include as zero CIL however this is not mentioned again so I assume not the case. However if this were support we feel that this is over complicating the situation and therefore again why we think a simplistic blanket charging rate at a much lower level.
11. In 4.3 and linked to our comments in point 3 above we believe that it is too simplistic to assume very different land values between Zone 1 & 2 and this is skewing the results.
12. If the Council were to accept BPS recommendations we think the map on Appendix 1 is a little misleading as the mapping spreads into adjoining Boroughs, Post Code CO4 5 is odd as it spreads way into what we would think is a rural area. Also the key would be more appropriate if it said 'Mainly Urban' and 'Mainly Rural'. As mentioned above it is not clear why brownfield and greenfield have been mentioned when it is irrelevant i.e. it is based on post codes only and a site will not get any different treatment if its previously developed or not.
13. As an additional issue obviously you will be aware of the Governments wish to enforce a 20% Affordable Housing (Starter Home tenure) on all schemes over 10 units which will also have to be taken into account when the details are known.

Yours faithfully



Stuart Cock  
Managing Director

Spatial Policy Team  
Colchester Borough Council  
Freepost RLSL-ZTSR-SGYA  
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Essex  
CO1 1ZE

By email

Dear Sir or Madam

### Community Infrastructure Levy Viability Update Consultation

I refer to the above consultation and write on behalf of a number of clients to put forward a collective representation, which is contained within an independent report (attached).

As a planning consultant in the town that represents a number of local development companies, I feel that it is important for those companies to engage with the Council in relation to important matters of planning policy. The introduction of the Community Infrastructure Level (CIL) in Colchester will have a significant impact on how local developers conduct their business affairs in the future, regardless of the level of the charge.

Of the many developers I represent in the local area, no fewer than twelve small to medium sized development companies expressed an interest in making a collective representation in response to this consultation. These companies are:

- Vaughan & Blyth
- Lexden Restorations Ltd
- East Anglian Group
- Mansfield Developments Ltd
- Barkley Projects LLP
- Harding Homes Ltd
- Glenmoor Developments Ltd
- Lord Residential Ltd
- R F West Limited
- Oak Home Developments Limited
- South East Developments
- C&K Developments Ltd

The consultation document focuses on the most appropriate level of CIL charge, having regard to the viability of development in Colchester. There can be no more experienced body in the town than those companies listed above, who understand the challenges of development viability in this area of Essex.

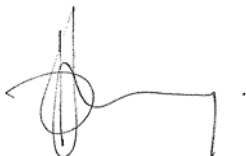


The consultation document is exclusively focussed on setting the most appropriate CIL charging level, which will allow development in Colchester to come forward, whilst remaining viable. As such, the issues that surround setting the most appropriate level of charge are those associated with land values, sales, development costs and other factors, relating to development viability. As such, I have advised my clients that the consultation document need independent review by a local surveyor/valuer, in order to establish whether the assumptions, figures, values and methodologies used by the Council's consultants are appropriate, generally and specific to conditions that prevail in Colchester.

To this end I have, on behalf of my client's, commissioned surveyors Morley, Riches and Ablewhite to undertake a review of the consultation document and to produce an independent report as to their findings; that report is attached.

It is important to note that my clients fully understand and accept the need for some form of charging associated with the impacts of new development. Their collective response is not simply aimed at reducing the CIL charge as much as possible. As with the CIL Regulations, the aim is to find a level for CIL, which is appropriate, reasonable and sensitive to local conditions, so that it allows development to continue to thrive in the town. The group of developers represented in this response make a significant contribution to housing delivery in Colchester and to its economic prosperity. Their knowledge and experience of development viability in the local area is of course extensive and the Council is invited to call upon this resource to assist in arriving at a fair and viable charging schedule.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'R' followed by a horizontal line and a small dot.

Robert Pomery BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI  
Director





Community Infrastructure Levy  
Comments on Update to Review of Evidence Base  
BPS Surveyors October 2015

15 April 2016

## 1 Introduction

1.1 Morley Riches & Ablewhite has been appointed by Pomery Planning Consultants to provide an independent assessment of the review of the evidence base prepared by BPS Surveyors in October 2015 to be considered in setting a CIL for Colchester Borough.

1.2 This assessment has been undertaken by Peter Riches BSc (Hons) FRICS. I am an RICS Registered valuer with 35 years' post qualification experience; 30 years being in private practice in Colchester. I have valued land and appraised the viability of numerous residential developments in the Borough. Since 2011 I have carried out RICS 'Red Book' valuations for Icen Homes/Colne Housing Association to meet the requirements of the Homes & Communities Agency.

## 2 Identification of Zones

2.1 In paragraph 2.3 the report identifies the difficulty of categorising sites purely by location. It is suggested that whether a site is Greenfield or Brownfield is a more important determinant of viability than its location. Clearly there will be Brownfield sites in rural areas and vice versa.

2.2 However, the report then appears to make the distinction by post codes and by reference to fixed map zones. It is unclear which will take precedence in determining the level of CIL to be paid – location or land use history.

## 3 Development Policy

3.1 Sections 2.4 and 3.5 state the definition of the Greenfield and Brownfield zones has been adopted to reflect the Council's wish to promote brownfield development in accordance with national planning policy guidance. Whilst I take no issue with the policy I question whether it is the function of the CIL to be such a policy tool.

3.2 The function of CIL (like s.106 financial contributions) is for the profits from development to contribute towards the additional infrastructure and public services it requires. It should not be used to influence where development takes place.

3.3 CBC has made the decision not to propose a CIL for all forms of retail development on the grounds that the market is weak for this use. (See paragraph 1.1 of the BPS Review.) I make the following observations

Morley Riches & Ablewhite LLP is an appointed representative of Genavco Insurance Limited who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority  
Property Management – Rent Reviews – Lease Renewals – Commercial Agency – Valuations – Rating  
Investment & Development – Planning – Building Surveying



**Partners** Peter Riches BSc (Hons) FRICS Jon Ablewhite MRICS Samantha Morley Teresa Ablewhite  
**Chartered Surveyor** Emma Byrne MA (Hons) MRICS **Property Management** Carol Geddes

- a) If the aim is to encourage activity in this sector is this another example of using the CIL for an unintended purpose?
- b) With developers jostling to undertake retail development at Tollgate Village, Stane Park and Northern Gateway is this sector stronger than suggested?
- c) Planning policy might wish to favour the town centre and zero CIL might encourage this. However why should any new retail development that is permitted not pay its way?

## 4 House Prices

4.1 The report concludes that identical houses in the rural/Greenfield Zone 2 are more expensive than those in the urban/Brownfield Zone 1. BPA have reached this conclusion by dividing the average sale price by the same 'hypothetical' floor area in each case ie they have divided actual sale prices by assumed areas. The result is the same 4 bedroom house in the town comes out with an average value of £2,440/m<sup>2</sup> as opposed to an average of £2,980/m<sup>2</sup> in the countryside – 22% more. Analysing the figures in this way fails to take account of the possibility that a 4 bedroom house in Zone 2 might very well have a larger floor area.

4.2 The importance of this cannot be overstated as it leads BPS to the conclusion that Greenfield development is very much more profitable and can support a CIL whilst Brownfield development cannot.

## 5 Construction Costs

5.1 The report assumes there is no difference in costs between the Zones. Larger houses in rural areas are generally related to lower development densities and higher amenity. Buyers tend to be from higher income groups with greater purchasing power, thus seeking a better quality product. Better specified houses are more expensive to build in terms of materials. Where densities are lower the land is also relatively more expensive.

5.2 In the BPS report the identical 4 bedroom house is assumed to be worth £92,000 more outside the town (Greenfield) but costing exactly the same amount to build. If the house is no larger, the specification must improve. In either event the build cost increases if such a price differential is to be supported.

## 6 Land Value

6.1 Section 4.2 makes the assumption that Greenfield land is cheaper than Brownfield land making development more profitable. I could find no evidence to support this assertion in the report or from my own experience. BPS appear to have reused the values in their 2012 report.

6.2 There are arguments that Brownfield land should be cheaper. These additional costs will reduce the price a developer will pay;

- a) In an historic town there is more likely to be a need for an archaeological excavation.
- b) Schemes in conservation areas (more likely to be in Zone 1) require greater attention to design and the use of more costly specialist materials.
- c) Previous uses of the land may have caused contamination requiring remediation.
- d) In an urban environment there is a greater possibility of problems caused by surface water run-off.

6.3 Section 4.3 goes on to say the value of land in the urban area (£400,000 per acre) is 60% higher than it is in the rural area (£250,000 per acre). I can find no evidence for this. BPS argue developers

take a greater risk undertaking rural development due to the relative difficulty of obtaining planning permission and hence will pay less for the land. I have two observations:

- a) CIL only applies in a '**consented scheme**' world. Including pre-planning risk as a development cost is inappropriate.
- b) If sites do not have planning permission developers will pay less. The reality however is this rarely happens. Developers generally prefer to secure options and will only acquire sites once permission has been obtained.

6.4 Land value is a function of development viability. It is the largest and most uncertain element in the development equation –

**Land value = Sales Revenue less Development Costs and Developer's Profit.**

Sales Revenue is determined by the market. There is a limit to what buyers will pay so this is finite and largely out of the developers' control.

Development Costs are '**what they are**'. Some developers can exercise great skill to save money and economies of scale come into play. However, there is not a great deal of margin.

Developers' Profit is a little more discretionary in that developers can decide to accept a lower profit if highly motivated to undertake a scheme. However, if there is any element of external funding the lender will expect to see a level of profit adequate to provide protection against unexpected increases in costs or delays. **BPS use 20% of GDV; I'm comfortable with this figure.**

6.5 There is no set price for land. Its value is determined by the formula in 6.3. If sales revenue falls or costs rise, the land value falls. Whilst land values can in theory rise without limit if they fall below the point where vendors are willing to sell they will retain their land and hope for better times. Hence it is not possible to set a typical land value in order to assess the viability of a hypothetical site. It is the viability of a development which determines the price a developer will pay for the land.

6.6 The BPS appraisal in Appendix 6 compares the viability of a 52 unit scheme on one hectare of Brownfield land with a 34 unit scheme on a one hectare Greenfield site. The urban scheme produces a gross residual value of £1,093,415 to fund the acquisition of the site having allowed £1000 per unit for s.106. The rural scheme generates a residual value of only £775,127 to fund the acquisition of the site having allowed £150/m<sup>2</sup> for CIL.

6.7 If I add back the CIL and s.106 costs the urban site is generating a surplus of £1,142,415 whilst the rural site a surplus of £1,146,190. Hence if you use the viability of development to assess whether a scheme can support CIL or other financial contributions, the evidence of BPS is there is no discernible difference between Greenfield and Brownfield sites.

6.8 As I have described above, the BPS appraisal assumes the same 4 bed house in the Greenfield Zone will sell for £92,000 more than in the town with no increase in costs to improve the specification. If the unit size is increased on the Greenfield site to reflect the lower site density and improved specification (thus supporting the increased sale price) then the development cost will rise. This will make the Greenfield site less viable and less able to support the level of CIL proposed.

## 7 s.106 Charges

7.1 At paragraph 4.33, BPS state that a CIL of £150/m<sup>2</sup> will generate a typical sum of £13,750 per dwelling. This works back to a floor area of **91.67m<sup>2</sup> so presumably a 3 bedroom house; they don't say.** They go on to say this would impose no additional liability on developers as the typical s.106 cost is £14,000 per dwelling. **What they don't give is any evidence for this figure.**

7.2 My own experience is the typical s.106 contribution for a three bedroom house is £6,944.16; roughly half of what is suggested by BPS. Perhaps they quoted a figure for a much bigger scheme that triggered additional highway or educational contributions? BPS should provide evidence to support their calculation.

7.3 I have evidence of a development of four bedroom houses in West Bergholt. The average floor area was 220m<sup>2</sup>. (See my comment above and the BPS area of 120m<sup>2</sup> for a four bedroom house in Zone 2.) **Had this scheme not benefitted from the Government 'break' for small developers** available at the time, the s.106 would have been £9,787.06. The CIL at £150/m<sup>2</sup> would be £33,000. More than three times as much.

## 8 Analysis of BPS Appraisal

8.1 Table 1 is a summary of the BPS appraisal. I have removed any items for CIL or s.106 contributions.

	Area m <sup>2</sup>	No.	£/m <sup>2</sup>	Value	No.	£/m <sup>2</sup>	Value
		<b>Brownfield</b>			<b>Greenfield</b>		
2 bed flat	65	9	£ 2,356	£ 153,112	5	£ 2,459	£ 159,830
2 bed house	80	11	£ 2,542	£ 203,352	6	£ 2,848	£ 227,806
3 bed house	95	21	£ 2,287	£ 217,297	12	£ 2,557	£ 242,955
4 bed house	120	8	£ 2,157	£ 258,872	4	£ 2,924	£ 350,000
3 bed AH	95	3	£ 1,295	£ 123,025	7	£ 1,295	£ 123,025
<b>GDV</b>		<b>52</b>	<b>£ 2,222</b>	<b>£ 10,652,414</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>£ 2,347</b>	<b>£ 7,367,634</b>
Construction Cost			£ 1,130	£ 5,415,808		£ 1,130	£ 3,546,788
Abnormals etc			10%	£ 541,581		10%	£ 354,679
Contingency			5%	£ 297,869		5%	£ 195,073
Professional fees			10%	£ 595,739		10%	£ 390,147
Sales			2.5%	£ 256,227		2.5%	£ 162,126
Finance			6.75%	£ 208,660		6.75%	£ 144,837
Profit			20%	£ 2,069,140		20%	£ 1,342,097
<b>Residue</b>				<b>£ 1,267,390</b>			<b>£ 1,231,887</b>

Table 1

In each case it shows a residual amount to meet financial contributions and acquire a 1 hectare site. You can see, the sums are almost identical. There are some minor aspects of the appraisal I could challenge but as the same criteria is used in each case any changes equally affect both scenarios.

8.2 There is however, one major aspect that I believe is incorrect that has a significant effect on the comparison. This is the assertion that an identical house (the cost of construction and floor area is taken above to be the same) will sell for significantly more in the Greenfield Zone. The specification would need to be much higher, or more likely the floor area will be greater to achieve this. Table 2 reconsiders the Greenfield scenario with larger units.

<b>Table 2</b>	Area m <sup>2</sup>	No.	£/m <sup>2</sup>	Value
			<b>Greenfield</b>	
2 bed flat	65	5	£ 2,459	£ 159,830
2 bed house	85	6	£ 2,848	£ 227,806
3 bed house	110	12	£ 2,557	£ 242,955
4 bed house	150	4	£ 2,924	£ 350,000
3 bed AH	100	7	£ 1,295	£ 123,025
<b>GDV</b>		34	£ 2,347	<b>£ 7,367,634</b>
Construction Cost			£ 1,130	£ 3,904,150
Abnormals etc			10%	£ 390,415
Contingency			5%	£ 214,728
Professional fees			10%	£ 429,457
Sales			2.5%	£ 162,126
Finance			6.75%	£ 159,321
Profit			20%	£ 1,342,097
<b>Residue</b>				<b>£ 765,341</b>

8.3 A modest increase in unit sizes to a level that justifies the same sales figures increases the build cost by approximately 10% and reduces the residue by approximately £450,000.

## 9 Proposal

9.1 If the cost of the land is deducted from the Residue at the rates suggested by BPS (for which there is no evidence) the remaining sum to meet CIL or s.106 contributions can be calculated for both sites.

	Area m <sup>2</sup>	No.	£/m <sup>2</sup>	Value		Area m <sup>2</sup>	No.	£/m <sup>2</sup>	Value
			<b>Brownfield</b>					<b>Greenfield</b>	
2 bed flat	65	9	£2,356	£153,112	2 bed flat	65	5	£2,459	£159,830
2 bed house	80	11	£2,542	£203,352	2 bed house	85	6	£2,848	£227,806
3 bed house	95	21	£2,287	£217,297	3 bed house	110	12	£2,557	£242,955
4 bed house	120	8	£2,157	£258,872	4 bed house	150	4	£2,924	£350,000
3 bed AH	95	3	£1,295	£123,025	3 bed AH	100	7	£1,295	£123,025
<b>GDV</b>		52	£2,222	<b>£10,652,414</b>	<b>GDV</b>		34	£2,347	<b>£7,367,634</b>
Construction Cost			£1,130	£5,415,808	Construction Cost			£1,130	£3,904,150
Abnormals etc			10%	£541,581	Abnormals etc			10%	£390,415
Contingency			5%	£297,869	Contingency			5%	£214,728
Professional fees			10%	£595,739	Professional fees			10%	£429,457
Sales			2.5%	£256,227	Sales			2.5%	£162,126
Finance			6.75%	£208,660	Finance			6.75%	£159,231
Profit			20%	£2,069,140	Profit			20%	£1,342,097
<b>Residue</b>				<b>£1,267,390</b>	<b>Residue</b>				<b>£765,430</b>
Less site cost (inc fees)				£1,058,000	Less site cost (inc fees)				£634,800
Interest on site (1 year at 6.75%)				£71,415	Interest on site (1 year at 6.75%)				£42,849
Balance for CIL				£137,975	Balance for CIL				£87,781
<b>CIL per m<sup>2</sup></b>	m <sup>2</sup>	4420		<b>£31.22</b>	<b>CIL per m<sup>2</sup></b>	m <sup>2</sup>	2755		<b>£31.86</b>

Table 3

9.2 Table 3 shows the outcome is very similar in both cases and suggests a single rate of CIL (£31.50/ m<sup>2</sup>) could be applied to all development scenarios in the Borough.

## 10 Summary and Conclusion

10.1 I referred in 7.3 to a development in West Bergholt of four bedroom houses with average floor areas of 220m<sup>2</sup>. In 2014, Vaughan & Blythe sold 10 houses on a Greenfield site in Tiptree. They had a mixture of 3, 4 and 5 bedrooms. The average floor sizes were 142m<sup>2</sup> and 197m<sup>2</sup> for the 3 and 4 bedroom units respectively.

10.2 I have reworked the figures used by BPS and although there are some I am cautious about I have made only one change - to sustain higher sales prices on lower density rural sites, unit sizes must be higher. Table 4 compares the areas I have used in Zone 2 with those BPS used for both Zones.

	Area m <sup>2</sup>	
	Zone 1	Zone 2
2 bed flat	65	65
2 bed house	80	85
3 bed house	95	110
4 bed house	120	150
3 bed AH	95	100

Table 4

The increases I have made are modest by comparison with some of the evidence although I am aware of other developments in Greenfield locations where unit sizes are smaller. Charles Church are currently building 3 bed houses in Stanway that are 93m<sup>2</sup> although with the addition of a garage the total will be closer to 110m<sup>2</sup>

10.3 Brownfield development often in urban areas can place greater pressure on already overloaded services and infrastructure. For this reason exempting it from CIL and placing all the burden on Greenfield sites seems inappropriate.

10.4 Comparing the surplus from each type of development as I have in Table 3 suggests that each can sustain a modest level of CIL without adversely affecting the viability or threatening the future release of land for development.

10.5 A uniform level of CIL avoids making a challenging definition of what is a Greenfield or Brownfield site. I use the word 'challenging' as a decision with adverse implications could well result in 'challenges' being made by an aggrieved party.

10.6 In 2014 a single house standing on a very large plot in The Avenue, Wivenhoe was demolished and replaced by five large detached houses. Nearby, Cooks Shipyard was redeveloped to provide a wide range of housing (approximately 100 units) and some commercial floor space. Both schemes are in Zone 2. The redevelopment of Cooks Shipyard clearly was on a Brownfield site. If the BPS proposal is taken at face value (see paragraph 2.3 of their review) the scheme today would not attract CIL. The site in the Avenue was built on previously garden land and would presumably be regarded as Greenfield. The five houses (with an aggregate area of 1255 m<sup>2</sup>) would today attract a CIL of £188,250 based on the BPS proposal. Its impact on local services however, will have been minimal compared to Cooks. This is just one example of how the BPS proposal can lead to highly anomalous results.



10.7 If CIL is imposed at a rate that threatens the viability of a development it increases the likelihood of a successful challenge against the Affordable Housing (AH) allocation. The figures used in Table 3 adopt the same AH allocations as BPS and assumes CIL will not be applied to that element of the floor space. If CIL is imposed at a higher level the reduced viability implies the level of AH will be reduced.

10.8 High rates of CIL encourage the construction of the smallest possible unit sizes. This will tend to favour larger schemes where high volume delivery solutions tend to take precedence. The small and medium size builders will be discouraged from promoting bespoke house designs thereby restricting consumer choice.

10.9 The CIL proposed appears very high compared to these towns

- a) Southend on Sea (non-core but including Westcliffe, Leigh on Sea and Shoeburyness) - £20/m<sup>2</sup>
- b) Chelmsford - £125/m<sup>2</sup>
- c) Babergh District - £50/m<sup>2</sup> (£90/m<sup>2</sup> for 1-2 dwellings)
- d) Hadleigh, Sudbury, Needham Market and Stowmarket - £115/m<sup>2</sup>
- e) Mid-Suffolk - £50/m<sup>2</sup> (£75/m<sup>2</sup> for 1-14 dwellings)
- f) Leiston and Felixstowe - £50/m<sup>2</sup> (£70/m<sup>2</sup> for 1-5 dwellings)
- g) Woodbridge, Saxmundham, Kesgrave and Marltesham - £90/m<sup>2</sup> (£115/m<sup>2</sup> for 1-5 dwellings)
- h) Suffolk Coastal (Villages) - £150/m<sup>2</sup>

None of the adjoining districts have adopted CIL free areas as proposed for Colchester. Some districts have adopted lower rates in the town whilst others have done the opposite. Chelmsford makes no distinction. Both Babergh and Mid-Suffolk are charging more in their urban centres than the rest of the districts; the opposite of the approach proposed by BPS.

What circumstances in Colchester mean a CIL at £150/m<sup>2</sup> can be sustained compared to Chelmsford (which is closer to London and supports higher sales prices) only charges £125/m<sup>2</sup>? The CIL proposed by BPS is higher than all of adjoining centres. Does this not make Colchester a less appealing location for new development?

10.10 In the face of obvious demand, why has CBC dropped the proposal to introduce CIL for retail development when none of the neighbouring districts have done this?

10.11 Finally, there are a number of assumptions that BPS have made that are unsupported. I have highlighted those that are material to their conclusion. They should be asked to provide evidence or verification where possible.



**P D Riches BSc (Hons) FRICS**  
RICS Registered Valuer

15<sup>th</sup> April 2016  
CADV366533/AJ



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Dear Mr Cameron

**Colchester Borough Council CIL Report Update to Review of Evidence Base  
Representation submitted on behalf of Redrow Homes**

This representation is submitted by Savills (UK) Limited (hereafter known as “Savills”) in respect of Colchester Borough Council’s (“CBC”) request for feedback on their updated Community Infrastructure Levy (“CIL”) viability evidence base, on behalf of our client Redrow Homes Limited (“Redrow”).

**Background**

- 1.1 CBC undertook initial consultation on a Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule (“PDCS”) in September 2011 and a Draft Charging Schedule (“DCS”) in December 2011. We understand that consultation was then put on hold and Savills was invited to meet with CBC in July 2014 to provide advice in regards to the implementation of CIL.
- 1.2 The previous CIL viability work (undertaken by Robert Tym & Partners) was reviewed and updated at this stage by BPS Chartered Surveyors<sup>1</sup>. Savills provided commentary on this review in our letter dated 4<sup>th</sup> September 2014. CBC has now released a Report Update to Review of Evidence Base<sup>2</sup> for consultation from 7<sup>th</sup> March to 15<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

**Purpose**

- 1.3 The purpose of this representation is to set out Redrow’s response to CBC’s updated viability evidence base, which has been undertaken with a view to introducing CIL alongside the new Local

<sup>1</sup> CBC CIL: Review of Evidence Base, September 2012

<sup>2</sup> BPS Chartered Surveyors, October 2015



plan. Redrow's particular comments in regards to the residential viability evidence base and suggested rates can be summarised as follows:

- **Revised Draft Charging Schedule** - We note that CBC is yet to devise a revised Draft Charging Schedule for consultation. It is therefore unclear whether CBC are proposing the suggested rates contained with the BPS Report Update or alternative rates;
- **Planning Uncertainty** – At this stage in the Local Plan process there is a high level of uncertainty around future development sites and locations for growth. This makes it difficult to determine whether the updated Viability Assessment correctly tests the future housing supply; and
- **Unviable Rates** – It is unclear how BSP have formulated their suggested CIL rates from the viability evidence and testing. A number of the key viability inputs adopted by BPS are incorrect, which in our opinion results in an over-estimation of the potential for CIL in the Borough.

1.4 These points are discussed in greater detail in the following sections.

## Legislation

1.5 It should be noted that this representation is made in the context of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) ("the Regulations") and relevant statutory guidance<sup>3</sup>. The most recent amendments to the Regulations and associated guidance came in to force on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015. The CIL consultation will therefore be subject to the requirements of these latest set of Regulations and Guidance.

## Overview

1.6 Savills has been asked on behalf of Redrow to scrutinise the available evidence, viability testing and the proposed CIL rates. The objective is therefore to ensure a reasonable rate of CIL, which allows for the policy requirements for sustainability and affordable housing, anticipated residual Section 106/278 and other site specific infrastructure.

1.7 The objective of this representation is therefore not to oppose CIL; it merely seeks to ensure a reasonable rate is proposed, which will enable the planned development in the area to come forward. We have therefore split our response in to the following Sections:

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<sup>3</sup> April 2014 (as amended)

- **Part 1** - Planning Overview;
- **Part 2** - Viability Testing;
- **Part 3** - Interpretation of Results;
- **Conclusions** - Overview of key concerns and proposed CIL rates.

1.8 In submitting this representation, we are only commenting on particular key areas of the evidence base. The lack of reference to other parts of the evidence base cannot be taken as agreement with them and we reserve the right to make further comments upon the evidence base at the Examination stage.

### **Part 1 – Planning Overview and Housing Land Supply**

1.9 The adopted Development Plan for CBC comprises the Core Strategy (adopted December 2008, selected policies revised July 2014), the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) (2010) and the Development Policies DPD (2014). The Core Strategy Review did not include any amendments to the spatial strategy, housing and employment targets, or allocations. It is therefore not considered that Colchester has an up-to-date NPPF compliant Local Plan.

1.10 CBC is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan and Strategic Growth DPD. Consultation on the Local Plan Issues and Options Local Plan took place in early 2015. In support of the new Local Plan, Strategic Growth Development Plan Document(s) will be prepared to include policies and allocations to support strategic allocations for new development. The quantum and location of new housing within the Borough is therefore unknown.

1.11 The timetable for the production of the new Local Plan, as set out in the Local Development Scheme (December 2015), is as follows:

- **Preferred Options** – June/July 2016
- **Publication of the Submission Local Plan** – December 2016
- **Submission to Secretary of State** – March 2017
- **Examination** – June 2017
- **Adoption** – October 2017

1.12 This is considered an overly ambitious timetable to adoption with the Council giving itself very little time to review comments, collate any additional evidence and revise the plan publication. The examination time period is also considered unrealistic. The duration of the examination will depend on

the availability of an appropriate Inspector, the scope and complexity of issues raised and the need for further consultation on modifications arising out of the examination. The average duration of examination for local planning authorities whose plan was found sound in 2015 was 18 months. A more realistic adoption date is considered to be late 2018-19.

## Housing Land Supply and Affordable Housing

- 1.13 As set out in the Council's Annual Monitoring Report (December 2015), the Council considers that it has a five year housing land supply of 5.3 years. This is calculated from a housing target of 920 dwellings per annum.
- 1.14 The target of 920 dwellings per annum is derived from the Objectively Assessed Housing Need Study<sup>4</sup> (July 2015) which provides the most recent assessment of the Council's OAN. As noted in the NPPG<sup>5</sup>, the weight attributed to such studies should take account of the fact they have not been tested or moderated against relevant constraints. Indeed, as noted at paragraph 9.27 of the Study, the suggested housing targets may need to be adjusted to take account of cross-boundary unmet need and affordable housing need.
- 1.15 The neighbouring authorities of Tendring and Braintree are both unable to demonstrate a five year supplies of housing which suggests that Colchester may need to increase its target to help accommodate their unmet need.
- 1.16 In regards to affordable housing, the Council has failed to meet its affordable housing targets in 6 of the last 8 years (see table 1 below). The 2008 Core Strategy sets an affordable housing target of 35% which was subsequently amended to 20% in the Core Strategy Review (July 2014). 20% was considered to be a more realistic target in maintaining a balance between housing need and viability.
- 1.17 **Table 1** also indicates how the percentage of affordable housing delivery fluctuates each year, making it difficult to identify any trends in affordable housing delivery. Furthermore, it should be noted that the delivery percentage includes affordable housing exception schemes and thus the percentage of delivery on market housing schemes is likely to be lower.

<sup>4</sup> Study undertaken by PBA on behalf of Braintree, Chelmsford, Colchester and Tendring Councils.

<sup>5</sup> NPPG, Paragraph 030, Reference ID 3-030-20140306

**Table 1: Affordable Housing Delivery 2007-2015**

Year	% of affordable housing delivery	Local Plan Target
2014/15	26.2%	20%
2013/14	14.2%	35%
2012/13	21.6%	35%
2011/12	35.3%	35%
2010/11	28.5%	35%
2009/10	30.1%	35%
2008-09	11.5%	35%
2007-08	21.3%	25%

*Source: Colchester AMR's 2007-15*

1.18 The above illustrates the following:

- i) CBC does not currently have an up-to-date plan;
- ii) CBC has a five year housing land supply but does not appear to have taken into account cross-boundary unmet targets; and
- iii) Affordable housing in the Borough fluctuates and historically has struggled to meet Local Plan targets.

1.19 The planning context of the Borough is incredibly important when assessing and reviewing the evidence base for appropriate CIL rates. It is therefore unclear at this stage how CBC can demonstrate that the rates will not threaten the delivery of development in the Borough (in particular the affordable housing delivery rates), when the content and adoption of the development plan is unclear and sites to come forward for development are not yet identified.

1.20 In light of the above, we strongly advise that the CIL process is suspended (or suitable buffers incorporated) until such time that future development sites are identified and can be adequately tested through the CIL viability evidence. This will ensure that the proposed development can support the suggested level of CIL and the delivery of development (both private and affordable) across the Borough is not threatened.



## **Part 2 – The Viability Testing**

- 1.21 CBC have reviewed and updated their viability analysis of residential development (undertaken by BPS, October 2015). We welcome that CBC has acknowledged that residential build costs and sales values have changed since the previous viability testing (although please note further comments below). The result is that a £0 psm CIL charge is proposed for development falling within the boundary of 'Zone 1- Brownfield'. For the purpose of our representation we have therefore focused on the assumptions that have been adopted for residential development within 'Zone 2 – Rural Greenfield Areas', which currently have a proposed CIL rate of £150 psm.

### **Previous Response – September 2014**

- 1.22 Please note that we previously set out our concerns in relation to the assumptions adopted in the Viability Study<sup>6</sup> and the Review of Evidence Base<sup>7</sup> in our letter (September 2014). Our comments in relation to the following appraisal assumptions still stand:

#### Developer's Profit

- 1.23 We welcome that BPS have increased the developer's profit margin to 20% of GDV however remain concerned that a 6% profit margin remains for the affordable housing and would advocate a blended rate of 20% on GDV. This approach has recently been supported by an Inspector in relation to two residential development sites in Southend-on-Sea –

*"Most of the risk of development remains and so, although I am aware that in some parts of the country developers are prepared to accept a return of 15%, for this appeal I accept the assertion of both parties' experts...that a risk reward return of between 20% and 25% is a reasonable expectation for profits whether calculated on GDV or on costs, with expectations for profits calculated on the latter basis being sometimes higher still"<sup>8</sup> (Paragraph 6).*

- 1.24 The Inspector also acknowledged the outcomes of the following appeal decisions, which supported a higher blended profit rate than currently reflected in BPS's viability testing for Colchester:

- **Land at the Manor, Shin field<sup>9</sup>** – accepted evidence submitted by six national housebuilders on their targets and supported a blended rate of 20% on GDV;

<sup>6</sup> Roger Tym & Partners, 2011

<sup>7</sup> BPS Chartered Surveyors, September 2012

<sup>8</sup> Paragraph 6, APP/D1590/Q/14/2228062, P W Clark MA MRTPI MCMI, 7<sup>th</sup> January 2015 and Paragraph 6, APP/D1590/Q/14/2228065

<sup>9</sup> APP/X0360/A/12/2179141, Paragraph 44

- **Land at Lowfield Road, Rotherham**<sup>10</sup> – supported a rate of 22%, made up of 15% profit and 7% overheads; and
- **Former Holsworthy Showground, Holsworthy**<sup>11</sup>.

1.25 We would therefore ask that the viability evidence is re-run to include a blended profit rate of 20% on GDV.

#### Build Costs

- 1.26 We are pleased to note that BPS has reviewed their build cost assumptions and highlighted that there were significant cost increases between July 2012 and September 2014. However, Redrow are concerned that the updated figures used in the viability modelling are taken from the BCIS All In Tender Prices for September 2014 and are therefore now 18 months out of date.
- 1.27 We appreciate that CIL viability modelling cannot be continuously updated throughout the process; however, build costs have increased rapidly over this period and we would therefore expect BPS to have updated these figures in the latest update to viability testing to current values. Failure to do so increases the potential for the viability modelling assumptions to be challenged at examination. [11] We would therefore strongly advise that these figures (along with Sales Values) are updated ahead of the revised DCS being published for consultation / submitted for examination.

#### **Updated Viability Assessment**

- 1.28 In addition to the above, we would like to draw attention to the following appraisal assumptions:

#### Residential Development Scenarios

- 1.29 Our client is concerned that only two residential development scenarios have been tested within the BPS viability testing. Both of these scenarios are of the same scale of development (1 Hectare), with one Brownfield and one Greenfield residential scheme. This is particularly concerning given the fact that CBC does not have an identified five year housing land supply and / or up-to-date Local Plan. We are therefore concerned that the development scenarios tested are not reflective of the sites that will come forward during the plan period.

<sup>10</sup> APP/R4408/Q/14/2216976, Paragraph 33

<sup>11</sup> APP/W1145/Q/13/2204429, Paragraph 14

- 1.30 In light of this, we would have expected CBC to test a variety of residential development scenarios ranging in scale, number of units and type of development to ensure that the viability of all potential sites coming forward over the plan period is tested. We would also highlight we do not believe that the resultant “Brownfield”/ “Greenfield” differential CIL rates are in accordance with the CIL Regulations and / or supported by this viability testing (please see paragraphs 1.41 - 1.55 below).

### **Section 106 Assumptions**

- 1.31 We are concerned that the BPS viability appraisals for Section 106 and 278 obligations (£1,500 per unit)<sup>12</sup> are too low. Furthermore, no allowance for Section 106 and 278 obligations has been made within some of the Zone 2 typology viability testing. It is unclear what, if any, justification exists for this assumption.
- 1.32 Given the potential for larger sites to be allocated as part of the Local Plan we would argue that this allowance is too low. We would also highlight that as a Regulation 123 List has not been publicised for review, it is unclear which infrastructure items will be excluded from being paid for by CIL and will therefore remain payable by way of Section 106 Agreements. At this stage, it is therefore impossible to determine whether or not £1,500 per unit for Section 106 / 278 is sufficient for a generic 1 ha greenfield / brownfield site in the Borough.
- 1.33 We would therefore recommend that CBC demonstrate that accurate allowances have been made in their viability testing to reflect adopted policy within the Borough when formulating their CIL rates. We would therefore ask that CBC review historic Section 106 obligations in light of their proposed Regulation 123 List to determine whether or not the above assumptions are reasonable.

### **Part 3 - Interpretation of Results**

- 1.34 It has not been made clear within BPS’s updated evidence testing how the recommended CIL rates have been calculated from the viability testing.
- 1.35 At present only two ‘Sample Appraisals’ are contained within the study at Appendix 6. We would therefore request that BPS clarify how the proposed CIL rates have been calculated, how any buffer has been provided and that they make all of the viability appraisals used in reaching their conclusions available for sense checking.

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<sup>12</sup> Section 4.2.51, Ibid, July 2014

## Sensitivity Testing CIL Levels

- 1.36 Affordable housing is a key component of the CIL viability testing. It is therefore of paramount importance that the affordable housing assumptions are realistic and reflective of current market conditions.
- 1.37 The applicable affordable housing policy for the Borough was amended in the 2014 Core Strategy Review. The affordable housing target in the Borough is currently 20%. The Viability Study<sup>13</sup> has tested the two development scenarios with varying levels of affordable housing, as per **Table 2** below.

**Table 2: BPS Sensitivity Testing CIL Levels – Zone 2**

% Affordable	S106	CIL (£ per Sq M)	Net Residual against Land Cost
10%	£1,500	£185	£250,417
15%	£1,500	£185	£197,474
20%	£1,500	£185	£8,921
10%	£0	£200	£254,473
15%	£0	£200	£201,453
20%	£0	£200	£12,430

Source: BPS (October 2015)

- 1.38 Whilst sensitivity testing is a useful tool, the CIL Regulations and PPG require CIL testing to take account of current policy requirements. The sensitivity testing of the typology at non-policy compliant levels of affordable housing must therefore be disregarded for the purposes of setting CIL rates in Colchester. From the table above, it is clear that when the adopted affordable housing policy (20%) and £1,500 per unit Section 106 is applied to the Zone 2 typology that the viability reduces significantly. It is therefore questionable how the proposed CIL rate of £150 psm was reached, as this only reflects a 19% buffer.

<sup>13</sup> Three Dragons, March 2015

## Application of Buffer

- 1.39 Our client welcomes that a viability 'buffer' has been included within the BSP testing; however, we have concerns over the methodology and the application of this buffer to calculate the suggested CIL rates.
- 1.40 As already discussed there are a number of risks and uncertainties associated with the housing supply in the Borough for the following reasons:
- i) Significant history of under delivery of affordable housing in CBC and surrounding Local Planning Authorities; and
  - ii) Lack of an adopted Development and Site Allocations Development Plan Document, making it unclear which sites will come forward during the Plan Period.
- 1.41 It is therefore of paramount importance that a **minimum** viability cushion of **30%** should be adopted to minimise risk. We would therefore ask that the suggested CIL rates are reviewed to include an appropriate viability cushion once the above recommendations are taken in to account.

## Differential Rates by Geography and Site Classification

- 1.42 The CIL Regulations and PPG make it clear that differential CIL rates may be appropriate in relation to the following:
- i) Geographical zones within the Charging Authority's boundary;
  - ii) Types of development; and/or
  - iii) Scales of development.
- 1.43 We therefore welcome the fact that CBC has recognised the varying site characteristics across the Borough in terms of value and have proposed differential rates. However, we have the following concerns:
- **Zones** - looking at the proposed geographical zones within CBC, we are concerned that these boundaries do not reflect the market value areas within the Borough. In light of the uncertainty of the location of future housing sites, it is essential that the CIL rates are applied correctly across the Borough in accordance with the identified value areas.

- **Greenfield / Brownfield differentiation** – a number of examiner’s reports have looked at this differentiation recently to determine whether or not this qualifies as a “type” of development under the CIL Regulations. Our interpretation of their findings is that a generic “type” (i.e. greenfield / brownfield) cannot be applied to a whole area.
- **Supporting viability evidence** - we do not believe that sufficient evidence and viability testing has been undertaken in order to justify these differential rates. The fact that only two generic 1ha sites for each “type” of development have been tested provides limited supporting evidence that the proposed differential CIL rates are justifiable.

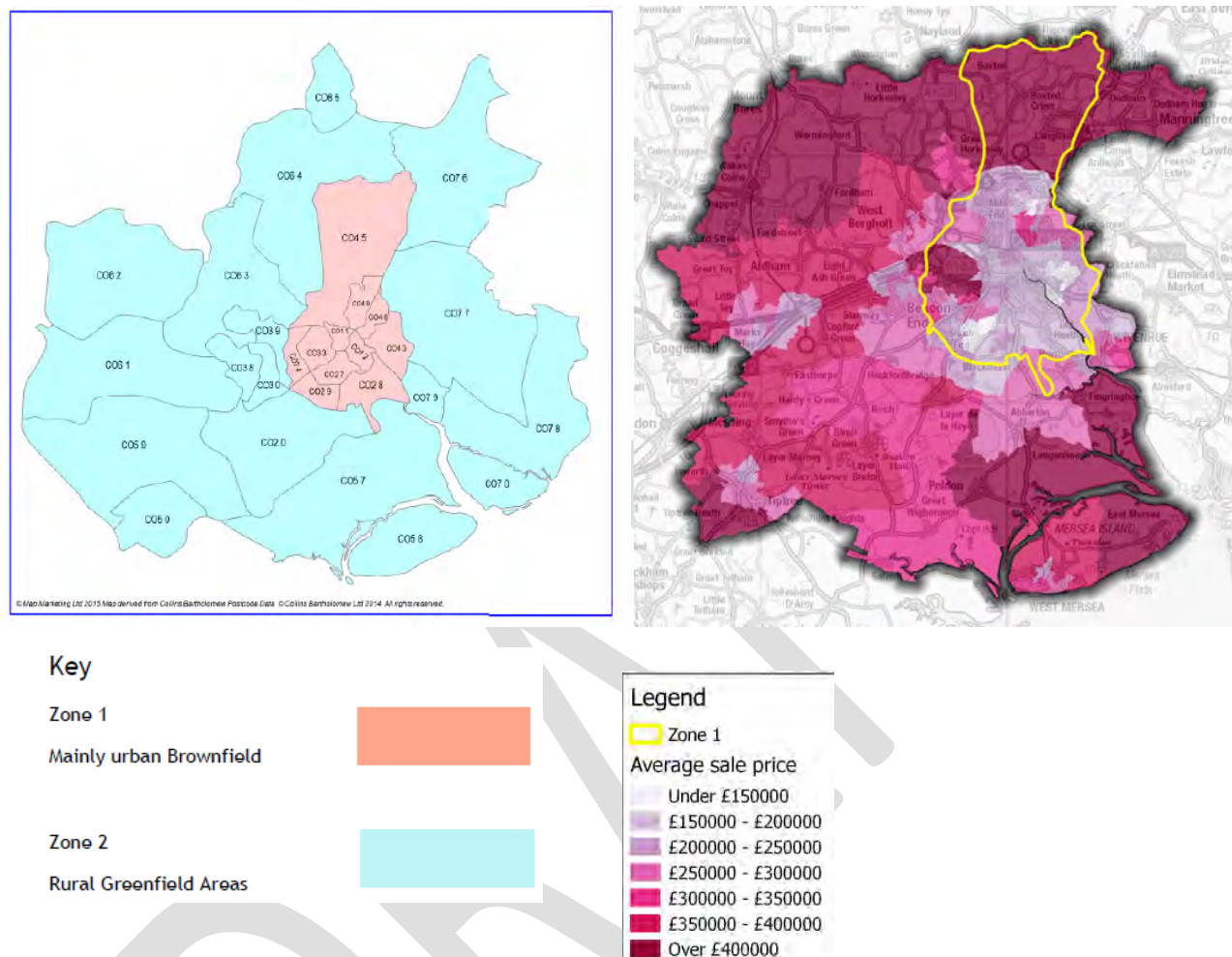
1.44 Further detail on these points is set out below.

#### Value Zones

- 1.45 We understand that BPS revisited the house price data by obtaining information on residential transactions (second hand and new build sales) from the Land Registry for all relevant postcodes within the Colchester administrative area. This was then compared to the sales values from 2012, 2013 and Q1, 2, and 3 2014. However, it is not clear how BPS has then interpreted their analysis of these sales values in order to justify the proposed geographical boundaries (high and low value).
- 1.46 As discussed, we are also concerned that the most recent house price data obtained and analysed is from September 2014 and is therefore out of date by over 18 months. We would also highlight that BPS has stated that the house price data obtained was separated into areas where new development was seen as being typified by Greenfield development or Brownfield development. However, it has not been made clear or justified how this categorisation has been made. We would therefore ask that clarification on this point is provided.
- 1.47 Using their analysis, BSP have proposed the following zones based on post code and differentiated by ‘mainly urban Brownfield’ and ‘rural Greenfield Areas’ site classifications.



**Figure 1 - Comparison of Sale Value analysis by Postcode**



Source: BPS (October 2015)

Source: Savills

- 1.48 We have compared the BPS boundaries (LH side) against Savills Average House Price heat map (April 2016, RH side). The Zone 1 boundary as outlined in the BPS report identified on the Savills analysis by the yellow line. This highlights that the Zone 1 delineation does not appear to follow the low value area analysis as demonstrated in the Savills analysis. From the analysis it would appear that a simplistic post code approach has been adopted. However, our analysis clearly illustrates that sales values across the Borough are not contained within post code boundaries.
- 1.49 This is concerning as parts of the lowest value areas as illustrated in the map above fall within Zone 2 with the suggested £150 psm rate. This entirely contradicts the purpose of adopting differential rates based on market value areas and risks rendering sites that fall within these areas unviable. We would

therefore recommend that the zone boundaries are reviewed to ensure that they reflect the lower value areas clearly visible within the Borough.

#### Brownfield / Greenfield Differentiation

1.50 As discussed, it is currently unclear how the suggested CIL rates would be applied and our client seeks further clarification on their intended operation. For example, further clarification on which CIL rate would apply should a Brownfield site come forward within Zone 2 ("Greenfield zone") and vice versa.

1.51 We would also highlight the Rother District Council (RDC) Examiner's Report<sup>14</sup> that recommended that the proposed Greenfield/ Brownfield differentiation in Rother's proposed CIL Charging Schedule be removed. The Examiner justified this recommendation by initially outlining Regulation 13 of the CIL Regulations which allow charging authorities to set differential rates, as follows:

*"(1) A charging authority may set differential rates –*

- (a) For different zones in which development would be situated;*
- (b) For reference to intended uses of development;*
- (c) By reference to the intended gross internal floor area of development;*
- (d) By reference to the intended number of dwellings or units to be constructed or provided under a planning permission."*

1.52 The Examiner went on to highlight that where charges are to be differentiated by zones, Regulation 12(2) has to be followed. This states:

*"(2) A draft charging schedule submitted for examination in accordance with section 212 of PA 2008 must contain –*

- (a) Where a charging authority sets differential rates in accordance with regulation 13(1)(a), a map which –*
  - (i) Identifies the location and boundaries of the zones,*
  - (ii) Is reproduced from, or based on, an Ordnance Survey map,*
  - (iii) Shows National Grid lines and reference numbers, and*
  - (iv) Includes an explanation of any symbol or notation which it uses;"*

1.50 The Examiner then concludes that in light of Regulation 12 and 13;

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<sup>14</sup> Kemmann-Lane, Terrence JP DipTP FRTPO MCMI, September 2015, File Ref: PINS/U1430/429/5

*“It can be seen that differentiation by Brownfield and Greenfield does not fall within regulation 13(1) (b), (c) or (d). The only basis on which the distinction could be made would be in Brownfield and Greenfield areas were able to be defined by zones. The Council has confirmed that it would be impractical to identify all the sites within the two descriptions by zonal mapping; it had been the Council’s intention that individual sites would be identified assessing which category the site fitted, at the time of imposing the Levy.”*

- 1.53 In light of the RDC Examiner’s removal of the differentiated CIL rates by Brownfield and Greenfield zones, we would strongly recommend that CBC reconsiders whether proposing a CIL rate of this nature in the Borough would be practical. We would also suggest that legal advice be obtained on whether or not the Council’s proposed CIL rates comply with the CIL Regulations.

#### Viability Evidence

- 1.54 Based on the above analysis, we are of the opinion that the Council **cannot** demonstrate that the suggested CIL rates are supported by the current viability evidence. It is therefore essential that additional testing is undertaken (in light of the above) and the CIL rates are reviewed.

#### **Effective Operation of CIL**

- 1.55 We note that CBC previously published an Instalments Policy for consultation however it is not currently clear whether an alternative instalments policy is being proposed. We would strongly advocate that CBC considers adopting a similar approach to Chichester District Council’s who implemented the following Instalments Policy:

**Table 3 – Alternative Instalments Policy**

CIL Liability	Number of Instalments	Payments
<b>Amounts up to £49,000</b>	None	Full payment within 90 days of commencement
<b>Amounts from £50,000 to £249,999</b>	2	£50,000 payable within 90 days of commencement Balance payable within 180 days of commencement
<b>Amounts from £250,000 to £499,999</b>	3	£100,000 payable within 90 days of commencement 50% balance payable within 180 days 50% balance payable within 270 days

CIL Liability	Number of Instalments	Payments
<b>Amounts from £500,000 to £999,999</b>	4	£250,000 payable within 90 days of commencement 33% balance payable within 180 days 33% balance payable within 270 days 33% balance payable within 360 days
<b>Amounts over £1,000,000</b>	4	In principle, as set out above for amounts over £500,001, but instalments for this scale of development will be open to negotiation on an individual basis.

Source: Chichester District Council's Adopted Instalments Policy (Implemented 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016)

## Relief

- 1.56 It has not been made clear within the updated evidence base whether CBC would be proposing to offer to Discretionary Relief and Exceptional Circumstances Relief. We do not consider there to be any detriment arising from the Council making available such reliefs within policies as part of its Charging Schedule, as the Council will still retain control over the application of the policies.
- 1.57 We therefore consider it imperative that CBC make both Discretionary and Exceptional Circumstances Relief available from the adoption of CIL.

## Conclusion

The assessment of planned development and its viability is an inherent test of the CIL Examination, making the following points significant:

- **Planning Uncertainty** – In light of the uncertainty of the planning context we strongly advise that the CIL process is suspended until such time that future development sites are identified and can be adequately tested through the CIL viability evidence;
- **Incorrect Assumptions** - A number of the key viability inputs adopted by BPS are incorrect. This results in an over-estimation of the maximum CIL rates that can be supported;
- **Unviable Rates** – It is unclear how BSP have formulated their suggested CIL rates from the viability evidence and testing. There has been limited viability testing with only two typologies both of 1 hectare. Based on the limited testing, and policy compliant assumptions, it is clear that the viability of this typology is marginal;

- **Application of Buffer** - It is fundamental that a **minimum** viability cushion of **30%** should be adopted within the proposed CIL rates to minimise risk to the housing supply, particularly when CBC and its' neighbouring authorities have a history of under delivery of affordable housing; and
- **Charging Zones** - CBC have proposed differential CIL rates by 'Area' (or geography) and by Site Classification. Whilst the principle of applying differential rates is not questioned, it is unclear how the zones have been decided. By comparing our house price evidence heat map it is clear that these boundaries and suggested differential CIL rates cannot be justified in terms of value areas and risks preventing some potential development sites from being viable and therefore deliverable across the plan period.

We would therefore strongly advise that additional viability testing be undertaken in light of the points raised above.

Moving forward, Redrow and Savills are open to a meeting with CBC and its advisors to discuss the approach taken and to discuss common ground in advance of a revised Draft Charging Schedule being proposed.

Yours faithfully

**For and on behalf of Savills (UK) Ltd**

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read "A Jones", written over a large, light grey "DRAFT" watermark.

**Abigail Jones MSc (Hons) MRICS**

Development Surveyor

Daniel Cameron - Planning and Contributions Officer  
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15 April 2016

OUR REFERENCE: 15/224  
BY POST/EMAIL

Dear Mr Cameron,

## **COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY VIABILITY UPDATE CONSULTATION**

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We write further to the invitation to provide representations in response to the Community Infrastructure Levy Viability Evidence Base Update for Colchester Borough Council ("the Council").

We write on behalf of our clients, Cirrus Land LLP and L&Q, working in collaboration with G120 landowner consortium. The land under the control of our clients will make a significant contribution to the future sustainable growth of the Borough.

### **a. Background**

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Our clients are committed to bring forward a sustainable new settlement to the west of Colchester, based around Marks Tey. Following the principles of Locally-Led Garden Towns and Cities, there is potential to provide a form of development that will support the aspirations of the Council to deliver a sustainable new community and contribute to meeting the goals of central Government to deliver a new wave of garden cities and towns.

Working in close collaboration with delivery partners, the land is capable of delivering a comprehensive development to include infrastructure to support approximately 15,000 homes as a new settlement making efficient use of existing services and infrastructure.

### **b. Community Infrastructure Levy**

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Cirrus Land LLP and L&Q are supportive in principle of the provision of CIL within the Borough in order to ensure that funding can be provided towards infrastructure improvements to facilitate growth.

It is critical that any CIL adopted by the Council is sufficiently flexible, evidently based and proportionate to allow development with the Borough as a whole to remain deliverable. Significantly, any proposed CIL charging schedule should ensure the Borough remains an attractive location for investment whilst simultaneously being able to make suitable provision of infrastructure to support the assessed planned growth. In this context the CIL charging schedule must clearly identify requirements, set clear rates and identify exclusions.



## Identifying Infrastructure Requirements

The Council should identify key infrastructure requirements that would facilitate economic and social growth within the Borough, and ensure the level of CIL apportioned is appropriate to ensure its delivery. The spatial strategy of the emerging Local Plan will require adequate support from CIL receipts in order to be an achievable, deliverable plan. The objectively assessed needs for housing and employment shouldn't be compromised by a failure to deliver essential infrastructure.

The Council should set out a draft list of the projects or types of infrastructure that are to be funded in whole or in part by the levy. The Local Plan Issues and Options document recognises essential infrastructure that is required over the lifetime of the Plan. The inter-urban road network is a recognised priority for significant improvements. The Council's Route Based Strategy (2013) identified the A12 and A120 for targeted investment and the Council should utilise CIL to prioritise the delivery of these improvements.

## Setting Charge Rates

In order to ensure that Council's future CIL is sufficiently flexible, evidentially based and proportionate to ensure development within Colchester remains deliverable, we have identified a number of key considerations:

1. The need to ensure maximum flexibility is built into the charging schedule in order to ensure abnormal costs associated with development do not harm its viability;
2. The need to ensure that appropriate exemptions/relief are embedded within the charging schedule, particularly at strategic sites where significant infrastructure is to be provided as part of a comprehensive scheme; and
3. The need to ensure the level of CIL apportioned to various infrastructure projects is appropriate.

Additionally, it is imperative that any proposals for development that are brought forward through a Local Delivery Vehicle (LDV) mechanism must be exempt from CIL.

## c. Conclusions

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Thank you once again for the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the draft Charging Schedule. The provision of CIL within the Borough is supported in principle; however, as outlined above further work is required to bring forward a viable levy, this includes:

- Identifying infrastructure essential to the emerging plan delivery to be funded in part or wholly by the levy; and
- Provide for a zero CIL charge, where a Local Delivery Vehicle arrangement is in place to bring forward strategic infrastructure that would otherwise be funded by CIL.

We would be very grateful for confirmation that these representations have been received and confirm that we would like to be involved in any future stages of the process.

Yours sincerely



David Churchill  
DIRECTOR



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14<sup>th</sup> April 2016

**Colchester Borough Council: Community Infrastructure Levy October 2015**

Colchester Borough Council is seeking feedback on an update to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) viability evidence base (BPS Report, 2015) with a view to introducing CIL within the Colchester Borough administrative area in step with its emerging new Local Plan that will guide development until 2032. According to the LDS, the next steps for the new Local Plan are as follows:

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

The Council has undertaken an 'Issues and Options consultation' in early 2015. The replacement plan is therefore still at an early stage. At this stage, the preferred spatial allocation of planned growth has not been set out.

Persimmon Homes welcomes the opportunity to comment on Colchester's Updated Community Infrastructure Report.

The document seeks to update the assessment of viability in relation to the residential costs and values adopted in the viability testing set out in the 'Community Infrastructure Levy:

evidence base Final report' (Roger Tym & Partners, 2011) and the BPS report (October 2012). It also seeks to review possible CIL charging levels.

It is noted that the work undertaken is to update the evidence base used to test the generic viability of development in the Colchester. Given the stage the emerging Local Plan has reached, the work on CIL to date does not have regard to the planned spatial distribution of growth up to 2032 and beyond and an assessment of infrastructure that will be required to support such growth. It is considered that the CIL charge rate should be informed by an up to date assessment of infrastructure, informed by the spatial distribution of planned growth. It is considered that Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) viability evidence base (BPS Report, 2015) is out of step with the preparation of the new emerging Local Plan and as such the proposed CIL charge rate will need to be re-assessed and consulted upon once the emerging Local Plan is at a more advanced stage.

The 2012 report considered 2 zones (rural and urban). Since this time the Council have decided that these terminologies could fail to reflect the division between Brownfield sites and development on previously undeveloped and Greenfield land. Therefore the zones have been reworded as Zone 1 broadly equating to Brownfield sites and Zone 2 equating to previously undeveloped Greenfield sites.

The decision to change the terminology responds to Colchester's commitment to promote development on Brownfield sites. Whilst Persimmon Homes supports the need to redevelop Brownfield sites, we would urge the Council to be cautious with this approach, not seek to wholly rely on Brownfield sites to meet their OAN requirements or unduly constrain the ability of other sites to come forward. It is anticipated that the approach adopted within the Core Strategy's spatial strategy of prioritised the redevelopment of Brownfield sites will not be possible for the emerging Local Plan. This is due to the need to meet housing needs and the availability of sites. The majority of the borough falls within Zone 2 and therefore under the emerging CIL most development would be required to pay a rate of £150 sqm.

## **Zone 1**

The report concludes that a zero CIL charge for development falling within the boundary of Zone 1. This focuses on Colchester Town Centre and the surrounding urban areas. The report states that *"the Council and developers would be better served through individual assessments of viability and focussing on the potential of sites to deliver affordable housing and sites specific S106 contributions rather than risk making development none viable"*.

Persimmon Homes supports a zero CIL charge for brownfield sites. Brownfield sites face additional costs, complexities and delays. They can also be subject to existing use values which need to be exceeded in order to make site disposal attractive for the landowner. The Council need to be mindful that site specific contributions sought in lieu of CIL should (a) be clearly set out and transparent (b) equitable, (c) not jeopardize the delivery of development.

CIL charging authorities should set out how their Section 106 policies will be varied upon the adoption of a CIL Charging Schedule, and the extent to which they have met their Section 106 targets. The Council should set out how their current s106 policies and SPD's will be varied upon adoption of the CIL.

## **Zone 2**

The report concludes that *"a CIL of £185 per sqm could be supported whilst still delivering a policy compliant level of affordable housing at 20%"*. The report seeks to reduce the rate to £150 per sqm as this is deemed to be more appropriate in terms of existing contributions being sought by developers, equating to approximately £13,750 per unit.

Persimmon Homes notes that the requirement to deliver 20% affordable housing as assessed in the CIL report derives from policy H4 in the adopted Local Plan Focussed Review (2014). Colchester Borough Council are currently progressing a new Local Plan which will supersede the adopted one. The emerging plan has not yet identified the Council's target for affordable housing provision and therefore Persimmon Homes would question the assumption that this will remain at 20%.

The provision of a higher percentage of affordable housing or a change in the tenure mix sought would impact on development viability. The proposed CIL rate within this report is based upon an assumption that the Council's Policy on affordable housing will not change. This is not known at this stage.

Should a higher percentage of affordable housing provision or a change in tenure be sought as part of the emerging Local Plan then affordable housing requirement and the proposed CIL rate could to render some Greenfield sites unviable.

Paragraph 2.76 of the report states that *"We have further sought to contrast the cost per unit represented by CIL at £150 sqm which averages across all unit types at a figure of £13,750. We take the view that this total compares well with the level of S106 contributions typically achieved by the Council on recent consents for rural development"*. This is an important statement, seeking to justify the level of charging on the basis of a benchmark against what has historically been secured via s106 agreement. There is little evidence presented within the report to back up this statement. The evidence base should be made available. The Council will have records of what has been delivered by way of s106 that can be interrogated and presented.

Persimmon Homes has delivered a larger number of sites in the borough and in our opinion, the Council's figure of £13, 750 per unit does not represent comparable level to S106 contributions secured. For instance, a 2015 approval for c.300 dwellings secured a financial contribution of c.£11,900 per unit. A contribution of c.£6,500 was sought from a development of c.100 dwellings. It is evident that the sums secured via s106 have not been comparable to that sought in the draft CIL charging schedule.

#### Evidence base on infrastructure and other matters;

The Roger Tym report (2011) contains an assessment of infrastructure needs. The 2011 report states *'In this instance it is considered appropriate to focus on the items that CBC considers to be essential to support the proposed growth. Of these items, those that must be delivered in the first five years are considered to have highest priority so should be included in the infrastructure assessment'*.

This report is now 5 years old. Infrastructure will have been delivered in the five year period post its publication. Furthermore, decisions on investment priorities may have changed (in light of public and private sector funding programs). It is considered that the assessment of infrastructure needs is now too old and cannot be relied upon.

Given the stage the emerging Local Plan has reached, the work on CIL to date does not have regard to the planned spatial distribution of growth up to 2032 and beyond and an assessment of infrastructure that will be required to support such growth. It is considered that the CIL charge rate should be informed by an up to date assessment of infrastructure, informed by the spatial distribution of planned growth. It is considered that Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) viability evidence base (BPS Report, 2015) is out of step with the preparation of the new emerging Local Plan and as such will need to be re-assessed once the emerging Local Plan is at a more advanced stage.

The Council do not appear to have undertaken an exercise to identify what infrastructure gap there is in the Borough, reviewed funding programs and the extent to which the planned growth will contribute. This exercise should be carried out ahead of any Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule.

The Council should publish an up to date draft Regulation 123 List. The list should highlight what infrastructure will form a priority for funding through CIL and be based upon evidence in this regard. In light of the above, it will therefore be necessary for the Council to review, refine and further detail the infrastructure items on the Regulation 123 List.

It is unclear whether the Council intends to publish a statement (i.e. a policy) for permitting claims for relief from CIL in exceptional circumstances. It is also unclear if the Council will prepared and published a draft Instalment Policy for consultation.

#### **Conclusion**

As previously stated, the majority of the borough falls within Zone 2. The scale of development likely to be considered acceptable by Colchester will differ depending on the sites location and proximity to the more 'urban' areas of the borough. The proposed terminology does not have any regard for this and it is likely that some sites will be deemed unviable as a consequence.

This response has also demonstrated that a CIL rate of £150 sqm is not comparable with the S106 contributions being achieved by the Council on recent applications. If a rate of £150 sqm is adopted then this will result in an increase in financial contributions being sought by the Council and could render sites unviable.

Persimmon Homes suggest that subject to addressing the flaws in the assessment and the lack of an up to date evidence base on infrastructure, a reduced rate for Zone 2 should be adopted by Colchester Borough Council to ensure that the planned growth can be delivered. The PPG states;

*'A charging authority's proposed rate or rates should be reasonable, given the available evidence, but there is no requirement for a proposed rate to exactly mirror the evidence. For example, this might not be appropriate if the evidence pointed to setting a charge right at the margins of viability. There is room for some pragmatism. It would be appropriate to ensure that a 'buffer' or margin is included, so that the levy rate is able to support development when economic circumstances adjust. In all cases, the charging authority should be able to explain its approach clearly'.*

This will ensure an appropriate buffer and ensure that CIL does not jeopardise delivery of much needed housing, the emerging Local Plan allocations and the maintenance of a 5 year housing land supply over the emerging plan period.

For Zone 1, it is presently unclear and the Council should set out how their current S106 policies and SPD's will be varied upon adoption of the CIL. Some of these SPD's pre-date the CIL regulations and seek pooling of contributions towards single items of infrastructure and as such are not up to date.

Given the stage the emerging new Local Plan has reached, the Council are not in a position at present to have a clear understanding of the spatial distribution of growth and the infrastructure necessary to support it. Before taking forward CIL, the Council must undertake an up to date assessment of infrastructure needs arising from the planned growth in the emerging new Local Plan and use this evidence to inform CIL. The Council also needs to publish an up to date draft Regulation 123 List informed by such work.

Please keep me informed regarding future progress of the development plan and CIL (email: [anna.davies@persimmonhomes.com](mailto:anna.davies@persimmonhomes.com)).

Yours sincerely

Anna Davies  
**Persimmon Homes Essex**



## **Response to Community Infrastructure Levy Viability Update Consultation**

**Author: Councillor J E Dickinson FRICS on behalf of Myland Community Council**

**Summary of main recommendations** for new policies for Colchester Borough Council, addressing perceived inadequacies in current Sec 106 and likely CIL ( if implemented) protocols.

Both the Roger Tym & BPS reports make it clear that meeting modest Community Infrastructure Costs and an adequate amount of affordable housing cannot be achieved under the present S106 or CIL approaches, which seek financial contributions after some 25-30% of the total development cost, just for developers' profit, risk, interest and finance & fees.

1. The Roger Tym 2011 report is correct in that lower, serviced land values, and self help by communities are two key factors which will help to actually build new affordable homes anywhere in the Borough.
2. We recommend CBC reduce their attempts to procure through the current developers and the affordable homes processes and instead derive a simpler procurement process where the 25% profit & risk money is used to support individual communities on a need basis. This could bring forward public sector, cheaper, leasehold land, and use Neighbourhood Plans and/or Community Interest Companies to undertake the infrastructure and local building process to Shell & Core standard, with local labour and apprenticeships.
3. As communities are seeing so little in community infrastructure, it is reasonable in the short term that a portion of New Homes Bonus credits be returned in part to communities affected by major development, and with so many NHPs now in advanced stages, we would suggest that CBC change their consultative procedures to include NHP leaders as full members on all Sec 106/CIL funding and resources negotiations.
4. Roger Tym 2011 CI 4.58 report illustrates that contributing the New Homes Bonus received by the Council from the Government could make a £90m contribution towards the funding gap for affordable housing & Community facilities on many of the Section 106 negotiations.
5. BPS's 2012-2014 economic environment data (immediate post recession) appears not to have been considered in the context of Zone 2 for rural areas. We suggest this point along with the very small sample size is an anomaly, and we would recommend CIL is NOT applied to rural areas at this time. (ref)

## Detailed Commentary on BPS Reports, 2012 & 2015

Clause	BPS Report Statement	Response/ Suggestions
General 3.12	Analysis of house sales Jan 2012 to Sept 2014, reported October 2015.consultaion April 2016	Query if Data is no longer as relevant as it should be, as it is now 18 months out of date  No forecasts/ latest summary update provided
	Sample Sizes, & relevance to today?	Not in Rural areas
	Report presented as just an update on methodology used on 2012 original report,	Little attempt to widen discussion on interim quality of performance and modern relevance of CIL methodology
	Seems to be a confirmation of the status quo. Does not address one of the main reasons for implementing CIL which was to compensate affected communities by the impact of development	The lack of CIL processes where 18% of CIL award, ( 25% to areas having a Neighbourhood Plans), currently deprives local areas of both money and influence
	Funding Gap means very limited social facilities and affordable housing ,or skill upgrading needs are met	Lots of local evidence
2.4	NPPF requirement; Council wishes to promote use of Brownfield sites	CBC recently declared most brownfield sites are identified and non contaminated ones are all in development process
	Major increase in sales value and profits of rural rather than urban housing determined	Disagree: retired richer people buying rural properties post-recession. No thought of supply needs of rural existing population
2.11	“CIL could limit the ability of schemes to deliver other planning obligations such as affordable housing. Because CIL is a fixed development cost we are of the view that given the very low levels indicated by our modelling the Council and developers would be better served through individual assessments of viability and focussing on the potential of sites to deliver affordable housing and site specific S106 contributions rather than risk making development none viable”	Current position of CBC in regard to CIL, and its preference to use Sec 106 negotiations. However the evident danger is that public needs at the bottom of every negotiation list, like Community Facilities, will never be addressed fairly.  An alternative approach for community facilities and social housing altogether could/should be introduced.

2.14-2.16	Proposals for CIL only for rural properties at rate of £185/m2 –or 150/m2	Do not agree, see attached commentary
4.8	There is also clearly an impact on the potential ability of schemes to deliver affordable housing as it can be seen that even with a relatively modest CIL charge a 10% affordable housing quantum would be undeliverable.	See supplementary commentary para SA 2
4.9	10% CIL would be insufficient to allow for more than minimal affordable housing	
4.11	Recognising that the NPPF requires that the scale of planning obligations should not be a factor adversely affecting viability to the point where a scheme would not be y it would seem appropriate that any imposition of a CIL levy could potentially adversely affect viability.	Makes economic sense, but does not help at all in resolving the funding gap.
	Assumptions throughout document that only Developers/Private Landowners will bring forward sites	And ensure their 20%+ profit, finance charges and other fees on top of the total development value, are secured before any construction works are undertaken or Sec 106 money released.
4.29	NPPF assumes CIL will be included	Colchester unable to expedite commitment to communities' interests under CIL
4.32	<i>MCC Opinion Schemes go too far in commercial commitment &amp; development before all liabilities and priorities from public &amp; private sector are determined</i>	Should be "An independent development risk assessment before the lodging of any outline planning application must allocate appropriate categories of expenditure and risk. A planning condition should be included for CBC to include & rely on this data in any development agreement .
PAR 1	<a href="http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmcomloc/190/190.pdf">http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmcomloc/190/190.pdf</a> We recommend that the Government take appropriate steps to impress publicly upon both the Planning Inspectorate and Local Authorities the importance of giving equal weight to each of the three dimensions of sustainable development, as required by the NPPF. Both the Planning Inspectorate and Local Authorities, when they make their decisions on planning applications, should set out clearly how all three factors have been considered as part of the decision-making process.	<u>Parliamentary Statement,</u>  Reflecting need to LPA to include statements in application responses of how each approval equally addresses the 3 bases of the NPPF.

PAR 2	<p><a href="http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmcomloc/190/190.pdf">http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmcomloc/190/190.pdf</a></p> <p>49 We are concerned that parish and town councils might not receive infrastructure funding when the principal authority has decided not to charge CIL. This problem is likely to be particularly acute in neighbourhood planning areas. It would be unfair if a parish council or neighbourhood forum found it had no way of funding the infrastructure allocated in its neighbourhood plan.</p> <p>Local authorities should be particularly mindful of the need to support infrastructure requirements identified in adopted neighbourhood plans.</p> <p>We strongly encourage parish and town councils and neighbourhood forums that have an adopted neighbourhood plan to request from their local planning authorities a share of infrastructure proceeds from section 106 agreements, where the Community Infrastructure Levy is not in place.</p> <p>We encourage local planning authorities to give full consideration to such requests.</p>	<p><u>Parliamentary recommendation</u> That where NHPs are in place (or close to being so) careful consideration to providing “ a share of the Section 106 agreement, equivalent to a 25% CIL payments”.</p> <p><u>Recommendations,</u> With so many NHPS now in advanced stages, CBC is requested to change their consultative procedures to include NHP leaders as full members on all the Sec 106/ CIL funding and resources negotiations</p>
<p>Roger Tym 2011</p> <p>CI 4.58</p>	<p>This £203m figure represents the higher end of the likely gap because, over the lifetime of the Core Strategy, it is expected that additional funding from mainstream and other non-developer sources will be available.</p> <p>Some of this – through sources such as the New Homes Bonus – could be considerable and will serve to significantly address the funding gap,</p> <p>Applying the CLG’s New Homes Bonus calculator to the 12,711 dwellings with planning permission or additionally required to deliver the Core Strategy creates a total value of £89.9m3.</p> <p>The difference between this and CIL is that CIL monies come in upfront in the development process whereas New Homes Bonus funding does not come until the properties in question are completed.</p>	<p>Roger Tym 2011 illustrates that contributing the New Homes Bonus received by the Council from the Government could make a £90 million contribution towards the funding gap for Affordable housing &amp; Community facilities on many of the Section 106 negotiations, over this period.</p> <p>CBC are requested by our disadvantaged communities with NHPs to implement this proposal.</p>

## Supplementary Analysis / Report

**SA 1** The original paper in 2012 by BPS appears to have been produced in response to the imminent introduction of CIL (within the new NPPF 2012 Planning Legislation) as a community benefit support method (on Building Developments). This second paper reviews the potential application and values for CIL from 2016 across the Colchester Borough in profitability money values only.

It is disappointing this report has not been required to address the actual effectiveness of present and future delivery of Community benefit over the period 2012-2015, as required by the NPPF.

**SA 2** The Roger Tym report of 2011m (not updated) provided, as background, context for the future demand for CIL spending to 2021 and is most illuminating in today's context. This report had one of its conclusions that CIL would not provide even 10% of the necessary affordable housing over the period.

No Social Housing appears to have been included in the summary to the Roger Tym 2011 report. However from a major community point of view the following amended table shows the suggested and reliable values for future Community facilities for the Mile End & Highwoods wards in contrast to Mr Tym's forecasts for borough-wide community facilities, and the total demand anticipated in 2011.

### Roger Tym 2011 Report Clause 4.56

#### Amended Table 4.1 Infrastructure funding gap for 'necessary projects'

Infrastructure type	Cost (£m)	Developer Funding secured (£m)	Non developer Funding (£m)	Funding gap (£m) CBC, Community	North Colchester identified Community needs
<b>Community, 2011</b>	21.43	0.00	0.00	21.43	10.5m
Total Community, Leisure, open space & outdoor sports, Education Transport, Health <b>Total 2011</b>	<b>278.93</b>	<b>32.55</b>	<b>43.7</b>	<b>206.68</b> <b>22.5 m</b>	10.5m
Total Community, Leisure, open space & outdoor sports, Education Transport, Health <b>Total 2016(+25%)</b>	<b>348.66</b>	<b>40.69</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>258.35</b> <b>28m</b>	13m
<b>Total 2021(+25%)</b>	<b>435.83</b>	<b>50.86</b>	<b>68.28</b>	<b>322.94</b> <b>35</b>	<b>£16.5 m</b>

The obvious question here is that if the Borough-wide figures produced by Roger Tym are at such variance with the financial reality of community demand for just for one area, then how big is the actual community facilities' deficit across the whole Borough?

Also what is the effectiveness of either CIL or Sec106 agreements in ever meeting any of the reasonable social needs of all existing and new communities in the future? How can this be addressed in another way?

## **COMMENTARY ON BPS REPORT IN MORE DETAIL**

### **SA3 PROFITABILITY (BPS 2015).**

The whole NPPF concept of CIL (& Sec 106) claims is based on an assumption that development profits can reasonably meet most Highways and Social infrastructure plus Affordable Housing needs in both new and existing affected areas, but this concept is flawed.

Both the Consultants' reports continue to support the opinion that CIL cannot be relied on as a basis for negotiating social benefit funding in urban areas, because of inadequate surpluses over developers' required profit margins (currently quoted at 20% +10% risk on total development value).

### **SA4 PROFIT MARGINS (BPS 2015)**

The post-2000 means of procuring housing and all these appropriate community services from the profit is now demonstrated to be highly flawed and has proved to be economically non-viable, with affordable housing and Community facilities at the bottom of any priority list over recent years.

Fundamental policies for the provisions of all types of commercial and/or local community services, childcare, elderly persons care, accessible and affordable cultural spaces such as plazas or outdoor theatre, social, Arts and business venues for all ages just have not been included in any of the huge developments in Mile End over the last 20 years.

For example, the Severalls development, recent Sec 106, just 3 OAP bungalows, < 4000 m2 land and £1m, as facilities contribution for high quality 1000 new dwellings in an area of 4500 existing dwellings.

The general breakdown for major housing developments include a Developers direct costs + profit of 20% of total value plus a 10% risk & inflation contingency (ref). It is these very high but non-contributing factors (in a built environment sense) which currently deprive all local communities of the new facilities they need for their total population including a degree of recompense for the existing community for the inconvenience, disruption and adaption at local level to absorb thousands of new residents ( NPPF intention ref)

Taking the Roger Tym 2011 suggestion, a more local and hands-on procurement method utilising land held in public ownership, a Not for Profit company of Developers, co-ordinated with local labour, tradesmen, apprenticeships, possibly to shell & core status only, then it may be possible to deliver the same amount of new housing, but also provide a good proportion of the social infrastructure and affordable housing.

Note: This option is particularly relevant to local facilities or house building which are the stated goals of all the Neighbourhood Plans which are emerging across the Borough. We would like to make a policy proposal for CBC to agree in principle to protect sites in their ownership, possibly to



sell on a leasehold basis at discounted prices specifically to meet the affordable housing and reasonable community facilities demand. This method was one of many used by East London businesses, organisations & the public in raising the quality of the environment, funding and local business activity to the degree that the proposals for the London Olympics could be realistically supported (ref).

#### **SA5 PROFITABILITY CONCEPT RURAL AREAS? BDS 2015**

My recommendation is not to introduce CIL at this time in Colchester's rural areas.

The x report recommends CIL may be used in the Rural areas where housing development margins are greater. I beg to differ with this conclusion. This Rural Area proposal is based on the present figures which may be factually correct but logically may be misleading because:

- The sample size is very small (acknowledged by author)
- Most of Colchester's rural areas have good transport links to main routes which maintains increasing commuter demand and normally similar house prices
- The period evaluated 1Q2012 to 3Q2015 was during the "hangover" from the main recession when urban building was just beginning to recover, and there was massive planning, funding and skills and materials shortages. There was little normal housing building going on, and what there was was generally aimed at affluent new residents, retiring early from City areas.

The need for increased rural housing for less affluent people is well known, and if as expected new Neighbourhood Plans come forward are supported to address this need, there may be further downward pressure on profitability in the rural areas

I therefore do not support the notion the much higher profitability factor, identified in the report can be relied on over the next 5 years, to justify CIL for all Colchester Rural areas under normal demand & trading conditions. .