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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Colchester is a diverse and growing Borough, with a vibrant town centre, attractive villages and important natural landscapes. Over the next 15 years the Borough will face many challenges, such as population growth and change, evolving economic trends and the need for more sustainable transportation. To address these challenges, Colchester Borough Council is preparing a new Local Plan to meet the needs of current and future generations whilst also protecting and enhancing the environment and people's quality of life.
- 1.2 The Local Plan sets out a vision, strategy, objectives and policies for planning and delivery across the borough. These are first set out at the strategic level in Part 1 of the plan, and then followed by more detailed information on Colchester in Part 2 of the plan. Taken together, these two parts of the plan combine to provide a spatial framework that brings together and co-ordinates a range of strategies prepared by the Council, its partners and other agencies and authorities. It includes policies for deciding development proposals. It takes account of projected changes in the economy, employment, housing need, transport demand, and seeks to maintain the quality of the natural and built environment as well as its historic environment. It provides the strategy and policies for shaping the borough until 2033 and beyond.

### **Local Plan: The Process**

- 1.3 The Borough cannot be planned in isolation. The Local Plan has been developed in the context of a range of other plans and strategies operating at the national, county, and local levels.

### **National planning guidance**

- 1.4 The Local Plan must reflect the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued by the Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government. Further national guidance on planning policies is provided in Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The NPPF establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which the Council will implement in making its planning decisions. It is a statutory requirement for the council to produce planning policies for the Borough. The policies must comply with national planning policy unless there is overwhelming evidence to demonstrate why this is not the case.

### **South East Local Enterprise Partnership**

- 1.5 To bridge the gap between the national and local levels, business-led Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) have been established across the country. The South East LEP (SELEP) includes the Colchester Borough and comprises the areas of Essex, Kent and East Sussex. Whilst the LEP has no statutory land use planning powers, it is responsible for determining local economic priorities and undertaking activities to encourage economic growth and local job creation.
- 1.6 In July 2014, the SELEP agreed a "Growth Deal" with the Government which aims to contribute to the LEP's Strategic Economic Plan (2014) for the period



2015 to 2021, and aims to create up to 45,000 new jobs and see 23,000 new homes built across the LEP area. The Growth Deal focuses initially on transport infrastructure and meeting the skills capital requirements identified by the LEP, but also lays the foundations for increased growth across the SELEP area. Significant investment in transport infrastructure is key to facilitating growth in jobs and housing. The transport priorities relevant to Colchester Borough focus on the A120 and A12 corridors, Great Eastern Mainline, and a range of measures to support growth at Colchester Northern Gateway, Colchester Town Centre, and the Knowledge Gateway, including investment in broadband and business parks. For Colchester Borough, over £35 million has been secured to complete projects over the five year period to 2020-21.

### **County Level Plans**

#### **Essex Local Transport Plan**

- 1.7 The Essex Local Transport Plan (2011) contains the Essex Transport Strategy (2011) and sets out the 15 year vision to improve travel in the county and underlines the importance of the transport network in achieving sustainable, long term economic growth and enriching the life of residents. It is supplemented by delivery strategies for public transport, highways, cycling and public rights of way.

#### **Economic Plan for Essex**

- 1.8 The Economic Plan for Essex is based on the collective ambitions of all local authorities in Essex. It identifies the steps that local partners will take together, alongside the private sector and government to accelerate local growth over the period 2014-2021 and beyond. Colchester and the Haven Gateway are identified as growth locations. The plan states the capacity of key transport corridors within Essex is a key challenge to securing growth – a challenge that partners are working together to meet. The key corridors for Colchester are A120 - Haven Gateway and A12 /Greater Eastern Main Line.

#### **Essex Minerals Local Plan**

- 1.9 Essex County Council is the minerals planning authority for the Borough, and is responsible for preparing planning policies, and also for assessing applications for mineral development. The Essex Minerals Local Plan (2014) is a statutory Development Plan and should be read alongside the Colchester Local Plan. The role of the Minerals Local Plan is to identify sites for the extraction of sufficient quantities of mineral within Essex to facilitate development over the Plan period.
- 1.10 There are active quarry sites in the Borough as well as currently unworked sand & gravel and brick clay deposits which are subject to a Minerals Safeguarding policy within the Minerals Local Plan. The safeguarding policy requires the minerals planning authority – Essex County Council - to be consulted on development proposals covering 5 hectares or more within the sand & gravel minerals safeguarding area and greater than one dwelling for the brick clay safeguarded area. The Minerals Safeguarding Areas within Colchester Borough are shown on the Policies Map. Regard should be had to

the requirements of the Minerals Local Plan where a development falls within a Minerals Safeguarding Area.

- 1.11 The Minerals Local Plan also designates Mineral Consultation Areas at a distance of 250m around active quarries, mineral infrastructure and mineral deposits permitted for extraction. Essex County Council will be required to be consulted on all non-mineral related development within these areas.

### **Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan**

- 1.12 Essex County Council is the waste planning authority for the Borough, and is responsible for preparing planning policies, and also for assessing applications for waste management development. The Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan (2001) is a statutory Development Plan which should be read alongside the Colchester Local Plan. It sets out where and how waste management developments can occur, and is the planning policy against which waste management development planning applications are assessed. A Replacement Waste Local Plan is currently being prepared and should be adopted in 2016/17. It will cover the period from 2017 to 2033.
- 1.13 The Replacement Waste Local Plan proposes new waste development at Bellhouse, Stanway, Fingringhoe Quarry and Wivenhoe Quarry. It also identifies Areas of Search to meet the need for additional small scale waste management facilities. These Areas of Search are existing industrial estates within the Borough, and are located away from residential and other uses sensitive to amenity impacts such as schools, retail, leisure and office development. The Plan would seek to focus any new proposals for waste management facilities, which support local housing and economic growth, within these Areas of Search.
- 1.14 The Plan also designates Waste Consultation Areas at a distance of 250m around waste management facilities. Essex County Council will be required to be consulted on all non-waste related development within these areas.

### **Borough Strategies**

- 1.15 The Local Plan brings together the spatial elements of the following Borough strategies and provides a focus for future development.

**Colchester Borough Council Strategic Plan 2015-18** This plan sets out the direction and future potential for the borough, with the aim of making the Borough a vibrant, thriving, prosperous and welcoming place.

**Colchester Economic Strategy 2015-21** This plan provides an overarching vision and framework for economic interventions in Colchester, including guidance on partnership work and prioritising resources.

### **Duty to Co-operate**

- 1.16 In preparing the Local Plan, the Council co-operates with a range of other bodies to ensure a co-ordinated approach in the development of its policies in

line with national guidance, in the context of strategic cross-boundary matters.. These bodies include Essex County Council, the neighbouring districts of Braintree, Tendring, Maldon and Babergh, together with agencies responsible for transport, health and the environment.

- 1.17 Further information on the duty is provided in Part 1 of this Local Plan, which discusses the strategic approach to local plan issues across Colchester, Braintree and Tendring.

### **Evidence Base**

- 1.18 Policy development goes hand in hand with the development of an evidence base of research and information. The Evidence Base contains documents from local, county and national levels. National guidance is not listed to avoid repetition, given that the Local Plan has been produced in accordance with national planning policy. The evidence gathered from the documents has been employed in the formulation of the Spatial Strategy and Policies:

- 1.19 Key documents making up the primary Evidence Base and available on the Council's website include:

Sustainability Appraisal – see explanation in following section  
Objectively Assessed Housing Need Report – July 2015  
Strategic Housing Market Assessment – December 2015  
Strategic Land Availability Assessment – June 2016  
Concept Feasibility Study for Garden Communities – June 2016  
Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment – July 2014, updated October 2014  
Employment Land Needs Assessment – January 2015  
Colchester Retail Study – March 2013  
Travel to Work Patterns – September 2015  
Green Infrastructure Strategy – October 2011  
Indoor Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies – July 2015  
Water Cycle Study – June 2016  
Local Wildlife Study-  
Transport Modelling – June 2016

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

- 1.20 Policy development has been carried out in the light of a Sustainability Appraisal, incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment. The Sustainability Appraisal tests the sustainability of the Plan options throughout the production process. It does this by considering how different policy choices perform against a range of 'sustainability' criteria. For example, it looks at whether policies or allocations would provide new jobs, make efficient use of land and help to improve health and wellbeing. The Sustainability Appraisal also helps to identify amendments to policies, or measure that could help to minimise any negative impacts identified and maximise the sustainability of the Local Plan.

- 1.21 A further part of the process is Habitats Regulations Assessment. This is the process for determining whether a plan or project will have adverse effects on a European habitat site. The Council carried out a Habitat Regulations

Assessment screening opinion and concluded that a high level of growth, regardless of location, has the potential to lead to adverse effects on European sites in the Borough, primarily owing to increased levels of recreational disturbance. The next stage will be an Appropriate Assessment identifying how pressures can be mitigated which will be prepared and published alongside the submission version of the plan.

- 1.22 All this evidence is made publicly available. The Council will keep the evidence base under review and monitor the implementation of the Local Plan's objectives and policies. Monitoring reports on key Local Plan issues will be published on an annual basis, and will highlight whether circumstances have changed sufficiently to require a review of the Local Plan in its entirety or a review of selected policies.

### **Local Plan: Structure of the Plan and other related documents**

- 1.23 Development Plan Documents for Colchester will comprise:
- The Local Plan setting out the overarching spatial vision for development of Colchester Borough to 2033, the broad locations for strategic growth as well as other detailed allocations and development management policies and provides the planning framework for the other Documents listed below. Part 1 outlines policy for strategic growth across North Essex, including cross-boundary Garden Communities, while Part 2 of the plan details specific policies and allocations within the Borough. The allocations provided in the plan are shown on the associated Proposals Map.
  - Joint Local Plans with Tendring and Braintree District Councils as appropriate which will allocate land to specific uses within Garden Communities. They will also provide relevant policy guidance, and set out policies for the management of development, against which planning applications for the development and use of land will be considered
  - Neighbourhood Plans – Neighbourhood Plans when adopted for different areas of Colchester will form part of the Development Plan and will guide new development for their areas.
  - Essex Minerals Local Plan and Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan, prepared by the County Council, apply to minerals and waste development matters.

### **Other Colchester Planning Documents**

- 1.24 The Local Plan is accompanied by a number of other planning documents that provide policies, guidance and feedback:
- Policies Map(s) which show where the Local Plan's policies apply to specific locations;
  - Local Development Scheme – this lists and describes all planning policy documents and the timetable for preparing them;
  - Statement of Community Involvement – sets out how we will consult the public in preparing planning policies;

- Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) – set out in more detail how some of the Local Plan’s policies will be applied;
  - Annual Monitoring Report
  - Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – A charging schedule will be developed to set out how the CIL will be applied to various categories of development.

## How to respond

You are encouraged to comment on this document. If you register to submit comments online, you can update your own contact details as needed, and you will receive e-mails informing you when new documents are available for consultation.

The consultation portal can be found at

<http://www.colchester.gov.uk/currentconsultations>

You will be asked to register or login before being able to comment but you can read consultation documents without registering.

Alternatively, you can use the following contact details to send us comments, although we would encourage respondents to use the online response forms wherever possible. If you do submit a response via email or letter which is not on the Council’s response form please set out very clearly within your response which site, paragraph or policy to which your comment refer.

By email to [localplan@colchester.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@colchester.gov.uk)

By post to:

Planning Policy

Colchester Borough Council

Rowan House

33 Sheepen Road

Colchester CO3 3WG

All consultation responses must be received no later than **5pm on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2016.**

Please note that responses which include a series of supporting documents must be received both electronically and with 3 hard copies. A summary of the response must be included within the representation if the response comprises more than 1000 words.

If you have any questions about the consultation please contact the Planning Policy team on 01206 250387 or e-mail [planning.policy@colchester.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@colchester.gov.uk)

If you would like this document in an alternative format such as large print, braille or another language then please contact the Planning Policy team.

## **What Happens Next?**

The Plan will be published for eight weeks public consultation commencing on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2016 to enable the public and stakeholders to comment upon the draft allocations, policies and alternatives and to suggest amendments to the plan.

The Council will use the comments and suggestions that it receives on this document to help it to develop the plan. The revised plan will be the subject of the next stage of public consultation in early 2017 before it is formally submitted to the Secretary of State. An Inspector will be appointed to examine the 'soundness' of the Plan in a series of round table discussions on different issues, giving individuals and organisations the opportunity to challenge or support the Plan. If the Planning Inspector is content that the Plan is sound, then the Council can adopt the Plan, taking on board any relevant recommendations from the Inspector to change the Plan. The Council is aiming for the new Local Plan to be adopted by early 2018.

## **PART ONE: SHARED STRATEGIC PLAN**

## **2. North Essex authorities: Strategic Part 1 for Local Plans**

### **Introduction**

- 2.1 North Essex is a vibrant and attractive place to live and work. The area has seen significant growth in recent years and this is forecast to continue. The local authorities and their partners wish to respond to this opportunity by planning positively for the area as a whole. Working together to address some of the key strategic issues in North Essex will get the best outcomes for current and future communities. In particular, it will deliver sustainable development that respects local environments and provides new homes, jobs and essential infrastructure.
- 2.2 For these reasons, Braintree District Council, Colchester Borough Council and Tendring District Council have agreed to work together to address strategic planning matters across their areas. Collectively they are known as the North Essex authorities. Essex County Council is a key partner in its strategic role for infrastructure and service provision.
- 2.3 An initial outcome of this collaboration is this Strategic Planning chapter, which each of the local planning authorities have included in their draft Local Plan. The Local Plan together with the Essex Minerals and Waste Local Plan prepared by the County Council and any Neighbourhood Plans, form the Development Plan for the respective areas.

### **The Need for a Strategic Approach**

- 2.4 In Essex as elsewhere, the influences of population and economic growth do not stop at administrative boundaries. Settlement patterns, migration flows, commuting and strategic infrastructure needs all have significant influences within and between local authority areas.
- 2.5 Local Plans are the main vehicle for conveying an area's growth requirements and how these will be accommodated. However, individual local authority boundaries cannot encapsulate the geographies of issues that transcend those boundaries. Through active and on-going collaboration the authorities can plan, manage and review strategic objectives for the effective implementation of sustainable development and enhanced environments.
- 2.6 The geographic and functional relationship between the authorities' areas is demonstrated by the fact that, together with Chelmsford City Council's area, they form a single Housing Market Area (HMA) for planning purposes<sup>1</sup>; and

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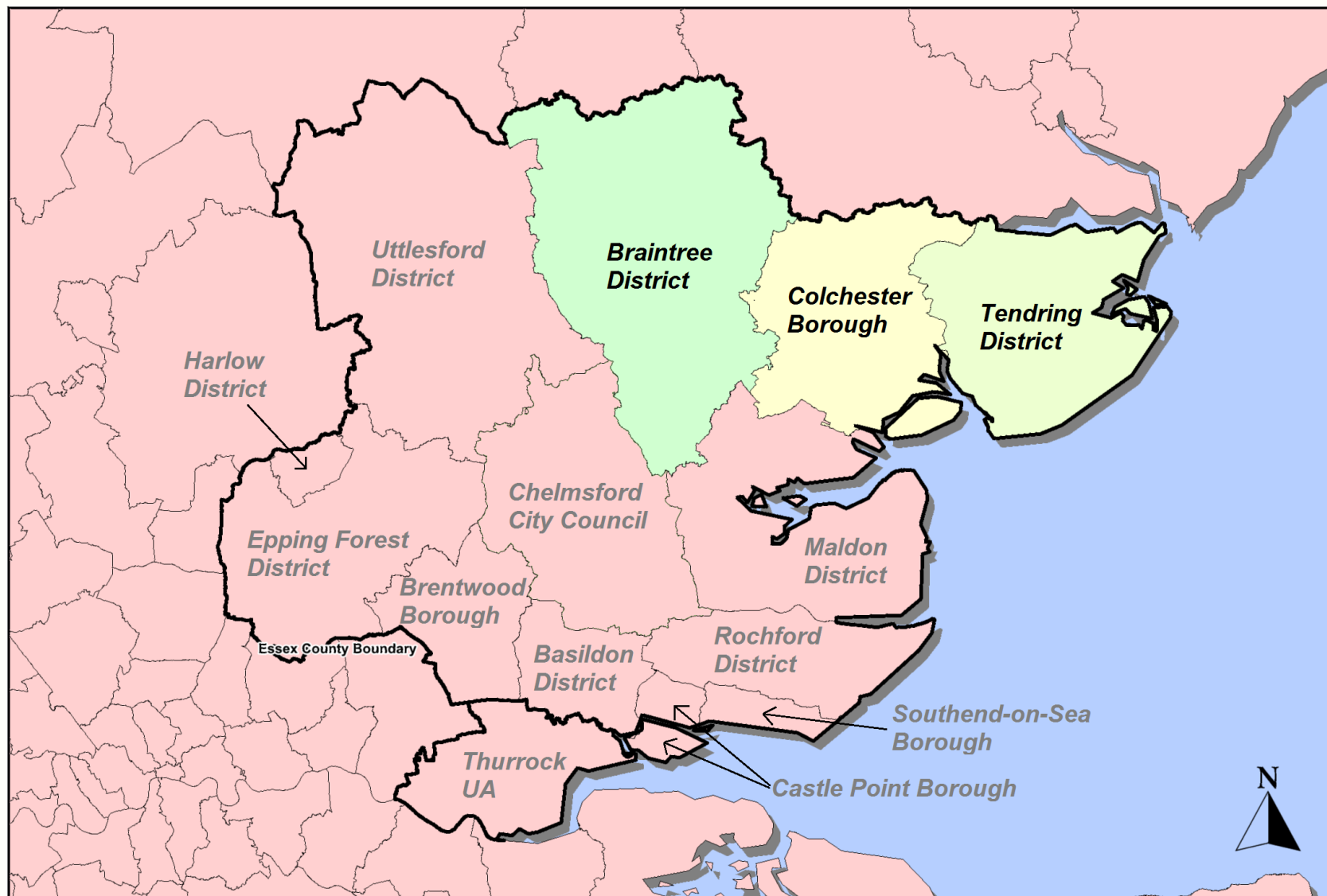
<sup>1</sup> *Objectively Assessed Housing Need Study* – Peter Brett Associates, July 2015.



they are a major part of the Haven Gateway, an established economic partnership area. Within this context, the forecast levels of future population growth together with the geography of North Essex means that considerations for future growth will include options that have clear cross-boundary implications. These include both the expansion of existing towns and villages as well as possible new settlements.

- 2.7 Consequently, this group of neighbouring authorities has agreed to come together because of their shared desire to promote sustainable growth; and the particular need to articulate the strategic priorities within the wider area and how these will be addressed. Central to this is the effective delivery of planned strategic growth, particularly housing and employment development, with the necessary supporting infrastructure.
- 2.8 Uttlesford District Council as well as other neighbouring authorities sit within separate housing market areas and as such are not part of this strategic plan. However the authorities are actively and continuously engaged to ensure that cross boundary and strategic issues are dealt with.

**Map 1: Location of Local Authority Areas**



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## **How does this fit with National Guidance?**

- 2.9 The Localism Act 2011 places a Duty to Co-operate on local planning authorities and county councils<sup>2</sup>. This requires them to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis in the preparation of plans where this involves strategic matters. The National Planning Policy Framework adds to this statutory duty as it expects local planning authorities to demonstrate evidence of having co-operated effectively to plan for issues with cross-boundary impacts.
- 2.10 This strategic chapter of the authorities' plans meets the requirements of the Duty to Co-operate for the authorities involved, as it concerns strategic matters with cross-boundary impacts in North Essex.
- 2.11 Against this background, the main purposes of this strategic chapter of the local plan are to:
- Articulate a spatial portrait of the area, including its main settlements and strategic infrastructure, as a framework for accommodating future planned growth;
  - Set out the numbers of additional homes and jobs across the area that will be needed covering the period to 2033;
  - Provide a strategic vision for how planned growth in North Essex will be realised;
  - Set strategic objectives and policies for key growth topics; and
  - Highlight the key strategic growth locations across the area and the necessary new or upgraded infrastructure to support this growth.

## **Spatial Portrait**

- 2.12 Braintree, Colchester and Tendring districts are located to the north of Essex between the East coast ports and London Stansted airport. The principal towns are Braintree, Colchester and Clacton-on-Sea, together with the port of Harwich and a number of secondary settlements: Witham, Halstead, Wivenhoe, Tiptree, Brightlingsea, Walton and Frinton. Map 2 identifies the settlements that link with the main road and/or rail infrastructure.
- 2.13 Beyond these settlements much of the area has a rural character.
- 2.14 The area covered by this strategic planning approach comprises a large part of the Haven Gateway, an established partnership area which is identified in a range of existing strategy and investment documents<sup>3</sup>. The Haven Gateway

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<sup>2</sup> Localism Act 2011, section 110.

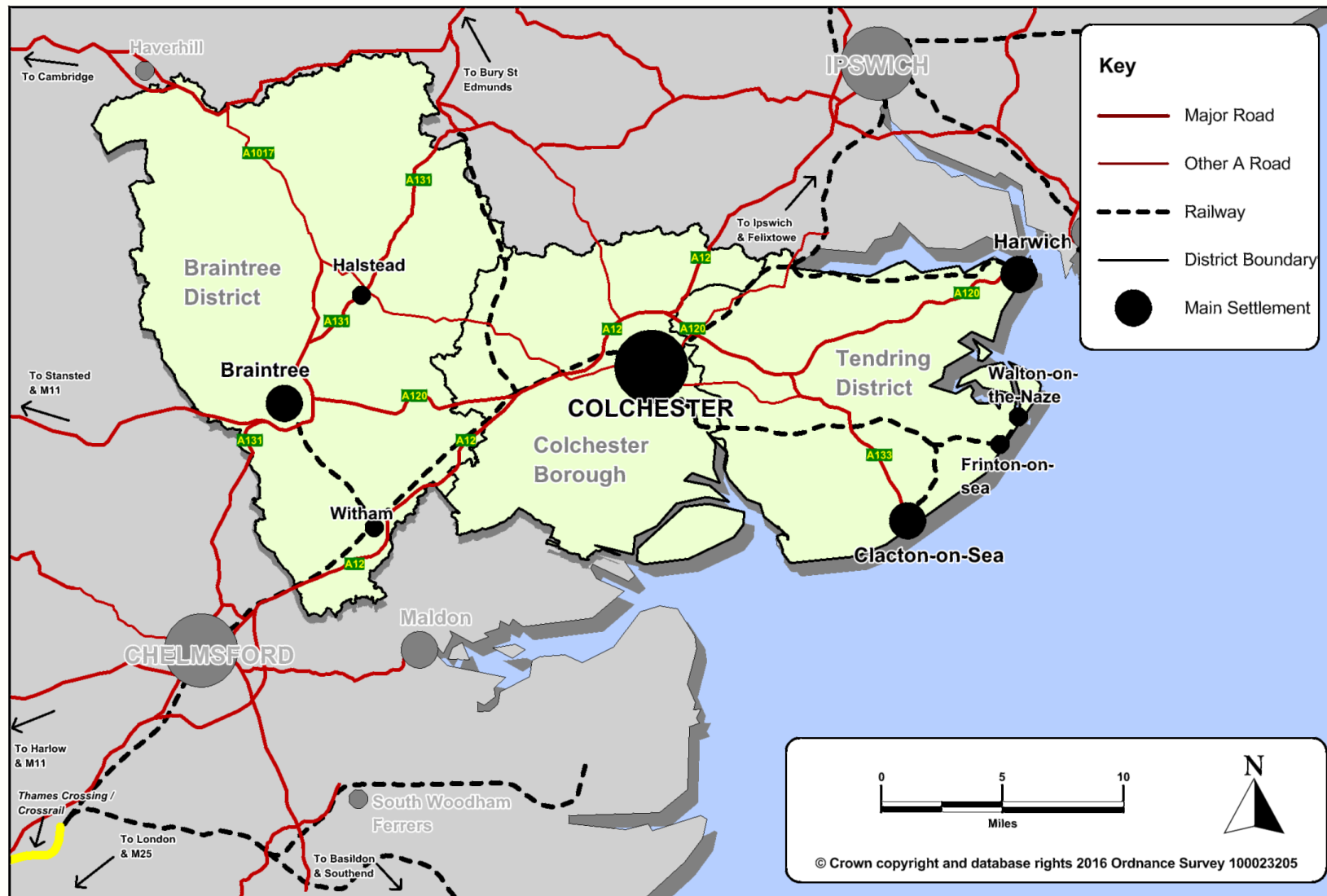
<sup>3</sup> Including, for example, the *Economic Plan for Essex* (2014) and the *South East LEP Growth Deal and Strategic Economic Plan* (2014).

includes the administrative areas of Braintree, Colchester and Tendring Councils and extends northwards into Suffolk.

- 2.15 The area's strategic road and rail network is heavily used, particularly given the proximity to and connectivity with London. The principal roads are the A12 and A120, while the A130, A133 and A414 also form important parts of the strategic road network.
- 2.16 The Great Eastern Main Line provides rail services between London Liverpool Street and the East of England, including Chelmsford, Colchester and Clacton-on-Sea. It also carries freight traffic to and from Harwich International Port, which handles container ships and freight transport to the rest of the UK. Harwich is also one of the major UK ports for ferry and cruise departures.
- 2.17 Crossrail is expected to start operating in the first part of this plan period with services commencing just south of Chelmsford in Shenfield. The opportunities that Crossrail will bring in terms of additional capacity and quicker journeys to a wider choice of destinations will be a contributor to the continued attractiveness of north Essex as a place to live and to do business.
- 2.18 London City, Gatwick, Stansted and Southend airports serve the North Essex economy and the growing demand for the use of these facilities from an increased population will create additional pressures on road and rail infrastructure. The County Council along with South East Local Enterprise Partnership, local and national agencies and other organisations will also need to work collaboratively with the Local Planning Authorities to ensure infrastructure meets demand for enhanced economic growth.
- 2.19 Braintree and Colchester are the major centres of employment within the strategic area. While there are high levels of commuting to London, many residents work and live within the area with significant commuting across city and district boundaries, reflecting a functional economic geography.
- 2.20 The area has a mixed economy focused on the service sector, including wholesale and retail, business services, tourism, health and education, although there is also manufacturing and construction capacity. Due to the extensive rural area outside settlements, agriculture plays an important part in the overall economy.
- 2.21 This rurality also means that there are large areas of open countryside, including protected natural and historic landscapes. Areas of importance for nature conservation are to be found particularly along the coast and river estuaries, while the villages, towns and city include many built heritage assets.

2.22 A more detailed assessment of the characteristics of each area is provided in the second part of this local plan.

**Map 2: Districts with principal towns and road & rail**



## **Key Issues: Opportunities and Challenges**

- 2.23 Due to its strong economic base, proximity to London and attractiveness as a place to live and work, the area has seen significant growth over recent years. In particular Braintree and Colchester have regularly exceeded planned housebuilding targets.
- 2.24 Future population growth will require an appropriate response from the local authorities to ensure that sufficient homes, employment premises and land, and supporting social and other infrastructure are provided. The ageing profile of residents also requires a proactive response to provide the right type of homes, including independent living and supporting services; as well as sufficient healthcare facilities to support both older residents and the population as a whole.
- 2.25 The education needs of a growing population must be addressed, requiring careful planning to assess future pupil numbers and to address further education needs. The assessed need must in turn be translated into new or expanded education facilities which are available to meet the needs of new communities at the appropriate time.
- 2.26 New development should be accessible by sustainable forms of transport, including walking and cycling. However, growth will create demand for additional road and rail use with the associated need for new and upgraded infrastructure. Future planned growth provides the opportunity to address some of these infrastructure needs, although growth locations and sites need to be considered carefully with regard to the balance of providing necessary infrastructure and the viability and deliverability of development.
- 2.27 The National Planning Policy Framework expects local authorities to set out the strategic priorities for the area in the Local Plan. Of those listed in the Framework<sup>4</sup> and based on the above key issues, this strategic plan chapter addresses:
- the homes and jobs needed in the area;
  - the provision of infrastructure for transport and telecommunications;
  - the provision of education, health, community and cultural infrastructure; and
  - conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape.

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<sup>4</sup> NPPF, paragraph 156.

## **Vision for the Strategic Area**

2.28 It is important that addressing growth at any spatial scale is founded on a clear vision of how and where change should occur. The vision for North Essex sets this out at a strategic level and provides a context for the more detailed vision for the growth of each individual authority's area.

***North Essex will be an area of significant growth over the period to 2033 and beyond, embracing positively the need to build well designed new homes, create jobs and improve and develop its infrastructure for the benefit of existing and new communities.***

***Sustainable development principles will be at the core of the strategic area's response to its growth needs, balancing social, economic and environmental issues. Green infrastructure, and new and expanded education and health care facilities will be planned and provided; while the countryside and heritage assets will be protected and enhanced***

***At the heart of our strategic vision for North Essex are new garden communities. The garden communities will attract residents and businesses who value innovation, community cohesion and a high quality environment, and who will be keen to take an active role in managing the garden community to ensure its continuing success. Residents will live in high quality, innovatively designed, contemporary homes, accommodating a variety of needs and aspirations. There will be a network of leafy streets and green spaces, incorporating and enhancing existing landscape features. This will provide safe and attractive routes, and sustainable drainage solutions, as well as excellent opportunities for people to play. Open spaces will be attractive areas which offer leisure and recreation opportunities for residents of the garden communities. All Garden City principles will be positively embraced including new approaches to delivery and partnership working, and sharing of risk and reward for the benefit of the new communities.***



## Strategic Objectives

2.29 The following strategic objectives are designed to support the vision for the area and provide a basis for the development of strategic topic-based policies that will help in achieving the vision.

- **Providing Sufficient New Homes** – to provide for a level and quality of new homes to meet the needs of a growing and ageing population in North Essex; to achieve this by ensuring the availability of developable land in appropriate locations and that the market delivers a suitable mix of housing types.
- **Fostering Economic Development** – to strengthen and diversify local economies to provide more jobs; and to achieve a better balance between the location of jobs and housing, which will reduce the need to travel and promote sustainable growth.
- **Providing New and Improved Infrastructure** – to make efficient use of existing transport infrastructure and to ensure sustainable transport opportunities are promoted in all new development. Where additional capacity is required in the form of new or upgraded transport infrastructure to support new development, to ensure this is provided alongside the development. To enable provision of upgraded broadband infrastructure and services.
- **Addressing Education and Healthcare Needs** – to provide good quality educational opportunities as part of a sustainable growth strategy, including practical vocational training and apprenticeships linked to local job opportunities. To work with partners in the NHS and local health partnerships to ensure adequate provision of healthcare facilities to support new and growing communities.
- **Ensuring High Quality Outcomes** – to promote greater ambition in planning and delivering high quality sustainable new communities, including through new garden communities and strategic growth areas. Overall, new development must secure high standards of urban and built design which creates attractive places where people want to spend time.

## **Strategic Issues and Policies**

2.30 This section includes the Councils' response to the opportunities and challenges facing the wider area, in the form of strategic policies that will help to deliver the vision and objectives. These policies only cover those matters that are of strategic relevance to all four authorities. Policies that address local matters are included in the following section of the plan.

### **Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development**

2.31 The authorities will apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development in accordance with guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework.

#### **SP1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development**

*When considering development proposals the Local Planning Authorities will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. They will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.*

*Sustainable development in North Essex will demonstrably contribute to the strategic and local vision and objectives and will accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans). Development that complies with the Plan in this regard will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.*

*Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:*

- Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or*
- Specific policies in that Framework or the Plan that indicate that development should be restricted.*

## **Meeting the Need for New Homes**

- 2.32 Provision of sufficient housing is critical to meet the needs of a growing population and for the effective functioning of local economies.
- 2.33 The North Essex authorities are committed to plan positively for new homes and to significantly boost the supply of housing to meet the needs of the area. To meet the requirements of national policy to establish the number and type of new homes, the authorities commissioned Peter Brett Associates to produce an *Objectively Assessed Housing Need Study* building on earlier work. This was first published in July 2015 and updated in January 2016. It meets the requirements of the NPPF to prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).
- 2.34 Detailed analysis in the report suggests that a Housing Market Area comprising Braintree, Colchester, Chelmsford and Tendring Council areas forms a sound basis for assessing housing need.
- 2.35 Demographic projections are the starting point for assessing how much housing will be required across an area. Based on 2012 national projections covering the period 2013 to 2037, some 4,910 more people will be living in the area each year. This translates to 2,589 additional households per year, which generates a need for an additional 2,691 new homes each year.
- 2.36 Analysis of economic forecasts reveals that to support the expected jobs growth would require 3,090 net new homes per year. This represents an uplift of 399 additional homes, or 15%, over the demographically projected need referred to above. The report concludes that this 15% 'future employment' uplift over the whole HMA will cover any 'market signals' adjustment that can reasonably be justified. It also makes an allowance for additional London related migration.
- 2.37 The conclusion reached is that the objectively assessed need across the Housing Market Area is 3,090 new homes a year over the period 2013 – 2037. This is the number of new homes needed to provide sufficient labour to meet the number of forecast jobs. The total requirement across north Essex, excluding Chelmsford City Council's area, is 2,315 new homes per year.
- 2.38 The *Objectively Assessed Housing Need Study* and SHMA update seek to establish a balance between jobs and homes across the area, although there is some uncertainty in relation to this arising from unattributed population change (UPC) within Tendring. 550 dwellings a year is suggested as the indicative objectively assessed need for Tendring because at this level of provision affordable need can be met. This reasonable rounded figure, which

should be kept under review, is considered an appropriate response to the uncertainty arising from the UPC.

- 2.39 Evidence on overall levels of affordable housing provision and the requirements of Gypsies and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation will be set out in more detail within the individual Local Plans, but a figure of 30% of affordable housing across the new garden communities is supported by the evidence base.

## **SP2: Meeting Housing Needs**

***The local planning authorities will identify sufficient deliverable sites or broad locations for their respective plan period, against the requirement in the table below.***

***Each authority will maintain a sufficient supply of deliverable sites to provide at least five years' worth of housing; and will work proactively with applicants to bring forward sites that accord with the overall spatial strategy and relevant policies in the plan.***

	<b><i>Plan period</i></b>	<b><i>Net additional dwellings per annum</i></b>	<b><i>Minimum net additional homes in the Plan period</i></b>
<b><i>Braintree</i></b>	<i>2016 - 2033</i>	<i>845</i>	<i>14,365</i>
<b><i>Colchester</i></b>	<i>2013 – 2033</i>	<i>920</i>	<i>18,400</i>
<b><i>Tendring</i></b>	<i>2013 - 2033</i>	<i>550</i>	<i>11,000</i>
<b><i>North Essex</i></b>		<b><i>2,315</i></b>	

- 2.40 As the fourth local authority in the housing market area, Chelmsford City Council have been involved at every stage of the work on objectively assessed need and affordable housing need which were all commissioned jointly. The Council is aware of and supportive of the approach and the housing numbers that are set out in the table above, however due to a mismatch between the timetables of the Local Plan, were not able to be part of the strategic plan. Uttlesford District Council and other neighbouring authorities are not part of the Strategic Housing Market and will be looking to meet their own needs within their own housing market area.

### **Providing for Employment**

- 2.41 A key objective for the area is to strengthen and diversify local economies to provide more jobs; and to achieve a better balance between the location of jobs and housing, which will reduce the need to travel and promote sustainable growth.
- 2.42 Braintree District's employment is relatively focused on industrial-type sectors, including construction and manufacturing. London Stansted airport plays a significant role in not only employing residents of the District, but through the indirect economic benefits associated with proximity with such a large employment hub.
- 2.43 Retail is the second largest sector by employment, and plays an important role in sustaining the District's three key town centres. The financial & insurance sector, where Braintree District traditionally has a relatively small proportion of employment, has seen some strong employment growth in recent years. This may be a growth sector in the future.
- 2.44 Colchester is the dominant town within the Essex Haven Gateway and will accommodate much of the future growth in the sub-region. It is one of the UK's fastest growing towns and has developed a strong economy, linked to the town's historic character, cultural activities and its university.
- 2.45 Tendring District has a diverse economy with local employment across a range of activities. Health, retail, and education are the largest sectors in terms of the number of jobs, and together represent 45% of the district's total employment.
- 2.46 Harwich is home to Harwich International Port – one of the district's major employers. To the west of the district, the economy and labour market of Manningtree is influenced by its relative proximity to Colchester and good transport links to London. The interior of the district is largely rural and is characterised by a high quality environment, interspersed with small settlements.
- 2.47 Opportunities have been identified for Tendring to develop potential future strengths in Offshore Wind and the Care & Assisted Living sector.
- 2.48 As part of the SHMA work, analysis of economic forecasts was undertaken together with demographic projections to establish the inter-relationship between population growth, forecasts of new jobs and the number of new homes needed to accommodate these levels of growth. Employment Land Needs Assessments have been carried out by each authority which set out the amount of employment land that is required within the Plan periods.

### **SP3: Providing for Employment**

***A strong, sustainable and diverse economy will be promoted across North Essex with a minimum net increase of 139.1ha of employment land up to 2033. These areas are distributed to each local authority area based on a sustainable balance between jobs and the available labour force through population growth, as set out in the table below.***

	<b><i>Plan period</i></b>	<b><i>Hectares of B use employment land required</i></b>
<b><i>Braintree</i></b>	2016-33	43.3
<b><i>Colchester</i></b>	2016-33	55.8
<b><i>Tendring</i></b>	2016-33	40
<b><i>North Essex</i></b>		<b>139.1</b>

***More detailed employment policies are included in the second part of each authority's plan. However, the following strategic principles will underpin the approach to economic growth across North Essex.***

- a) Sufficient land, premises and other provision will be identified to support the achievement of the minimum jobs numbers, recognizing the importance of key sectors to be identified by each local authority;***
- b) Priority will be given to use of previously-developed land in appropriate locations as well as, where it meets sustainable development principles, the expansion of existing employment locations;***
- c) Existing and allocated employment sites will be safeguarded for employment use unless it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable prospect of the site being used for that purpose. Alternative uses will be considered against relevant plan policies;***
- d) Town and city centres are the appropriate locations for new office development; and***
- e) Employment development will be a key component of the new garden communities, as well as strategic growth locations more generally.***

## **Infrastructure and Connectivity**

- 2.49 A growing economy impacts on travel demand. The challenge is to provide a sustainable transport system, while providing good access to jobs and services, to support economic growth.
- 2.50 There are significant levels of local employment in each authority which generate short work trips concentrated in the peak hours. Of those commuting out of a local authority area, there is generally a westerly commuting movement, with London having a stronger effect on Braintree and Colchester. There is a strong level of movement from Tendring into Colchester for work, and Colchester to Chelmsford. Town centres are a focal point for work trips with most of the town centres offering a substantial proportion and variety of local employment opportunities. Most of the urban areas have business parks on their edges, which have access to the strategic road network. Those living in the rural areas are drawn to the main urban areas for employment but there is an emerging trend for “working at home”. When combined with trips to education, accessing stations, retail and leisure trips results in urban traffic congestion at certain locations at certain times. This congestion has negative impact on journey time reliability, air quality, accessibility and the quality of the place. The ability to change significantly the urban road network is limited however there are greater opportunities for short trips to be made by walking, cycling and public transport.
- 2.51 Growth promoted through the new Local Plans will need to be supported by the appropriate transport infrastructure. Braintree, Colchester and Tendring will continue to work closely with Essex County Council, Highways England and other partners to improve roads and public transport and to promote cycling and walking, and to better integrate all forms of transport. An infrastructure delivery plan is being developed which will provide more detail about the phasing and costing of the infrastructure requirements.

### **Strategic transport network**

- 2.52 Highways England manages and maintains the national strategic road network. This includes the A12 and A120 trunk roads that pass through the area. Network Rail is responsible for the railway network with train operating companies franchised to provide the rail services. Essex County Council is the statutory local transport, traffic and highway authority responsible for the majority of the transport network, including strategic roads.

### **The inter-urban road network**

- 2.53 On the inter-urban road network, traffic levels have increased significantly in recent years with parts of the A12 around Colchester carrying 90,000 vehicles per day, which is high for an A class trunk road.

- 2.54 Most of the inter-urban road network, particularly the capacity of the A12, is constrained by the operation of the junctions and sub-standard slips. The Highways England A12/A120 Route Based Strategy (March 2013) shows that the A12/A120 is an ageing route which has several key maintenance issues. It will also be functioning above capacity by 2021.

## **A12**

- 2.55 The A12 is set to have major improvements as part of the Government's Roads Investment Strategy (2015-2020) (RIS), with the aim of improving capacity and relieving congestion. The plans were announced in December 2014 and will represent the largest investment in road infrastructure received by Essex.

- 2.56 The RIS confirmed

- investment in a technology package for the length of the A12 from the M25 to the junction with the A14;
- phased improvement of the road to a consistent dual 3 lane standard; and
- Improvement to the A12/M25 junction.

- 2.57 The A12 from Chelmsford to the A120 junction is to be widened to three lanes, with work expected to start in 2015/16-2020/21. The A12 is also due to be widened to three lanes around Colchester (between junctions 25 and 29) and improvements to local junction layout, to be implemented post 2020/21. Other works include the M25 to Chelmsford section of the A12 which will be developed post 2021.

## **A120**

- 2.58 The A120 is a key east-west corridor across Essex providing access to London Stansted Airport in the west to Harwich Port in the east and serving the economies of Colchester, Tendring and Braintree, with links to Chelmsford via the A130. The road is dualled between the M11 and Braintree, but the section from Braintree to the junction of the A120/A12 is of a low standard with heavy congestion, high accident risk and poor journey reliability.

- 2.59 Highways England and Essex County Council will work together to study options for dualling the A120 between Braintree and A12 junction with the County Council taking the lead.

- 2.60 It is essential that work on both the A12 and A120 are directly linked and informed by the planned growth, identified in emerging Local Plans, through partnership working between all parties. In addition, such projects are essential in enabling planned growth to come forward supported by the necessary strategic infrastructure. The scale of new development envisaged



will also need to deliver public transport improvements, including improved rail infrastructure and potential for rapid transit services into Colchester.

### **Route Based Strategies**

2.61 Route based strategies are prepared and delivered by the County Council for strategic road corridors, in consultation with local authorities. The following strategies are currently being prepared for delivery post 2018/19: A130 - Chelmsford to Braintree; A133 - Colchester to Clacton; A131 and A120 Colchester to Harwich.

2.62 The strategies aim to provide:

- improved journey times and reliability for all users with traffic management, capacity enhancements and congestion relief measures;
- passenger transport improvements along the routes;
- walking and cycling improvements along the routes where appropriate;
- targeted safety improvements; and
- highway asset renewal.

### **Rail**

2.63 The rail network is heavily used by passenger trains and through freight from the Haven Ports. The Great Eastern Main Line provides services to London Liverpool Street.

2.64 The Anglia Route Study shows that while capacity varies along the line capacity to accommodate growth is limited and is particularly constrained in peak times from Chelmsford to London. Improvements are required along the line to accommodate growth and provide a faster more competitive service across the region.

2.65 The Study identifies a package of improvements necessary to respond to the need for increased capacity, which are seen as priorities to enable growth, improve services and journey reliability. The improvements include:

- the introduction of passing loops at Witham;
- the introduction of automated in cab signalling;
- a passing loop on the Braintree branch line, and
- the removal of level crossings.

2.66 These improvements are assumed to provide the gross capacity required along the line but further work is needed to identify specific local improvements in response to local growth and to define the timescale for delivery.

### **Public transport, walking and cycling**

- 2.67 Alternative forms of transport to the private car (walking, cycling and public transport) to travel to work are important in managing congestion and to accommodate sustainable growth.
- 2.68 Within the urban areas, the bus network is available although it is currently underutilised. Essex County Council wishes to address this through a new passenger transport strategy. By promoting travel by sustainable modes there are wider benefits to local people such as personal health, less pollution and using less resources (including land), and they are cost effective.
- 2.69 The levels of growth in the Local Plan will require that the consequent need to travel is managed. Travel planning and smarter choices initiatives will be promoted to ensure that all residents have good access to local jobs, services and facilities, preferably by either walking or cycling. For longer trips and in rural areas where there are fewer local services and employment opportunities, public transport will be promoted.

### **Education and Healthcare**

- 2.70 New development must provide for the educational needs of new communities. This will involve the expansion of existing schools where feasible and identification of opportunities to create new schools. Education requirements will need to be based on a strong understanding of future pupil numbers, with co-operation between county, district and borough councils. A range of educational opportunities will need to be addressed as part of a sustainable growth strategy, including practical vocational training and apprenticeships.
- 2.71 The authorities will need to work with the NHS and local health partnerships to ensure adequate provision of healthcare facilities to support new and growing communities. This will be particularly important given the ageing profile of existing and future residents. There is already a need for more and better quality health care facilities across the region with some areas such as Witham, having relatively poor access to health care facilities.

### **Broadband**

- 2.72 The NPPF indicates how high quality communications infrastructure is crucial for sustainable growth. The availability of high speed and reliable broadband, particularly in rural areas is a key factor in unlocking new development opportunities and ensuring that people can access services online and work from home.
- 2.73 Fast broadband connections and telecommunications are an increasingly important requirement to serve all development. New development should contribute to the creation of a comprehensive and effective network in both

urban and rural areas to promote economic competitiveness and to reduce the need to travel. The priority is to secure the earliest availability for universal broadband coverage and fastest connection speeds for all existing and new developments.

#### **SP4: Infrastructure and Connectivity**

*Development must be supported by provision of infrastructure, services and facilities that are identified to serve the needs arising from new development.*

*The following are strategic priorities for infrastructure provision or improvements within the strategic area:*

- *New and improved infrastructure required to support economic growth, strategic and site-specific priorities outlined in the second part of each Local Plan.*
- *Improved road infrastructure aimed at reducing congestion and providing more reliable journey times along the A12, A120, and A133 to improve access to markets and suppliers for business, widen employment opportunities and support growth.*
- *Junction improvements on the A12 and other main roads to reduce congestion.*
- *A dualled A120 between the A12 junction and Braintree.*
- *Increased rail capacity, reliability and punctuality; and reduced overall journey times by rail.*
- *Support changes in travel behaviour by increasing opportunities for sustainable modes of transport that can compete effectively with private cars.*
- *To comply with sustainability objectives public transport will be prioritised, particularly in the urban areas. To meet the diversity of travel need, there will need to be new and innovative ways of providing public transport including:*
  - *high quality rapid bus services, in and around urban areas;*
  - *maximising the use of the local rail network to serve existing communities and locations for large-scale growth; and*
  - *promotion and wider use of community transport schemes.*
- *Roll-out of superfast broadband across Essex to secure the earliest availability for universal broadband coverage and fastest connection speeds for all existing and new developments.*
- *Provide sufficient school places in the form of expanded or new primary and secondary schools.*
- *Ensure that essential healthcare infrastructure is provided as part of new developments of appropriate scale in the form of expanded or new doctors' and dentists' surgeries.*

## Creating Quality Places

- 2.74 New development must reflect high standards of urban and architectural design. It must also be functional and viable. Major new developments will be planned carefully with the use of masterplans and design codes where appropriate.
- 2.75 This requirement for high design standards will apply to public and private buildings across all scales of development, as well as to infrastructure projects. Enhancements to the public realm, landscaping measures and attention to architectural detail will be important features that the authorities will wish to see included in new developments. Strategic scale and more local green infrastructure can make a vital contribution to quality of place, biodiversity and health outcomes.

### **SP5: Place Shaping Principles**

***All new development must meet the highest standards of built and urban design. The local authorities encourage the use of development frameworks and masterplans and will use design codes where appropriate for strategic scale developments.***

***All new development should reflect the following principles:***

- Respond positively to local character and context to preserve and enhance the quality of existing communities;***
- Provide buildings that exhibit individual architectural quality;***
- Create well-connected places that prioritise the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport services above use of the private car;***
- Where possible, provide a mix of land uses and densities with well-defined public and private spaces;***
- Enhance the public realm through additional landscaping, street furniture and other distinctive features that help to create a sense of place;***
- Provide streets and spaces that are overlooked and active, and promote inclusive access;***
- Include parking facilities that are well integrated as part of the overall design;***
- Provide public open space or larger scale green infrastructure;***
- Include measures to promote environmental sustainability, including to address energy and water efficiency; and***
- Protect the amenity of existing and future residents and users with regard to noise, vibration, smell, loss of light and overlooking.***

## Spatial Strategy

- 2.76 Future growth will contribute to maintaining and enhancing a well-connected network of sustainable settlements across North Essex. New homes, jobs, retail and leisure facilities serviced by new and upgraded infrastructure will be accommodated as part of existing settlements according to their scale, sustainability and role. The countryside will be protected and enhanced.
- 2.77 For the majority of settlements these issues are addressed in the second part of the plan dealing with each authority's area. However, it is relevant here to set out the spatial strategy at an appropriate level, as it relates to the main settlements and strategic-scale new development.
- 2.78 In Braintree growth the growth will be a mixture of urban extensions and new communities. Braintree town itself, as the largest service centre in the District will have a number of new urban extensions. Over 4,000 homes will be allocated in this area. The other main focus for development will be the A12 corridor with the main town of Witham and service villages of Hatfield Peverel, Kelvedon and Feering with allocations of just over 2,000. Other parts of the District, including the town of Halstead will have smaller allocations to reflect a more local need and making the best use of brownfield site, recognising that these areas are not as sustainable. Two new garden communities located on the A120 on the eastern and western edge of the District will provide at least 3,500 new homes within the Plan period, as well as the facilities and employment land to support them. These garden communities will continue to grow providing a key source of housing and jobs growth into future plan periods.
- 2.79 In Colchester the urban area of Colchester will continue to be a focus for growth due to its pre-eminent role as a centre for jobs, services and transport, with 4,000 units expected to be delivered over the plan period. The urban area of Colchester, however, has a limited and diminishing supply of available brownfield sites, so new communities will be included in the spatial hierarchy as a sustainable option for further growth of homes and jobs. Approximately 1200 homes will be allocated in the Rural District Centres of Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe. Smaller sustainable settlements will receive limited allocations proportionate to their role in the spatial hierarchy.
- 2.80 In Tendring the spatial hierarchy promotes growth in settlements that are the most assessable to the strategic road network, public transport and offer a range of services. Clacton, the Colchester Fringe and Harwich with Dovercourt are classified as strategic urban settlements and will accommodate around 5,000 new homes. The smaller urban settlements of Frinton with Walton and Kirby Cross, Manningtree with Lawford and Mistley,

Brightlingsea and the expanded settlement of Weeley will accommodate between 1,500 and 2,500 new homes. The rural service centres and smaller rural settlements will accommodate around 1,500 new homes including a windfall allowance. Each of the strategic and urban settlements and to lesser extent the other settlements, will accommodate a share of 40 hectares of employment space, with infrastructure and services to accommodate the growth.

#### **SP6: Spatial Strategy for North Essex**

***Existing settlements will be the principal focus for additional growth across North Essex. Development will be accommodated within or adjoining settlements according to their scale, sustainability and existing role both within each individual district and, where relevant, across the wider strategic area.***

***Future growth will be planned to ensure settlements maintain their distinctive character and role, and to avoid coalescence between them. Re-use of previously-developed land within settlements is an important objective, although this will be assessed within the broader context of sustainable development principles, particularly to ensure that development locations are accessible by a choice of means of travel.***

***New development will be focused on the principal settlements in each district. Below this level, each local authority will identify a hierarchy of settlements where new development will be accommodated according to the role of the settlement, sustainability, its physical capacity and local needs.***

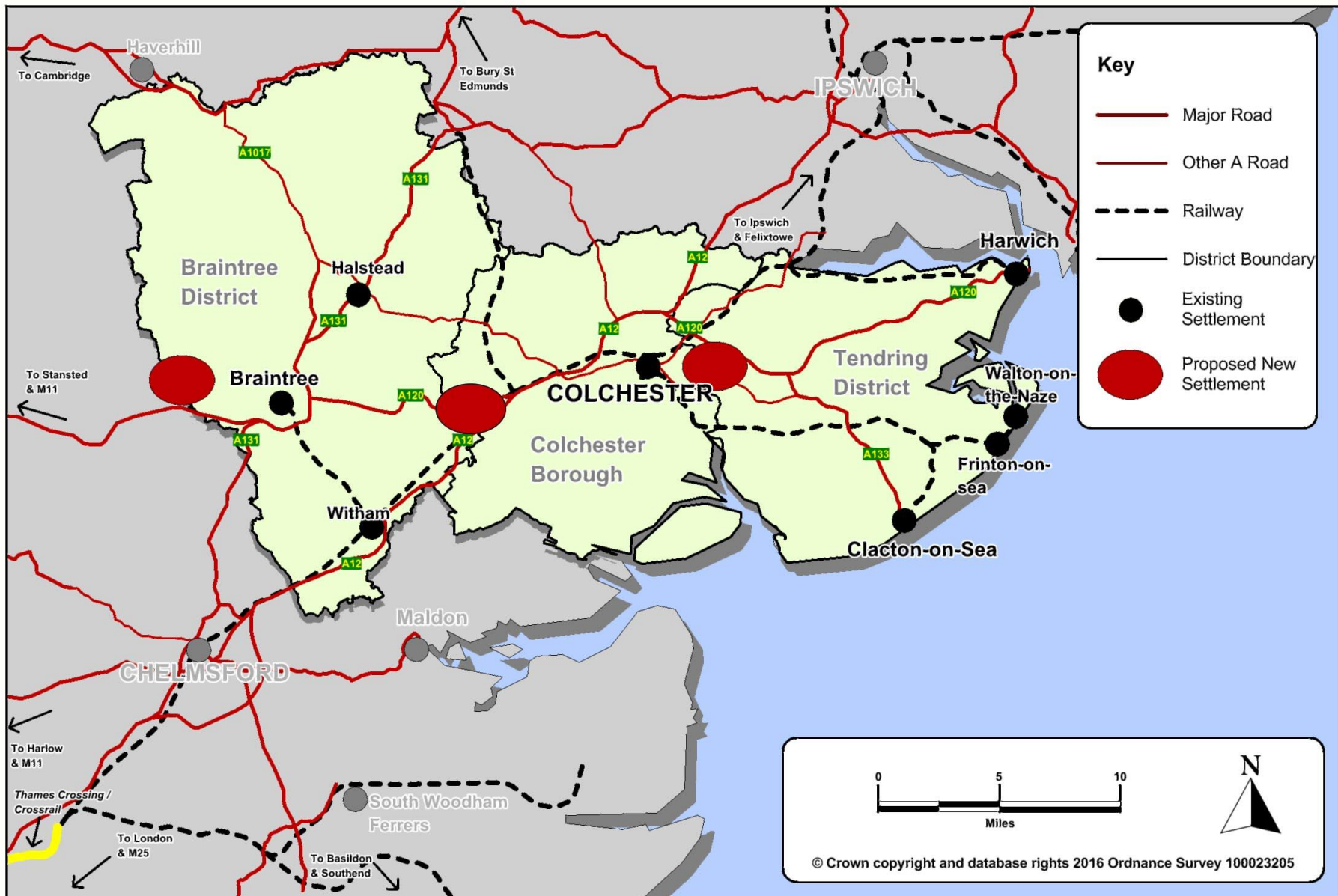
***Beyond the main settlements the authorities will support diversification of the rural economy and conservation and enhancement of the natural environment.***

***Three new garden communities will be developed and delivered as part of the sustainable strategy for growth at the locations shown on Map 2. These new communities will provide strategic locations for 7,500 additional homes within the Plan period as well as accompanying employment development, with the expectation that substantial additional development will be delivered beyond the current Local Plan periods. They will be planned and developed on garden communities principles, with necessary infrastructure and facilities provided and a high quality of built and urban design.***

- 2.81 The spatial strategy as set out in the policy and supporting text is the Council's preferred options at this time. However if further evidence or work reveals that one or more garden community is not deliverable or viable in the way that meets with the policies set out below, then other options will be explored.



**Map 3: Location of Proposed New Garden Communities**



## **Cross Boundary Garden Communities**

- 2.82 A key element of the spatial strategy for North Essex is the development of three new large scale garden communities, the location of each which could straddle council administrative boundaries. Garden communities were amongst a range of options which were considered by the local authorities to meet their needs, but due to the scale of development being proposed across North Essex and the infrastructure constraints which exist in many of the existing main settlements, this was considered the most deliverable and sustainable option, providing a major long term supply of new homes.
- 2.83 These new communities will accommodate a substantial amount of the housing and employment growth planned for North Essex within the plan period and beyond in a sustainable way that meets the strategic objectives.
- 2.84 The North Essex Garden Communities will be holistically planned new settlements that respond directly to their regional, local and individual site context and opportunities to create developments underpinned by a series of interrelated principles which are based on the TCPA Garden City Principles<sup>5</sup>, adapted for the specific North Essex context.
- 2.85 A number of sites of sufficient scale to accommodate a garden community were identified through the Call for Sites, the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and wider evidence gathering processes by each of the local authorities. These were evaluated using agreed sustainability criteria.
- 2.86 As these three proposed garden communities could be cross-boundary, continued close joint working between the authorities involved will be required to secure their successful delivery. Each of the authorities is committed to ensuring that the new communities proposed are as sustainable and high quality as possible and that the infrastructure needed to support them is delivered at the right time. This will require the local authorities to work very closely with the landowners within the proposed garden community locations to develop and put in place a robust delivery mechanism that will ensure a fair and equitable distribution of the costs and land requirements needed to secure the ambitions for these garden communities and create a long term legacy appropriate to the scale of this ambition. The Garden City principles developed by the Town and Country Planning Association have provided a good starting point in creating a framework for this approach. As noted earlier in this document, whilst Uttlesford are in a separate housing market area and are therefore not part of this strategic Part 1 there will continue to be ongoing discussions regarding the area of search in this location. The Uttlesford Issues and options Plan published in October 2015 included an area of search to the west of Braintree.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.tcpa.org.uk/pages/garden-cities.html>

### **SP7: Development and delivery of new garden communities in North Essex**

The following three new garden communities are proposed in North Essex.

- East of Colchester, on the border of Colchester BC and Tendring DC, a new garden community will deliver up to 2,500 homes within the Plan period (as part of an overall total of between 7,000-9,000 homes)
- West of Colchester, on the border of Colchester BC and Braintree DC, a new garden community will deliver up to 2,500 within the Plan period (as part of an overall total of between 15,000 – 20,000 homes)
- West of Braintree in Braintree DC and potentially on the border with Uttlesford DC, a new garden community will deliver up to 2,500 homes within the Plan period (as part of an overall total of between 10,000-13,000 homes)

Each of these will be an holistically and comprehensively planned new community with a distinct identity that responds directly to its context and is of sufficient scale to incorporate a range of homes, employment, green space and other uses to enable residents to meet the majority of their day-to-day needs, reducing the need for outward commuting. Delivery of each new community will be underpinned by a comprehensive package of infrastructure. Unallocated proposals in the borough and districts will not be permitted if it would prejudice the development of these garden communities, regardless of the eventual capacity and phasing of the developments or the status of the 5 year supply in each local authority.

The design, development and delivery of each new garden community will conform with the following principles.

- (i) Community and stakeholder empowerment in the design and delivery of each garden community from the outset and a long term community engagement and activation strategy.
- (ii) The public sector working pro-actively and collaboratively with the private sector to design, and bring forward these garden communities, deploying new models of delivery, sharing risk and reward and ensuring that the cost of achieving the following is borne by those promoting the developments: (i) securing a high quality of place-making, (ii) ensuring the timely delivery of both on-site and off-site infrastructure required to address the impact of these new communities, and (iii) providing a mechanism for future stewardship, management, maintenance and renewal of community infrastructure and assets.
- (iii) Promotion and execution of the highest quality of planning, design and management of the built and public realm so that the Garden Communities are characterised as distinctive places that capitalise on local assets and establish environments that promote health, happiness and well-being. This

will involve having detailed masterplans and design guidance in place to inform and guide development proposals and planning applications. Planning applications for the garden communities will be expected to be consistent with approved masterplans and design guidance.

- (iv) Sequencing of development and infrastructure provision (both on-site and off-site) to ensure that the latter is provided in tandem with or ahead of the development it supports to address the impacts of the new garden communities and meet the needs of residents.
- (v) Development that provides for a truly balanced and inclusive community and meets the housing needs of local people including a mix of dwelling sizes, tenures and types including provision for self- and custom-built homes to meet the requirements of those most in need including an appropriate level of affordable housing.
- (vi) Provide opportunities for employment within each new community and within sustainable commuting distance of it.
- (vii) Plan the new communities around a step change in integrated and sustainable transport systems for the North Essex area that put walking, cycling and rapid public transit systems at the heart of growth in the area, encouraging and incentivising more sustainable active travel patterns.
- (viii) Structure the new communities to create sociable, vibrant and walkable neighbourhoods with equality of access for all to a range of community services and facilities including health, education, shopping, culture, community meeting spaces, multi-functional open space, sports and leisure facilities.
- (ix) Specific garden community parking approach and standards will be developed that help promote the use of sustainable transport and make efficient use of land.
- (x) Create distinctive environments which relate to the surrounding environment and that celebrate natural environments and systems, utilise a multi-functional green-grid to create significant networks of new green infrastructure including new country parks at each garden community, provide a high degree of connectivity to existing corridors and networks and enhance biodiversity.
- (xi) Secure a smart and sustainable approach that fosters climate resilience and a 21<sup>st</sup> century environment in the design and construction of each garden community to secure net gains in local biodiversity, highest

standards of technology to reduce impact of climate change, water efficiency (with the aim of being water neutral in areas of serious water stress), and sustainable waste and mineral management.

- (xii) Put in place appropriate and sustainable long term governance and stewardship arrangements for the new communities as well as long term community engagement.

2.87 The following three policies relate to the strategic allocations for each of the new cross-boundary garden communities.

### **SP8: East Colchester / West Tendring New Garden Community**

The broad area of search shown on the adopted policies map, is identified as a strategic area for development of a new garden community of which the details and final number of homes will be set out in a Masterplan Framework to be prepared jointly between Colchester BC and Tendring DC and which will incorporate the following;

- (i) housing for around 2,500 dwellings within the Plan period (as part of an overall total of between 7,000-9,000 homes)
- (ii) Land for employment generating development,
- (iii) Neighbourhood centres incorporating provision for convenience shopping, community, health and cultural provision,
- (iv) Primary schools, a secondary school and other community facilities as appropriate,
- (v) A high proportion of the garden community will comprise green infrastructure including a new country park around Salary Brook.

The Masterplan Framework will set out the nature, form and boundary of the new community. The masterplan will be produced in partnership with the development interests and will provide a layout showing the disposition and quantity of future land-uses, and give a three dimensional indication of the urban design parameters which will be incorporated into any future planning applications; together with a phasing and implementation strategy which sets out how the rate of development will be linked to the provision of the necessary social and physical infrastructure to ensure that the respective phases of the development do not come forward until the necessary infrastructure has been secured. The masterplan will incorporate mechanisms for regular review and updating over the course of the implementation of this garden community.

The Masterplan Framework will address the following principles and requirements in the design, development and delivery of the new garden community:

#### **A. Place-making and design quality**

1. The development of a new garden community to high standards of design and layout drawing on its context and the considerable assets within its boundaries such as woodland, streams and changes in topography, as well as the

opportunities afforded by the proximity of the University of Essex campus to create a new garden community that is innovative, contemporary and technologically enabled set within a strong green framework with new neighbourhood centres at its heart. It will be designed and developed to have its own identity as a garden village and be as self-sustaining as possible recognising its location close to the edge of Colchester. It will secure appropriate integration with Colchester and the nearby University of Essex campus by the provision of suitable walking and cycling links and rapid public transport facilities to enable residents of the new community to have convenient access to town centre services and facilities in Colchester as well as Elmstead Market. A separation will be maintained between the new garden community and the nearby villages of Elmstead Market and Wivenhoe.

2. Detailed masterplans and design guidance will be put in place to inform and guide development proposals and planning applications. Planning applications for this garden community will be expected to be consistent with approved masterplans and design guidance.

#### B. Housing

3. A mix of housing types and tenures including self- and custom-build will be provided on the site, including a minimum of 30% affordable housing. The affordable housing will be phased through the development;
4. New residential development will seek to achieve an average net density of at least 30 dwellings to the hectare. Higher densities will be located close to the neighbourhood centres and along the strategic public transport corridors;

#### C. Employment

5. Provision for B1 and/or non B class employment generating uses towards the south of the site in proximity to the existing University of Essex and Knowledge Gateway, to provide for a wide range of local employment opportunities where appropriate;
6. Provision for B1, B2 and B8 businesses to the north of the site close to the A120;

#### D. Transportation

7. A package of measures will be introduced to encourage smarter transport choices to meet the needs of the new community and maximise the opportunities for sustainable travel including the provision of a network of footpaths, cycleways and bridleways to enhance permeability within the site and to access and to access the adjoining area; development of a public transit rapid transit system; and effective measures to mitigate the transport impacts of the proposed development on the strategic and local road network. Longer term transport interventions will need to be carefully designed to minimise the

impacts on the strategic road network and fully mitigate any environmental or traffic impacts.

8. Foot and cycle ways shall be provided throughout the development linking the site to the University of Essex, Hythe station and Colchester Town Centre;
9. Primary vehicular access to the site will be provided off the A120 and A133.
10. Improvements to the local road infrastructure will be necessary to mitigate adverse traffic impacts and serve the new development. These shall include bus (or other public transit provisions?) priority measures between the site, University of Essex, Hythe station and Colchester Town Centre;
11. Other specific infrastructure requirements identified as work on the area of search progresses.

#### E. Community Infrastructure

12. Neighbourhood centres of an appropriate scale will be provided to serve the proposed development. The centres will be located where they will be easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transit to the majority of residents in the garden community.
13. A health facility and community meeting places will be provided within the local centres.
14. A secondary school, primary schools and early years facilities will be provided to serve the new development;
15. A network of green infrastructure will be provided within the garden community including a community park facility, allotments, a new country park of a minimum of 70 hectares in size provided along the Salary Brook corridor and incorporating Churn Wood, the provision of sports areas with associated facilities and play facilities;
16. Provision of or contribution to indoor leisure facilities

#### F Other Requirements

17. Provision of improvements to waste water treatment including an upgrade to the Colchester Waste Water Treatment Plant and off-site drainage improvements;
18. Provision, management and on-going maintenance of sustainable surface water drainage measures to control the risk of flooding on site and which will reduce the risk of flooding to areas downstream or upstream of the development;
19. Landscape buffers between the site and existing development in Colchester, Wivenhoe and Elmstead Market;
20. Protection and/or enhancement of heritage and biodiversity assets within and surrounding the site;
21. Provision of appropriate buffers along strategic road and rail infrastructure to protect new development

22. Provision of appropriate design and infrastructure that incorporates the highest standards of innovation in technology to reduce impact of climate change, water efficiency (with the aim of being water neutral in areas of serious water stress), and sustainable waste / recycling management facilities.
23. Measures to assist the development of a new community including provision of community development workers
24. Appropriate and sustainable long term governance and stewardship arrangements for the new garden community including provision for management and maintenance of the public realm and community assets.

### **SP9: West of Colchester / East Braintree New Garden Community**

The broad area of search shown on the adopted policies map, is identified as a strategic area for development of a new garden community of which the details and final number of homes will be set out in a Masterplan Framework to be prepared jointly between Colchester BC and Braintree DC and which will incorporate the following;

- (i) housing for around 2,500 dwellings within the Plan period (as part of an overall total of between 15,000 to 20,000 homes)
- (ii) Provision for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling showpeople,
- (iii) Land for B1 and/or employment generating development,
- (iv) A district centre and neighbourhood centres incorporating provision for convenience shopping, community, health and cultural provision,
- (v) Primary schools, a secondary school and other community facilities as appropriate,
- (vi) A high proportion of the garden community will comprise green infrastructure including a new country park.

The Masterplan Framework will set out the nature, form and boundary of the new community. The masterplan will be produced in partnership with the development interests and will provide a layout showing the disposition and quantity of future land-uses, and give a three dimensional indication of the urban design parameters which will be incorporated into any future planning applications; together with a phasing and implementation strategy which sets out how the rate of development will be linked to the provision of the necessary social and physical infrastructure to ensure that the respective phases of the development do not come forward until the necessary infrastructure has been secured. The masterplan will incorporate mechanisms for regular review and updating over the course of the implementation of this garden community.

#### **A. Place-making and design quality**

1. The development of a new garden community to high standards of design and layout drawing on its context and the assets within its boundaries including



streams, land drains and ditches, mature hedgerows and field boundaries, woodland and historic buildings. A mixed use district centre will provide a vibrant heart to this new community supplemented by neighbourhood centres to form foci for new neighbourhoods. The design of the community will also address the challenges offered by other features in particular the severance created by the A12 and A120 and maximise the opportunities afforded through integration with the existing community of Marks Tey, and the presence of the railway station, all underpinned by a strong green grid of connected green space that provides great recreational opportunities for residents and connection to the wider countryside. The garden community will be designed and developed to have its own identity be as self-sustaining as possible. A separation will be maintained between the new garden community and the nearby settlements of Coggeshall and Stanway.

2. Detailed masterplans and design guidance will be put in place to inform and guide development proposals and planning applications. Planning applications for this garden community will be expected to be consistent with approved masterplans and design guidance.

#### B. Housing

3. A mix of housing types and tenures including self- and custom-build will be provided on the site, including a minimum of 30% affordable housing. The affordable housing will be phased through the development;
4. New residential development will seek to achieve an average net density of at least 30 dwellings to the hectare. Higher densities will be located close to the district and neighbourhood centres, the rail station and along the strategic public transport corridors;

#### C. Employment

5. Provision for B1 and/or non B class employment generating uses around the rail station as part of mixed use urban development to provide for a wide range of local employment opportunities where appropriate;

#### D. Transportation

6. A package of measures will be introduced to encourage smarter transport choices to meet the needs of the new community and maximise the opportunities for sustainable travel including the provision of a network of footpaths, cycleways and bridleways to enhance permeability within the site and to access the adjoining area; development of a rapid transit system connecting this new garden community to the wider Colchester context; development of opportunities to improve accessibility to Marks Tey rail station; and effective measures to mitigate the transport impacts of the proposed development on the strategic and local road network. Longer term transport

interventions will need to be carefully designed to minimise the impacts on the strategic road network and fully mitigate any environmental or traffic impacts.

7. Primary vehicular access to the site will be provided via a reconfigured A120.
8. Improvements to the local road infrastructure will be necessary to mitigate adverse traffic impacts and serve the new development. These shall include bus priority measures between the site, Colchester and Braintree town centres, employment areas and rail stations;
9. Foot and cycle ways shall be provided throughout the development and linking the site to the wider network
10. Marks Tey rail station is an important asset located in the northern eastern section of the new garden community. Opportunities will be explored to establish how it can be made more accessible to residents of the new community including relocation of the station to a more central location and improvement of walking, cycling and public transport links to the station.
11. Other detailed infrastructure requirements may be added as work on the site progresses.

#### E. Community Infrastructure

12. A new district centre and neighbourhood centres of an appropriate scale will be provided to serve the proposed development. The centres will be located where they will be easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transit to the majority of residents in the garden community including residents of the existing Marks Tey village.
13. A health facility and community meeting places will be provided within the district and local centres.
14. At least one secondary school, primary schools and early years facilities will be provided to serve the new development;
15. A network of green infrastructure will be provided within the garden community including a community park, allotments, a new country park, the provision of sports areas with associated facilities and play facilities;
16. Provision of or contribution to indoor leisure facilities

#### F. Other Requirements

17. Provision of improvements to waste water treatment including an upgrade to the Colchester Waste Water Treatment Plant and off-site drainage improvements;
18. Provision, management and on-going maintenance of sustainable surface water drainage measures to control the risk of flooding on site and which will reduce the risk of flooding to areas downstream or upstream of the development;
19. Landscape buffers between the site and Coggeshall, Stanway and Easthorpe;
20. Protection and/or enhancement of heritage and biodiversity assets within and surrounding the site including Marks Tey Hall, Easthorpe Hall Farm, Easthorpe

Hall and the habitats along and adjoining the Domsey Brook and Roman River corridors.

21. Provision of appropriate buffers along strategic road and rail infrastructure to protect new development
22. Provision of appropriate design and infrastructure that incorporates the highest standards of innovation in technology to reduce impact of climate change, water efficiency (with the aim of being water neutral in areas of serious water stress), and sustainable waste / recycling management facilities.
23. Measures to assist the development of a new community including provision of community development workers for a minimum of ten years from initial occupation of the first homes.
24. Appropriate and sustainable long term governance and stewardship arrangements for the new garden community including provision for management and maintenance of the public realm and community assets.

### **SP10: West of Braintree new garden community**

The broad area of search, as shown on the adopted policies map, is identified as a strategic area for development of a new garden community of which the details and final number of homes will be set out in a Masterplan Framework to be prepared jointly between Braintree DC and Uttlesford DC if applicable and which will incorporate the following;

- (i) housing for around 2,500 homes within the Plan period (as part of an overall total of between 10,000 – 13,000 homes)
- (ii) Provision for Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
- (iii) Appropriate provision of B1 and/or employment generating development,
- (iv) Neighbourhood centres incorporating provision for convenience shopping, community, health and cultural provision,
- (v) Primary schools, a secondary school and other community facilities as appropriate,
- (vi) At high proportion of the garden community will comprise green infrastructure including a new country park to the east of site.

The Masterplan framework setting out the nature, form and boundary of the new community. The masterplan will be produced in partnership with the development interests and will provide a layout showing the disposition and quantity of future land-uses, and give a three dimensional indication of the urban design parameters which will be incorporated into any future planning applications; together with a phasing and implementation strategy which sets out how the rate of development will be linked to the provision of the necessary social and physical infrastructure to ensure that the respective phases of the development do not come forward until the necessary infrastructure has

been secured. The masterplan will incorporate mechanisms for regular review and updating over the course of the implementation of this garden community.

A. Place-making and design quality

1. The new garden community will be developed to high standards of design and layout drawing on its context and the assets within its boundaries including Boxted Wood, Golden Grove, Rumley Wood, Pods Brook and the historic airfield. The gently sloping topography to the south of the site also affords opportunities for long distance views. These key assets will provide a context to build a new green space grid upon to provide an attractive setting for the new community and linking to the wider countryside. The new community will also address the relationship with existing communities close to its boundaries including Great Saling, Stebbing Green and Stebbing. The garden community will be designed and developed to have its own identity be as self-sustaining as possible. A separation will be maintained between the new garden community and the nearby village of Great Saling.
2. Detailed masterplans and design guidance will be put in place to inform and guide development proposals and planning applications. Planning applications for this garden community will be expected to be consistent with approved masterplans and design guidance.

B. Housing

3. A mix of housing types and tenures including self- and custom-build and starter homes will be provided on the site, including a minimum of 30% affordable housing. The affordable housing will be phased through the development;
4. New residential development will seek to achieve an average net density of at least 30 dwellings to the hectare. Higher densities will be located close to the neighbourhood centres and along the strategic public transport corridors;

C. Employment

5. Provision for B1, B2 and B8 businesses in the southern part of the community close to the A120 to provide for a wide range of local employment opportunities

D. Transportation

6. A package of measures will be introduced to encourage smarter transport choices to meet the needs of the new community and maximise the opportunities for sustainable travel including the provision of a network of footpaths, cycleways and bridleways to enhance permeability within the site and to access the adjoining area; development of an effective public transport system; development of opportunities to improve accessibility to local rail station; and effective measures to mitigate the transport impacts of the proposed development on the strategic and local road network. Longer term transport interventions will need to be carefully designed to minimise the

impacts on the strategic road network and fully mitigate any environmental or traffic impacts.

7. Primary vehicular access to the site will be provided via the A120 and B1256.
8. Improvements to the local road infrastructure will be necessary to mitigate adverse traffic impacts and serve the new development. These shall include bus priority measures between the site, Braintree town centre, rail station and employment areas including the 120 Skyline business park, Witham rail station and London Stansted Airport;
9. Foot and cycle ways shall be provided throughout the development, linking the site to Braintree town through the existing Flitch Way linear country park;
10. Other specific infrastructure requirements identified as work on the area of search progresses

#### E Community Infrastructure

11. Neighbourhood centres of an appropriate scale will be provided to serve the proposed new community. The centres will be located where they will be easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transit to the majority of residents in the garden community.
12. A health facility and community meeting places will be provided within the district and local centres.
13. A secondary school, primary schools and early years facilities will be provided to serve the new development;
14. A network of green infrastructure will be provided within the garden community including a community park, allotments, a new country park provided at the east side of the community, the provision of sports areas with associated facilities and play facilities;
15. Provision of or contribution to indoor leisure facilities

#### F Other Requirements

16. Provision of improvements to waste water treatment and off-site drainage improvements;
17. Provision, management and on-going maintenance of sustainable surface water drainage measures to control the risk of flooding on site and which will reduce the risk of flooding to areas downstream or upstream of the development;
18. Landscape buffers between the site and Great Saling, Stebbing, Stebbing Green and Rayne;
19. Protection and/or enhancement of heritage and biodiversity assets within and surrounding the site including Great Saling Hall conservation area and areas of deciduous woodland within and adjoining the site.
20. Provision of appropriate buffers along strategic road to protect new development

21. Provision of appropriate design and infrastructure that incorporates the highest standards of innovation in technology to reduce impact of climate change, water efficiency (with the aim of being water neutral in areas of serious water stress), and sustainable waste / recycling management facilities.
22. Measures to assist the development of a new community including provision of community development workers for a minimum of eight years from initial occupation of the first homes.
23. Appropriate and sustainable long term governance and stewardship arrangements for the new garden community including provision for management and maintenance of the public realm and community assets.

## **Delivery Arrangements**

- 2.88 The Councils are currently investigating the best ways to deliver development on the garden communities. Given the scale and ambition of the proposals, a new method of delivery is being sought which will allow the local authorities to have a much greater say in when and how the land is released and to ensure that the infrastructure and residents requirements for the new community are developed at the same time as new homes.
- 2.89 Detailed monitoring arrangements are included within the implementation and monitoring section of each Local Plan and will include how the monitoring of the delivery of the garden communities will be carried out. It should be noted that where there is an unacceptable delay in delivery of development and/or infrastructure occurs, the local authorities will use mechanisms and powers including Compulsory Purchase Orders, to intervene.



## **PART TWO - LOCAL PLAN FOR COLCHESTER**



### **3. Vision and Objectives for Part Two**

#### **Local Characteristics and Key Issues for Colchester**

- 3.1 The unique characteristics of Colchester create specific issues, opportunities and challenges for the future, which need to be addressed by the Local Plan. The sub-regional issues identified in Part 1 of the plan, combined with the following issues for Colchester provide the basis and context for the development of the Part 2 Colchester Vision and Objectives, the Spatial Strategy and Policies

#### **Making the most of the Borough's location and links between communities**

- 3.2 Spatially, Colchester benefits from its southeast location with good access to London, Stansted Airport and the port of Harwich. The Borough's population has grown by 15.6% between 2001 and 2014 and was estimated to stand at 180,420 people in mid-2014. The borough's growing population is accommodated within a spatial structure defined by the urban area at its centre, surrounded by a rural hinterland with three smaller centres, Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe. While Colchester is less deprived than Essex as a whole, 2 small areas in Colchester were in the top 10% most deprived in England in 2010, Magnolia in St. Andrew's Ward and St Anne's Estate in St Anne's ward. Sustainable development for the future will require the development of sustainable land use patterns that maximise accessibility between jobs, homes, services and facilities.

#### **Deliver economic growth in response to new challenges and trends**

- 3.3 Colchester has maintained good levels of employment growth over the last two decades with declining industrial employment being offset by a growth in office jobs. Colchester registered 92,300 workforce jobs in 2014 representing an increase of 20% over 1991 levels. This increase was higher than in the UK (14.6%) and similar to the East of England (19.6%), but was lower than employment growth recorded across Essex as a whole (27.9%) over the same period. The challenge for Colchester will be to retain existing office employers and to increase the supply of better quality modern space catering to small and start-up businesses.

#### **Supporting the Town Centre as the heart of the Borough**

- 3.4 The town centre of Colchester serves as a centre not only for the Borough but for a much wider area of North East Essex, with residents of Braintree, Maldon and Tendring districts travelling into the town to work, shop and use its community facilities. The town's present character reflects its rich and diverse history dating back to the Iron Age and including its period as the Roman capital of Britain, its importance as a wool and cloth centre in medieval and Tudor times, and its focus as a hub for Victorian and 20<sup>th</sup> century industry. In addition to its wealth of historic buildings and environments the Town Centre is also valued for its shops; employment opportunities; institutions of learning and culture; and services catering to a wide variety of users. The Local Plan seeks to retain the pre-eminence and vitality of the Town Centre in the face of changing economic and lifestyle trends and the rapid pace of technological innovation.

#### **Building houses fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

- 3.5 Colchester delivered 12,644 new homes between 2001/02 and 2014/15 at an average rate of 903 dwellings per year. Given the continuing pressures on the

South East housing market, Colchester will need to maintain its good rate of delivery over the next plan period to meet the Objectively Assessed Need figure of 920 houses a year, while also ensuring that increasing quantity is matched with high design quality and sustainable construction.

### **Improving Accessibility**

- 3.6 The car currently dominates the way people travel, with the 2011 Census showing that the car represents 55% of all journeys to work in the Borough. The Borough's self-containment rate (share of residents who also work within the Borough) was 69% in 2011, with 24,850 employed residents leaving the Borough to work. Of these 25% go to Greater London, 15% to Tendring District, 15% to Braintree District and 10% to Chelmsford City. The Local Plan will need to manage the continuing pressures of vehicle congestion and parking while developing practical solutions to minimise the need to travel and provide non-car based alternatives to movement around the Borough.

### **Vision: Colchester in 2033**

- 3.7 The following Vision sets out where we want to be in 2033. The objectives that follow address the issues, opportunities and problems faced by the Borough.
- 3.8 Colchester will be an active and welcoming town with its rich and prestigious heritage treasured and showcased for all to enjoy. Colchester will be acclaimed for the creative, innovative and sustainable ways in which it addresses the wide range of challenges facing the Borough, including climate change; population growth and changing composition; new lifestyle and technological innovations; creating and maintaining strong safe communities; and shifting market forces.
- 3.9 The Council will work proactively to ensure that the historic Town Centre continues its role as the cultural and economic heart of the Borough and international visitor destination. The surrounding urban area of Colchester will continue to provide a focus for new housing and employment with good transport accessibility and links to green spaces within both urban areas and the adjacent countryside. Tiptree, Wivenhoe and West Mersea will be key district settlements that provide essential services and facilities to their rural hinterland. The rural hinterland will remain home to an array of distinctive and thriving villages, set amidst beautiful landscapes and coastal areas which will be protected and enhanced for the enjoyment of all.
- 3.10 Colchester has made the most of its brownfield sites, revitalising large areas of the town, providing an array of high quality new homes, businesses, and facilities. Colchester will build on this progress with the delivery of a range of high quality greenfield developments. Working in partnership with our neighbours and local communities, two new exemplary Garden Communities to the East and West will become innovatively designed, sustainable communities enabling a strong sense of local identity, social inclusion, and involvement; well-co-ordinated and timely delivery of high quality infrastructure and facilities; good links to the Borough's primary hub at Colchester Town Centre; a range of market and affordable housing, and an array of job opportunities, together with opportunities for sport;

renewable energy; leisure and recreation; walking and cycling, and growing produce.

- 3.11 The Borough will enable the provision of a wide range of new housing that addresses the need for affordable, well-designed and adaptable homes that meet the needs of a diverse market, including families, young people/students, and an increasing number of older residents. New developments will be designed and located to ensure that residents are, from the start, able to reach a wide range of destinations using sustainable transport methods. The Council with its partners will pursue a range of funding options to ensure the timely delivery of new infrastructure and facilities.
- 3.12 Colchester will boast a diverse and thriving economy within a prosperous southeast region, supported by high quality digital infrastructure and accessible locations for new employment development, providing job opportunities for all. The Borough Council will pursue commercial opportunities that support job creation and generate revenue to help sustain the delivery of essential public services to the whole community, working in partnership with public and private sector partners. Colchester will provide an array of high quality training and educational opportunities at all levels, providing equality of opportunity for all. In particular, the University of Essex will grow in its role as a leading higher education institution, developing strong links to the new University Garden Village as well as the Town Centre and East Colchester.

## **Objectives**

### **3.13 Sustainable Growth**

- Ensure new development is sustainable and minimises the use of scarce natural resources and addresses the causes and potential impacts of climate change, and encourages renewable energy.
- Focus new development at sustainable locations to create new communities with distinctive identities whilst supporting existing communities, local businesses, and sustainable transport.
- Provide high quality housing of all tenures at accessible locations to accommodate our growing community.
- Ensure there are sufficient sites allocated in the right locations to support employment growth over the plan period.
- Focus development at accessible locations which support public transport, walking and cycling, and reduce the need to travel.
- Secure infrastructure to support new development.
- Promote of healthy lifestyles through the provision and enhancement of sport and recreation facilities, public open space and green infrastructure.

### **3.14 Natural Environment**

- Protect the countryside and coast

- Develop a green infrastructure network across the borough
- Ensure new development avoids areas of flood risk and reduce future flood risk where possible.
- Protect and enhance landscapes, biodiversity, green spaces, air and water quality, and river corridors.

### 3.15 **Places**

- Ensure the unique qualities of different communities and environments in the Borough are identified, protected and enhanced through policies and allocations which ensure high quality, consistency, equity and responsiveness to local character.
- Promote high quality design and sustain Colchester's historic character, found in its buildings, townscape and archaeology.
- Improve streetscapes, open spaces and green links to provide attractive and accessible spaces for residents to live, work and play.

## **4. Sustainable Growth Policies**

### **The Spatial Strategy**

- 4.1 The Spatial Strategy directs development towards the most sustainable locations, as illustrated by the Key Diagrams, and provides for supporting facilities and infrastructure to create sustainable local communities. The Spatial Strategy provides the framework for the place-based approach of the Local Plan and relates allocations to the unique characteristics of particular communities within the Borough.
- 4.2 Following on from the Spatial Strategy for North Essex set forth in Part 1 of the plan, the Strategic Growth policies in Part 2 of this Plan provide the complete strategic picture of the role and functions of different areas of Colchester within its sub-regional context.
- 4.3 Policy SG1 sets out the spatial hierarchy for Colchester, with the urban area of Colchester at its centre. Sustainable settlements form the next tier of the borough's Spatial Hierarchy. This includes the two new Garden Communities straddling boundaries with Braintree to the west and Tendring to the east, which will provide strategic locations for 5000 additional dwellings within the plan period as well as accompanying employment development. The tier also includes the District Centres of Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe, with their associated commercial centres, and 16 larger villages. All other villages are included in an 'other villages' category which restricts further development to a limited set of criteria. The remaining area of the Borough is categorised as countryside, where more restrictive development policies apply.
- 4.4 By focusing future development on highly accessible locations this will reduce the need to travel. Good accessibility means that the community can access their needs easily and without always needing a car. Accessibility can be improved by locating development at accessible locations and improving public transport, walking and cycling facilities and services.
- 4.5 Policy SG2 details the housing targets for the plan period and list the allocations aligning with the spatial hierarchy which will provide the locations for this new development.
- 4.6 Policy SG3 explains the economic growth strategy for the plan period and provides the locations and rationale for new employment generating uses in the Borough.
- 4.7 Policy SG4 details the approach to protect and enhance the delivery of jobs throughout the Borough with an indication of areas where a more flexible approach is appropriate to secure a range of economic opportunities in sustainable locations in the Borough
- 4.8 Policy SG5 recognises the role existing commercial clusters play in the economy and the importance to the surrounding area
- 4.9 Policy SG6 sets out the strategy for provision of infrastructure required during the plan period to support development in the Borough.

## **Spatial Strategy Policy**

- 4.10 The strategic Part One section of this plan states in Policy SP6 that new development will be focused on the principal settlements within Colchester Borough. It also provides that the Council will identify a hierarchy of settlements where new development will be accommodated according to the role of the settlement, its sustainability, its physical capacity and local needs. This hierarchy, to be developed by each of the three authorities within the Part 1 Plan area, is to include strategic locations for growth in the form of new garden communities.
- 4.11 The Spatial Strategy for Colchester reflects the Council's evidence base on sustainable settlements along with a range of associated issues including development needs; environmental constraints; and deliverability. At the Issues and Options stage, the Council posed three potential options for growth – development to the east and west; development to the west; and development to the east and north.
- 4.12 Overall, the Sustainability Appraisal determined that the broad locations selected for growth to the east and west were considered to be more sustainable than alternate locations for the following reasons:
- They provide good access to the Town Centre and community facilities.
  - They provide good access to public transport interchanges or services and the strategic road network and in some instances the ability to expand provision.
  - They are not designated as environmental conservation areas or identified as areas of landscape importance.
  - They provide sufficient capacity to establish new sustainable communities.
  - They will help deliver infrastructure and facilities that will support nearby regeneration areas.
- 4.13 The preferred Spatial Strategy, and the results of the Sustainability Appraisal, accordingly mean that a proposal for a Garden Community at Langham which was submitted through the Call for Sites was rejected for inclusion in the Plan.
- 4.14 A further tool used to analyse both broad options for growth and specific site proposals is the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA), which identifies whether sites potentially available for development are 'suitable', 'available' and 'deliverable'. Sites considered in the SLAA included both sites put forward by developers as well as a range of other potential sites the Council identified through such sources as earlier assessment work completed in 2009 and current allocations which remain undeveloped. This work is then fed into other parts of the plan including the Sustainability Appraisal, Settlement Boundary Review and Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

## **Growth Locations**

### **Urban Area of Colchester**

- 4.15 In Colchester's spatial hierarchy, the urban area of Colchester is ranked as the most sustainable location for growth, given its high level of accessibility and concentration of housing, jobs and services. Proposals for town centre uses such as retail, offices, leisure, culture and entertainment facilities, and food/drink establishments will accordingly be directed to Colchester Town Centre in the first instance. Policy TC1 provides further guidance on the mechanisms for maintaining Colchester Town Centre's pre-eminent position.
- 4.16 Some areas of the Colchester have been a focus for regeneration over a number of years, with significant progress and delivery evident in some areas such as the Garrison and North Colchester. Other areas will continue to be a focus for regeneration and enhancement delivered via a range of mixed use, commercial, social and residential opportunities. These areas have been designated as Special Policy Areas to provide a clear context against which to promote opportunities for appropriate growth, enhanced public realm and connectivity. Colchester has a number of existing established Commercial Areas which serve a particular function which is important for the economy and the surrounding area. Whilst expansion of such areas is not appropriate, retention and support for their current function is considered to be important, which is reflected in a specific policy (SG5). Site allocations along with specific policy considerations for other parts of the urban area of Colchester are contained in the following policies:

#### ***Central Colchester***

- TC1 - Town Centre and
- TC3- Central Colchester other allocations

#### ***North Colchester***

- NC1- Northern Gateway/Severalls Strategic Economic Area
- NC2- North Station Special Policy Area
- NC3- North Colchester other allocations

#### ***East Colchester***

- EC1 - Knowledge Gateway and University Strategic Economic Area
- EC2 - East Colchester- The Hythe Special Policy Area
- EC3- East Colchester other allocations.

#### ***West Colchester***

- WC1 – Stanway Strategic Economic Area
- WC2 – Stanway
- WC3 –Colchester Zoo Special Policy Area
- WC4- West Colchester other allocations

## **Sustainable Settlements**

- 4.17 The next tier of Sustainable Settlements includes the Garden Communities programmed for long term growth beyond the plan period as well as larger existing settlements within the Borough which are considered to have the potential to accommodate further proportionate growth.
- 4.18 As the underlying principle of the NPPF and therefore the new Local Plan is to support the principle of sustainable development, it is important that new allocations for growth and the associated settlement development boundaries relate to sustainable locations. The Local Plan therefore defines those settlements which are “sustainable” using evidence to justify this. By implication any other settlements (or parts of settlements currently defined by a settlement boundary) are less sustainable, although it is recognised that these other villages serve an important community function within the rural areas around the Borough.
- 4.19 Policies SP8 and SP9 in Part One describe the requirements of two new Garden Communities at University Garden Village to the East and the West Colchester Garden Community to the West. They are programmed to be initiated during the life of the plan to allow for necessary infrastructure to be planned for and phased as required, but they will continue to grow gradually over a number of years beyond the plan period.
- 4.20 To develop a list of settlements considered to qualify as ‘sustainable’, each village has been assessed against the criteria listed below which relate to the NPPF identification of the three dimensions of sustainability – economic, social and environmental. Please see the Settlement Boundary Review document prepared as evidence to support the development of this plan which incorporates findings of the Sustainability Appraisal of potential sites within Sustainable Settlements. The three District Centres have automatically been included in the Sustainable Settlements category due to their larger populations and concentrations of jobs, facilities, and services and function.
- Access to sustainable transport (Railway station; bus stop - including crude consideration of quality of service; good accessibility is considered to be a distance of up to 2,000m to train station with a frequent service at least six days a week, or up to 400m of a bus stop with a frequent service at least six days a week.
  - Environmental constraints such as flooding, protected landscapes, etc;
  - Proximity to community facilities with good accessibility being judged for most as judged as a distance up to 400m including;
    - Public open space
    - Primary school
    - Small shops to meet local needs
    - Community / village Hall;
    - Doctors Surgery
    - Proximity to Secondary School;
    - % of people who travel less than 2km to work;
- 4.21 Those settlements which tend to have the most sustainable characteristics are, for the most part the larger villages which have a population of at least 500. This



reflects the historic development of settlements both planned (and unplanned in the more distant past) which have evolved around good accessibility and key community facilities such as churches and primary schools. These types of considerations are now widely recognised in planning policy nationally and locally and the approach in this plan is to channel some growth to the most sustainable settlements to encourage their continued growth recognising the key function they play beyond the urban area of Colchester. A review of the settlement boundaries in these settlements and identification of new allocations are identified in each of the place policies, providing a more proactive approach to new development in these settlements. The growth provided for in these settlements is proportionate to the size of the settlement, local landscape character, other local constraints, identified need and the availability of infrastructure.

- 4.22 The settlements highlighted in bold in Table SG1 have active Neighbourhood Plan working groups which have chosen to pursue site allocations through their respective Neighbourhood Plans under the Localism Act 2011. More detailed proposals for site allocations and other policy matters are set out in the Neighbourhood Plan for these areas. More information on these are included in the relevant sustainable settlement sections of this plan.

### **Other Villages**

- 4.23 Other Villages tend to be small villages with only limited facilities. Functionally, however, they act as local service centres which local communities rely on for basic facilities and as social hubs. Settlements now classed as Other Villages are listed in Table SG1 above. These smaller rural villages often operate as clusters by sharing key services and facilities which help provide a strong sense of identity for the communities living and working there. Although this plan does not seek to promote substantial housing growth or other development in these less sustainable settlements, their role in serving a community function in the rural areas is still recognised. The Plan continues to define the village core with tightly drawn Settlement Boundaries for the Other Villages which reflects the core community focus of that village. These settlements can accommodate a limited amount of small scale development and the policy context setting out the types of development considered appropriate within the Other Villages is set out in policy OV1.

### **Countryside**

- 4.24 Within the countryside, there a number of very small isolated clusters of dwellings or small hamlets across the Borough, which lack any community facilities or services and rely on nearby villages or towns to meet their daily needs. Although they provide a community function for the small groups of residents living within these areas, as their location is physically detached, and sometimes remote, from the core villages to which they relate these clusters/hamlets will no longer be defined by a settlement boundary and they will comprise small groups of dwellings within the countryside. Development within the countryside will be restricted to activities that either require a rural location or proposals that help sustain a rural community and local economy and which help protect the rural character of the areas where the development is being proposed. The type of development considered appropriate within the countryside is set out in policy OV1 of the Local

Plan. The settlement areas which no longer have a defined settlement boundary, are illustrated on the individual settlement policy maps and listed in Appendix 1

### **SG1 – Colchester’s Spatial Strategy**

Throughout the Borough, growth will be located at the most accessible and sustainable locations in accordance with the spatial strategy for North Essex set forth in Policy SP6 in Part One above and with the Settlement Hierarchy set out in Table SG1. The Settlement hierarchy ranks areas of the Borough in order of their sustainability merits and the size, function and services provided in each area.

Development will be focused on highly accessible locations to reduce the need to travel. Development will be supported where there a real travel choice is provided and sustainable travel for different purposes is promoted throughout the day.

This Spatial Hierarchy focuses growth on the urban area of Colchester, reflecting its position as the main location for jobs, housing, services, and transport. Sequentially, the next tier of preferred growth includes Garden Communities straddling boundaries with adjacent authorities and providing new greenfield sites in sustainable communities which will grow gradually, over time, extending beyond the plan period. The second tier also includes proportionate growth in existing Sustainable Settlements within the Borough, including 15 large villages and the 3 District Centres of Tiptree, West Mersea, and Wivenhoe.

In the remaining Other Villages and Countryside areas of Colchester, new development will only be acceptable where it accords with policy OV1. New development in the open countryside will only be permitted on an exceptional basis to preserve its rural character.

Table SG1 Spatial Hierarchy		
Urban Area of Colchester including;		
Central Colchester; Town Centre		
North Colchester; <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Northern Gateway/Severalls Strategic Economic Area,</li><li>North Station Special Policy Area,</li><li>Cowdray Centre, Turner Rise and Highwoods Mixed Use Areas</li></ul>	East Colchester; <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Knowledge Gateway/University Strategic Economic Area,</li><li>The Hythe/East Colchester Special Policy Area,</li></ul>	West Colchester; <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Stanway Strategic Economic Area,</li><li>Colchester Zoo Special Policy Area,</li><li>Peartree Mixed Use Area</li></ul>
Garden Communities  University Garden Village  West Colchester Garden Community	Sustainable Settlements including District Centres. Settlements in <b>BOLD</b> are preparing Neighbourhood Plans to guide development Abberton and Langenhoe Birch <b>Boxted</b> Chappel and Wakes Colne Copford and Copford Green Dedham <b>Eight Ash Green</b> Fordham Great Horkesley Great Tey Langham Layer de la Haye <b>Marks Tey</b> Rowhedge <b>Tiptree</b> <b>West Bergholt</b> West Mersea <b>Wivenhoe</b>	
Other Villages Aldham		

Eastthorpe East Mersea Fingringhoe Great Wigborough Layer Breton Little Horkesley Messing Mount Bures Peldon Salcott Wormingford
<b>Countryside</b>

**Countryside**

### Alternative options considered

- 4.25 **Alternative spatial strategy** – The Borough clearly contains sufficient undeveloped land to accommodate required growth in alternative locations, however Sustainability Appraisal work has discounted many of these potential alternative locations on the basis of environmental constraints. As noted in the Explanation above, the preferred Spatial Strategy has evolved from firstly, consideration of the individual characteristics and capacity of different parts of the Borough and secondly, consideration of the overall linkages and functionality of settlements within the area and the best strategy for enhancing their sustainability.

### Housing Delivery Policy

- 4.26 As provided in Part 1 of this plan, Colchester BC has reached agreement with other local Essex authorities, including Braintree, Chelmsford and Tendring, to identify sufficient deliverable sites or broad locations for growth to 2033 to meet Objectively Assessed Need for new development land.
- 4.27 Colchester needs to make a minimum provision of 14,720 homes between 2017 and 2033 in accordance with its evidence based housing target. This housing target has been developed in line with national guidance, beginning with agreement on the effective market area for housing. The boundaries of Colchester’s Strategic Housing Market Area have been determined to also include Braintree, Chelmsford and Tendring. A figure of 920 homes per year has been determined as the Objectively Assessed Need for Colchester. This housing provision is made up of existing commitments (which includes sites with planning permission and sites allocated in the adopted local plan which are being re-allocated in this plan). The Housing Trajectory illustrates these sites and the current total is 7634. The remaining balance is made up from new allocations identified in this plan, illustrated in Table SG2.
- 4.28 National planning policy requires the Local Plan to ensure that the minimum housing requirement can be delivered with confidence. It is therefore necessary to

identify broad locations and sites that are available and deliverable over the plan period for new housing to supplement existing completions, permissions and allocations. This involves firstly ensuring that the selection of each area programmed in this plan for new housing development aligns with the location's place in the Spatial Hierarchy set forth in Policy SG1. The number of new dwellings for each area then follows on from firstly, the broad distribution established by the Spatial Strategy and secondly the analysis of capacity, deliverability, suitability and proportionality carried out by the Council through the Strategic Land Availability Assessment and the Sustainability Appraisal

- 4.29 The two broad locations for Garden Communities identified in Part 1 of this plan are expected to collectively deliver 5000 new homes shared between Colchester and Braintree/Tendring within the plan period, growing to 20-30,000 beyond the plan period, along with employment space, green infrastructure, strategic and community infrastructure. It is important that the principles of development are established by each Council with details being set out in the joint plans. Part 1 policies SP7, 8 and 9 provide a policy framework for the new garden communities and further detail will be provided in area specific local plans.
- 4.30 The Place policies in this plan provide detail on specific allocations within each area of new housing development, along with further information on infrastructure and mitigation required to address site constraints and opportunities.
- 4.31 Ensuring the quality of new housing development is equivalent in importance to ensuring its quantity. Policies in the Development Management section of this plan accordingly provide for affordable housing (DM8), housing to meet the needs of a range of different groups within the population (Housing Diversity DM10), and well-designed (Design and Amenity DM15)

## **SG2 - Housing Delivery**

The Borough Council will plan, monitor and manage the delivery of at least 14,720 new homes in Colchester Borough between 2017 and 2033. The Council's housing target is based on a robust Objectively Assessed Need figure of 920 homes a year and provides alignment with the targets for the delivery of employment land.

Colchester has a good track record of using previously developed land within its urban area. As a result of this, the borough has a limited and diminishing supply of brownfield sites that can contribute to accommodating new growth. Accordingly, development sites for the 2017-33 period include new greenfield sites which have been selected on the basis of their sustainable location and deliverability.

The overall distribution of new housing, as shown in Table SG2, will be guided by the Settlement Hierarchy set forth in the Spatial Strategy and Policy SG1. New housing development will be focused on the following key areas:

- Colchester urban area (Place policies for Central, North, East and West Colchester)

- University Garden Village (East) (Part 1 Policy SP8)
- West Colchester Community (West) (Part 1 Policy SP9)

Detailed decisions on the location, type and level of development to be carried out in the new settlements will be made through joint plans to be agreed with the relevant local authority, either Braintree (west) or Tendring (east), as outlined in Part 1 of this plan.

To maintain the vitality and viability of the Borough's smaller towns and villages, an appropriate level of new development will be brought forward in Sustainable Settlements to support new homes and economic and social development. Details on those allocations are provided in Policies SS1- SS18 (Sustainable Settlements)

**Table SG2 - Colchester's Housing Provision**

Settlements and Key Development Areas		Existing commitments (2017-2033)	Estimated minimum housing provision (2017-2033)	Policy reference
Colchester Urban Area		5,308	1,718	TC3, NC4, EC3, WC4
Stanway		1,554	678	WC4
East New Settlement		0	1,250	Part 1 SP7 and SP8
West New Settlement		0	1,250	Part 1 SP7 and SP9
Sustainable Settlements	Abberton and Langenhoe	619	30	SS1-18
	Birch		15	
	Boxted		36	
	Chappel and Wakes Colne		30	
	Copford and Copford Green		120	
	Dedham		17	
	Eight Ash Green		150	
	Fordham		20	
	Great Horkesley		93	
	Great Tey		17	
	Langham		125	
	Layer de la Haye		50	
	Marks Tey		0	
	Rowhedge		60	
	Tiptree		600	
	West Bergholt		120	
	West Mersea		350	
	Wivenhoe		250	
Windfall allowance (2022-2033)			500	
<b>Total</b>		<b>7,481</b>	<b>7,479</b>	<b>14,960</b>

#### 4.32 **Alternative options considered**

**Restrict allocations to plan period** -Confine allocations to those which can be delivered entirely within the plan period. This would preclude the development of Garden Communities, given their long lead time, and would not allow the Council the opportunity to optimise long-term planning.

**Provide a more dispersed pattern of new development** –This option would spread the impact of new development more widely across the Borough, but would not secure the critical mass of new supporting infrastructure required to support sustainable growth and could therefore be expected to result in higher overall levels of growth in villages and within existing communities; congestion; and restricted infrastructure.

### **Economic Delivery Policies**

4.33 In accordance with the NPPF, the Council has set forth a clear strategy for Economic Growth in its Economic Development Strategy 2015-21 which has the following priorities:

- Creating new jobs
- Raising the employability and skill levels of our residents and retaining talent
- Creating, supporting and retaining businesses
- Improving 'hard' (road, rail and broadband connectivity) and 'soft' infrastructure (business and employment support, employment sites)
- Securing greater inward investment and funding.

4.34 The Council's allocations support this strategy and also reflect the need for economic growth to be targeted at the most accessible and sustainable locations. The Council commissioned studies including an Employment Land Needs Assessment, (ELNA) (January 2015) to update the evidence base and enable effective planning to facilitate the provision of appropriate employment to reflect current trends, market changes and projections for the plan period. The ENLA looked at provision in relation to B class uses and found that as a Borough there is sufficient supply to meet future needs when considering various scenarios, based on the allocations in the Adopted Local Plan (Core Strategy, Site Allocations and Development Policies) however, it recognised that achieving this is dependent upon all remaining land coming forward on 3 existing large Strategic Employment Zones with almost 80% of this being on the Stanway and Knowledge Gateway sites.

4.35 As part of the preparation of the Local Plan a full review of the unimplemented Strategic and Local Employment sites has been considered, informed by the ELNA as well as settlement assessments, strategic land availability assessments and policy review in the light of national guidance and other evidence as relevant. It is also recognised that a significant contribution to jobs in the Borough comes from other economic uses which are not classified as B class uses. In order to respond to this and to provide greater flexibility to aid delivery of further jobs throughout the Borough, employment areas will be provided within wider



economic areas which will allow for a mix of appropriate economic uses in some areas.

- 4.36 In order to bring forward these sites and maintain an appropriate level and type of employment provision a specific policy approach for each area is appropriate. Around the edge of Colchester there remains 3 Strategic Locations for economic growth to the east, north and west of Colchester. Local Economic Areas around the Borough are retained where appropriate and designations have been removed where the ELNA or other evidence suggests them as no longer being suitable. These include areas which may have been identified for potential redevelopment, but are now functioning successfully with an existing successful operation. Those previously allocated sites which are no longer designated are identified as such on the individual settlement policies maps and listed in appendix 1. Some LEAs are located within sustainable settlements which provide a key role in supporting the economic sustainability of the settlements. Other established areas are operating successfully in more remote rural locations, although these are less sustainable in terms of accessibility, the role they play in contributing to the wider rural economy and the function within the wider area is important hence the continued protection of some of these sites. The ELNA highlights some sites as being somewhat dated and that the potential for modernisation to be encouraged should opportunities arise through reuse or expansion proposals

### **Strategic Economic Areas**

- 4.37 The Strategic Economic Areas review the former Strategic Employment Zones with some revisions to all of these areas. These are the best employment sites in the Borough and should be retained for employment purposes to meet anticipated needs over the plan period, in accordance with Paragraph 22 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Knowledge Gateway and University SEA reflects opportunities associated with the growth plans for the university and the benefits linked to the new University Garden Village to the east of Colchester. The Northern Gateway and Severalls SEA responds to the potential to maximise its prime location adjacent to Junction 28 of the A12 and for enhanced connectivity to the Colchester's Northern Gateway, for the retention and expansion of the Business Park and for opportunities to deliver an enhanced sports and leisure hub. The third SEA at Stanway continues to be a favoured location for strategic economic opportunities given its relative sustainability taking advantage of good access to the A12. To allow for flexibility the Strategic economic areas are divided into sub areas (zones), the policy context for which is set out in the individual policies. The Council will work with other key stakeholders to ensure a comprehensive approach to the delivery of employment land and other mixed commercial uses within the Strategic Economic Areas in accordance with policies NC1, EC1 and WC1.

### **Garden Communities Strategic Allocations**

- 4.38 Policy SP3 in Part 1 of this plan indicates that the new garden communities will make a strategic contribution to employment provision serving the sustainable communities and the rest of the Borough. The extent, location and policy context

for this in new garden communities to the east and west of Colchester will be informed by future master planning for these areas.

### **Centres Hierarchy**

4.39 The NPPF provides specific guidance on town centre uses and requires that local authorities should define a network and hierarchy of centres to help ensure their vitality. The Council's Centre Hierarchy accordingly provides that town centre uses should follow a sequential approach to location, with Colchester Town Centre at the top of the hierarchy. Policy TC3 provides detail on the allocation of land within the Town Centre to provide additional town centre use capacity. Town centre uses elsewhere in the urban area of Colchester are dealt with through area based policies set out below for the Central, North, East and West areas. but are not given a specific role in the centres hierarchy given the limits placed in those locations on expansion of town centre uses. Small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance along with existing out-of-centre developments are excluded in the NPPF glossary definition of centres. The second tier of the centres hierarchy includes the District Centres of Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe along with new Garden Community centres which are expected to serve as centres for their surrounding local communities.

4.40 Areas within Colchester which were formerly District Centres are no longer designated as such, but are all now part of other policies with the approach set out to reflect the intended function of these areas. For clarity these are listed in Appendix 1. Furthermore the numerous areas previously designated as Neighbourhood Centres are also no longer designated within Colchester since most of them comprise small parades of shops purely of a neighbourhood significance which are expressly excluded in the NPPF definition. These areas are indicated on the policies maps and listed in appendix 1

### **SG3 - Economic Growth Provision and Centre Hierarchy**

The Borough Council will encourage economic development and will plan for the delivery of at least 57.8 ha\* (B class uses) of employment land in Colchester Borough up to 2033. Existing economic uses on the sites identified will be safeguarded in accordance with the relevant policies. New development for employment uses will primarily be provided on a range of sites to ensure jobs are accessible to new and existing communities across the borough. Sites include;

- Land within Strategic Economic areas as indicated on the proposals maps (policies NC1, EC1 and WC1)
- Land within existing and proposed Local Economic Areas including those identified on the policies maps
- Land within defined Commercial / mixed use special policy areas as shown on the policies maps (Policies TC3, NC2-4, EC2-3, WC4)
- Existing sites with planning permission;

Within some of the defined economic areas alternative economic non- B class uses contribute to the provision of jobs providing flexibility and securing delivery of the additional jobs. Suitable alternative economic uses will be supported within the

defined areas in accordance with the relevant policies.

### **Centre Hierarchy**

In accordance with the NPPF the centres identified in the following hierarchy will be the preferred location for main town centre uses such as retail, office, leisure and entertainment. Proposals for such uses outside of these centres as defined on the proposals map will be subject to a sequential test as required by policy TC1

<b>Regional Centre</b> Colchester Town Centre	
<b>District Centres</b> Tiptree West Mersea Wivenhoe	<b>Proposed District Centres</b> New Garden Community East Colchester New Garden Community West Colchester

**Table SG3 Economic Provision- Including Employment Land**

Table 5-5 Economic Provision Including Employment Land		
Location / Site	Land available (approx. ha *)	Policy Reference
Strategic Economic Areas		
Northern Gateway / Severalls Strategic Economic Area	17	Zone 1 Policy NC1
Knowledge Gateway and University Strategic Economic Area	7	Zone 1 Policy EC1
Stanway Strategic Economic Area	24	Zone 1 Policy WC1
University Garden Village (East)	To be informed by master planning	SP8
West Colchester Garden Community	To be informed by master planning	SP9
Total Employment Land (B class uses) within SEAs (Hectares)	48 hectares	
*note the figure provided for hectares relates only to the Zones within the SEAs which are allocated primarily for B class uses.		
Local Economic Areas		
Site	Total Area and Land available	Policy
Colchester		
Clarendon Way	0.22	SG4

Maldon Road including the Shrub End Depot	1.0	SG4
Davey Close	1.08	SG4
Whitehall Industrial Estate (Place Farm)	5.5	SG4
The Hythe		
<b>Outside Urban Colchester</b>		
Tiptree ** - Tower Business Park	2.0	SG4
<b>Total Employment Land from LEAs (Hectares)</b>	<b>9.8 hectares</b>	
<b>Total Employment Land SEAs and LEAs combined</b>	<b>57.8 hectares</b>	

4.41 Additionally, further floorspace for non B-class economic uses will be provided within the following areas of urban Colchester:

- Colchester Town Centre (Policy TC3)
- North Station Special Policy Area (Policy NC2)
- East Colchester – Hythe Special Policy Area (Policy EC2)
- Colchester Zoo (Policy WC4)

### **Local Economic Areas**

4.42 The Local Employment Areas provide an important contribution to the Colchester economy alongside the Strategic Areas. The ELNA reviewed the majority of the former Local Employment Zones and suggested whether they should be reallocated, reviewed or deallocated. The sites are listed in policy SG3 and SG4 and in each case they are cross referenced in the appropriate place policy including policies for Colchester, Special policy areas, sustainable settlements or the other villages / countryside policies.

4.43 The Economic Areas shown on the Policies Maps provide a framework within which Colchester's business community can develop and compete at a local, regional, national and international level. The Council will work with businesses within these areas to encourage them to adapt and respond to changing economic conditions in order to support business growth and ensure the economic viability of local communities.

4.44 The East of England Economic Strategy states that employment sites are under increasing pressure to be developed for housing and other uses but it is important to retain existing employment sites where possible and appropriate. Employment site retention and provision is particularly necessary to enable balanced job and housing growth and to provide choices for businesses looking to expand or relocate.

4.45 Employment Areas contain a range of sites and premises that meet the needs of the business community and offers flexibility and choice. However, the National Planning Policy Framework advises local authorities to take a pragmatic approach

to the protection of employment sites where there are high vacancy rates and/or where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for the allocated employment use. To build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, policies need to be flexible whilst ensuring that the needs of the community are met. To this end, the Council will, where possible, seek to retain Class B uses at employment sites whilst at the same time seek to prevent the long-term vacancy of land and units where other non-Class B uses may be appropriate.

- 4.46 There is pressure to change commercial land and premises into higher value uses but if an employment site was lost to a higher value use every time an application was made then there runs the risk of a declining stock of employment premises that would hamper the ability of the Borough to maintain and increase employment growth. The loss of commercial space to other uses could also lead to future social problems such as increased unemployment and increased out commuting.

#### **SG4 - Local Economic Areas**

The Local Economic Areas as defined on the policies maps and listed in policy tables SG3 and SG4, will be safeguarded primarily for B class uses to provide, protect and enhance employment provision in a range of locations across the borough to enable balanced job and housing growth. Planning permission will be granted for the redevelopment or change of use for non-Class B uses where:

- i) it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable prospect of the site concerned being used for Class B purposes; and
- ii) The supply, availability and variety of employment land is sufficient to meet Borough and local needs; and
- iii) it can be demonstrated that the alternative use cannot be reasonably located elsewhere within the area it serves; and
- iv) The proposal does not generate potential conflict with the existing proposed B class uses / activities on the site; and
- iv) the use will not give rise to unacceptable traffic generation, noise, smells or vehicle parking; and
- v) The proposal provides the opportunity to maximise the sites potential for economic growth and support the continued operation of existing employment uses within the economic area;

Opportunities to enhance and renew more dated buildings within Local Economic Areas will be supported when proposals are promoted for improvements to existing operations or for new operations where the use and scale is appropriate.

**Table SG4 Local Economic Areas**

Local Economic Area	Place Policy Reference
<b>Colchester</b>	
Barrack Street	EC3
Brook Street, Colchester	EC3
Chandlers Row - Port Lane	EC3
COLBEA Business Centre George Williams Way	TC3
Crown Interchange	NC3
Davey Close	EC3
Gosbecks Road	WC4
Maldon Road including the Shrub End Depot	WC4
Middleborough Area (including Fairfax House/Digby House, Causton Road & Sheepen Road)	TC3
St Peters Street (South)	TC3
Southway	TC3
Whitehall Industrial Estate (including extension and Fieldgate)	EC3
<b>Outside Colchester</b>	
Abberton Pantiles Farm, Peldon Road	SS1
Boxted - 30a Straight Road (known as the Classic Pot Emporium)	SS3
Boxted - Straight Road, (known as Tin Bins Ltd)	SS3
Dedham - Depot (Old Ipswich Road)	SS6
Great Tey - Tey Brook Farm	SS11
Great Horkesley - Holly Lodge	SS10
Langham - Langham Airfield,	SS11
Layer de Le Haye - Queensmead, The Folley	SS12
Langham - Powerplus Engineering and Whitnell Contractors Site, School Road	SS12
Tiptree Alexander Cleghorn Ltd	SS15
Tiptree - Tower House	SS15
Tiptree - Tiptree Jam Factory	SS15
Tiptree - Basketworks site	SS15
West Bergholt - Pattens Yard, Nayland Road,	SS16
West Mersea - Waldegraves Farm	SS17a
West Mersea - Boat Yards, Coast Road,	SS17c
West Mersea - Rushmere Close,	SS17a
Wormingford Airfield – (Packards Lane, Fordham Road North and South)	OV1

## **Existing Mixed Use Commercial areas within Colchester**

- 4.47 Within the Colchester urban area, there are existing mixed use commercial areas that comprise large supermarkets and/or retail units together with smaller retail units, community facilities, offices and food and drink outlets. In some cases these areas also include large surface parking areas that could provide space for intensification.
- 4.48 Expanding the retail components significantly in these areas could undermine the vitality of the town centre. However, it is important to retain and, where appropriate, increase the mix of uses, improve the public realm and improve the provision of community facilities within these areas. The areas listed below have individual functions and these roles will be safeguarded by supporting proposals that are complimentary to the existing function. These areas will be categorised as 'out of centre' in relation to the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework for a sequential test (Paragraph 24). This is a change from their previous designation as 'Urban District Centres'. The removal of this designation is intended to avoid any ambiguity over what constitutes a 'centre' for the purposes of the sequential test and thereby to reinforce the primacy of Colchester Town Centre. This means that proposals for town centre uses in these Mixed Use Commercial Areas will need to satisfy the sequential test to demonstrate that no alternative Colchester Town Centre sites are available.
- 4.49 Any development should enhance the role that these areas provide to the local community and seek to enhance the public realm. Proposals should also seek to encourage and promote the use of sustainable transport to the area and minimise the impact of traffic on the local highway network and parking and to enhance connectivity opportunities to the town centre and to residential areas in the vicinity.

### **Turner Rise**

- 4.50 Turner Rise is a retail park dominated by large buildings set within extensive areas of surface car parking. It is located approximately 1km to the north of the town centre, and within 250m to the east of Colchester Rail Station. The surrounding area is characterised by a mix of uses with residential development to the north and east of the site, and commercial uses to the west around the railway station. The Turner Rise Commercial Area consists of a large supermarket, retail units and a restaurant. The retail mix has changed over recent years from mainly bulky goods retail to an increased range of retail units. In 2016, two new food and drink pod units have been constructed.

### **Cowdray Centre**

- 4.51 The Cowdray Centre is located to the north of the town centre currently a mix of employment, retail and leisure uses separated by vacant land which has planning permission for residential development. The area extends from the northern end

of Clarendon Way, to the mixed use area on Mason Road and the retail units on Colne View Retail Park.

- 4.52 In general, the mixed commercial and residential uses are considered appropriate for this area given its links to the railway station and proximity to the town centre. Any new proposals should seek to enhance the mixed use role of this area and contribute to the enhancement of the public realm.
- 4.53 The Cowdray Centre is located between the North Station Special Policy Area and the town centre and provides opportunities to improve connectivity in the corridor between the station and the town centre. Development proposals should also enhance connectivity and contribute towards a green link between Highwoods Country Park and Castle Park.

#### Peartree Road.

- 4.54 The Peartree Road Commercial Area is located approximately 3.5km to the south west of the town centre and the surrounding area is predominantly residential. It consists of three separate areas:
- North of Peartree Road – supermarket, retail units, offices and food outlets.
  - The Peartree Business Centre and Peartree Road – variety of small retail units ranging from bicycle sales, bulky goods and builders merchants in addition to services such as dry cleaners and a gym.
  - South of Peartree Road and Moss Road – variety of units including bulky goods retail, offices, builders merchants and leisure units.

#### Highwoods

- 4.55 The Highwoods Commercial Area is located approximately 2.5km to the north east of the town centre and serves a distinct surrounding residential catchment area. It consists of a large supermarket and local community facilities and services such as a dry cleaners, post office, surgery and community centre.

#### **SG5 - Existing Mixed Use Commercial Areas within Colchester**

**Within the urban area of Colchester there are a number of existing mixed use commercial areas which are established and serve a current function important to the surrounding area and the urban area beyond.**

**The following areas as shown on the policies maps will be safeguarded and subject to the principles identified below:**

- **Turner Rise (north)**
- **Cowdray Centre (north)**



- Peartree Road (west)
- Highwoods (north)

Within the areas listed above, the current function of the area will be safeguarded and proposals for development which is of a scale appropriate to the function of the area and is complimentary to this will be supported.

The areas will be classed as 'out-of-centre' areas in terms of retail policy contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in paragraphs 24-27. Accordingly, proposals for further main town centre uses must:

- Meet the sequential test and the Borough Council are satisfied that there are no alternative sites located closer to the town centre in accordance with the hierarchy;
- Where the scale of the proposal requires a retail impact assessment, CBC are satisfied that the proposal will not impact on the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Proposals should encourage the use of sustainable transport modes and minimise the impact of traffic and parking.

## Strategic Infrastructure Policy

4.56 The Council fully appreciates that the delivery of new homes and jobs needs to be supported by necessary infrastructure, including a wide range of transport options, utilities, and community facilities. This issue is of particular concern to existing residents and businesses. The Council will prepare an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) based on work carried out for the current Local Plan: studies prepared for the Garden Communities; relevant Neighbourhood Plans; topic based national and local studies; and discussions with infrastructure providers. The IDP will sit alongside this plan and provide specifics on the main items of infrastructure, when they are likely to be provided and who will pay for them. Additionally, the place-based policies in this plan will highlight essential pieces of infrastructure for communities within Colchester.

4.57 The broad categories of infrastructure covered in the IDP will include:

- Water and Drainage – water supply, waste water, flood risk management and resilience, and water quality
- Energy – electricity, gas, and renewable energy
- Communications – broadband coverage and provision
- Leisure and green infrastructure – sport, open space and community facilities
- Education –early years and childcare, primary, secondary, further education, and higher education

- Health – hospitals, health centres, GP surgeries, dentists, public health, and preventative health care.
- Transport – highways, cycle and pedestrian facilities, rail, bus, park and ride, travel management, and car parking.

4.58 Infrastructure and community facilities are mainly provided by partner agencies and service providers such as water and energy provision by the utility companies; highways and social services by Essex County Council; education by a range of public and private sector providers, and healthcare services and facilities by the North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group and National Health Service (NHS) England. The IDP will identify the different investment and development time scales for these providers and will work with those providers to help deliver a co-ordinated approach to new infrastructure delivery.

4.59 In the event that essential infrastructure cannot be appropriately delivered to support new development in spite of best efforts to secure this, policy will be used to restrict development from being commenced or, in certain cases, from being permitted, in the absence of proven infrastructure capacity.

#### **SG6 - Strategic Infrastructure**

All new development should be supported by, and have good access to, all necessary infrastructure. Planning Permission will only be granted if it can be demonstrated that there is, or will be, sufficient infrastructure capacity to support and meet all the necessary requirements arising from the proposed development. Development proposals must consider all of the infrastructure implications of a scheme; not just those on the site or its immediate vicinity. Conditions or planning obligations, as part of a package or combination of infrastructure delivery measures, are likely to be required for many proposals to ensure that new development meets this principle. Consideration must be given to the likely timing of infrastructure provision. As such, development may need to be phased either spatially or in time to ensure the provision of infrastructure in a timely manner. Conditions or a planning obligation may be used to secure this phasing arrangement.

Policy SP4 in Part 1 provides the strategic priorities for infrastructure provision or improvement. Further guidance on the delivery of necessary infrastructure as detailed in the Part 1 Garden Communities policies SP7, 8, and 9) and in particular Place Policies in Part 2 will be set out in an Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which will detail the type and nature of infrastructure required; phasing; delivery partners; and funding.

#### **4.60 Alternative options considered**

**Leave to NPPF** –The NPPF provides a general requirement for Local Plans to plan positively for the development and infrastructure required in the plan area, but this needs to be backed up with specific Local Plan policy detailing the processes for ensuring delivery.

## Neighbourhood Plan Policy

- 4.61 The 2011 Localism Act introduced the concept of Neighbourhood Planning. Under this Act local communities in urban and rural areas were given new powers to prepare Neighbourhood Plans enabling these communities to have a greater influence over the future land use within their areas.
- 4.62 Neighbourhood Plans can vary in their terms of their complexity and approach and can cover one or more of the following topics areas: site allocations, housing type/size, local housing need, affordable housing, local character considerations, design and building materials, boundary fences/walls design criteria, community facilitates and services to sustainable development. The Council will be supportive of communities who want to prepare Neighbourhood Plans covering one or more policy topic.
- 4.63 Neighbourhood Plans are subject to examination and referendum and Plans which successfully pass these 2 tests will be adopted as part of the Development Plan for Colchester. Any issues which are not covered by the scope of a Neighbourhood Plan will be determined in accordance with the Local Plan.

### **SG7 - Neighbourhood Plans**

Town and villages are encouraged to plan for the specific needs of their communities by developing Neighbourhood Plans. The Borough Council will support Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Forums (in un-parished areas) to prepare Neighbourhood Plans, containing locally determined policies to guide land use and meet future development needs in their areas. Neighbourhood Plans are being prepared for Boxted, Eight Ash Green, Marks Tey, Myland and Braiswick, Stanway, West Bergholt and Wivenhoe. While Neighbourhood Plans are not required to promote growth, where they do intend to, the plans should aim to promote additional growth to that promoted in the Local Plan and should be in general conformity with national planning policies and guidance and strategic local policies.

Eight Ash Green, Marks Tey, Tiptree, West Bergholt and Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plans will allocate development sites and require a different policy approach to the Neighbourhood Plans in the Borough that are not allocating sites. i.e. Copford with Easthorpe, Myland and Braiswick and Stanway.

The policy approach for each Neighbourhood Plan allocating sites is set out in the policy for the relevant sustainable settlement under the Place section in the Local Plan. Neighbourhood Plans not allocating sites will be progressed in accordance with the NPPF/PPG and the most current Neighbourhood Plan Regulations.

The Council will support new Neighbourhood Plans coming forward over the plan period. Either of the two approaches set out above could apply depending on the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan.

#### 4.64 **Alternative Options considered**

***No change to existing policy*** – the wording of the current policy ENV2 in the adopted Core Strategy is NPPF compliant but it does not highlight the need for different policy approaches for Neighbourhood Plans allocating sites and plans that are not allocating sites. This is necessary to provide an appropriate balance between providing adequate certainty for the Local Plan and flexibility for the Neighbourhood Plans to make their own informed choices.

### **Developer Contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy Policy**

- 4.65 New development gives rise to the need for many new or improved services, facilities and other infrastructure which can be considered as part of the overall cost of development. Developers will accordingly be expected to contribute towards meeting these costs, having regard to overall consideration of viability and costs. This will include contributions to both on-site costs and strategic off-site infrastructure costs. Contributions will be secured under S106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and/or secured through a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). CIL will complement and not duplicate planning obligations. A CIL charging schedule would stipulate a charge, per square metre of gross internal floorspace, for relevant classes of development. CIL is being developed and consulted on in parallel with the Local Plan but will need to be adopted after adoption of the Plan. A proportion of CIL funds would be passed to Parish/Town councils. Elected Council members would agree a list of strategic projects which would be the priorities for CIL funding.
- 4.66 The Council will seek to expand infrastructure funding sources and will work with partners to identify and secure funding from all relevant sources for infrastructure identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan; relevant Local Plan policies; and or in more current evidence at the time of submission of a planning application.
- 4.67 When infrastructure cannot be provided within, or is not appropriate to be located on, the development site itself, developers will be expected to make a contribution to the cost to provide what is necessary to support new development.

#### **SG8 - Developer Contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy**

Developers will be expected to contribute towards the delivery of relevant infrastructure. They will either make direct provision or will contribute towards the provision of local and strategic infrastructure required by the development either alone or cumulatively with other developments.

Further guidance on how this policy will be implemented will be set out in separate documents. In addition to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan referred to in Policy SG6 (Infrastructure), such documents will include, a Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (new Supplementary Planning Document), and a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule and CIL related policies which will explain how, when and who will collect contributions along with how contributions are intended to be spent.

#### 4.68 **Alternative options considered**

***No Policy/Leave to NPPF***: The NPPF provides a general requirement for Local Plans to plan positively for the development and infrastructure in the plan area, but this needs to be backed up with specific Local Plan policy detailing the processes for ensuring delivery. There is a risk that strategic and local infrastructure improvements are not delivered if the policy does not exist.

## **5. Environmental Assets Policies**

### **Natural Environment Policy**

- 5.1 Colchester's countryside and coastline is extremely diverse and important in terms of its natural environment, biodiversity, landscape character, archaeology and cultural heritage. The countryside provides the attractive landscape setting that defines and characterises the villages and rural communities of Colchester Borough. The countryside and coastal areas also provide important agricultural, tourism and recreational opportunities that support local economies and communities. The Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty extends into the northern part of the Borough and has the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.
- 5.2 The Council has statutory obligations under the Habitats Directive and Birds Directives to protect important habitats and species designated as Natura 2000 sites. This policy aims to protect the undeveloped areas of the Colne Estuary and coast and support regeneration that enhances the river's recreation and nature conservation values.
- 5.3 Plans or projects likely to have an adverse effect on an internationally designated site will require a full Appropriate Assessment.
- 5.4 All development proposals are required to be supported by ecological surveys conducted at the appropriate time of year in accordance with current best practice. Where there is a confirmed presence, or reasonable likelihood, of a legally protected species or Species of Principal Importance, on an application site, the applicant will be required to demonstrate that adverse impacts upon the species have been avoided, and where they cannot be avoided adequately mitigated. Mitigation must conform to the requirements of relevant legislation and Government Standing Advice.
- 5.5 Where Priority Habitats are likely to be adversely impacted by a proposal, the developer must demonstrate that adverse impacts will be avoided, and impacts that cannot be avoided are mitigated on-site. Where residual impacts remain, off-site compensation may be required so that there is no net loss in quantity and quality of Priority habitat in the Borough.
- 5.6 Protected Hedgerows must be assessed by the Council's Landscape Officer against criteria in the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. Where a hedgerow is deemed to be Important under the Hedgerow Regulations, the developer must demonstrate that adverse impacts upon the Important hedgerow will be avoided. This is necessary as the loss of protected 'Important Hedgerows' is difficult to mitigate against as they cannot easily be recreated as either a landscape or ecological feature.
- 5.7 The Coastal Protection Belt is a county-wide designation that protects the sensitive character of the undeveloped coastline which could be harmed by development that might otherwise be acceptable in a countryside area. The original designation of 1984 has been reviewed with some amendment. The revised boundary based on 2016 evidence will be shown on the Policies Map.

- 5.8 The green infrastructure network of open spaces and links is important in providing alternative areas of accessible natural green space to alleviate pressure on Natura 2000 sites as well as contributing to the landscape character of Colchester Borough. The Local Plan will make a major contribution towards achieving the objectives of the UK and Essex Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP) (or any future replacements).
- 5.9 A major threat to the low lying coastal and estuary areas is rising sea levels as a result of climate change. This will be addressed through increasing the network of green corridors and sites to aid the dispersal of species that will need to move as climate change renders their existing habitat unsuitable. Climate change impacts, particularly sea level rise, will also be addressed by accommodating future flood waters through managed realignment projects identified in the Essex and Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan, without harm to the built environment..
- 5.10 The policy aims to control development outside settlements to protect open stretches of countryside around and between existing settlements to prevent coalescence and retain settlement identity. Proposals are required to have regard to Colchester's Landscape Character Assessment (updated as required) and the Council's adopted [Landscape Guidance for Developers](#) for Colchester to help conserve the Borough's landscape character.
- 5.11 The historic environment will be protected across the Borough with reference to studies including the Townscape Character Assessment, the Urban Archaeological Database and Historic Environment Characterisation Study and updated evidence as required.

#### **ENV1 - Natural Environment**

**The Borough Council will conserve and enhance Colchester's natural and historic environment, countryside and coastline. The Council will safeguard the Borough's biodiversity, geology, history and archaeology which help define the landscape character of the Borough, through the protection and enhancement of sites of international, national, regional and local importance.**

**In particular, developments that have an adverse impact on Natura 2000 sites or the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will not be supported. Development proposals within designated areas or within the Coastal Protection Belt will also need to comply with policies ENV2 and ENV4.**

**Development proposals where the principal objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity and geodiversity interests will be supported in principle. For all proposals, development will only be supported where it:**

- (i) Is supported with acceptable ecological surveys where appropriate. Where there is reason to suspect the presence of protected species, or Species of Principal Importance, applications should be**

accompanied by a full survey assessing their presence and, if present, the proposal must be sensitive to, and make provision for their needs.

- (ii) Will conserve or enhance the biodiversity value of greenfield and brownfield sites and minimise fragmentation of habitats;
- (iii) Maximises opportunities for the restoration, enhancement and connection of natural habitats in accordance with the UK & Essex Biodiversity Action Plans or future replacements; and
- (iv) Incorporates beneficial biodiversity conservation features and habitat creation where appropriate.

**Proposals likely to have an adverse effect on Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Ramsar sites will require a full assessment in line with European legislation.**

**Additionally, proposals for development that would cause direct or indirect adverse harm to nationally designated sites or other designated areas, protected species, Habitats and Species of Principle Importance or result in the loss of irreplaceable habitats, such as ancient woodland, Important Hedgerows and veteran trees, will not be permitted unless:**

- (a) They cannot be located on alternative sites that would cause less harm;**
- (b) The benefits of the development clearly outweigh the impacts on the features of the site and the wider network of natural habitats; and**
- (c) Satisfactory mitigation and compensation measures are provided.**

**The Council will take a precautionary approach where insufficient information is provided about avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures and secure mitigation and compensation through planning conditions/obligations where necessary.**

## **Coastal Areas Policy**

5.12 The open, undeveloped and rural landscape character of the coastal area of Colchester Borough is an extremely rich, diverse and irreplaceable natural asset in terms of its natural and cultural features. It includes substantial parts of the Colne and Blackwater Estuaries. The ecological importance of the Colne and Blackwater Estuaries is reflected by the variety of international and European designations covering them i.e. Ramsar sites, Special Protection Areas (Birds Directive), and the Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designated under the Habitats Directive. There are also a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Local Wildlife Sites designated around the estuaries.

5.13 The Borough's coastline is also home to a number of sizeable communities in West Mersea, Rowhedge, and Wivenhoe. As a consequence there are a number of diverse and competing interests which all need to be managed in an integrated way within the Borough's coastal belt. These include internationally important habitats, land and water-based recreation, fishing, archaeological and historic



environment assets. Obligations to protect the important natural and cultural assets have to be balanced against the wider socio-economic needs of the Borough's coastal communities. Climate change including sea level rise is likely to present increasing pressure on the management of coastal habitats and coastal communities along Colchester's coastal fringe. The National Planning Policy Framework highlights the need to identify 'Coastal Change Management Areas'. The Essex and South Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan (October 2010) has shown that the coastal frontage within the Borough is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and coastal processes. It will be important that future land uses and developments along this frontage, in particular built-up frontages, can demonstrate a high level of resilience in response to changing local climatic conditions.

- 5.14 In 1984, Essex County Council produced the Essex Coast Protection Subject Plan. This defined a Coastal Protection Belt, which was reviewed and updated in 2016 by the Borough Council. The Coastal Protection Belt aims to protect the rural and undeveloped coastline from inappropriate development that would adversely affect its rural, undeveloped and open character and irreplaceable assets, landward and marine sites of nature conservation importance, and buildings and areas of special architectural, historic or archaeological importance. The Belt's rural and undeveloped coastline is of international, national and regional significance for its historic environment assets, and nature conservation interest. These multiple assets are strongly focussed and interrelated within the defined area, including between the coastline and adjoining inland areas. The Belt has a unique and irreplaceable character which should be strongly protected and enhanced.
- 5.15 Because the Coastal Protection Belt has a unique and irreplaceable character, there is a local need for greater priority to be given to the restraint of potentially damaging development than is normally possible under national planning policies. The Coastal Protection Belt adopts the precautionary principle and seeks to restrict development to within the built up areas of the coast. Some developments however require a coastal location and cannot be located elsewhere or are needed to help sustain the socio-economic base of a coastal area or serve the needs of the local coastal community. This may include sustainable tourism or leisure related developments, where they meet the requirements of policies elsewhere in the Plan.
- 5.16 The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) has commenced work on the preparation of the first South East (Inshore) Marine Plan. Colchester falls within this plan area. The Marine Plan once completed will cover the area up to mean high water springs, the Borough's coastline and the tidal reaches of the Colne Estuary/ River Colne. The Marine Plan's jurisdiction will overlap with Colchester Borough Council's planning responsibilities (which extend to mean low water). The Borough Council must have "due regard" to the Marine Plan. This new and evolving concept of a Marine Plan will at a local level be implemented in accordance with the national Marine Policy Statements. The Local Plan will be integrated with the South East (Inshore) Marine Plan, once it is complete, to provide a consistent approach for planning on land, and within the inter-tidal and marine environments.

### **ENV2 - Coastal Areas**

Work has commenced on the preparation of a new South East (Inshore Marine Plan). Until this plan is completed, any planning proposals within the Borough's coastal, estuarine, intertidal and tidal environment, will need to accord with guidance set out in the national Marine Policy Statement.

Within the Coastal Protection Belt and along the undeveloped coast an integrated approach to coastal management will be promoted and development will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that it:

- (i) Requires a coastal location and is located within the developed area of the coast;
- (ii) Will be safe from flooding over its planned lifetime and will not have an unacceptable impact on coastal change;
- (iii) Will not be significantly detrimental to conserving important nature conservation, historic environment assets, maritime uses and the landscape character of the coast;
- (iv) Will deliver or sustain social and economic sustainability benefits considered important to the well-being of the coastal communities; and
- (v) Provides opportunities and scope for adaptation to climate change; and
- (vi) Will not hinder the potential future creation and maintenance of a continuous signed and managed coastal access route.

In exceptional circumstances, development may be permitted where it is proven that the proposal provides an overwhelming public or community benefit that outweighs all other material considerations. In such instances applications must demonstrate that the site is the only available option and be acceptable in terms of its other planning merits.

## **5.17 Alternative Options Considered**

***No Policy/Rely on the NPPF*** - The NPPF provides the high level protection but Local Plan policies are required in respect of all the identified environmental issues to provide the appropriate local context and detailed policy guidance against which proposals for development should be considered.

## **Green Infrastructure Policy**

5.18 Green Infrastructure is a strategic network of multifunctional green and blue (water) spaces, and the connections between them, in both urban and rural areas. The Green Infrastructure network may comprise spaces in public or private ownership, with or without public access that is capable of delivering a range of environmental, economic, health and quality of life benefits for local communities and wildlife.

- 5.19 In Colchester, green infrastructure covers a range of green and blues spaces including allotments, community gardens, amenity greenspaces, cemeteries, natural and semi natural green spaces, river and estuary corridors, play areas and parks and gardens.
- 5.20 Well connected Green infrastructure networks also function as important wildlife corridors which species use for movement between sites and for feeding and breeding. Strategic green links also provide valuable corridors for the movement of people.
- 5.21 Existing open spaces, sports facilities and green link networks provide the people of Colchester with opportunities for passive and active recreation and encourages healthy and active lifestyles. It is therefore important that all residents have access to green (or blue) infrastructure close to where they live or work.
- 5.22 The green spaces along the Colne River, for example, connect the town centre, suburbs, countryside, villages and the coast. These corridors provide alternative means for people making journeys into and across Colchester. It is important therefore that the existing green infrastructure network is protected and enhanced and new links created as part of future developments to improve the GI network and improve the provision of sustainable transport corridors across the Borough where gaps exist.
- 5.23 To facilitate this, the Council will work with access groups to develop the Colchester Orbital route. While much of this network already exists the network is not complete. Not all sections of the existing route are fully accessible for all potential users. It will be important that new development connects to existing opportunities e.g. access to education and employment. Paths should be constructed to provide direct links that are useable all year round, make users feel secure and minimise maintenance costs. Designs will need to be sympathetic to the Green Infrastructure environment but not allow the GI to become a barrier to sustainable active travel. New developments will be expected to contribute towards the creation of new paths and PROW where gaps exist, to improve linkages with other spurs of the GI network. i.e. Wivenhoe Trail or wildlife areas or to improve the quality of the existing network through improved signage, drainage improvements or landscaping.
- 5.24 The Orbital Route is shown on the Policies Map. An audit of the Orbital Route will be completed by the Orbital Access Group and the data from this work will be used to guide improvements to be funded from development contributions where appropriate.

### **ENV3 – Green Infrastructure**

The Council will aim to provide a comprehensive green infrastructure network comprising strategic green links between the rural hinterland, river corridors and open spaces across the Borough. It will seek to protect and enhance the existing network of green links and open spaces and to create new green infrastructure where deficiencies and gaps are identified to provide corridors that will benefit both wildlife and people. The Council will also work with access stakeholder/groups to support the development of a 'new' multi user route, the Colchester Orbital, around

urban Colchester.

Development proposals that contribute to the delivery of projects identified in the Colchester Green Infrastructure Strategy, the Orbital Audit Paper and the Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Essex will be positively supported.

The Council will seek opportunities from future developments, where appropriate, to improve the connectivity between the Colchester Orbital route, new developments and the wider countryside. Radial connections will be made between the existing development, the Orbital route and the new development. This will improve the choices available to residents to access and participate more easily in healthy activities, such as walking, cycling and horse riding.

Proposals that cause loss or harm to the green infrastructure network will not be permitted unless the need for and benefits of the development outweigh any adverse impacts. Where adverse impacts on green infrastructure are unavoidable, development will only be permitted if suitable mitigation measures for the network are provided. Key linkages will be constructed to a suitable standard to allow year round secure usage by all.

The Council will seek contributions from new development where practical, to create new paths where gaps are evident in the existing PROW Orbital network or to enhance the quality of the existing route.

The provision of green infrastructure will be central to the masterplanning and future development of new garden communities to be developed in the Borough. The detailed green infrastructure requirements being sought within West Colchester Garden Community and the University Garden Village will be set out in detailed masterplans plans for each of these areas.

## 5.25 **Alternative Policy Option –**

**Rely on current policy and the NPPF** –The NPPF approach is very high level cannot consider local GI need. While the current Local Plan policies broadly meet NPPF objectives, they are out of date as they do not include the need to provide Green infrastructure within the West Colchester and University Garden Communities or as part of the Orbital Project. A new policy is needed to ensure that all future developments identified in the Local Plan adequately consider green and blue needs across the Borough. The Council could decide to not support the Colchester Orbital initiative and rely on ad hoc opportunities to protect and enhance the GI network. This would be less successful regarding the delivery of a well-connected, inter-linked GI network and it would be more difficult to realise the multiple benefits that a comprehensive GI network can deliver for both people and wildlife. Also a failure to deliver green infrastructure as part of future developments in the Borough would not satisfy the principles of sustainable development and would not accord with the national policy.

## Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Policy

- 5.26 The Dedham Vale AONB has been designated for its national importance in terms of landscape quality, and is further enhanced through its close association with the works of artist John Constable. The quality of the landscape is defined by its natural beauty and the integration of the man-made elements within it, and the primary aim of the designation is to conserve and enhance this character.
- 5.27 The features that define the Natural Beauty and Special Qualities of the Dedham Vale AONB have been identified in the Dedham Vale AONB **Natural Beauty and Special Qualities and Perceived and Anticipated Risks Report** prepared by the Dedham Vale Joint Management Committee in 2016.
- 5.28 In this report, Natural Beauty has been defined in terms of Landscape Quality, Scenic Quality, Relative Wildness, Relative Tranquillity and Natural and Cultural Heritage Features. The special qualities have been influenced by factors such as traditional land use patterns, evidence of human habitation through history, geology, river valleys and woodlands or association with artists and writers.
- 5.29 Applications within or close to the AONB will need to consider how proposals impact on the Natural Beauty and Special Qualities of the Dedham Vale AONB.
- 5.30 It is essential that AONBs and their setting are conserved and enhanced. However it is acknowledged that the Dedham Vale is a 'living' landscape which needs to be able to adapt, change and respond positively to changing social, economic and environmental issues (climate change, declining agricultural sector, recreational pressures) to meet the needs of the local community and visitors to the area. In exceptional cases development proposals that help maintain the economic and social wellbeing of the AONB will be supported where these do not detract from the special character/quality of the AONB or its setting. Minor house extensions may have little opportunity to enhance the landscape qualities of the AONB and accordingly will not be exclusively rejected on this basis where otherwise acceptable.
- 5.31 Solar Farms and wind turbines are large developments that can have a visual impact. A visual impact however does not automatically mean that it will have an adverse landscape impact. Proposals for solar farm or wind farms within or near the Dedham Vale AONB should accord with the most current national policy and best practice to help protect the Natural Beauty and Special Qualities of the AONB.
- 5.32 Proposals outside of the AONB will not be supported where, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, they will have an impact on natural beauty, tranquillity, special qualities setting and public enjoyment of the AONB.

### ENV4 - Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Development will only be supported in or near to the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) that:

- (i) Makes a positive contribution to the special landscape character and qualities of the AONB, including tranquillity;
- (ii) Does not adversely affect the character, quality views and distinctiveness of the AONB or threaten public enjoyment of these areas, including by increased vehicle movement;
- (iii) That there are no adverse impacts on the setting of the AONB which cannot reasonably be mitigated against and,
- (iv) Supports the wider environmental, social and economic objectives as set out in the Dedham Vale AONB & Stour Valley Management Plan.

Applications for major development within or in close proximity to the boundary of the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be refused unless in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest.

Where exceptionally development is essential, landscape enhancements, mitigation or compensation measures must be provided to the Local Planning Authority's satisfaction. Any proposals affecting existing development that adversely affects the landscape qualities of the AONB, or its setting will be expected to satisfactorily mitigate this impact as part of any new development proposals.

Proposals for solar farm development or wind farms in or near the Dedham Vale AONB should have regard to the advice in the Council's Guidance Note '[Designing solar farm renewable energy development](#)' and in the '*Dedham Vale AONB Position Statement Renewable Energy in the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (March 2013)*'.

The Council will also encourage proposals in or near the AONB to underground new infrastructure associated with electricity schemes, where financially viable, to help protect the high landscape qualities of the Dedham Vale

### 5.33 Alternative Options

***Rely on the current policy and the NPPF*** – The NPPF identifies the need to protect designated landscapes such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Relying on national policy however would only provide high level protection to the Dedham Vale AONB. A more detailed Local Plan policy is needed to ensure that the local context and special characteristics of the Dedham Vale (including setting) are recognised and appropriate detailed policy guidance prepared against which proposals for development can be considered.

## Climate Change Policy

- 5.34 The NPPF states that mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy, is part of the role of the planning system. It recognises that planning can help shape places to secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and provide resilience to the impacts of

climate change, and support the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. This is fundamental to the achievement of sustainable development.

- 5.35 Sustainable development is at the heart of the Local Plan. Through the Local Plan the Council is seeking to create communities that secure reductions in greenhouse gas emissions through the location, mix and design of development, provide resilience to the impacts of a changing climate, support the delivery of renewable energy technologies and district heating systems, and minimise waste.
- 5.36 The Local Plan as a whole sets out a strategy for climate change mitigation and adaptation. Examples of climate change mitigation are:
- Reducing the need to travel and providing for sustainable transport;
  - Providing opportunities for renewable and low carbon energy technologies;
  - Providing opportunities for decentralised energy and heating;
  - Promoting [low carbon design approaches](#) to reduce energy consumption in buildings, such as [passive solar design](#).
- 5.37 Examples of climate change adaptation are:
- Considering future climate risks when allocating development sites to ensure risks are understood over the development's lifetime;
  - Considering the impact of and promoting design responses to [flood risk and coastal change](#) for the lifetime of the development;
  - Considering availability of water and water infrastructure for the lifetime of the development and design responses to promote water efficiency and [protect water quality](#);
  - Promoting adaptation approaches in design policies for developments and the public realm.
- 5.38 Developers will be expected to demonstrate how the scheme mitigates and adapts to climate change. In particular proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they have taken account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing, tree planting and landscaping to minimise energy consumption and provide resilience to a changing climate.
- 5.39 Green infrastructure is a recognised climate change adaptation measure. Green infrastructure has a wide range of benefits, including reducing the adverse impacts of a changing climate. Policy ENV3 includes detailed criteria relating to green infrastructure. Landscaping and tree planting are important climate change adaptation measures and new development should take every opportunity to enhance the Borough's green infrastructure network. Landscaping schemes should include species that will tolerate a changing climate, which will help future proof towns and urban areas against rising temperatures.
- 5.40 To help contribute towards achieving the climate change target set out in the Climate Change Act 2008 of a 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050 from a 1990 baseline, the Council will encourage development to meet a proportion of energy needs from renewable or low carbon sources. The Council has an interim aim to meet 40% reduction in carbon emissions by 2020 (from a 2006/7 baseline). The Council is set to become a signatory of the Covenant of Lord Mayors by the

end of 2016. The Covenant of Mayors is a mainstream European movement involving local and regional authorities, voluntarily committing to increasing energy efficiency and use of renewable energy sources. By their commitment, Covenant signatories aim to meet and exceed the European Union objective of 20% CO<sub>2</sub> reduction by 2020.

- 5.41 The Council will support proposals for renewable energy development providing that there would be no adverse effects on a Natura 2000 site or the Dedham Vale AONB. Policy DM23 includes criteria that will be used to assess proposals for renewable energy schemes.
- 5.42 Whilst renewable energy has an important role to play in contributing to a reduction in Colchester's greenhouse gas emissions, regard should be had to the energy hierarchy. The energy hierarchy sets out the order in which energy issues should be tackled:
1. Reduce the need for energy;
  2. Use energy more efficiently;
  3. Use renewable energy;
  4. Any continuing use of fossil fuels should be clean and efficient.
- 5.43 In 2015 Element Energy carried out studies of heat network opportunities in the Northern Gateway and the Hythe for the Council and DECC's Heat Network Delivery Unit (HNDU). This study demonstrated that the scale of heat demand, diversity of uses and heat density expected at the Northern Gateway, together with the new build development and greenfield nature of the site combine to present a highly promising opportunity for an economically viable heat network scheme. The Council commissioned a more detailed investigation of the economic viability and potential financing, delivery and operating models for a heat network scheme at the site, which was published in 2016. The study found that there is significant opportunity to deliver a large fraction of the electricity generated by a gas CHP plant through private wire.
- 5.44 The study of the Hythe identified five areas within the study area as the focus for an initial study of heat network feasibility. More work is required for each of these opportunity areas to establish whether there is potential for a district heating network. If future work demonstrates that a network(s) would be viable development will need to connect to the network or design for future connection where there are firm proposals in place.
- 5.45 Existing buildings can also play an important role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions through improved energy efficiency measures. Householders and businesses will be encouraged to make energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings as part of proposals for extensions/ alterations.
- 5.46 In 2015 the Council published an Environmental Sustainability Strategy. The Council is leading the way in sustainability and this has been achieved by working with partners and taking action beyond our statutory duties. The vision set out in the Environmental Sustainability Strategy, which is reflected in the Local Plan is:
- Demonstrating strong performance in tackling climate change;
  - Resource efficiency;



- Environmental protection and enhancement (of both natural and built environments);
- Sustainable transport;
- Quality of life for all, whilst respecting its special qualities and capacity for growth.

## **CC1 - Climate Change**

The Council will continue to adopt strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change. In addressing the move to a low carbon future for Colchester, the Council will plan for new development in locations and ways that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, adopt the principles set out in the energy hierarchy and provide resilience to the impacts of a changing climate.

A low carbon future for Colchester will be achieved by:

- Encouraging and supporting the provision of renewable and low carbon technologies.
- Encouraging new development to provide a proportion of the energy demand through renewable or low carbon sources.
- Encouraging design and construction techniques which contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation by using landform, layout, building orientation, massing, tree planting and landscaping to minimise energy consumption and provide resilience to a changing climate.
- Requiring both innovative design and technologies that reduce the impacts of climate change within the garden communities.
- Supporting opportunities to deliver decentralised energy systems, particularly those which are powered by a renewable or low carbon source. Supporting connection to an existing decentralised energy supply system where there is capacity to supply the proposed development, or design for future connection where there are proposals for such a system.
- Requiring development in the Northern Gateway and East Colchester to connect to, or be capable of connecting to the Gas CHP district heating scheme, through private wire where there is capacity to supply the proposed development.
- Supporting energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings in the Borough.
- Minimising waste and improving reuse and recycling rates.

#### 5.47 **Alternative options**

An alternative option is to retain the current adopted climate change policy. However, this is now out of date as it refers to the Code for Sustainable Homes and out of date national targets on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Another alternative option is to omit a climate change policy from the Local Plan. However, there is a statutory duty on local planning authorities to include policies in their Local Plan designed to tackle climate change and its impacts [Section 19 (1A) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004]

## **6. Places**

- 6.1 The policies and text contained within this section set forth allocations for specific parts of the Borough and explain how those allocations align with the Plan's overall spatial strategy and policy objectives.

### **Colchester**

- 6.2 As a regional centre Colchester is the key focus for a wide range of development opportunities and challenges. This section covers the area of Colchester, divided up into 4 broad geographic areas designed to help the user and follow a place based Plan. The policies relating to Colchester are set out below under the headings, Central, North, East and West Colchester.

#### **Central Colchester**

##### **Town Centre**

- 6.3 The Town Centre remains largely defined by the Town Walls first constructed by the Romans two thousand years ago and which led to the development of a compact commercial core built to a higher density and different character to development outside the walls. The insertion of new roads on Balkerne Hill and Southway in the 1960-70s created boundaries between the Town Centre and surrounding residential areas to the west and south sides and limit the potential for Town Centre expansion in those directions. The Town Centre boundary has been extended slightly from the previous boundary defined in the Local Development Framework to include the Crouch Street shopping area. This recognises Crouch Street's role in strengthening the Town Centre's presence of independent retailers, food/drink establishments, and small offices.
- 6.4 Policy for the Town Centre is intended to support its pre-eminent position in the Borough's spatial hierarchy and provide a flexible approach to adapting to changing economic and social circumstances. Town centres have been evolving to provide a greater mix of leisure and food/drink uses in previously retail-only areas. In recognition of this fact, the Council will accept a greater diversity of town centre uses in primary shopping areas to support the core retail uses. This approach is intended to increase the mix of compatible uses in Colchester's historic core to provide a more robust economic environment and will stimulate a greater diversity of evening activities. The Town Centre will therefore attract people of various ages and interests at different times of the day and night, and when combined with effective Town Centre management policies, safety and inclusiveness will be improved.
- 6.5 The Council wishes to ensure that all town centre businesses are able to enjoy the great benefits of fibre, including its future-proofing, at rates comparable to those available in the world's best-connected cities. The town centre already has a free WiFi network which went live in 2014 and the Council is currently working with partners to install ultrafast broadband.
- 6.6 The extent of the Primary Shopping Area has been reviewed to address the requirement in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to provide and define the extent of primary and secondary shopping frontages in town centres. The previous Local Plan provided for an the Inner and Outer Core where the

requirement for the Inner Core was 85% of frontages to be in retail use with a lower requirement of 50% in the Outer Core. These two areas have now been merged into one Primary Shopping Area where the retail frontage requirement is 50%. The area previously classed as Mixed Use Areas will continue with that allocation as it is appropriate for a wide range of town centre uses, including secondary retail frontages. These changes to planning policy reflect the increasing predominance of leisure, food/drink and cultural uses within town centre areas previously confined to retail uses only. It will also help accommodate the need for additional capacity for town centre uses in the main Town Centre area.

- 6.7 The need for further development capacity within the Town Centre will largely be met by redevelopment of existing areas, given the land use, environmental and topographic constraints on further Town Centre expansion. The St. Botolph's area to the east will continue to be a focus for new development in the Town Centre, with the Firstsite gallery, opened in 2011, serving as a catalyst for further culture and leisure-related development. With permission granted for an arthouse cinema, further development is programmed to include development of an 85-bed hotel; restaurant cluster; and student accommodation.
- 6.8 The need identified in the Council's retail evidence base for additional comparison retail capacity will be addressed by development of the Vineyard Gate site, beginning with the Vineyard Street car park area. Development there will also include related leisure and food/drink uses to ensure the viability and vitality of the proposal. Medium to longer term need for town centre use floorspace will be also be addressed by redevelopment of the St. John's and Priory Walk developments, providing potential opportunities for redevelopment of existing buildings and car parks.
- 6.9 Residential uses will be supported within the Town Centre to support vitality, diversity, and economic activity. In addition to existing units, further residential units will arise from the permitted development change of use from office use as well as the refurbishment of upper floors over town centre uses. New residential allocations are provided for in the Britannia Street car park and for a portion of the Town Hall car park.
- 6.10 Additional office floorspace to sustain the Town Centre will be supported at the adjacent Middleborough Local Economic Area as shown on the Policies Map. This is specifically safeguarded for the retention of office uses and also allows scope for redevelopment to provide additional purpose-built modern accommodation well-connected to Town Centre facilities. The area's edge of centre location means it would be considered to be sequentially preferable to other potential locations for offices in the Borough. The Town Centre fringe areas also contain areas of existing employment floorspace at South St. Peters Street, George Williams Way and Southway which will be safeguarded to ensure the supply of well-located business use premises.

### **TC1– Town Centre Policy and Hierarchy**

Colchester Town Centre is at the top of the retail hierarchy. Accordingly it will be the focus for new Town Centre uses and will be the preferred location for such uses in relation to the sequential test contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 24).

The Borough Council will encourage development in the Town Centre (as defined on the Policies Map) which is focused on retail (particularly comparison) and supporting leisure, culture, and food/drink uses to enhance the Borough's role as a sub-regional shopping and leisure destination and important tourism destination.

The Town Centre boasts important historic character which must be protected and enhanced by all development as set out in Policy DM16 Historic Environment and relevant supporting guidance updated as required.

The Council will seek to deliver more attractive public spaces and streetscapes in the Town Centre. The Council will support proposals that positively contribute towards creating an attractive, vibrant and safe Town Centre that offers a diverse mix of uses and extend the time when the Town Centre is active subject to their impact on local amenity.

Colchester Borough Council, working with its project partners, will work to deliver high quality digital connectivity to support Town Centre businesses and residents.

In addition to the sequential test, proposals for town centre uses of a scale greater than the 2500 sqm threshold outside the Town Centre and 500 sqm in District and Local Centres will be required to undertake a retail impact assessment in order to safeguard the vitality and viability of the town centre

### **TC2 –Retail Frontages**

Given that the Town Centre is the sequentially preferable location in the Borough as a whole for Town Centre uses, particularly comparison retail, the Council will seek to maintain at least 50% retail use on each street frontage within the Primary Shopping Area shown on the Policies Map. At ground floor level, support will be given within the Primary Shopping Frontages for the continuing predominance of retail uses, supported by other activity-generating town centre uses which enhance the vitality and activity of the area, including food and drink premises (Use Class A3, A4 and A5), non-residential institutions (Use Class D1) and leisure uses (Use Class D2). Where planning applications are required, alternative non-retail town centre uses in Primary Shopping Frontages will be supported where they are supported by the following criteria:

- Contribution to footfall and levels of activity throughout the day
- Quality and design of street frontage, ie inclusion of active frontage/displays; use of materials; scale; retention of historic features; and relationship to surrounding streetscape

- Compatibility with adjacent uses – the proposal complement the town centre uses in the immediate street frontage

The Mixed Use Areas defined on the Policies Map include Secondary Shopping Frontages. These areas are characterised by a more diverse mix of Town Centre uses, with less of a focus on comparison retail than Primary Shopping Frontages. Appropriate uses and criteria for Mixed Use areas will be as for Primary Retail Frontages above, with additionally, scope for B1 office use and with no set requirements for a minimum level of retail frontage. Premises occupying small footprints and flexible ground floor footprints will be encouraged in these frontages to help support the town's small/independent town centre businesses.

### TC3– Town Centre Allocations

**Town Centre uses:** The 2013 Retail Study identified a need for 36,730 sq m additional floorspace capacity for comparison retail uses over the period 2012-26 which can be accommodated within the defined Town Centre boundary. Updated evidence will inform specific allocations within these areas and additional areas will be allocated within the Town Centre if required. To address the need for additional town centre use floorspace providing a mix of comparison shopping; food and drink; entertainment; and residential uses over the plan period to 2033, additional potential capacity has been identified as follows and is shown on the Policies Map:

- St. Botolphs  
Mixed use scheme providing cinema, 85-room hotel; restaurant cluster; student accommodation; Creative Business Centre (1.86 ha)  
Requirements:
  - Access off Queen Street
  - Archaeological investigation required
  - Development will need to protect and enhance the character of the Conservation Area and listed buildings
- Vineyard Gate  
Redevelopment of Vineyard Gate in 2 phases over the plan period:  
Area 1 – Vineyard Street car park (1.04ha)  
Area 2 – Osborne St. car park and area bounded by St. John's Street, Abbeygate, Stanwell Street and Southway (1.39ha)
- Redevelopment and reuse of Priory Walk area (0.95ha)

**Residential allocations:** Residential allocations as shown on the Policies Map will be safeguarded for residential uses as follows:

Land at Britannia Car Park

Residential scheme providing up to 100 dwellings

Requirements:

- Development will need to protect and enhance the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument (The Priory)
- Pre-determination archaeological investigation to be agreed with the Council

Part of Nunns Road Car park

Residential scheme providing up to 12 dwellings

Requirements:

- Pre-determination archaeological investigation to be agreed with the Council
- Access to be agreed with the Highway Authority

**Employment allocations:** Additional office floorspace to sustain the Town Centre will be supported just outside the Town Centre boundary within the Middleborough Local Economic Area as shown on the Policies Map. In addition, proposals for office use elsewhere in the Town Centre will be supported where they comply with other policy requirements.

The following LEAs are safeguarded for economic use in accordance with Policy SG4 and as shown on the Policies Map:

Southway

St Peters Street (South)

COLBEA Business Centre George Williams Way

## 6.11 Alternative Options

### **No change – retain existing Town Centre boundary and Inner and Outer**

**Retail Cores:** This option would not address the requirement to update allocations and policies for the Town Centre, given the need to find further areas for the development of additional Town Centre floorspace. Additionally, while policy needs to be modified to allow for increasing flexibility in uses to respond to changing market requirements, the NPPF continues to require the identification of Primary and Secondary shopping areas.

### **North Colchester**

6.12 The North Colchester area has been the subject of various planning applications and development in recent years and this is expected to continue through the plan period. The road infrastructure has already seen significant change with Axial Way, United Way, A12 Junction 28 and the Northern Approaches Road all opened by April 2015. The early delivery of the transport infrastructure allowed Colchester United football club to relocate to the Weston Homes Community Stadium in 2008. The stadium was part of a comprehensive development granted planning permission in 2006. The applications allowed for an element of leisure use as well

as employment space to support future housing growth in the area. The uses permitted included the community stadium, health and fitness centre, an hotel, public house and other food/drink uses, some of which are under construction. The mix of uses was permitted to enable funding of the stadium and local road infrastructure.

- 6.13 The North Transit Corridor will facilitate high quality public transport services that can bypass traffic and provide easy access by a range of sustainable modes to the town centre, North Colchester and the Park and Ride via Colchester Station. The last section of the North Transit Corridor (referred to as NAR2 Busway in the previous Local Plan) is yet to be delivered and is subject to an existing legal agreement.
- 6.14 To support the sport and leisure theme and promote active healthy life styles which can be used by all ages, development must be well connected for walking and cycling to existing and new communities. The dual carriageway A12 trunk road severs the development areas north and south of the A12. Measures need to be included in the masterplan to provide safe, direct, cohesive walking and cycle linkages to allow people to move independently between the development areas and the new opportunities on offer.
- 6.15 The Myland and Braiswick Neighbourhood Plan identifies the emerging Northern Gateway proposals as having the potential to deliver an array of sport and leisure facilities which will provide much needed opportunities for sport and recreation and which will make an important contribution to the sustainability of the Neighbourhood Plan Area. The Plan indicates that end Myland Community Council will work with CBC to ensure the proposed sport and leisure development area will help to satisfy resident aspirations.

### **Zone 1 – Strategic Employment Area**

- 6.16 The Employment Land Needs assessment identifies North Colchester and Severalls Strategic Economic Area as one of the Borough's best located and connected sites for business, benefiting from excellent access to the strategic road network. There is approximately 17ha of land available to be allocated for employment purposes. The area is well placed to accommodate over-spill demand from the Colchester and Severalls Business Parks, as expansion and development opportunities become increasingly rare on these well performing and popular business areas. A limited range of non-B class uses will be supported in accordance with the policy where they do not undermine or constrain the main purpose of the economic function of the area to deliver significant job growth.

### **Zone 2 – Cuckoo Farm North West**

- 6.17 Approximately 4.25 hectares of land adjacent the community stadium is allocated for mixed use reflecting the planning permission granted in 2006. It is expected



that a mixed leisure and commercial scheme will be delivered to compliment the sport offer elsewhere in the SEA.

### **Zone 3 - Northern Gateway area north of the A12**

- 6.18 It is proposed that the Council will deliver the next phase of the Northern Gateway Masterplan vision through the development of a new sports and recreational hub on land in its ownership to the north of the A12, referred to as zone 3 on the policies map. The scheme provides an opportunity to bring forward the site as a sub-regional leisure destination and to enhance and expand the range of sport and recreational facilities available for local clubs and residents in order to increase participation levels across the Borough.
- 6.19 The Indoor Sports Facility strategy has identified that there is a need to offer more indoor sports facilities to support the growing population of Colchester, especially in north Colchester where 2,500 new dwellings are to be delivered in the plan period. Development of the land to the north of the A12 allows for the delivery of indoor sporting facilities.
- 6.20 Discussions have taken place with the major national governing bodies on the growth and quality of pitches and the future provision in Colchester. The Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan identifies the need for increase in the quality and number of specific type of sports pitches (including artificial grass pitches) to avoid overplaying of pitches to maintain quality. Colchester Rugby Union football club currently play in North Colchester and need to access to more pitches to meet demand. The Rugby Football Union identifies the need for an internationally compliant pitch. The pitch strategy also identified a number of indoor requirements to complement outdoor provision. The sporting facilities will include in indoor sports hub, rugby club pavilion. Outdoor facilities will include facilities for a range of sports to maximise the use of the land and accommodate those that take place on the existing site (Mill Road). New cycling facilities for sport and training will also be delivered. Investment will be made in infrastructure to ensure sustainable access to the development from the local communities and car parking.

### **Land at the Rugby Club**

- 6.21 The rugby club site is allocated for residential development and open space to provide enabling development to help deliver the sport facilities detailed above, which will benefit the whole borough. Provision of significant open space will be required within the site to ensure that some of the existing benefits of the current use are retained for local residents. As with the proposals in zones 2 and 3, there will be a masterplan agreed which will provide a more detailed framework for the area as a whole. Proposals will be expected to comply with this. It is anticipated that development of this site will deliver approximately 150 dwellings

### **NC1 North Colchester and Severalls Strategic Economic Area**

All land and premises within the North Colchester and Severalls Strategic Economic Area including the areas known as the Northern Gateway and Severalls and

Colchester Business Parks will be safeguarded for the identified uses based on a zoned approach as indicated below.

A master plan will be prepared to provide a detailed framework for growth covering part of the economic area as illustrated on the North Colchester Policies Map. Proposals which are in accordance within this defined area which are in accordance with the agreed masterplan will be supported.

All proposals within the North Colchester and Severalls Strategic Economic Area will be required to provide good public transport, pedestrian and cycle links ensuring good connectivity within the area, with neighbouring communities, to the Colchester Orbital Route, and to and from the town centre and Colchester Station.

Development will be expected to contribute to the cost of infrastructure improvements where necessary and identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) or subsequent evidence which will be secured through a legal agreement or CIL.

**Zone 1:** as defined on the Policies Map (including areas known as Severalls Business Park, Colchester Business Park, Flakt Woods / Easter Park and Cuckoo Farm and additional land at Colchester Rugby Club) will be the primary focus for B class employment uses and as such, alternative non- B Class uses will only be supported where they;

- (i) Are ancillary to the existing employment uses on the site intended to serve the primary function of the site as an employment area;
- (ii) Provide the opportunity to maximise the sites potential for economic growth and support the continued operation of existing employment uses within the economic area;
- (iii) Do not generate potential conflict with the existing proposed B class uses / activities on the site; and
- (iv) There is no reasonable prospect of the site being used for B class employment.

Proposals for main town centre uses will only be permitted in zone 1 if they are related in scale and use to the primary employment focus of the site and would have no significant adverse impact on the vitality and viability of any defined centre. Examples of acceptable uses include trade counters and services to support employees at the business park.

**Zone 2:** The area defined on the policies map as zone 2 will be safeguarded for a mix of uses to reflect the extant planning permission and to provide flexibility. Alternative non- B class uses will be permitted where they clearly demonstrate the potential for job creation and provided that they do not undermine or constrain the main purpose of the economic function of the wider area. Uses may include an appropriate scale of leisure and commercial space, open space and green infrastructure to enhance connectivity. No retail use will be permitted unless it is ancillary to another use.

**Zone 3** as defined on the Policies Map (including areas known as the Northern Gateway area north of the A12 ) land will be safeguarded primarily for a range of

sport and recreation uses within Use classes D, subject to up to date evidence supporting a need for such use. Proposals will need to be in accordance with an agreed master plan.

#### **Allocation for Residential and Open Space Uses**

The area shown on the policies map which comprises the existing Rugby Club will be safeguarded for employment use (as set out above) as well as residential use to provide enabling development to deliver the sport and leisure uses in Zone 3. Development of the site will provide for approximately 150 new dwellings and will incorporate significant areas of open space. Proposals will be permitted in accordance with a masterplan to be approved by the Council which will incorporate an appropriate design approach to ensure the different uses can be accommodated in a compatible way.

### **6.22 Alternative Option**

***Retain existing Strategic Employment Zone allocation*** – The existing Strategic Employment Zone allocation in the current adopted Local Plan is a generic policy which, while it recognises the role of Severalls and part of the Northern Gateway as providers of well-located, high quality employment land, does not sufficiently recognise the particular role and function played by the area in the Borough's spatial hierarchy. The policy for Northern Gateway/Severalls recognises its pre-eminent position within the Borough as a preferred location for employment land. It also provides for expansion of sport facilities to create a sports-related cluster anchored by the existing Colchester United Football stadium.

#### **North Station Special Policy Area**

- 6.23 Colchester Station is a key gateway to Colchester with the mainline railway station facilitating high frequency of services including intercity routes between Norwich and London and services to Clacton and into Suffolk. Regeneration of this area remains key to the continued development of Colchester that is attractive to investment, visitors and residents.
- 6.24 The North Station area of Colchester was a designated regeneration area in the Core Strategy and some initial work on developing a masterplan was undertaken post 2010. Implementation of some of the initiatives arising from this, including the Fixing the Link project, have been delivered during the early part of 2016. Many of the concepts remain relevant and the principle of the overall vision remains, to create a welcoming gateway to the town, set within a balanced mix of uses, and enhance connectivity to and from this area of Colchester.
- 6.25 The North Station Special Policy Area is based on a revised boundary than that defined in the previous draft masterplan. The area designated on the Policies Map focuses on the North Station Gateway and the existing traditional urban village on North Station Road. The commercial areas of Cowdray Avenue and Turner Rise are now covered in the Plan by policy SG5. However, the North Station Special Policy Area still builds on opportunities to improve the public realm

and enhance connectivity within the area identified on the proposals map in addition to the town centre, the commercial areas at Cowdray Avenue and Turner Rise, the surrounding residential areas and green infrastructure links in Castle Park and Highwoods Country Park with links to the Colchester Orbital Route.

- 6.26 Refreshing of the Masterplan with a view to adoption may be pursued to provide greater detail to a framework for potential development to realise the regeneration opportunities.
- 6.27 Colchester Station has been upgraded over the past few years as part of the National Stations Improvement Programme and through the Station Travel Plan initiative. The Colchester Station Travel Plan was developed in partnership with the Train Operating Companies and Essex County Council and has been running since 2008. This successful project includes campaigns and promotion of sustainable travel to the station, as well as encouraging investment in physical improvements, for example secure cycle parking compounds, car sharing bays, walking and cycle access to the station and its environs, and funding for station buildings.
- 6.28 As part of the Station Travel Plan, objectives have been agreed for improvements to the station forecourt. This will include access to the station for all modes and from and from all directions, and prioritise access to the station for sustainable modes.
- 6.29 The station forecourt needs to become not only an efficient transition point between modes of transport, but also to be seen as a public square and a new public space in its own right. There are regeneration opportunities opposite the station and off of Clarendon Road, including the car sales site adjacent to the railway bridge.
- 6.30 The North Transit Corridor will provide easy access by a range of sustainable modes to the town centre, North Colchester and the Park and Ride, via Colchester Station. The Transit Corridor will facilitate high quality public transport services that can bypass traffic congestion in the area.
- 6.31 The traditional urban area that is situated on either side of North Station Road has a distinctive character. The North Station Road area will be enhanced as a walkable environment which is the focus for the day to day needs of its immediate community, but also offers opportunities for those passing to and from the town centre and the station.

### **NC2 North Station Special Policy Area**

Within the area designated on the policies map as the North Station Special Policy Area, development which contributes to regeneration of the area will be supported. Development will need to address the following criteria;

- Creates a positive sense of arrival at the station, providing a quality public transport interchange as part of the Station Gateway, improving the accessibility and function of the station.

- Creates new areas of high quality public realm in the station area to provide greater legibility within the area.
- Supports public transport, including the North Transit Corridor, and encourage more sustainable transport choices, particularly by commuters.
- Encourages investment in physical improvements in the station area to increase sustainable travel to the station.
- Creates positive landmark buildings and promotes suitable levels of compatible land uses and activities including office floorspace, leisure uses, retail related to the primary function of the area associated with the station, residential and open space.
- Improves the quality of the public realm through improved footpaths, cycle routes and direct crossings in order to encourage walking and cycling, particularly between the town centre, neighbouring commercial areas and communities and the station. Seek opportunities to widen footpaths and cycleways in the vicinity of the station when opportunities arise.
- Supports and enhances the vibrancy of the North Station Road area as a focus for the day to day needs of its immediate community and to offer opportunities for those passing to and from the town centre and the station.
- Establishes enhanced connectivity through green infrastructure improvements, including the creation of a green link between High Woods Country Park and Castle Park.

### 6.32 **Alternative options**

*Do not designate a Special Policy area and rely on allocations and development management policies:* This misses an opportunity to collectively promote a framework to support schemes which deliver objectives specific to the area around north station and also encourages a more comprehensive approach to development in this area. The area could also retain Cowdray Centre and Turner Rise commercial areas in the North Station Special Policy Area. However, it is appropriate to draw the area more tightly to focus on issues specific to the area around North Station itself.

### **North Colchester other allocations/policies**

6.33 North Colchester is designated for the following areas of new residential and employment development:

## **Extensions to Settlement Boundary at Braiswick**

### **Land at St. Botolph's Farm, Braiswick**

- 6.34 This site is located between the B1508 to the south, existing residential development to the east, the A12 to the west and Braiswick Golf Club to the north. Existing belts of trees along the western and northern edges of the site should be retained as they help to screen the site from the golf course to the north, provide a soft transition between the Colchester urban area and open countryside/West Bergholt to the west and help to soften the impact of noise and disturbance from the A12. The southern boundary along the road frontage is also heavily vegetated. Access to the site will be directly off the B1508. The western edge of the site is within the flood zone.

### **Land north of Achnacone Drive, Braiswick**

- 6.35 The site is located to the north of Achnacone Drive adjacent to the Golf Course. Good design, screening and landscaping is required to minimise impacts on existing development and to provide a buffer between residential development and the golf course. Access to the site will be provided via Achnacone Drive.

### **Land south of Braiswick Golf Club**

- 6.36 The site is located to the south of Braiswick Golf Club and to the east of the Land at St Botolph's Farm. Good design, screening and landscaping is required to minimise impacts on existing development and to provide a buffer between residential development and the golf course. Safe access to the site will need to be provided from the B1508. An existing Public Right of Way runs alongside the eastern edge of the site and will need to be safeguarded.

## **Extensions to Settlement Boundary at St. John's/Welshwood Park**

### **Land at St. John's Road**

- 6.37 The site was previously allocated as private open space outside the settlement boundary and adjoins residential development to the south and the Bullock Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) to the north. Development will need to provide mitigation and compensation measures to limit the impact on this key environmental resource in accordance with Policy ENV1. The site could accommodate up to 700 units at medium density to provide needed growth capacity in a sustainable location. It would need to be planned in a comprehensive manner to ensure appropriate access and amenity. Development would be expected to address the loss of private open space through provision of public open space within the site.

### **Land at Shaw's Farm**

- 6.38 The site proposed for allocation of up to 30 units forms a small part of a larger submission made through the Call for Sites. It is the area closest to the settlement boundary defined by the previous Local Plan and is defined by the railway line to the southeast and the proposed allocation above at St. John's Road. The site accordingly needs to be evaluated as a continuation of the larger St. John's

development and provision of access and amenity would need to complement the arrangements made for the larger site to create a sustainable urban extension.

### **Land at Welshwood Park**

6.39 The proposed site extends beyond the settlement boundary defined in the previous Local Plan and is adjacent to existing residential areas, open countryside, and the Welshwood Park Local Wildlife Site. It has the potential to provide up to 200 units. Development will need to provide mitigation and compensation measures to limit the impact on the adjacent Local Wildlife Site in accordance with Policy ENV1. A green landscaped buffer will also be required between the new development and existing properties. An existing Public Right of Way runs through the site and will need to be safeguarded.

### **NC3 North Colchester**

**Residential allocations** as shown on the policies map will be safeguarded for residential uses. Proposals will be required to satisfy the Council with regard to the following requirements:

- Contributions to the cost of infrastructure improvements and/or community facilities as required supported by up to date evidence in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) or as informed by the Community Council or subsequent evidence which will be secured to an appropriate level by way of legal agreement or through CIL. In particular, further development in St. John's/Welshwood Park at the scale identified would be expected to generate the need for a new primary school.
- Adequate wastewater treatment and sewage infrastructure capacity in the catchment area; and
- Appropriate SuDS for managing surface water runoff within the overall design and layout of the site.
- Further exploration of potential archaeological significance of the site, by way of pre-determination evaluation (geophysical survey and trial trenching). Any findings from the evaluation will need to be reflected in a detailed mitigation strategy for further investigation to be agreed and submitted with the application to preserve in-situ or adequately recorded by excavation, secured by a planning condition

Additionally the allocated sites identified below will need to meet the following site specific requirements;

#### ***Land at St Botolph's Farm Braiswick***

Development of this site will be supported where it also provides;

- Up to 50 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development.
- Retention of existing belt of trees on western and northern edges of site
- No development in area of site within Flood Zone 3.

#### ***Land north of Achnacone Drive Braiswick***

Development of this site will be supported where it also provides;

- Up to 30 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development.
- Access to be via Achnachone Drive
- Landscaping to be provide screening between site and golf course.

#### **Land south of Braiswick Golf Club**

Development of this site will be supported where it provides;

- Up to 8 dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development;
- Suitable access off B1508;
- Protection of, and any necessary upgrades to the existing Public Right of Way, which runs along the eastern edge of the site;
- Landscaping to be provide screening between site and golf course.

#### **Land at St. John's Road**

Development of this site will be supported where it also provides:

- Development of up to 700 units of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development.
- Satisfactory mitigation and compensation measures to limit impact on the adjacent Bullock Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Development to address the loss of private open space through provision of public open space.
- Phased and comprehensive approach to development to ensure appropriate access and amenity provision.

#### **Land at Shaw's Farm**

Development of this site will be supported where it also provides:

- Development of up to 30 units of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development along with phasing and infrastructure of any development at the St. John's site above.

#### **Land at Welshwood Park**

Development of this site will be supported where it also provides;

- Development of up to 200 units of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development.
- Satisfactory mitigation and compensation measures to limit impact on the adjacent Local Nature Reserve
- Protection of, and any necessary upgrades to the existing Public Right of Way, which runs through the site
- A substantial landscaped buffer between the site and existing properties.

### **6.40 Alternative Option**

***Selection of alternative sites for development*** – The Council carefully considered a number of alternative sites, but only selected those sites which firstly, accorded with the overall spatial hierarchy and strategic policies for the Borough and secondly, satisfied the criteria for sustainable and deliverable sites set by the Strategic Land Availability Assessment and the Sustainability Appraisal.



The alternative sites considered included both those received through the Call for Sites process as well as a number of other sites it was aware of from earlier assessments; current development allocations which remain undeveloped, and land in broadly sustainable locations which had not been put forward for assessment elsewhere.

## **East Colchester**

### **Knowledge Gateway and University Strategic Economic Area (East Colchester)**

- 6.41 The University of Essex is a leading research-intensive university and is ranked in the top 20 for research excellence within the UK. The University currently provides 1870 jobs and indirectly supports a further 2693 jobs, as well as contributing £404 million in turnover and indirect economic impact to the East of England. On the basis of the current Strategic Plan, by 2018, the University will grow to some 15,000 students. Continuation of this current rate of growth in student numbers would see the University achieve a student body of approximately 20,000 by 2025 and 25,000 students by the end of the local plan period.
- 6.42 These ambitious plans for the growth of the University have many benefits for Colchester Borough as a whole, the town centre and in particular east Colchester, including allowing the development of clusters of companies that can take advantage of co-location whilst minimising the costs of further infrastructure development. Through £13 million of investment and partnership with new and growing businesses, the expansion of the Knowledge Gateway research and technology park on the Colchester Campus has the potential to bring 2000 further jobs to the local economy by 2025.
- 6.43 Colchester's evidence base, the Employment Land Needs Assessment, acknowledges the role and importance of the Knowledge Gateway for developing technological and creative businesses. Unlocking some of the barriers, particularly associated with the existing transport infrastructure will assist in bringing forward further development on this site. This primarily seeks to promote B1 uses within the area, but acknowledges that some flexibility to this approach is beneficial, with the key principle being that proposals should be related to the key function of the economic area.
- 6.44 The University is supporting the designation of a fifth national University Enterprise Zone (UEZ), in addition to those in Bradford, Bristol, Liverpool and Nottingham. UEZs do not come with the same tax and business rate incentives or promises of high-speed broadband that are features of Enterprise Zones. However, they are granted support in driving export trade and attracting inward investment through the Government's UK Trade and Investment (UKTI), as well as being subject to simplified planning arrangements. The Essex UEZ would have a focus on digital and creative industries, a sector that contributes £2.5 billion per year to the economy of the Southeast LEP area. Colchester has the largest concentration of digital creative businesses in Essex and the Haven Gateway, with over 3500 people employed in this sector across more than 600 companies. A UEZ for Colchester can help to ensure that developments on Knowledge Gateway will also support developments in Colchester town centre.

- 6.45 The University competes globally for staff and students and there is a clear need for good quality and affordable accommodation. On the Colchester campus, the University already offers a mix of medium and high rise student accommodation, and it is likely that future need will mirror this pattern to allow for an efficient use of space, protection of the historic parkland and ensure that as many students as possible can be accommodated on the campus. High quality staff housing will also be in demand, with the development of the new University Garden Village also providing attractive new locations for University staff to live, adding to the existing blend of urban and rural dwellings in the area. The University strongly supports a vision for a proposed Garden Village to the east of Colchester, providing a sustainable, mixed academic, commercial and residential community that offers a high quality of life to enhance both Colchester and the University. The University will therefore be a key partner in the master planning process for the University Garden Village, recognising the importance and mutual benefit to establishing an integrated approach to planning and engagement.
- 6.46 The significant growth envisaged by the University and the associated expansion opportunities for the Knowledge Gateway technology park will be realised over the long term with phases being delivered throughout the plan period and potentially beyond associated with the new Garden Village. This plans identifies an area for expansion of the Knowledge Gateway which will be linked to the Garden Village development. It is important that the planning for this is considered comprehensively. This will involve clear partnership working involving the Council and other key stakeholders. This will provide a framework for the expansion of both the University and the Knowledge Gateway and also provide the opportunity to maximise any benefits associated with the new Garden Village. A joined up approach and the mutual opportunities to both are evident, particularly associated with infrastructure improvements with alternative public transport options being a key factor for East Colchester.
- 6.47 It is recognised that the University makes a significant contribution to the economy of Colchester Borough and to the vitality and viability of the town centre. There are unique opportunities for the community and the university to feed off each other, particularly as sports and cultural facilities are improved with the potential to create opportunities for the community to benefit from extensive facilities providing a hub in this area of Colchester which would not otherwise be available to them. The benefits and opportunities for shared use will be further explored through the Sports Strategy Delivery Board. In addition opportunities for the University to pursue a greater physical presence in the town centre will be encouraged and would potentially contribute to the connectivity between the two.

#### **EC1 Knowledge Gateway and University of Essex Strategic Economic Area**

The Council recognises the value of Essex University to Colchester Borough's economy and the vitality and viability of the town centre, and will work in partnership to maximise the economic and social benefits associated with it.

The area shown on the Policies Map is designated as the University and

Knowledge Gateway Strategic Economic Area. Within this area development will be supported which enables significant expansion of the University of Essex as reflected in its current Strategic Plan 2013-19 as well as the retention and expansion of the Knowledge Gateway. Proposals which provide for the retention and expansion of the Knowledge Gateway and which build on the benefits of the growing University will be supported.

There will be a need for a comprehensive approach to development in conjunction with the new University Garden Village proposed to the east of Colchester, working in partnership with key stakeholders including the University.

Proposals for the expansion of the University will be required to provide good public transport, pedestrian and cycle links ensuring good connectivity to and from the town centre, the Hythe Station and surrounding area, the Knowledge Gateway and the proposed Garden Community to the East of Colchester including contributing to the Orbital route as shown on the Policies Map.

Development will be expected to contribute to the cost of infrastructure improvements as required, supported by up to date evidence in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) or subsequent evidence which will be secured to an appropriate level by way of legal agreement or through CIL as required.

In addition, contributions may be sought to promote the delivery of infrastructure and Green Infrastructure improvements specifically the East Transit Corridor shown on the and the Policies Map and the Orbital Route, improvements to upgrading the footbridge across the railway between the Meadows 1 and the University Quays to enhance opportunities to the walking and cycling network accessing the university campus with the town centre. These will also help to achieve wider objectives which are also linked to University and Knowledge Gateway.

### **Zone 1 Knowledge Gateway**

The area shown on the East Colchester Policies Map will be safeguarded for the expansion of the Knowledge Gateway associated with the new University Garden Village to allow for provision of a range for additional jobs and to accommodate expansion of the existing research and technology uses.

Within this zone, the Council will continue to support the growth and retention of the University Research Park. All land and premises within this zone will be safeguarded for employment uses, primarily for B1 and non/ B class employment generating uses of a scale and type compatible with the Research Park. Encouragement will also be given to uses which can be shown to be directly linked to the development of research associated with the University and to the provision of business incubator units. Proposals for uses which are not B1 or where it cannot be demonstrated that they are linked to the Research Park will only be supported where they;

- Are ancillary to the existing employment uses on the site and are intended to serve the primary function of the site as an employment area and research park;

- Provide the opportunity to maximise the sites potential for economic growth,
- Support the continued operation of existing employment uses within the employment area and in particular its focus for research and technology contributing towards the delivery of the overall vision
- Are generally in accordance with the most up to date masterplan / Strategy for the University and Knowledge Gateway.
- Do not generate potential conflict with the existing proposed B class uses / activities on the site.

## **Zone 2 University Expansion**

The area shown on the East Colchester Policies Map will be safeguarded for further expansion of the University Campus to provide additional facilities associated with delivering the University's vision for growth and research excellence including new academic, sporting, social facilities and housing, associated with delivering the University's growth plans in accordance with any relevant agreed masterplan, or similar.

### **6.48 Alternative Option**

***Retain existing Strategic Employment Zone allocation*** – The existing Strategic Employment Zone allocation in the current adopted Local Plan is a generic policy which, while it recognises the role of the Knowledge Gateway and University in the provision of well-located, high quality employment land, does not sufficiently recognise the particular roles and functions played by the University in the Borough's spatial hierarchy. It is appropriate for the Knowledge Gateway and University to be recognised as drivers of economic growth related to higher education and associated Research Park uses by allocating and safeguarding land for those purposes. Additionally, development of a specific policy for the area will facilitate an integrated approach to university expansion; development of the University Garden Village; and links with East Colchester and the Town Centre.

## **East Colchester/Hythe Special Policy Area**

- 6.49 The Hythe area is a former commercial harbour which includes some rundown and underused industrial land in East Colchester. Together with the University of Essex, the eastern area of Colchester has experienced a period of significant change and growth. The area provides good access to Hythe Station and is located close to the University of Essex but is currently constrained by flooding issues.
- 6.50 The Hythe is an established regeneration area that seeks to deliver sustainable, mixed use neighbourhoods, oriented towards the River Colne, which respects the historic character of the area as the location of the early port. Over the plan period the East Colchester – Hythe Special Policy Area provides capacity to accommodate approximately 600 new dwellings including those already committed. The regeneration of this area needs to be supported by improvements

to the transport infrastructure and services, flood mitigation and open space to ensure that the sufficient amenity space is included to support the increasing population.

- 6.51 The river forms a natural corridor and amenity. Riverside walking and cycle routes which exist should be retained and extended for walking and cycling as part of a green link giving riverside traffic free routes for both commuting and leisure trips; with links to the Town centre and Wivenhoe along the National Cycle Network route1, the Rowhedge Trail and links to New Town, Distillery Pond and Bourne Ponds. The river also forms an east west barrier to movement. More links across the river are required to access local opportunities and create a cohesive development area. Opportunities should be sought to bridge the Colne to the south of Colne Causeway Bridge and could include power generation through tidal flow as part of the HEAT project. The Energy Centre and HEAT project has identified the ability to redistribute power more efficiently reducing the carbon but requires infrastructure in the area to do this.
- 6.52 The area is also split by the road and rail network. Peak hour traffic congestion is severe in this area, especially at Greenstead roundabout. The rail line forms an east west physical barrier especially for pedestrians and cyclists. Improvements are required to address congestion and severance, linking together development areas and opportunities offered by the expansion of the University and the Knowledge Gateway.
- 6.53 The area is served by a number of high frequency bus routes, passing through the area from the town centre to serve the University and Greenstead. These bus services are heavily utilised routes. The University Garden Village and University expansion provide the opportunity and demands for a rapid transit system in the area to link growth in east Colchester and in Tendring through the Hythe Area with Colchester Town centre and other key destinations.
- 6.54 Much of the Hythe area is in flood zone 3. Development must respect this designation and be designed accordingly to minimise the impact of any potential flooding on people and property.
- 6.55 As a working port many of the industries based there historically were “dirty” in nature but suitably located. As the area changes it will important not to locate residential properties on or near to contaminated land if satisfactory mitigation cannot be achieved. The major Colchester Sewage/Waste water plant lies at the south end of the area and includes a cordon sanitaire restricting the type of development which can be located here.
- 6.56 The river and the quay side is a natural place for residential moorings. Boats for residential purpose will be supported if they are of appropriate quality and enhance the marine environment. Improvements will be sought to the landscape and the utility infrastructure to serve boats.

## **EC2- East Colchester- The Hythe Special Policy Area**

Development within the area defined on the Policies Map as the East Colchester – Hythe Special Policy Area will be encouraged and supported where it contributes to achieving the following key objectives;

- Regeneration of the area with a mix of commercial, community and residential uses to provide additional jobs, homes (approximately 600), and community and environmental enhancements and create a strong sense of identity for the area;
- Maximise the potential and the benefits of the location adjacent to the University, enhanced by its expansion (Policy EC1) and supporting development associated with the University Research park to provide significant office floor space and high quality new jobs;
- Deliver significant public realm enhancements appropriate to local context, maximising the potential of the riverside location and improving the environment, increasing connectivity and providing convenient public access for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Contribute to the delivery of the East Transit Corridor which will bring significant improvements to public transport and accessibility, through enhanced services, improved links to the town centre and new University Garden Village;
- Enhance provision of Green Infrastructure to maximise potential opportunities for biodiversity and habitat creation, benefit nature conservation and landscape; enhance connectivity including linkages with the new garden community; and establish new areas of open space for public enjoyment including an urban park to serve the community.
- Manage flood risk pragmatically, further to Flood Risk Management policy DM23
- Provide for a compatible mix of uses having regard to neighbouring amenity;
- Situate proposals for residential development away from land which is contaminated. Where necessary mitigation measures will be required to be agreed with the Council.
- Develop the East Colchester Energy Centre and HEAT network (refer to policy CC1)
- Support the use of residential moorings by boats of acceptable quality which enhance the marine environment.

Development should also seek to soften the environment around the electricity sub-station to minimise its intrusive impact on the surrounding area. Opportunities to maximise the potential for comprehensive regeneration of King Edward Quay will be encouraged including exploring the potential to redistribute uses to allow for clustering of complementary uses and to respond to site constraints such as flood risk and land contamination.

### **East Colchester other allocations / policies**

- 6.57 The following areas of new residential and employment development have been allocated to areas of East Colchester, excluding the Hythe area covered by Policy EC2 on the Hythe Special Policy Area:

#### **Port Lane**

- 6.58 This site which formed part of the former Paxmans Factory site can deliver up to 130 dwellings. Access to the site will be off Port Lane. Given the site's previous industrial use, assessment of contamination and implementation of any required remediation measures will be required. The site is located within the area of archaeological interest recorded in the Colchester Urban Archaeological Database. There is high potential for encountering early occupation remains at this location so a trial-trenched archaeological evaluation will be required to establish the archaeological potential of the site. Decisions on the need for any further investigation (excavation before any groundworks commence and/or monitoring during groundworks) will be made on the basis of the results of the evaluation. Any permission granted is likely to include a condition requiring a programme of archaeological work.

#### **East Bay Mill**

- 6.59 This site includes a listed mill which has been badly damaged by fire. Redevelopment of the site will involve retention and restoration of this important landmark along with sympathetic development of other dwellings up to a total of 22 units, either independently or as part of a comprehensive scheme. In either case, proposals will need to be in keeping with the site's location within a Conservation Area. The site lies within a flood risk area, so it would need to in the first instance satisfy the Environment Agency's exception test for development in such areas, and secondly if that is met, provide adequate mitigation for flood risk such as residential on upper floors only. There is high potential for encountering early occupation remains at this location so a trial-trenched archaeological evaluation will be required to establish the archaeological potential of the site. Decisions on the need for any further investigation (excavation before any groundworks commence and/or monitoring during groundworks) will be made on the basis of the results of the evaluation. Any permission granted is likely to include a condition requiring a programme of archaeological work. Development will need to ensure contamination and flood risk issues are addressed. Vehicle, pedestrian and cycles arrangements to and within the site will need to have regard to restrictions on access as well as opportunities to provide a riverside path.

#### **Site off Barrington and Bourne Roads**

- 6.60 This 1 hectare site is comprised of vacant greenfield land within a predominantly residential area. The area was allocated for residential development in the previous Local Plan as part of a wider scheme, but this portion did not come forward for development following the first phase approved for 58 units. Open space delivery on the smaller remaining part of the site will need to address the shortfall in open space left over from the earlier phase of development. To address the issue of the divided ownership of the site, a scheme will need to provide a coordinated and comprehensive approach by owners to avoid

piecemeal development and secure satisfactory access arrangements, residential amenity and landscaping.

### **Magdalen Street sites**

6.61 Magdalen Street contains a number of older commercial buildings suitable for reuse, including in particular the former bus depot. The area could accommodate up to 250 new residential units. The Council produced an updated Development Brief for the site in February 2014 to realise a vision for the area to create a vibrant community and small scale, compatible uses associated with an edge of centre gateway. Architecturally, the Council will seek contemporary responses to the existing character and densities and parking appropriate to the edge of centre location. Magdalen Street is within an Air Quality Management Area and proposals will accordingly need to provide mitigation. The Council will expect development to be set back from the carriageway with large scale forecourts and tree planting. Vehicular access will only be available via Magdalen Street. Pedestrian and cycle opportunities also need to be addressed as part of any future design and site layout.

### **Employment Sites**

6.62 In common with the Hythe area covered by Policy EC2, the remaining area of East Colchester contains a number of historic employment sites, a number of which such as the Paxman's site, have been redeveloped for residential and mixed uses. The Whitehall Industrial Estate is the largest remaining industrial area, and with 9.19 ha of available land, will be a preferred location for new employment development in East Colchester. Sites on Barrack Street, Brook Street and Port Lane contain further small areas of employment floorspace which will be safeguarded for employment use.

#### **EC3 East Colchester**

**Residential allocations** as shown on the policies map will be safeguarded for residential uses. Proposals will be required to satisfy the Council with regard to the additional site specific requirements as identified below;

##### ***Land at Port Lane***

Development of this site will be supported where it also provides;

- Up to 130 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development.
- Access via Port Lane
- Contamination mitigation measures as required
- Pre-determination archaeological investigation to be agreed with the Council

##### ***East Bay Mill***

Development of this site will be supported where it also provides;

- Up to 22 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development.



- Adequate access including appropriate treatment / diversion of the existing Public Right of Way
- Satisfy Environment Agency flood risk exception test and if met, provide flood risk mitigation measures
- Contamination mitigation measures as required
- Pre-determination archaeological investigation to be agreed with the Council
- Conversion of listed mill
- Create access to river frontage
- Positive contribution to character of Conservation Area

#### ***Barrington Road/Bourne Road vacant site***

Development of this site will be supported where it also provides;

- Approximately 28 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development.
- Comprehensive development programme addressing issue of site lying within different ownerships
- Suitable landscaping and open space
- Access via Knightsfield

#### ***Magdalen Street sites***

Development within these sites will be supported where it also provides;

- Approximately 250 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development.
- Agreement with Magdalen Street Development Brief (adopted February 2014)

**Local Economic Areas** as shown on the policies map will be safeguarded for economic uses in accordance with policy SG4. The following areas will be safeguarded to retain their function and role as key clusters for a range of businesses including start ups:

Whitehall Industrial Estate

Land at Barrack Street

Land at Brook Street

Port Lane

#### ***Whitehall Industrial Estate*** – 9.19 ha undeveloped land (2015 ELNA)

Proposals for new employment development should support the existing mix of B1, B2, B8 and sui generis employment uses.

Contributions to the cost of infrastructure improvements and/or community facilities as required supported by up to date evidence in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) or as informed by the Parish Council or subsequent evidence which will be secured to an appropriate level by way of legal agreement or through CIL as required.

### **6.63 Alternative Option**

***Selection of alternative sites for development*** – The Council carefully considered a number of alternative sites, but only selected those sites which firstly, accorded with the overall spatial hierarchy and strategic policies for the Borough and secondly, satisfied the criteria for sustainable and deliverable sites

set by the Strategic Land Availability Assessment and the Sustainability Appraisal. The alternative sites considered included both those received through the Call for Sites process as well as a number of other sites it was aware of from earlier assessments; current development allocations which remain undeveloped, and land in broadly sustainable locations which had not been put forward for assessment elsewhere.

## **West Colchester**

### **Stanway Strategic Economic Area**

- 6.64 The Stanway Economic Growth Area is situated at the western end of the urban area of Colchester, with good access to the strategic road network at Junction 26 of the A12. It contains a mix of commercial uses including retail and B-use employment floorspace. A significant amount of new commercial development has been constructed over the last decade, in part enabled by the completion of a new bypass. The 2013 Tollgate Vision Framework prepared with local landowners in the area set forth a vision for the area 'to create a sustainable and balanced place as the heart of the Stanway Growth Area and to transform the character of the Tollgate area to become a stimulating, attractive and economically vibrant hub for the growing population, building on its success as a retail and commercial destination'.
- 6.65 The previous Local Development Framework classified the area as part Strategic Employment Zone and part Urban District Centre. The new Stanway Strategic Economic Area allocation continues to provide for two zones to reflect their existing functions and potential for future employment expansion.
- 6.66 The 2015 Employment Land Needs Assessment concluded that the Council should review its employment land portfolio throughout the Borough, and should focus on those sites including, Stane Park with the greatest prospect of coming forward for employment development in future. Accordingly, the Council has reviewed unimplemented employment allocations and where appropriate deallocated areas taking into account a number of considerations including sustainability factors and other evidence. The Stanway area in its close proximity to the A12 and edge of centre location remains one of the more sustainable locations in which to focus economic growth and therefore only one small area has been deallocated - the area around Trafalgar Farm has been removed from the former employment allocation and is now shown as white land since its use continues to be farm related and there is no likelihood of delivery. The remaining areas retain the employment allocation of the bulk of the former Strategic Employment Zone on the basis that the area's good location and potential for development of high quality new employment floorspace warrants the retention of a good supply of land. Pressure to change employment land to retail/leisure use has been resisted on this basis and also due to concern about the potential impact of other uses on Colchester town centre.
- 6.67 Policy for the area previously allocated as an Urban District Centre is designed to recognise its function providing commercial services for the local area but to restrict expansion of retail and leisure uses due to the need to focus such town

centre uses on Colchester Town Centre in line with the Spatial Strategy. The removal of the Urban District Centre follows a consistent approach with other similar commercial areas within Colchester's urban area which are based on a range of established commercial uses which serve an important function, but whose role does not reflect the commonly understood definition of a district centre. This area of the Strategic Economic area will be safeguarded to maintain its current function in relation to scale and mix of uses. The policy allows for some enhancement and potential intensification of this, within the area defined as zone 2, but in response to the areas primary function as an employment area and to protect the vitality and viability of the town centre this will be limited and subject to criteria which serves to protect the employment area and the town centre.

### **WC1 Stanway Strategic Economic Area**

All land and premises within the area allocated as the Stanway Economic Area will be safeguarded for economic / employment uses based on a zoned approach in accordance with the following principles;

**Zone 1:** as defined on the West Colchester Policies Map will be the primary focus for B class employment uses and as such, alternative non- B Class uses will only be supported where they;

- (i) Are ancillary to the employment uses on the site intended to serve the function of the site as an employment area;
- (ii) Provide the opportunity to maximise the sites potential for economic growth and support the continued operation of existing employment uses within the economic area;
- (iii) Do not generate potential conflict with the existing proposed B class uses / activities on the site.
- (iv) There is no reasonable prospect of the site being used for employment purposes.

Proposals for main town centre uses will not be permitted within zone 1 of the Stanway Strategic Economic Area.

**Zone 2:** as shown on the West Colchester Policies Map which comprises an existing mixed use commercial area which has established uses and serves a current function important to the surrounding area.

The current function of the area will be safeguarded and proposals for development which are complimentary to this will be supported.

Where the proposal is for a main town centre use, it must be of a scale appropriate to the economic area and must satisfy the criteria set out below;

- Meet the requirements of the sequential test as set out in policy TC1 in so far as the Council should be satisfied that there are no alternative sites located closer to the town centre in accordance with the hierarchy; and
- Where the scale of the proposal requires a retail impact assessment in accordance with policy TC1 the Council are satisfied that the proposal will not adversely impact of the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Any proposals within the Stanway Strategic Economic Area will be required to provide good public transport, pedestrian and cycle links ensuring good connectivity within the area and Zones, to the neighbouring communities, and to and from the town centre.

Development will be expected to contribute to the cost of infrastructure improvements as required, supported by up to date evidence in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) or subsequent evidence which will be secured to an appropriate level by way of legal agreement or through CIL as required.

## 6.68 **Alternative Option**

***Retain existing Strategic Employment Zone allocation*** – The existing Strategic Employment Zone allocation in the current adopted Local Plan is a generic policy which, while it recognises the role of Stanway as a provider of well-located, high quality employment land, does not sufficiently recognise the particular role and function played by the area in the Borough's spatial hierarchy. The policy for the Stanway Economic Growth Area provides for a continuation of the current mix of commercial uses within existing areas as well as allowing for further employment growth facilitated by the recent completion of further road infrastructure.

## **Stanway Area Housing/Other Allocations**

- 6.69 Stanway is a Parished area on the western edge of Colchester and lies adjacent to the A12. Over recent years it has been the location for significant growth seeing the delivery of the former Stanway Growth Area. Approximately half of the 1800 houses allocated in this Growth Area have been delivered together with elements of infrastructure including new roads. The remaining areas of housing, including Fiveways Fruit Farm and Lakelands remain allocated in this Plan for residential development. Further infrastructure previously agreed, linked to this, will also be delivered as part of this phased development including a primary school and areas of public open space.
- 6.70 Stanway Parish Council has commenced a Neighbourhood Plan with the plan area being designated in June 2014. Work on the Neighbourhood plan is in its early stages and the Neighbourhood Plan Group is considering the potential scope of the Plan working with the community and stakeholders. The Local Plan therefore provides for the strategic significance of the area, particularly for economic growth and the existing commitments associated with the former growth area.
- 6.71 In considering additional growth in Stanway it is considered there are opportunities for further development recognising the opportunities and constraints for the area. Sites to the west of Lakelands, to the west of Wyvern Farm, and at Chitts Hill are identified in this plan for additional housing growth. In addition a small area linked

to the Lakelands development at Churchfields Avenue is allocated to reflect the updated planning position and to provide consistency with the agreed master plan.

- 6.72 An area of land to the east of Tollgate Road is allocated for public open space, recognising its value as a linear link with potential benefits for landscape / amenity, recreation and biodiversity interests.

#### **Land between Churchfields Avenue, Church Lane and Partridge Way**

- 6.73 This site was originally intended to form open space within the development now known as Lakelands. It was shown in an agreed 2002 Masterplan for Lakelands as open space and the current adopted Proposals Map shows the site as open space. A Design & Access Statement (‘DAS’) which was agreed via a discharge of planning condition submission in 2010 showed the site as to be used for residential purposes, open space provision across Lakelands having been re-planned in that document. The planning permission to which that DAS relates remains extant. That permission and the DAS are or would be material planning considerations in the determination of future planning applications in respect of the site. The Council is currently considering a reserved matters application for residential use on the site. It is therefore allocated in the Local Plan to reflect this updated position and will be safeguarded to deliver up to 28 dwellings.

#### **Land at Chitts Hill**

- 6.74 The site is in a sustainable location well served by public transport. It has natural existing defensible boundaries and is surrounded by areas of predominantly residential development and an existing private school and associated playing fields which are safeguarded as private open space. The proximity of the site to the mainline railway on the northern boundary and the school to the south requires a substantive landscape buffer to minimise amenity interests. Existing capacity issues which exist at the primary schools will be addressed in part by the provision of a new primary school as part of the Lakelands development.

#### **Land between London Road and A12 Stanway**

- 6.75 The site is situated to the west of the Colchester and runs south of the A12 and north of London Road. It is in a sustainable location, well placed for public transport connections and job opportunities at the nearby economic area. Planning permission was granted for 358 units in 2015 on land to the east at Wyvern Farm. This allocation extends development further west and will provide for approximately 500 additional dwellings together with open space and community facilities as required including primary school provision. Development of the site will need to have regard to specific site constraints including archaeology, mineral safeguarding and drainage and water treatment

management. It will also be important to retain a significant break between the site and Turkey Cock Lane/Copford.

### **Land to the West of Lakelands**

6.76 A site to the west of Lakelands is allocated for residential development to provide approximately 150 dwellings. To create a more logical extension to the settlement boundary and mix of uses the allocation provides for residential development to the south of the site and employment to the north. The total area allocated for employment uses within Zone 1 of the Strategic Economic Area remains unchanged.

### **WC2 Stanway**

Allocations as shown on the policies map will be safeguarded for predominantly residential uses. Contributions to the cost or provision of infrastructure improvements and/or community facilities as required and identified by up to date evidence in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) or as informed by the Parish Council or subsequent evidence will be secured to an appropriate level by way of legal agreement or through CIL.

### ***Land between Church Lane, Churchfields and Partridge Way***

Development of this site will be supported where it also provides;

- Up to 28 dwellings new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development and in accordance with Design and Access Statement linked to the Lakelands Planning Permission.

### ***Land at Fiveways Fruit Farm***

Development of this site will be supported where it also provides;

- Approximately 500 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development.
- Details to comply with the Stanway Southern Sites Access Development Brief agreed by the Council in December 2013.

### ***Land at Chitts Hill***

Development of this site will be supported where it also provides;

- Up to a maximum of 100 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development.
- Substantive landscaping in particular to reflect appropriate boundary treatment to the north along the railway line and the south around the school.
- Access to the site to be restricted to Chitts Hill

- Open space / green infrastructure provision to compliment the biodiversity and wildlife interests of the neighbouring Local Wildlife designation (CO68) at Iron Latch Lane Woods and Meadows
- Further exploration of potential archaeological significance of the site, by way of pre-determination evaluation (geophysical survey and trial trenching). Any findings from the evaluation will need to be reflected in a detailed mitigation strategy for further investigation to be agreed and submitted with the application to preserve in-situ or adequately recorded by excavation, secured by a planning condition

### **Land between London Road and A12 Stanway**

Development of this site will be supported where it also provides;

- Approximately 500 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development;
- Provision for education requirements as informed by an evidenced need;
- Access to the site to be from London Road with no access to be provided via Turkey Cock lane
- Provision for retention or diversion of any existing public rights of way within the site;
- Further exploration of potential archaeological significance of the site, by way of pre-determination evaluation (geophysical survey and trial trenching). Any findings from the evaluation will need to be reflected in a detailed mitigation strategy for further investigation to be agreed and submitted with the application to preserve in-situ or adequately recorded by excavation, secured by a planning condition.
- Adequate wastewater treatment and sewage infrastructure capacity in the catchment area; and
- Appropriate SuDS for managing surface water runoff within the overall design and layout of the site.

Proposals must take into account the Essex Minerals Local Plan and developers will be required to submit a Minerals Resource Assessment as part of any planning application. Should the viability of extraction be proven, the mineral shall be worked in accordance with a scheme/masterplan as part of the phased delivery of the non-mineral development.

### **Land to the West of Lakelands**

Development of this site will be supported which also provides;

- Approximately 150 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development;
- An ecological survey with appropriate mitigation.
- Satisfactory access to be agreed with the Highway Authority
- Further exploration of potential archaeological significance of the site, by way of pre-determination evaluation (geophysical survey and trial trenching). Any findings from the evaluation will need to be reflected in a detailed mitigation strategy for further investigation to be agreed and submitted with the application to preserve in-situ or adequately recorded by excavation, secured by a planning condition.
- Adequate wastewater treatment and sewage infrastructure capacity in the

- catchment area; and
- Appropriate SuDS for managing surface water runoff within the overall design and layout of the site.
- Provision for retention or diversion of any existing public rights of way within the site;

**Land at Tollgate Road as shown on the policies map is allocated for public open space**

## 6.77 **Alternative Option**

***Selection of alternative sites for development*** – The Council carefully considered a number of alternative sites, but only selected those sites which firstly, accorded with the overall spatial hierarchy and strategic policies for the Borough and secondly, satisfied the criteria for sustainable and deliverable sites set by the Strategic Land Availability Assessment and the Sustainability Appraisal. The alternative sites considered included both those received through the Call for Sites process as well as a number of other sites it was aware of from earlier assessments; current development allocations which remain undeveloped, and land in broadly

## **Colchester Zoo**

- 6.78 Colchester Zoo is an important visitor attraction in the Borough and has operated successfully in its current location for over 50 years. The Council recognises that tourist attractions require constant updating and that expansion in its current location could have strong justification. Development that provides enhanced visitor facilities and opportunities whilst having regard to the sensitive location of the zoo will be supported. The extent of any development ancillary to the zoo, such as additional retail, hotel and food and drink outlets, would need to be related to the function of the zoo and assessed against the potential negative impact on the town centre.
- 6.79 Any proposals for the expansion of the zoo, and associated facilities, should be undertaken through a Masterplan approach, taking into account the sensitive location of the zoo including the issues identified below, and the impact on the town centre.
- 6.80 The site is in an environmentally sensitive location adjacent to the Roman River and includes a Scheduled Ancient Monument and Gosbecks Archaeological Park. Creation of new wildlife habitats accordingly would need to have regard to the existing habitats and the landscape character of the area.
- 6.81 Additionally, the impact of increased visitor numbers would need to be carefully managed to minimise any impact on the local highway network and ensure safe access to the site via Maldon Road. A comprehensive Transport Assessment would be required. Any proposals should promote access by bus from the town centre and local train stations, as well as promoting local access via cycle and footpaths and improving improvements to these routes where necessary. There



are a number of Public Rights of Way in the area and these would need to be taken into account in any further expansion plans.

- 6.82 Colchester Zoo is located adjacent to an existing sand and gravel minerals extraction site and is in a Minerals Safeguarding Area for sand and gravel as detailed in the Essex Minerals Local Plan 2014. In accordance with national mineral policy and the Essex Minerals Local Plan, a Minerals Resource Assessment must be submitted as part of any planning application. The Minerals Resource Assessment must assess economic viability of prior extraction and be prepared using the latest PERC standard. Should the viability of extraction be proven, the mineral shall be worked in accordance with a scheme/masterplan as part of the phased delivery of the non-mineral development. Consultation with the MPA and LPA will be required to determine whether a separate minerals planning application would be required.

### **WC3 - Colchester Zoo**

The Council recognises the importance of Colchester Zoo as a visitor attraction and as a contributor to the local economy. The Council will work in partnership with the Zoo to maximise the social and economic benefits associated with its development while ensuring any development proposals have regard to the environmentally sensitive location.

The area shown on the West Colchester Policies Map will be safeguarded for potential further expansion of Colchester Zoo to provide additional facilities associated with the Zoo's vision for growth. The extent of any development ancillary to the zoo, such as additional retail, hotel and food and drink outlets, will need to be related to the function of the zoo and assessed against potential negative impacts on the town centre.

Any proposals for the expansion of the Zoo will be undertaken through a Master plan approach taking into account landscape impact, safe access to the site via Maldon Road, existing Public Rights of Way and accessibility by sustainable modes. A comprehensive transport assessment would be required.

Any proposals will also take into account the Essex Minerals Local Plan and the developer will be required to submit a Minerals Resource Assessment as part of any planning application. Should the viability of extraction be proven, the mineral shall be worked in accordance with a scheme/masterplan as part of the phased delivery of the non-mineral development.

### **6.83 Alternative Options**

*Not to provide a policy context for the Zoo expansion:* This would be contrary to the economic strategy and the Council's objectives linked to tourism. It is preferable to provide a proactive comprehensive approach working with the zoo, rather than a less managed piecemeal approach via the Development Management process.

## **West Colchester other allocations / policies**

- 6.84 The following areas in the West area of Colchester are allocated for residential and economic uses, excluding those areas within Stanway which is covered by Policy WC2

## **Residential allocations**

### **Essex County Hospital site**

- 6.85 The Essex County Hospital site lies within the Lexden Conservation Area on a prominent site lying over a Roman burial area just outside the Town Centre on Lexden Road. The site contains a number of hospital buildings constructed over its two hundred year history, including a Grade II listed main building and a Locally Listed nurses block. In 2015, the Council received notice of the Health Trust's intention to dispose of the site for redevelopment, with the remaining hospital uses on the site being transferred to other sites. The Council has prepared a Development Brief for the site, adopted in December 2014, which provides guidance to ensure that appropriate development of the sensitive hospital site was encouraged to help deliver its re-use within the Lexden Conservation Area. Parking and amenity requirements for the site will reflect the site's sustainable location near the Town Centre.

### **Land at Gosbecks Phase 2**

- 6.86 The site Gosbecks Road, Colchester is well supported by infrastructure including public transport to the town centre and a new supermarket which is due to be completed in summer 2016. This site has the potential to deliver up to 150 dwellings. It is considered that this comprises a logical second phase of residential development following the first phase in the. Any development would be required to demonstrate that development would not cause an unacceptable impact on the adjacent Ancient Scheduled Monument (the land owners having previously gifted the land to CBC with funds for preservation). Adequate protection / enhancement of the Scheduled Ancient Monument and its setting and undertake mitigation as required and agreed by the Council

### **South of Berechurch Hall Road**

- 6.87 The proposal for 150 units opposite an existing residential area on Berechurch Road would entail comprehensive planning of two smaller sites accommodating approximately 50 units together with an adjacent site accommodating up to 100 units. Consideration of a cohesive layout, access and design approach to the site could provide a sustainable urban extension to Colchester's southern urban boundary. Development would need to ensure archaeological investigation and provision of acceptable access on to Berechurch Road.

### **Land at Irvine Road**

- 6.88 This 0.6ha site is located north west and to the rear of existing residential properties on Irvine Road. The site is currently designated as a Local Site (ref CO97) and along with the Philip Morant playing fields contributes to the green infrastructure in this part of Colchester. The site is accessed via a private track however there is no public access to this plot of land.
- 6.89 The 2016 Local Wildlife Site Report concluded that this site is in favourable but declining status as an orchard with no management of the fruit trees or other vegetation in recent years. The grassland is becoming rank through a lack of management and the *Prunus* scrub which is spreading, is already dominant in some areas. The northern edge of the site is also being managed inappropriately, from a conservation point of view. This lack of active and appropriate management if not addressed, over time, will result in further decline in the ecological value of the site. This could result in it eventually being de-designated as a Local Site if it fails to meet the qualifying criteria for designation. The site also forms part of the local Green infrastructure network in this part of Colchester. Whilst the site has some limited wildlife value, a small amount of development, of up to a maximum 10 dwellings, covering no more than 40% of the site is considered appropriate at this location. The remaining 60% of the site should be brought back into suitable management to improve the sites ecological value and to ensure it continues to contribute to the local Green Infrastructure network. A detailed ecological management plan and mitigation plan should be prepared in conjunction with EECOS as part of any future development proposal to conserve the most valuable habitats/part at this site.

### **Local Economic Areas**

#### **Land at Maldon Road / Shrub End**

- 6.90 The employment area at Maldon Road has been extended to include a further 1 hectare which is allocated to provide further opportunities in this areas for local employment, building on the benefits provided by its location and existing operation and access

#### **Land at Gosbecks**

- 6.91 Gosbecks Farm Road, Gosbecks Road, Colchester – this site is safeguarded as a Local Economic Area and is considered to support the existing employment uses at Gosbecks Business Park. As an economic area a range of mixed uses will be appropriate with the primary focus of the site being to deliver further employment.

### **WC4 West Colchester**

**Allocations** as shown on the policies map will be safeguarded for residential uses. Proposals will be required to satisfy the Council with regard to the additional site specific requirements as identified below;

**Essex County Hospital site, Lexden Road**

Development of this site will be supported where it also provides;

- Up to 44 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development.
- Accord with the Essex County Hospital adopted Development Brief (December 2014)

**Land at Gosbecks Phase 2**

Development of this site will be supported where it also provides;

- Up to 150 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development.
- Adequate protection / enhancement of the Scheduled Ancient Monument and its setting and undertake mitigation as required and agreed by the Council.
- Pre-determination archaeological investigation to be agreed with the Council
- Contribution to Gosbecks Archaeological Park

**South of Berechurch Hall Road**

Development of this site will be supported where it also provides;

- Up to 150 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development.
- A comprehensive approach to development of the three separate parcels of land which together make up the allocation will need to be planned for.
- Pre-determination archaeological investigation to be agreed with the Council
- 

**Land at Irvine Road**

Development of this site will be supported where it also provides;

- Up to 8 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development.
- Access via existing track off Irvine Road
- Maximum area of the site to be developed 40%
- Ecological Management Plan and Mitigation Plan required for remaining 60% of site to improve and enhance the ecological value.

**Local Economic Areas** as shown on the policies map will be safeguarded for economic uses in accordance with policy SG4. Proposals will also be required to satisfy the Council with regard to the additional site specific requirements as identified below;

**1 hectares of Land at Maldon Road / Shrub End is allocated for economic uses**

**Land at Gosbecks currently in employment use is safeguarded for economic uses**

All development will be required to make contributions to the cost of infrastructure improvements and/or community facilities as required supported by up to date evidence in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) or as informed by subsequent evidence which will be secured to an appropriate level by way of legal agreement or through CIL as required.

#### 6.92 **Alternative Option**

***Selection of alternative sites for development*** – The Council carefully considered a number of alternative sites, but only selected those sites which firstly, accorded with the overall spatial hierarchy and strategic policies for the Borough and secondly, satisfied the criteria for sustainable and deliverable sites set by the Strategic Land Availability Assessment and the Sustainability Appraisal. The alternative sites considered included both those received through the Call for Sites process as well as a number of other sites it was aware of from earlier assessments; current development allocations which remain undeveloped, and land in broadly

#### **Garden Communities**

- 6.93 As highlighted in Part 1 of this plan, new settlements developed in line with Garden Community principles are proposed for two areas of Colchester Borough, extending into the neighbouring local authorities of Braintree to the west and Tendring to the east. Policy SP7 (Development and delivery of new garden communities in North Essex) provides the overarching guidelines for the development of these new communities, while specific allocation policies provide guidance on the site constraints and opportunities; development potential; and infrastructure requirements. (See SP8 (East Colchester/West Tendring new University GardenVillage) and SP9 (West of Colchester/East Braintree new- West Colchester Garden Community)).
- 6.94 Selection of these sites has been made on the basis of their levels of sustainability and deliverability, using evidence gathered on environmental constraints, infrastructure requirements, development capacity, and viability. A Sustainability Appraisal was carried out for the option of developing Garden Communities and found potential for such long-term growth sites to the east and west of Colchester.
- 6.95 The Sustainability Appraisal did not support an option submitted by landowners to the north of Colchester at Langham on the basis of its environmental impact on the surrounding countryside and AONB; and concerns about infrastructure provision and connectivity with Colchester.

#### **Sustainable Settlements** **Abberton and Langenhoe**

- 6.96 Whilst Abberton and Langenhoe are separate settlements they are physically close and share services and facilities. Abberton was originally developed around a crossroads but over time has expanded along the roads to the north, south and

east with the majority of more recent housing development being to the south of the village. The Langenhoe area to the south is more detached from the rest of the settlement and the settlement boundary which previously defined small cluster of houses separately has been removed and the area is now part of the countryside.

- 6.97 Abberton/Langenhoe is fairly well connected to the road network as it is situated on the main Mersea to Colchester road (B1025). There is a primary school, post office/shop and village hall. There is also a cricket club with club house. Land to the south of Abberton/Langenhoe is within the Coastal Protection Belt.
- 6.98 Development that would not represent a logical or sensible extension to the existing built up area will be discouraged in order to prevent further ribbon development to the north along Mersea Road, to the east along Fingringhoe Road, to the west along Layer Road and Glebe Lane and to the south beyond existing extent of Langenhoe, to discourage further development away from existing village services and facilities and where it is more rural in character.
- 6.99 To contribute to the continued sustainability of the key services in the village, it is considered that the settlement can accommodate a 10% proportion of growth, based on the size of the existing settlement over the plan period. Two sites for housing development are allocated – Peldon Road and Aspark House, Peldon Road, in accordance with the site allocation policy SS1 below.
- 6.100 Land to the east and west of Peldon Road is allocated for the development of up to 25 dwellings. Suitable screening/landscaping to the south is required to provide a robust settlement edge and minimise impacts on the wider landscape. This site is close to a listed building and careful design will be required to ensure no adverse effects on the setting of a listed building. Visibility issues with the Peldon Road/Layer Road junction will need to be addressed and footpath links into the village along Peldon Road will be required.
- 6.101 Land at Ashpark House, Peldon Road represents an obvious gap on the edge of the settlement without resulting in further ribbon development along Glebe Lane. Glebe Lane appears to be private and concerns regarding its junction with Peldon Road and the Peldon Road/Layer Road junction will need to be addressed. Safe access to and from the highway will be required, including visibility splays which meet current standards. There is currently a deficit of school places and so the development of both sites will need to contribute towards improvements/expansion of Langenhoe Primary School to accommodate the level of growth proposed.

#### **SS1 – Abberton and Langenhoe housing sites**

**Within each of the areas shown on the policies map SS1 development will be supported which provides:**

- **Safe access to and from the highway;**
- **Safe pedestrian access from the site to existing footways to enhance connectivity;**
- **Suitable design, screening / landscaping to minimise any negative**

impact on the landscape;

- Adequate wastewater treatment and sewage infrastructure capacity in the catchment area; and
- Appropriate SuDS for managing surface water runoff within the overall design and layout of the site.
- The potential archaeological significance of the site should be further explored, by way of pre-determination evaluation (geophysical survey and trial trenching). Any findings from the evaluation will need to be reflected in a detailed mitigation strategy for further investigation to be agreed and submitted with the application to preserve in-situ or adequately recorded by excavation, secured by a planning condition

Contributions to the cost of infrastructure improvements and/or community facilities as required supported by up to date evidence in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) or as informed by the Parish Council or subsequent evidence which will be secured to an appropriate level by way of legal agreement or through CIL as required.

Site specific requirements are set out below.

Development of land at Peldon Road will be supported which also provides:

- Up to 25 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing for which there is a demonstrated need;
- Provision of a safe pedestrian access route from the development to be agreed with the Highways Authority.
- Suitable design and suitable screening/landscaping to minimise any negative impact on the nearby listed building and/or its setting.

Development of land at Ashpark House, Peldon Road will be supported which also provides:

- Up to 5 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development.

Pantiles Farm on Peldon Road is allocated as a Local Economic Area and will continue to be protected for this use. Any future development proposals will be required to comply with policy SG4.

## **Birch**

6.102 Birch Green is the largest area of housing within the wider Birch parish area. The smaller historic core of Birch is located to the north and a separate, isolated cluster of dwellings known as Hardy's Green to the north-west. Birch Green is broadly triangular in shape where development has filled the space between Birch Street, Mill Lane and Straight Way.

6.103 Birch Green is very rural in character and is not very well connected to the strategic road network. However, the parish does have a number of services and facilities including a primary school, GP surgery, post office and village hall.

- 6.104 Development that would not represent a logical or sensible extension to the existing built up area will be discouraged in order to prevent further ribbon development along the roads out of the settlement, to prevent Birch Green merging with the historic core of Birch to the north and with Layer Breton to the south; away from existing village services and facilities and where it is more rural in character.
- 6.105 To contribute to the continued sustainability of the key services in the village and accommodate an increase amounting to 5% proportion of growth (based on the existing settlement size) over the plan period a site for housing development is allocated in accordance with the site allocation policy SS2 below.
- 6.106 Development of land east of Birch Street would adjoin existing housing development and would be close to existing facilities, including the GP surgery. 10-15 dwellings will be acceptable on this site. Careful design, screening and landscaping will be required to minimise impacts on the surrounding landscape as there are currently no obvious features to contain development within the site.

#### **SS2– Land east of Birch Street**

**Within the area shown on the policies map SS2 development will be supported which provides:**

- **Up to 15 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing for which there is a demonstrated need;**
- **Suitable design, screening/landscaping to minimise any negative impact on the surrounding landscape;**
- **Adequate wastewater treatment and sewage infrastructure capacity in the catchment area; and**
- **Appropriate SuDS for managing surface water runoff within the overall design and layout of the site.**
- **The potential archaeological significance of the site should be further explored, by way of pre-determination evaluation (geophysical survey and trial trenching). Any findings from the evaluation will need to be reflected in a detailed mitigation strategy for further investigation to be agreed and submitted with the application to preserve in-situ or adequately recorded by excavation, secured by a planning condition**

**Contributions to the cost of infrastructure improvements and/or community facilities as required supported by up to date evidence in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) or as informed by the Parish Council or subsequent evidence which will be secured to an appropriate level by way of legal agreement or through CIL as required.**



## Boxted

- 6.107 Boxted is a rural parish located approximately 3km to the north east of urban Colchester. Development in Boxted is currently concentrated within 3 distinct settlement areas: Boxted Cross, Workhouse Hill and Mill Road. These latter two settlement areas are not considered suitable locations for new growth as they have no community facilities and are not well served by public transport. Boxted Cross is considered to be a sustainable location for limited growth only as the few community facilities that Boxted does have are concentrated in this northern part of the parish however, like the rest of Boxted, it has limited access to public transport.
- 6.108 Development in Boxted Cross has grown in a linear manner around Straight Road/Carters Hill, Dedham Road/Cage Lane crossroads extending north eastwards as far as Cooks Lane. The southern boundary of Boxted Cross settlement boundary runs just south of East Side.
- 6.109 Boxted is located approximately 6.5km from Colchester train station and 3km from the Park and Ride, Boxted Cross is the largest settlement within the Boxted Parish area. There are currently 555 households in the Boxted Parish area with 219 dwellings of these located within the current Boxted Cross settlement boundary. The primary school, village hall, bus stops and playing field are all located here, therefore Boxted Cross is the main community focus within the parish and an obvious location for some growth.
- 6.110 The Dedham Vale AONB abuts the north eastern edge of Boxted Cross settlement boundary in the vicinity of Cooks Lane. This restricts development opportunities northwards to ensure that the qualities of the Dedham Vale AONB are protected. Development is constrained to the northwest and west by arable land and land used as orchards/vineyard. Growth opportunities are constrained to the east by the sports and recreation ground and arable land. A local wildlife designation (Local Site Co136 Black Brook), is an extensive mosaic of habitats forming an important wildlife corridor on the eastern edge of Boxted Cross and represents a further constraint on development in this direction. Development southwards is also constrained due to the desire to prevent further ribbon development along Boxted Straight Road leading to the coalescence of settlements and to discourage further housing away from existing village services and facilities.
- 6.111 Boxted Parish Council has developed a Neighbourhood Plan that covers Boxted Parish. While the Boxted Neighbourhood Plan promotes residential development at Hill Farm, a derelict employment site located in Boxted Cross, it does not identify a specific number of houses to be delivered at Hill Farm. It does however, set out a policy framework for Hill Farm and the wider Parish that all future development proposals in Boxted will have to accord with, if the Neighbourhood Plan is 'made'. The Neighbourhood Plan has passed examination stage with a referendum being planned for September 2016. Development proposals will also be required to comply with Local Plan policies where relevant and outside of the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan.

### **SS3 Boxted Housing Sites**

**All development proposals in Boxted parish including the Hill Farm site in Boxted Cross, as shown on the Boxted Policies Map SS3, will be determined against and be required to comply with policies in the Boxted Neighbourhood Plan and any relevant Local Plan policies.**

**Development at Hill Farm will be required to deliver a total of 7 affordable units 5 of these will need to be provided for local people to meet identified local need**

**This policy should be read in conjunction with policy SG7.**

6.112 Hill Farm in Boxted Cross is currently allocated as a Rural Employment Site. In this Local Plan these are now known as Local Economic Areas (LEA). Hill Farm will not be retained as an LEA in the new Local Plan and the re-allocation of Hill Farm for residential use will be completed through the Boxted Neighbourhood Plan process if it is successful at referendum. The other 2 allocated LEAs on Straight Road will continue to be allocated for this use in the Local Plan. Any future development proposals on these sites will be required to comply with policies EG4.

### **Chappel and Wakes Colne**

6.113 Chappel and Wakes Colne are two parishes located 7km to the north west of Colchester separated by the A1124 (Colchester to Halstead road) and the River Colne. Although separate Parishes they have a close inter-dependency in respect of shared community facilities split between the two settlement either side of the A1124.

6.114 Chappel has one core settlement area with 3 remote/dispersed small clusters of housing at Rose Green, Swan Street and Wakes Street. Wakes Colne is also the main settlement area with smaller dispersed clusters of housing around Inworth Lane and at Middle Green.

6.115 There are 210 dwellings in total in Chappel and Wakes Colne Parish. The main area of Chappel has 68 dwellings along with a village shop, post office, primary school and pub. There are a further 37, 12 and 28 dwellings located at Rose Green, Wakes Street and at Swan Street respectively, to west east and south of the core Chappel settlement area. Both settlements lie to the east by the railway line, which is the operational Sudbury to Marks Tey branch line. The railway station is also home to Chappel and Wakes Colne Railway Museum which hosts many events and houses a number of refurbished steam trains.

6.116 Despite being 2 distinct villages, both provide an important community function in terms of the provision of local services which all residents use and benefit from.

6.117 There are 52 dwellings concentrated in the main Wakes Colne settlement area with an additional 18 dwellings at Inworth Road and 42 at Middle Green to the north of the main Wakes Colne settlement. The main area of Wakes Colne has developed around the railway station.

- 6.118 As part of the settlement development boundary review only the largest, core developed areas in Chappel and Wakes Colne where the majority of the facilities are located were considered sustainable settlements and the most appropriate areas to consider directing limited new development to. Due to the location of both settlements along the valley of the River Colne, significant parts of the villages are susceptible to flooding and therefore these areas are unsuitable for further development.
- 6.119 Development to the east of Chappel which would lead to ribbon development, and impact on the setting of the Conservation Area and encourage growth away from existing village services will be discouraged. Similarly, development to the north of Wakes Colne where there are unresolvable highway issues will also be discouraged.
- 6.120 Alternative options alongside the A1124 are also not considered suitable as this would extend ribbon development away from many of the key services. No sites are proposed for allocation within the Wakes Colne parish, but a review of the Settlement Development Boundary reflects any updates as relevant and is retained for the core area of the settlement .
- 6.121 A site in Chappel, to the east of Chappel Hill and to the south of the Swan Grove development is considered suitable for some limited development. This site is well located relative to the existing facilities in Chappel and walking distance at 0.8km from the train station in Wakes Colne. This site could deliver up to 30 units which is considered proportionate given the available services in Chappel and Wakes Colne and the capacity based on constraints and opportunities.
- 6.122 Development of land to the east of Chappel Hill represents a sensible and logical extension to the settlement boundary of the main Chappel settlement. A large site was submitted under the Call for Sites but only half the site is considered suitable for development because of the size of Chappel itself and the need to ensure new development is proportionate. Suitable screening / landscaping will therefore be needed to replace any hedgerow's removed to accommodate the development and to minimise any visual and landscape impacts. A single access should be provided via Swan Grove Development will need to provide a suitable pedestrian access from the site into Chappel. Good design will be needed to complement the existing built character and to protect the setting of Hill House Martyn's Croft and Brook Hall which are all Grade II Listed buildings.
- 6.123 Existing water supply and waste water infrastructure capacity issues in Copford would be compounded by development of this site. As a precautionary approach, development cannot come forward until there is sufficient water supply, network capacity, waste water treatment and sewage infrastructure capacity to serve the development. Where this cannot be demonstrated it will be necessary to seek further advice from Anglian Water.
- 6.124 The settlement development boundaries around smaller settlements and the small clusters of dwellings have been deleted, as indicated on the policies map SS4 and listed in appendix 1, to reflect the relationship of these areas to the countryside and the limited sustainability of the locations.

#### **SS4 Chappel Housing Sites**

**For the site shown on the Chappel Polices Map development will be supported which provides:**

- **Up to 30 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development;**
- **A single site access via Swan Grove.**
- **Adequate water supply, wastewater treatment and sewage infrastructure enhancements in the catchment area;**
- **Appropriate SuDS for managing surface water runoff within the overall design and layout of the site; and**
- **Good design and suitable screening/landscaping to screen the development to protect designated historic buildings and to minimise any negative impact on surrounding landscape.**

**Contributions to the cost of infrastructure improvements and/or community facilities as required supported by up to date evidence in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) or subsequent evidence which will be secured to an appropriate level by way of legal agreement or through CIL as required.**

#### **Copford & Copford Green**

6.125 Copford /Copford Green is located approximately 2.5km from the western boundary of Colchester. In Copford village, development has grown in a linear manner north and south of London Road and southwards along School Road. There are currently 635 households within Copford Parish. 518 of these are located with the Copford/Copford Green settlement boundaries, with 456 in Copford and 62 dwellings in Copford Green.

6.126 As part of the settlement development boundary review the potential to link Copford & Copford Green settlement boundaries was explored. Even though there is scattered development between the two settlement areas, along School Road, Copford Green has a very different character to Copford. It is therefore considered appropriate to retain Copford and Copford Green as two distinct settlements. A large part of Copford Green is also a Conservation Area.

6.127 Development that would not represent a logical or sensible extension to the existing settlement boundary will be discouraged to prevent coalescence between Copford and Marks Tey to the west and between Copford and Copford Green to the south along School Lane. Development will be also be discouraged in the north of the village to protect local open spaces and to avoid land at risk from flooding, to the east to discourage growth in areas where the character is more rural/or is open countryside and to the south to discourage further development away from existing village services and facilities and to help protect the setting of Copford Green Conservation Area.

6.128 Copford represents the obvious location for some additional growth over the plan period given its proximity to Marks Tey train station and the A12/A120. To contribute to the continued sustainability of Copford two sites have been allocated

for housing development over the plan period – land to the East of Queensberry Avenue north of London Road and land to the west of Hall Road, south of London Road. These sites will deliver up to an additional 118 houses by 2033.

- 6.129 Development of land to the east of Queensberry Avenue would be a continuation of the existing settlement form and represents a sensible and logical extension to the built up area. Development will need to provide a single access point from Queensberry Avenue. There is a Public Right of Way running along the western boundary of the site and development proposals will need to consider a permanent diversion or upgrade to the PROW. Good design will be needed to complement the existing built character and suitable screening / landscaping will be also be needed to replace any hedgerows removed to accommodate the development and to minimise visual impacts on the local landscape.
- 6.130 Development of land to the west of Hall Road represents a sensible and logical extension to the settlement development boundary to the south of London Road. Only a single access point will be supported off Hall Road. Development will need to provide a suitable pedestrian access from the site into Copford. Good design will be needed to complement the existing built character and to protect the setting of Brewers Cottage which is Grade II Listed. The land to the south of this site is in agricultural use, therefore suitable screening / landscaping will be also be needed to replace any hedgerows removed to accommodate the development and to minimise any visual and landscape impacts and to .The proposed site is of potential archaeological significance. It is, therefore, likely that heritage assets of archaeological interest will be found, i.e. below-ground archaeological remains.
- 6.131 The potential archaeological significance of the site should be further explored, by way of pre-determination evaluation (geophysical survey and trial trenching), before any decision is made as to whether or not the development of the site would be acceptable. Colchester Borough Council will, on request, provide a brief for each stage of the archaeological evaluation.
- 6.132 There is a Water Recycling Centre located to the east of Copford village. Anglian Water however has indicated that there are significant water supply and waste water infrastructure capacity issues in Copford. To address this waste and water treatment from new developments in Copford will be directed to Colchester's Water Recycling Centre. As a precautionary approach, development of these sites cannot come forward until there is sufficient water supply, network capacity, waste water treatment and sewage infrastructure capacity to cope with the 2 developments. Where this cannot be demonstrated it will be necessary to seek further advice from Anglian Water.

#### **SS5 - Copford Housing Sites**

**Within each site shown on the Copford Proposals Map development will be supported which provides:**

- **Adequate wastewater treatment and sewage infrastructure enhancements in the catchment area;**
- **Appropriate SuDS for managing surface water runoff within the overall**

- design and layout of the site; and
- Good design and suitable screening/landscaping to screen the development to protect designated historic buildings and to minimise any negative impact on surrounding landscape.

Contributions to the cost of infrastructure improvements and/or community facilities as required supported by up to date evidence in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) or as informed by the Parish Council or subsequent evidence will be secured to an appropriate level by way of legal agreement or through CIL.

Development of land to the east of Queensberry Avenue will be supported which also provides for :

- Up to 70 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development;
- A single site access via Queensberry Avenue.
- The permanent diversion and or upgrade to the existing Public Right of Way which runs along the western boundary edge of the site.

Development of land to the west of Hall Road will be supported which also provides for:

- Up to 50 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development.
- A single site access via Hall Road
- A safe pedestrian access agreed with the Highways Authority from the site to existing footways and Copford to enhance connectivity
- The potential archaeological significance of the site should be further explored, by way of pre-determination evaluation (geophysical survey and trial trenching). Any findings from the evaluation will need to be reflected in a detailed mitigation strategy for further investigation to be agreed and submitted with the application to preserve in-situ or adequately recorded by excavation, secured by a planning condition.

### **Dedham and Dedham Heath**

6.133 Most of the Dedham parish area falls within the Dedham Vale AONB. The largest settlement within the parish is the main historic village of Dedham to the north. A smaller area of predominantly housing called Dedham Heath lies to the south and two smaller clusters of properties lie to the west and east of Dedham Heath known as Lamb Corner and Bargate Lane respectively. Evidence compiled by the Rural Community Council for Essex (RCCE) demonstrates that Dedham has a very high proportion of detached dwellings (55% compared to just 30% in Essex and 22% in England). To address this and achieve a better mix of properties, new developments will be expected to deliver smaller units which will be suitable for people downsizing and as starter homes.

6.134 Dedham has a range of services and facilities, including its own primary school a GP, Post Office and a number of shops and services. Dedham Heath is a fairly

small settlement with limited services and facilities compared to larger, more sustainable settlements elsewhere in the Borough. However, it lies in close proximity to Dedham and along the bus route into Dedham and Colchester. Only the two larger areas of Dedham are considered to be sustainable. The two smaller clusters at Lamb Corner and Bargate Lane support no services and are more distant from the core area of the settlement and therefore not suitable for further growth.

- 6.135 All of Dedham village and the northern half of Dedham Heath are located within the Dedham Vale AONB. It is essential that any growth does not compromise the overall important function and purpose of the AONB designation and the historic character of Dedham.
- 6.136 Development that would not represent a logical or sensible extension to the existing built up area will be discouraged in order to prevent further ribbon development to the north (along The Heath – to prevent Dedham Heath merging with Dedham), to the west (along Long Road West – to discourage merging with Lamb Corner) to the south (along Long Road East – to discourage merging with Bargate Lane) and to the south to discourage further development away from existing village services and facilities, where it is more rural in character and to protect the important AONB landscape.
- 6.137 Dedham Heath represents the only obvious location for some small scale growth for Dedham. To contribute to the continued sustainability of the key services in the village and accommodate growth amounting to 10% proportionate increase based on the existing settlement size, over the plan period three sites for housing development are allocated - Land north of Long Road West and west of The Heath, Land south of Long Road East and Land north of Long Road East, in accordance with the site allocation policy SS below.
- 6.138 Land north of Long Road West and west of The Heath represents a sensible and logical extension to the built up area that is well enclosed by existing development and would mirror development opposite. Only a single access point will be supported to keep the loss of the protected hedgerow to a minimum. The existing important tree at the cross roads should be retained. Whilst it is within the AONB, the site's location is unlikely to have a significant impact on the wider landscape in terms of its position, but good design and suitable screening/landscaping will be needed to minimise any negative impact.
- 6.139 Land south of Long Road East would be a continuation of the existing settlement form and represents a sensible and logical extension to the built up area. Development will need to provide suitable footpaths into Dedham Heath and a single access point should be encouraged to reduce the amount of hedgerow lost. The site is adjacent to the AONB and so good design and suitable screening / landscaping will be needed to minimise any negative impact on the AONB.
- 6.140 Land north of Long Road East represents a sensible and logical extension to the built up area that is adjacent to existing development and would mirror development opposite. Only a single access point will be supported to keep the loss of hedgerow to a minimum. Development will need to provide suitable

footpaths into Dedham Heath. Whilst it is in the AONB, the site's location is unlikely to have a significant impact on the wider landscape in terms of its position but careful design and positioning and landscaping will be required to minimise visual impact on the AONB. Particularly to preserve views into the site from the surrounding countryside. The site is adjacent to a listed building so will need careful design to minimise any potential adverse impact on it or its setting.

- 6.141 The settlement development boundaries around the small clusters of dwellings are deleted as indicated on the policies map SS6 and listed in appendix 1 to reflect the relationship of these areas to the countryside and the limited sustainability of the locations.

### **Policy SS6 – Dedham Heath Housing Sites**

**Within each of the areas shown on the policies map SS6 development will be supported which provides:**

- **Landowners and developers will be encouraged to work together in conjunction with the Parish Council to plan for development of the three sites in a comprehensive manner;**
- **Future development should include starter homes and smaller units, some of which should be single storey;**
- **A single site access only off Long Road;**
- **Safe pedestrian access from the sites to existing footways to enhance connectivity;**
- **Retention of important landscape features within the site;**
- **Design and suitable screening/landscaping to minimise any negative impact on the AONB;**
- **Adequate wastewater treatment and sewage infrastructure capacity in the catchment area; and**
- **Appropriate SuDS for managing surface water runoff within the overall design and layout of the site.**
- **The potential archaeological significance of the site should be further explored, by way of pre-determination evaluation (geophysical survey and trial trenching). Any findings from the evaluation will need to be reflected in a detailed mitigation strategy for further investigation to be agreed and submitted with the application to preserve in-situ or adequately recorded by excavation, secured by a planning condition**

**Contributions to the cost of infrastructure improvements and/or community facilities as required supported by up to date evidence in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) or as informed by the Parish Council or subsequent evidence which will be secured to an appropriate level by way of legal agreement or through CIL as required.**

**Development of land north of Long Road West and west of The Heath will be supported which also provides:**

- **Up to 6 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development;**



- **Design and suitable screening/landscaping to minimise any negative impact on the adjacent listed building and/or it's setting (Old Church House).**

**Development of land south of Long Road East will be supported which also provides:**

- **Up to 5 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development.**

**Development of land north of Long Road East will be supported which also provides:**

- **Up to 6 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development;**
- **Good design and suitable screening/landscaping to minimise any negative impact on the adjacent listed building and/or it's setting (Old Church House).**

**The Depot on Old Ipswich Road in Dedham is an allocated Local Economic Area that will continue to be retained for this use in the Local Plan. Any future development proposals will be required to comply with policy SG4.**

## **Eight Ash Green**

6.142 Eight Ash Green is a rural parish located approximately 6km to the north west of urban Colchester. Within Eight Ash Green development is mainly concentrated around Fordham Heath and Choats Corner.

6.143 At Fordham Heath, development has grown in a linear pattern around the Halstead Road/Spring Lane junction and northwards along Spring Lane. It extends south-eastwards to the roundabout adjacent to the Holiday Inn. At Choats Corner, development has grown predominantly northwards around the Halstead Road, Wood Lane, Heath Road and Fiddlers Hill highways junctions in an almost rectangular growth pattern. There is small cluster of housing at Seven Star Green, located to the south of Halstead Road which separates these dwellings from the key facilities available in Eight Ash Green village.

6.144 Despite being located approximately 5km from both Marks Tey and Colchester train stations, Eight Ash Green is considered to be a Sustainable Settlement as it has a reasonable number of local services and facilities which serve the needs of local residents . Local facilities include a village hall, 3 shops (a farm shop, a shop within a garage and a mobile shop) and a pub. There is also a primary school located within the Choats Corner settlement boundary. Eight Ash Green also has a takeaway, convenience store and beauty salon.

- 6.145 Stanway School, the closest Secondary School to Eight Ash Green is located approximately 2km from the village. Tollgate Medical Facilities is also located within 2km of the village as is the Stanway Strategic Economic Area.
- 6.146 There are currently 680 households in Eight Ash Green parish. The majority of these dwellings, 569 in total, are concentrated within the Fordham Heath settlement area. which contains 285 dwellings and within the Choats Corner settlement boundary which contains 284 dwellings. The remaining houses are located at Seven Star Green and across the wider parish.
- 6.147 There are a number of constraints which restricts sites available for development within Eight Ash Green. Fordham Heath settlement development boundary is constrained to the north west by Fordham Heath which is an important open space in the village. The village allotments are also allocated on the heath. Development is also constrained northwards beyond Fordham Heath which is a designated Local Site.
- 6.148 Development to the northwest of Choats Corner is limited by Fiddlers Wood which is a designated Local Site. Developing north westerly from Choats Corner would extend new development away from existing key facilities and into open countryside which is not considered sustainable.
- 6.149 Development to the south and south east of Fordham Heath is constrained by residential & leisure developments i.e. Holiday Inn.
- 6.150 Eight Ash Green Parish Council is developing a Neighbourhood Plan which will provide for allocated sites for further growth in the Parish. In discussion with the Neighbourhood Plan Group, it is agreed that Eight Ash Green, could accommodate up to an additional 150 new dwellings over the next 15 years. This is considered an appropriate level of growth which Eight Ash Green has the capacity to absorb, given the current number of dwellings in Eight Ash Green parish, the available facilities and the proximity of the village to Colchester.
- 6.151 The Eight Ash Green Neighbourhood Plan will allocate land for housing in the broad location shown on the policies map and will develop a policy framework to guide and meet all other development or community needs identified by the community in Eight Ash Green up to 2033.

#### **SS7 Eight Ash Green**

**Within the broad area of growth as shown on the Eight Ash Green policies map SS7, the Eight Ash Green NP will:**

- i) Define a new Settlement Development Boundary for Eight Ash Green**
- ii) Identify specific site(s) for housing allocations to deliver up to 150 dwellings.**
- iii) Set out any associated policies needed to support this housing delivery i.e. housing mix, type of new housing and density for each site allocated for housing.**
- iv) The Neighbourhood Plan will also set out the policy framework to guide the delivery of any infrastructure/community facilities required**

**to support the development.**

**Proposals for development outside of the identified broad areas for growth will not be supported. This policy should be read in conjunction with the generic Neighbourhood Planning policy SG7 and the Eight Ash Green Neighbourhood Plan, once it has been made.**

### **Fordham**

- 6.152 Fordham is identified as a sustainable settlement and is a linear village with a core concentration of development which has evolved over time, including a number of small estate type developments. Although well spread out it is well served with key community facilities including, a primary school situated at the southern end of the settlement, village hall, convenience shop / post office and playing field which are located within the centre of the concentrated area of development. Also within the village is a community orchard maintained by the local community as well as an area of community woodland managed by the Woodland Trust.
- 6.153 The character of the village is influenced by a few significant listed buildings and their setting and the extensive areas of well established, locally managed woodland. It is important to protect and where possible enhance these characteristics. Small scale development adjacent to Plummers Road has recently delivered an attractive enhancement to the connectivity between this area and the rest of the village via a landscaped footway set back from the road. Further enhancement to connectivity through the village would be beneficial to existing and future residents.
- 6.154 Allocation of a site to the east of Plummers Road for additional small scale growth up to 20 dwellings is considered a logical extension to the settlement. This provides for the continued sustainability of the key services in the village and accommodates a proportional growth over the plan period. Development of this site will need to respond to particular site constraints including sensitive consideration in relation to the setting of a Listed Building.
- 6.155 The proposed site is of potential archaeological significance. It is, therefore, likely that heritage assets of archaeological interest will be found, i.e. below-ground archaeological remains. This will require further investigation initially by way of pre-determination evaluation report. Decisions on the suitability of the site and also the need for, and scope of, any further archaeological work, should be based upon the results of this evaluation. Please see the Council's website for further information: <http://www.colchester.gov.uk>

### **SS8- Fordham**

**Within the area shown on the policies map SS8 development will be supported which provides;**

- **Up to 20 new dwellings, the mix and type to be informed by evidence including the Fordham Housing Needs Survey;Site**
- **Access from Plummers Road with appropriate junction improvements;**
- **The development will incorporate a new footway along the frontage/behind the existing hedgerow to provide safe pedestrian access from the site to existing footways and the rest of the village.**
- **The potential archaeological significance of the site should be further explored, by way of pre-determination evaluation (geophysical survey and trial trenching). Any findings from the evaluation will need to be reflected in a detailed mitigation strategy for further investigation to be agreed and submitted with the application to preserve in-situ or adequately recorded by excavation, secured by a planning condition**
- **Adequate wastewater treatment and sewage infrastructure capacity in the catchment area;**
- **Appropriate SuDS for managing surface water runoff within the overall design and layout of the site; and**
- **Good design and suitable screening/landscaping to minimise any negative impact on the adjacent listed building and/or it's setting (Plummers Farmhouse).**

**Development will also be expected to contribute to the cost of infrastructure improvements and / or community facilities as required supported by up to date evidence in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) or subsequent evidence which will be secured to an appropriate level by way of legal agreement or through CIL.**

### **Great Horkesley**

6.156 Great Horkesley is essentially linear in shape and has developed over time along the old Roman road that radiates away from north Colchester (now the A134). Development has spread westwards along a number of roads off the main road. Land to the east of the main road has remained relatively free of development and is more open in character. Great Horkesley is fragmented with the main core of the settlement to the south and two smaller fragments to the north along the A134. The southern edge of the main part of the village is approximately 0.6km from the Colchester urban edge and is located north of the A12.

6.157 Great Horkesley is a sustainable village located close to the main Colchester urban area on a key transport route with a good bus service. It has its own primary school, post office and a number of other facilities which are located in the main concentration of development. Great Horkesley's close proximity to the main Colchester urban area means that it is important to seek to prevent coalescence between the southern edge of Great Horkesley and the northern edge of Colchester in order to retain the individual identity of the village.

- 6.158 Development that would not represent a logical or sensible extension to the existing built up area will be discouraged in order to prevent further ribbon development to the north along the A134 and to the west; away from existing village services and facilities and where it is more rural in character.
- 6.159 Infrastructure in the village is at capacity and will need to be improved / enhanced to support any new development. Requirements include new allotments, an extension to the new village hall, improved access to the old village hall and a new scout hut. Improvements will also be sought to the A134 between the village and North Colchester to promote cycling.
- 6.160 Land at Great Horkesley Manor represents a logical extension to the village between existing dwellings at the heart of the village and development would be contained within the wider landscape by a belt of trees and small brook to the east. Access will be from Nayland Road (A134) and access points will need to be kept to a minimum to avoid disrupting the flow of traffic along this busy main road. Suitable traffic management and crossing opportunities will be needed as development here will require school pupils to cross the main road. Appropriate design and landscaping will be required to preserve the setting of the existing manor building and the tree-lined approach road from the main road. Whilst the existing manor building is not listed it is considered to be a visually prominent local building set within large, open grounds, the character of which should be protected.
- 6.161 Land off School Lane to the north of the village offers the opportunity for comprehensive development which includes the redevelopment of a brownfield site and could improve access to the old village hall and the scout hut. The site includes a listed building and care will need to be taken to safeguard its setting. The existing scout hut is in poor condition and development proposals should look to replace and/or contribute to its relocation.
- 6.162 The small cluster of dwellings known as The Crescent, between the two areas of Great Horkesley supports no community facilities and is detached from the other parts of the village. Its Settlement Development Boundary is therefore not retained as illustrated on the policies map SS9 and listed in Appendix 1.

#### **Policy SS9 Great Horkesley**

Within the areas shown on the policies map SS9 new development will be supported which provides:

- Contributions towards improving cycling facilities along the A134;
- Contributions to the enlargement of Great Horkesley New Village Hall;
- Adequate wastewater treatment and sewage infrastructure capacity in the catchment area;
- Appropriate SuDS for managing surface water runoff within the overall design and layout of the site; and

Development of land adjacent to **Great Horkesley Manor** will be supported which also provides

- Up to 80 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing for which there is a demonstrated need;
- Provision of allotments;
- Provision of a scout hut with parking;
- Retention of the belt of trees to the east of the site;
- Access from Nayland Road;
- Suitable traffic management and crossing opportunities on Nayland Road;
- Good design and suitable screening/landscaping to minimise any negative impact on the setting of the existing manor building.

Any proposals will also take into account the Essex Minerals Local Plan and the developer will be required to submit a Minerals Resource Assessment as part of any planning application. Should the viability of extraction be proven, the mineral shall be worked in accordance with a scheme/masterplan as part of the phased delivery of the non-mineral development.

Development of land off **School Lane** will be supported which also provides

- Up to 13 new dwellings;
- Development will facilitate access to the village hall and scout hut from School Lane;
- Development will safeguard the setting of the Church of England School building as a grade 2 listed building and other heritage assets on The Causeway.

The designated Local Economic Area at Holly Lodge Farm shown on the policies map SS9 will be retained and any future development proposals at this site will be required to accord with policy SG4.

## Great Tey

6.163 Great Tey is situated north of the Roman River and is surrounded by largely flat arable land. The parish of Great Tey is a small rural community that contains a few local amenities including a village pub, a school, and a Norman church. The community originally developed at the southern end, as evidenced by the designation of a Conservation Area, with a newer small estate to the north and ribbon development along the main road through the village between Little Tey and Chappel.

6.164 The RCCE completed a Rural Housing Needs Survey in 2012 which indicated a need for 4 affordable units. The Parish Council thus acknowledge a need for lower cost/smaller houses in the village.

6.165 To contribute to the continued sustainability of the key services in the village and accommodate a 6% proportion of growth over the plan period a site for housing development is allocated in accordance with the site allocation policy SS10 below.

6.166 Land at Brook Road is capable of accommodating up to 17 dwellings. This is a sufficient number to meet the need for 4 affordable units as identified in the Rural

Housing Needs Survey. There is a Public Right of Way immediately adjacent to the site, which may need to be upgraded.

#### **SS10 – Brook Road, Great Tey**

**Within the area shown on the policies map SS10 development will be supported which provides:**

- **Up to 17 new dwellings, which shall include some single storey units;**
- **Affordable housing in line with adopted policy and incorporating 4 affordable units for local people to meet the identified local need;**
- **Suitable design and screening/landscaping to minimise any negative impact on the surrounding landscape and the adjacent listed building including its setting (Rectory Cottage).**
- **Safe pedestrian access from the site to existing footways to enhance connectivity;**
- **Adequate wastewater treatment and sewage infrastructure capacity in the catchment area;**
- **Appropriate SuDS for managing surface water runoff within the overall design and layout of the site;**
- **The potential archaeological significance of the site should be further explored, by way of pre-determination evaluation (geophysical survey and trial trenching). Any findings from the evaluation will need to be reflected in a detailed mitigation strategy for further investigation to be agreed and submitted with the application to preserve in-situ or adequately recorded by excavation, secured by a planning condition.**

**Contributions to the cost of infrastructure improvements and/or community facilities as required supported by up to date evidence in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) or as informed by the Parish Council or subsequent evidence which will be secured to an appropriate level by way of legal agreement or through CIL.**

**Tey Brook Farm is an allocated Local Economic Area as shown on the policies map SS10 and will be protected for this use. Any future development proposals will be required to comply with SG4.**

#### **SS11 - Langham**

6.167 Langham includes two settlements, Langham Moor and St. Margaret's Cross, linked by School Road. A former WWII airfield lies between the two areas. The village contains a mixture of historic properties and farmhouses with more recent development.

6.168 Langham has a number of facilities including a community centre and shop, and a primary school with capacity. Langham has limited access to public transport and there are capacity and access issues regarding secondary education and healthcare. Dedham Vale AONB adjoins the village to the east, although it is separated by the A12. Langham's location and the range of services it supports

mean that both areas of Langham are considered suitable for limited proportional growth.

- 6.169 Following the Call for Sites Langham Parish Council collated the views of residents to produce a document, which summarises the views of residents and makes recommendations about development over the plan period.
- 6.170 Residents believe that there should be a clear distinction between urban and rural Colchester and the A12 should continue to be the barrier. The overwhelming view was that major growth would destroy Langham. The document produced by Langham Parish Council suggests a figure of 85 dwellings over the plan period would be appropriate and they recommend the allocation of sites in Wick Road and School Road for small scale growth. The Borough Council agrees that large scale development would not be appropriate in the village but that the settlement can accommodate limited growth and three housing sites are allocated; Land at Wick Road, and two sites in School Road, Langham.
- 6.171 The Council agrees that up to 10 dwellings will be appropriate on Land at Wick Road in keeping with the existing detached housing adjoining and opposite. Land at Wick Road abuts the former airfield and development will need to have regard to both its landscape character and connectivity to existing footpaths.
- 6.172 Land at School Road represents a logical extension to the village as it lies between existing housing and employment sites and is well located for the school and community centre/shop. Two sites are allocated there. The first is allocated for up to 55 dwellings. Whilst the Parish Council favour frontage development there is potential on this site for an estate or green approach to layout given that it is at the heart of the village. The Borough Council also considers that an additional nearby site on School Road is suitable for development for up to 60 dwellings, with its inclusion joining up the two existing areas of Langham Moor and St. Margaret's Cross. This site lies within the much larger Garden Village submission made by landowners, and while this proposal was discounted due to its lack of fit with the Spatial Strategy and Sustainability Appraisal, the School Road frontage is considered suitable for smaller scale development given its position within the village and access to its facilities. Both sites abut the former airfield, and development would need to have regard to both its landscape character and connectivity to existing footpaths.

#### **Policy SS 11 Langham**

**Within each of the areas shown on the policies map SS11 development will be supported which provides:**

- Safe pedestrian access from the sites to existing footways to enhance connectivity;
- Appropriate design and suitable screening/landscaping to minimise any negative impact on the surrounding landscape;
- Adequate wastewater treatment and sewage infrastructure capacity in the catchment area;
- Appropriate SuDS for managing surface water runoff within the overall design and layout of the site.



Contributions to the cost of infrastructure improvements and/or community facilities as required supported by up to date evidence in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) or as informed by the Parish Council or subsequent evidence which will be secured to an appropriate level by way of legal agreement or through CIL.

Development of land at Wick Road will be supported which also provides:

- Up to 10 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development.

Development of two sites in School Road will be supported which also provide for:

- Up to 115 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing for which there is a demonstrated need, including smaller family homes and sheltered housing;
  - One site to the east of the Powerplus site to accommodate up to 55 dwellings.
  - One site to the west of the Powerplus site to accommodate up to 60 dwellings
- The potential archaeological significance of the site should be further explored, by way of pre-determination evaluation (geophysical survey and trial trenching). Any findings from the evaluation will need to be reflected in a detailed mitigation strategy for further investigation to be agreed and submitted with the application to preserve in-situ or adequately recorded by excavation, secured by a planning condition.
- The safeguarding of nearby listed buildings including their setting (Rectory Cottage and School Farm), including suitable screening/landscaping.

The Powerplus Engineering & Whitnell Contractors site on School Road and Langham Airfield in Langham are designated Local Economic Areas as shown on the policies map SS11. The sites will remain allocated and any future development proposals at this location will be required to accord with policy SG4.

### **Layer de la Haye**

6.173 Layer de la Haye is a reasonable sized village located approximately 2.5km from the south western edge of Colchester (Stanway). It is a sustainable location, suitable for proportional growth.

6.174 Development in Layer de la Haye is concentrated within two distinct settlement areas; Layer village and Malting Green. The 2 areas are physically separated by a large grass sward also known as Malting Green, a large area of which is designated as a Local Wildlife Site (Co93). It is also an important open space that helps define the rural character of the existing two settlement areas in Layer de la Haye. To help prevent coalescence and to help preserve this character, the two settlement areas should remain physically separate. Given its small size, lack of facilities and physical separation from Layer village, Malting Green is not considered to be a sustainable location to direct future growth and the existing development boundary is therefore not retained around this group of dwellings.

- 6.175 Layer village is the larger of the 2 defined settlement areas. Development has grown up around Church Road, Birch Road, High Road and Abberton Road crossroads. From the crossroads, ribbon development has extended north eastwards along High Road (B1026) as far as the Donkey and Buskin public house. A second band of ribbon development extends eastwards from the crossroads to the western boundary of Malting Green open space. There has been extensive infill between High Road and Abberton Road.
- 6.176 The Malting Green cluster of dwellings extend in a linear fashion as ribbon development from the eastern edge of Malting Green open space to just before the Abberton Road junction.
- 6.177 Layer village is reasonably well served by community facilities. The village has a primary school, a village shop/ post office, a GP surgery (Winstree Medical Centre), and 2 pubs. The GP surgery is at capacity however and the ECC school capacity report indicates that the school will only have a small capacity of 3 places in 2020. Layer de la Haye benefits from a bus service. A water treatment plant is also situated in the village.
- 6.178 There are approximately 710 dwellings in Layer de la Haye parish. In Layer village there are 494 dwellings while Malting Green is much smaller with approximately 50 dwellings. Layer de la Haye village is considered to be the only sustainable location for new growth.
- 6.179 Growth on the periphery of the Layer is restricted by environmental constraints to the North West due to a wildlife site designation (Co85 Chest Wood and Roman River Complex). Development that would adversely impact onto designated nature conservation sites, or direct new development to flood risk areas will not be supported. Growth that would result in coalescence between Layer village and Malting Green or which would result in more ribbon development into the wider countryside away from existing facilities will also not be supported. Given the above constraints, only one site is considered suitable for allocation in the emerging Local Plan. This site can deliver 50 dwellings which equates to a 10% increase in the number of dwellings in Layer village. Given its proximity to Colchester and the level of available community facilities in Layer village, this is considered an appropriate level of growth over the Local Plan period.

#### **SS12 – Layer de le Haye**

Within the site shown on the Layer de la Haye Policies Map development will be supported which provides:

- Up to 50 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with the surrounding built character and reflecting local needs, evidenced by the Parish Council. Bungalows and small family homes will be encouraged;
- A single access point via Hawthorn Road/Great House Farm Road. There shall be no access onto The Folley;
- A safe pedestrian access agreed with the Highway Authority to existing footpaths and Layer village to improve connectivity;
- Adequate wastewater treatment and sewage infrastructure enhancements in the catchment area;
- Appropriate SuDS for managing surface water runoff within the overall design

and layout of the site;

- Good design and suitable landscaping to screen the development to protect the amenity of existing residents in the neighbouring estate and to minimise any negative impact on surrounding landscape.

Contributions to the cost of infrastructure improvements and/or community facilities as required supported by up to date evidence in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) or subsequent evidence will be secured by way of legal agreement or through CIL.

6.180 There is a small designated Local Economic Area at Queensmead off The Folley which will continue to be protected for employment uses. Any future development proposals at this location will be required to accord with policy SG4.

### **Marks Tey**

6.181 Marks Tey is located at the busy junction of the A12 with the A120. It is essentially a linear settlement that has been bisected by the railway and A12/A120, with a number of community facilities including a railway station to the east and a larger area of modern housing and the primary school to the west.

6.182 Marks Tey is a highly sustainable location and has its own mainline railway station and good bus links, is located at a key junction of two busy strategic routes (A12 and A120) and has a number of shops, sources of employment and services and facilities including a primary school and a village hall. There are currently 1,055 households within the wider Marks Tey Parish area of which 944 dwellings are within the current settlement development boundaries

6.183 Development constraints in Marks Tey include the community separation resulting from the two roads and the rail line running through the village, with only limited pedestrian accessibility currently possible over these barriers. The northeast is affected by environmental constraints including the head of the Roman River valley and a minerals and waste safeguarding zone around the brickworks.

6.184 Reflecting its sustainable location, the wider Marks Tey area has been identified as a location for a Garden Community as identified in Part 1 of the plan. In addition to this Local Plan, future development of the area will also be guided by a new Joint Plan developed with Braintree for the Garden Community area as well as the Neighbourhood Plan being developed by Marks Tey Parish Council.

### **SS13 – Marks Tey**

Growth within the Marks Tey area will largely be guided by the following documents in addition to this Local Plan:

- i) The Joint Plan to be prepared with Braintree for development of a new Garden Community, as provided in Part 1 Policy SP9.
- ii) The Marks Tey Neighbourhood Plan will be developed to include policies to guide the relationship between the existing community of Marks Tey

and the gradual development of an adjoining Garden Community, and will provide scope for the allocation of any small parcels of land for development outwith the Garden Communities. In particular, the Neighbourhood Plan will deal with the allocation of the Anderson's site and the potential of this brownfield site for a mix of uses.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the generic Neighbourhood Planning policy SG7.

6.185 There are currently 2 designated Local Economic Areas in Marks Tey; the Anderson's Site and Poplars Nursery. The Anderson's site, although currently in employment use and allocated for those purposes, has potential for alternative mixed uses given that the current employment use on the site is ceasing. The Neighbourhood Plan is the appropriate mechanism for allocating the extent of future employment or alternative uses on that site. The Poplar Nursery site off the A120 will be de-allocated as a Local Economic Area as it is currently operating as a well-established garden centre. It is therefore no longer appropriate to promote alternative development or use during the plan period.

### **Rowhedge**

6.186 Rowhedge is situated to the south east of Colchester on the western banks of the River Colne; it is the only settlement in the parish of East Donyland. The village has approximately 900 dwellings within its settlement development boundary and this is due to increase in the coming years with the committed development of Rowhedge Wharf which will provide an additional 170 new homes.

6.187 The village has a strong sense of identity which is emphasised by a conservation area at its core and a number of listed buildings, predominately on the riverfront. Rowhedge benefits from its own primary school, GP surgery, village shop, public houses and open space provision. However due to its history as a fishing village the settlement has grown from the port outwards and this has resulted in new development being situated further away from Rowhedge's historic centre where many of its limited services and facilities are located. Rowhedge is considered a sustainable settlement in the sense that it has a number of key services available to its residents however it is also highly constrained by a number of natural and artificial barriers.

6.188 Rowhedge is bordered by the River Colne to the east, and the surrounding land's estuarine nature gives rise to a number of ecological designations which run along the coast and inland to the south of the village. The west of the village is bordered by the Rowhedge Business Centre which whilst providing important local employment opportunities, contains many uses which are not conducive to neighbouring residential uses.

6.189 The north of the village is separated from the urban area of Colchester by a relatively short, but nonetheless valuable, expanse of greenfield land. In addition to providing a valuable buffer between Rowhedge and Colchester, much of this land is designated as Coastal Protection Belt because of its high landscape value.

- 6.190 The forthcoming committed development at Rowhedge Wharf and the exceptional constraints to expansion surrounding the village renders Rowhedge unsuitable for extensive new development. However one site has been allocated which can be accommodated without causing coalescence with Colchester and an unreasonable impact on local services and facilities.

**SS14 – Land to the south of Battleswick Farm, Rowhedge Road**

Within the area shown on the policies map SS14, development will be supported which provides:

- Up to 60 new dwellings of a mix and type compatible with the surrounding area including affordable housing in line with adopted policy;
- Vehicular and pedestrian access from Rowhedge Road, utilising the existing approach to Battleswick Farm. Additionally the development should improve pedestrian connectivity to the rest of the village through footpath provision linking the site to Hill View Close;
- Appropriate SuDS for managing surface water run-off within the overall design and layout of the site;
- The retention and enhancement of existing field boundary vegetation in order to provide adequate landscape buffering between the site and neighbouring housing.

- 6.191 The continued importance of Rowhedge Business Centre towards local employment provision is recognised in its designation as a Local Economic Area as listed in policy SG3. All proposals within this LEA will be required to comply with policy SG4.

**Tiptree**

- 6.192 Tiptree is a large village located on the south west boundary of the borough and approximately 15km from Colchester itself. Tiptree has a roughly triangular built form. Development has grown up around key highway intersections; Kelvedon Road, Maldon Road to the west/north west, around Station Road and Church Road in the middle of the village, Factory Hill, Chapel Road to the south, Grove Road to the east and Colchester to the north/north east. Recently there has been new growth around Grange Road in the west of Tiptree. There is a small separate cluster of houses to the south west of the main village known as Tiptree Heath.
- 6.193 Tiptree Heath is very small and is dependent on services and facilities in Tiptree and is therefore not considered a suitable location for future growth. The settlement boundary is therefore no longer retained in this location.
- 6.194 Tiptree is a District Centre which is an important service centre for Tiptree itself as well as surrounding villages.
- 6.195 The closest train station is in Kelvedon which is approximately 5km from Tiptree. The village however has a reasonable bus network between Tiptree and Colchester, the University of Essex and Maldon.

- 6.196 Tiptree is very well served in terms of educational facilities as it has 4 primary schools and Thurstable Secondary School within the village. There is also a Leisure Centre located at Thurstable School. Colchester United's training ground is also located off Grange Road in west Tiptree. Two supermarkets and a reasonable range of independent retailers and other businesses operate successfully in the centre of the village. There are 4 Local Economic Areas in Tiptree; the Tiptree Jam Factory located on the south eastern edge of Tiptree and Tower Business Park on the north eastern edge of the village. Tiptree Heath SSSI is located to the south west of the main village.
- 6.197 There are currently 3860 households in Tiptree parish with the majority of these dwellings, 3545, concentrated within Tiptree village. The remaining houses are located at Tiptree Heath and scattered across the wider parish.
- 6.198 There are a number of constraints which limits the availability of land available for growth in Tiptree. Development to the south east is constrained by Tiptree Jam Factory and Birch Wood Local Site. Development in this direction would also reduce the green gap between the village and Tolleshunt Knights. Developing in this direction would also be constrained by Layer Brook which is Flood Zone 2. Expansion to the north east of Tiptree is constrained by Thurstable School and Warriors Rest while expansion to the south west is constrained by Tiptree Heath SSSI.
- 6.199 Tiptree Parish Council is currently preparing a Neighbourhood Plan, which will allocate sites for further growth in the Parish. In discussion with the Neighbourhood Plan Group, it is agreed that Tiptree could accommodate up to an additional 600 new dwellings over the plan period given the current number of dwellings in Tiptree, the good availability and access to services and facilities, and the fact that Tiptree is a District Centre. This is considered a proportionate level of growth for Tiptree.
- 6.200 The Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan will set out the planning policy framework needed to support the delivery of 600 houses up to 2033. The Neighbourhood Plan will also be used to allocate sites for any other uses identified by the local community as being important in Tiptree and develop the policy framework needed to support these allocations.

#### **SS15 Tiptree**

**Within the broad areas of growth shown on the Tiptree Policy Map, the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan will:**

- i) Identify the settlement boundary for Tiptree**
- ii) Identify specific sites for housing allocations needed to deliver 600 dwellings.**
- iii) Set out any associated policies needed to support this housing delivery i.e. housing mix, type of housing and density for each site allocated for housing.**
- iv) The Neighbourhood Plan will also set out the policy framework to guide the delivery of any infrastructure/community facilities required to support the development.**

**Proposals for development outside of the identified broad areas and the settlement boundary for growth will not be supported. This policy should be read in conjunction with the generic Neighbourhood Planning policy SG7, policy SG3 and policies in the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan, once it has been adopted.**

- 6.201 The Council's Housing Trajectory reflects that 2 sites, the Tiptree Jam Factory site and Vine Farm (Grange Road) have already secured planning permission for 126 houses and 103 houses respectively. These will not form part of the Neighbourhood Plan as they are already commitments.
- 6.202 There are currently 4 designated Local Economic Areas (LEAs) in Tiptree; the Alexander Cleghorn Site, Tiptree Jam Factory, the Basketworks Site and the Tower Business Park. These will continue to be protected for this use. Any development proposals affecting these sites or any other sites providing an economic/employment use in Tiptree over the Local Plan period will be required to comply with policy EG4 unless they are reviewed and amended through the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan.

### **West Bergholt**

- 6.203 West Bergholt is a rural parish located approximately 1km to the north west of Colchester. The majority of its residents live in the village of West Bergholt.
- 6.204 The village is centred around a triangle of roads: the B1508 Colchester Road; Chapel Road; and Lexden Road. West Bergholt is separated from Colchester by an area of open countryside and the valleys of St Botolph's Brook and the river Colne. The A12 bisects the open countryside between West Bergholt and Colchester.
- 6.205 The majority of more recent new development has occurred on the northern side of Colchester Road, notably on the site of the old brewery.
- 6.206 West Bergholt is considered a Sustainable Settlement as it has a sufficient population base to allow for proportionate growth which will support expansion of infrastructure and community facilities. It is located on a key transport route (B1508) to Colchester with good public transport links to the town centre and to Colchester Station. It has a good level of local facilities including a food store, post office, doctor's surgery, pharmacy and a primary school, and provision of open space, allotments and a village hall located centrally in the village.
- 6.207 A proportionate level of growth, supported by adequate infrastructure, can be physically accommodated in West Bergholt without compromising the existing settlement shape, form and character.
- 6.208 The current population of West Bergholt (2011 Census) is 2,855 with approximately 1,200 dwellings with the defined built up area of the village and a total of 1,365 dwellings within the wider Parish area.

- 6.209 There are a number of constraints which restrict sites available for development. To maintain the current settlement pattern, development will continue to be located around the three main roads with facilities located centrally where possible.
- 6.210 There is currently limited inter-visibility between Colchester and West Bergholt. However, there is a relatively high potential for visual coalescence of settlements and any new built development on land to the south of the village may undermine the sense of settlement separation. Development to the south of the village towards Colchester on Colchester Road is therefore not considered suitable due to the high potential of visual coalescence.
- 6.211 Development to the north of the village on Colchester Road/Nayland Road would extend new development away from existing key facilities and into open countryside, which is not considered sustainable.
- 6.212 West Bergholt Parish Council is currently preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the village, which will provide for allocated sites for further growth in the Parish. Given the current number of dwellings in West Bergholt, the available facilities and the proximity of the village to Colchester, it could accommodate approximately 120 dwellings over the next 15 years. This is considered a proportionate level of growth for West Bergholt.
- 6.213 The West Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan will allocate land for housing and develop a policy framework to guide and meet all other development or community needs identified by the community in West Bergholt and associated with development proposals in West Bergholt up to 2033.

#### **SS16 – West Bergholt**

**Within the broad area of growth as shown on the West Bergholt Proposals map, the West Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan will:**

- i) Identify the settlement boundary for West Bergholt**
- ii) Identify specific sites for housing allocations needed to deliver 120 dwellings.**
- iii) Set out any associated policies needed to support this housing delivery i.e. housing mix, type of new housing and density for each site allocated for housing.**
- iv) The Neighbourhood Plan will also set out the policy framework to guide the delivery of any infrastructure and community facilities required to support the development.**

**Proposals for development outside of the identified broad areas for growth and the settlement boundary will not be supported. This policy should be read in conjunction with the generic Neighbourhood Planning Policy SG7 and the West Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan, once it has been adopted.**



- 6.214 Pattens Yard in West Bergholt is allocated as a Local Economic Area. This site will remain allocated for this use and any future planning applications will be required to accord with policy EG4. Any development proposals affecting this site or any other sites providing an economic/employment use in West Bergholt over the Local Plan period will be required to comply with policy EG4 unless they are reviewed and amended through the West Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan.

## **Mersea Island**

### **West Mersea**

- 6.215 West Mersea is a small coastal town located on the confluence of the Colne and Blackwater Estuaries approximately 15km from the centre of Colchester Town. West Mersea is the larger of two settlements on Mersea Island, the other being the much smaller village of East Mersea. Early development in West Mersea was concentrated around the harbour and nearby oyster pits to the south west of the island. Development has since expanded to the north and west.
- 6.216 West Mersea is a District Centre with a high number of key services and community facilities. Mersea has 2 supermarkets, a primary school a community centre, as well as a range of independent shops, cafes and restaurants but no secondary school. These services support the needs of local residents and businesses on Mersea as well as communities from the surrounding rural areas in the south of the Borough. It will be important to protect the function of the District Centre in Mersea to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the local coastal communities who use it. While West Mersea does not have a train station, frequent bus routes serve the town which bus older pupils off the Island to secondary schools in Colchester and other parts of the Borough.
- 6.217 West Mersea is considered to be a sustainable location for some housing growth. There are currently approximately 3,200 dwellings in West Mersea. The preferred sites could deliver an additional 350 houses over the Local Plan period. This equates to an 11% increase in the number of dwellings, a level which reflects the availability of existing facilities and services

### **East Mersea**

- 6.218 The Parish of East Mersea is a smaller settlement situated on the eastern side of Mersea Island. It comprises a small cluster of dwellings and a limited range of community facilities. It is also home to Cudmore Grove Country Park which is very popular with visitors at weekends and in the holidays. Due to its size and limited facilities, East Mersea is not considered a sustainable location to accommodate substantial additional growth and is now defined as an Other Village in the hierarchy to reflect the important community function the village provides .

## **SS17a – Mersea Housing and Employment**

Within each site shown on the West Mersea Policies Map development will be supported which provides:

- Adequate wastewater treatment and sewage infrastructure enhancements in the catchment area;
- Appropriate SuDS for managing surface water runoff within the overall design and layout of the site;
- Does not conflict with other policies in the development plan.

Contributions to the cost of infrastructure improvements and/or community facilities as required supported by up to date evidence in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) or as informed by the Parish Council or subsequent evidence will be secured to an appropriate level by way of legal agreement or through CIL. Essex County Council has identified a need for contributions towards expansion of Mersea Island Primary School.

Development of land at Dawes Lane, West Mersea will be supported which also provides for :

- Up to 150 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development;
- Public Open Space and childrens play area to adjacent to The Glebe
- A single site access off East Road.
- The potential archaeological significance of the site should be further explored, by way of pre-determination evaluation (geophysical survey and trial trenching). Any findings from the evaluation will need to be reflected in a detailed mitigation strategy for further investigation to be agreed and submitted with the application to preserve in-situ or adequately recorded by excavation, secured by a planning condition.
- Suitable landscaping to screen the development to minimise any negative impact on the surrounding landscape and to protect the open rural character of land within the Coastal Protection Belt.

Development of land at Brierley Paddocks, East Road will be supported which also provides for:

- Up to 200 new dwellings of a mix and type of housing to be compatible with surrounding development.
- An access via Brierley Paddocks to East Road
- A safe pedestrian access agreed with the Highways Authority from the site to existing footways and to West Mersea to enhance connectivity
- Highways upgrades agreed by and compliant with the most up to date Highway Authority standards
- New Public Open Space.
- Design and suitable screening/landscaping to minimise any negative impacts on the adjacent listed building and/or its setting ( Brierley Hall)

There are 3 designated Local Economic Areas in Mersea as shown on the Policies Map that will continue to be safeguarded for this use. Any future development proposals at these sites will be required to comply with policies EG4.

## Coast Road

- 6.219 The coastal area of the Borough around Mersea Island is an extremely rich, diverse and irreplaceable natural asset in terms of its natural and cultural features. It includes substantial parts of the Colne and Blackwater Estuaries. The ecological importance of the Colne and Blackwater Estuaries is reflected by the variety of international and European designations covering them i.e. Ramsar sites, Special Protection Areas (Birds Directive), and the Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designated under the Habitats Directive. There are also a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest and designated around the estuaries.
- 6.220 Mersea is an important tourism destination in the Borough. Tourism makes an important contribution to both the local Mersea economy and the wider Borough economy. As a consequence there are a number of diverse and competing interests which all need to be managed in an integrated way within the Borough's coastal zone. These include internationally important habitats, land and water-based recreation, tourism, fishing, archaeological and historic environment assets.
- 6.221 Climate change including sea level rise is also likely to increase pressure regarding the management of coastal habitats and coastal communities along the Borough's coastal fringe.
- 6.222 Future development proposals will have to balance the need to protect the important natural and cultural assets at the coast against competing development pressures and the need to support wider socio-economic needs of the Borough's coastal communities.
- 6.223 Development proposals on the landward and seaward side of Coast Road will have to further balance these issues against the need to protect and enhance the traditional maritime character of this part of West Mersea. Sequentially preferred maritime related uses which could be supported along Coast Road include boatyards, boat restoration business; ancillary uses related to boating, sailing, chandlers, fishing, specialised fish restaurants, fish cookery schools and water based leisure businesses. Proposals for additional residential development on Coast Road will generally not be considered suitable or sustainable and will only be supported where sequentially preferred maritime related uses have been discounted.in agreement with the Council.
- 6.224 The current Essex and Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan has shown that the West Mersea coastal frontage is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and coastal processes. Future land uses and developments along the coastal frontage will be required to demonstrate the ability to adopt a roll back approach in response to changing local climatic conditions.

#### **SS17b- Coast Road**

Development proposals on the seaward and landward side of Coast Road, West Mersea, will be supported where they:

- i) Are located within the area defined as the developed coast and the

- (ii) development is such that a coastal location is required; Will not be significantly detrimental to conserving important nature conservation and historic environment assets, maritime uses, the traditional maritime character of Coast Road and the landscape character of the coast;
- (iii) Will deliver or sustain social and economic benefits considered important to the wellbeing of the coastal communities
- (iv) will not generate a significant increase in traffic
- (v) is an appropriate use with regards to flood risk

Proposals for all development and change of use on both the landward and seaward sides of Coast Road, West Mersea, will be expected to enhance the West Mersea Conservation Area and the traditional maritime character of the Coast Road, as well as its role as a major yachting, fishing and boating centre. Proposals that would result in the development of existing undeveloped areas of foreshore will not generally be supported unless they accord with criteria in the Coastal Areas policy ENV2.

In exceptional circumstances, development may be permitted where it is proven that the proposal provides an over-whelming public or community benefit that outweighs all other material considerations. In such instances applications must demonstrate that the site is the only available option and be acceptable in terms of its other planning merits.

**Houseboats** Proposals for new moorings for permanent residential houseboats will not be permitted in coastal areas including Coast Road because of their landscape and environmental impact on the Internationally designated habitats. Applications for infrastructure to support existing houseboats including jetties, sheds, platforms and fences and for replacement houseboats or houseboat alterations considered to result in material alterations will be considered on the basis of their scale and impact on surrounding amenity, environment and landscape.

## **Caravan Parks**

6.225 There are 6 caravan parks on Mersea Island; Firs Chase, Waldegraves, Seaview, Coopers Beach, Fen Farm and Cosways.

6.226 The Council recognises the valuable contribution that these caravan parks make to the supply of holiday accommodation for visitors to Mersea and the rest of the borough. They are also an important element of the local tourism industry and their retention and improvement is generally supported.

6.227 Caravan Parks are under increasing pressure to extend both the length of their opening season and also the range of activities and events operating on the sites to help sustain their business. This can generate local impacts that need to be carefully managed.

6.228 The caravan parks on Mersea are located adjacent to internationally designated Natura 2000 sites and because of their coastal frontage locations can be potentially vulnerable to increased risk from flooding. As an important tourist

destination, the protection of the EU designated bathing waters around Mersea is an important consideration. All tourism related development proposals including the extension of caravan parks will have to demonstrate that there is adequate waste water and sewage treatment infrastructure in place to serve the proposed development to help protect EU designated coastal bathing waters. As part of this process applicants should consult with the Environment Agency at an early stage in the planning application process to ensure that sewage disposal options are fully considered.

- 6.229 All coastal tourism developments must also be sensitive to and integrate well with their sensitive coastal environment and surrounding rural landscape and respect the special characteristics of the Coastal Protection Belt defined on the Proposals Map.
- 6.230 Proposals to extend existing holiday parks on Mersea located adjacent to designated coastal sites will only be supported where a sympathetic development approach is followed and mitigation measures implemented to minimise environmental impacts on neighbouring Natura 2000 sites. Mitigation proposals will need to be agreed with Colchester Borough Council and Natural England prior to development commencing.
- 6.231 Extensions to existing caravan parks should not impact on the amenity of residents living and working in close proximity to the parks, through increased noise or light pollution. Proposals should promote a range of measures to encourage sustainable travel for leisure to help mitigate and reduce the impact of leisure related traffic on Mersea Island.
- 6.232 Sites allocated as Caravan Parks as shown on policies map SS17 will be safeguarded for this use against other less appropriate types of development.

#### **SS17c - Caravan Parks**

Applications to extend existing caravan parks including any change of use / activity on the sites on Mersea Island will be supported when they:

- i) Have adequate wastewater treatment and sewage infrastructure capacity to serve the caravan park and to protect the EU designated coastal bathing water quality;
- ii) Help protect the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites and minimise disturbance to migratory or over wintering birds using the sites
- iii) Minimise impact on the amenity of residents or businesses living or operating near the site;
- iv) Are supported with a Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment and Flood Management & Flood Evacuation Plan;
- v) Are supported by measures to promote sustainable travel for leisure on Mersea.

All caravan park extension proposals should be supported by a site specific Flood Risk Assessment and Flood Management and Evacuation Plan. Proposals for caravan extensions in flood zone 3 land will not generally be supported due to the

increased risk to people and property from coastal flooding.
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## **Wivenhoe**

- 6.233 Originally Wivenhoe comprised two separate settlements: Wivenhoe Cross which was centred on the crossroads of Colchester Road, Rectory Road and The Avenue; and Wivenhoe to the south which was centred on the quay.
- 6.234 More recent development has resulted in the coalescence of these two distinct settlements into one .
- 6.235 Since the 1970's growth has included significant 'estate' development including Dene Park during the 1970s; Broomsgrove to the west in the 1970/80s; Ferry Marsh in the 2000's and most recently Cooks Shipyard..
- 6.236 The town benefits from good infrastructure provision including a mainline train station, a GP surgery, two primary schools, numerous shops and restaurants and abundant open space provision. There are also frequent bus services between Wivenhoe and Colchester and a cycle path between Wivenhoe, and the University of Essex (the town's biggest employer) has recently been built. There is a well-used footpath and cycle route to Colchester along the River Colne, which increases the sustainable nature of the settlement and makes it suitable for additional future growth within the Local Plan period.
- 6.237 There are currently approximately 3335 dwellings in Wivenhoe Parish with 3,200 dwellings concentrated within Wivenhoe Town. It has been proposed that an additional 250 new dwellings should be delivered within Wivenhoe by 2033. Wivenhoe is a District Centre and maybe expected to accommodate a higher number of new homes , but an extra 250 houses delivered over this period is considered to be appropriate, along with a number of new homes within the Parish which will be allocated in the University Garden Village. There are a number of constraints which has influenced the amount of growth considered proportionate for Wivenhoe.
- 6.238 Broomsgrove and Millfields schools are both operating at capacity but are currently still accepting a small number of pupils from outside of Wivenhoe, therefore there is capacity, albeit limited, for some additional residential development. The town, however, lacks a secondary school with most children attending the Colne Academy in Brightlingsea or Colchester Academy in Greenstead. Finally, Wivenhoe is bordered by the River Colne to the west and south. In addition to the physical boundary that the river presents, there are also other associated constraints such as EA Flood Zone 3 areas, SSSI, SPA and the Coastal Protection Belt which reduces the availability of suitable sites for new development.
- 6.239 Wivenhoe Town Council is currently preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for Wivenhoe which will set out the planning policy framework needed to support the

delivery of 250 houses up to 2033. The Neighbourhood Plan will also be used to allocate sites for any other uses identified by the local community as being important in Wivenhoe and develop the policy framework needed to support any such allocations.

### **SS18 - Wivenhoe**

Within the broad areas of growth as shown on the Wivenhoe Proposals map, the Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan will:

- i) Identify the settlement boundary for Wivenhoe
- ii) Identify specific sites for housing allocations needed to deliver 250 dwellings.
- iii) Set out any associated policies needed to support this housing delivery i.e. housing mix, type of housing and density for each site allocated for housing.
- iv) The Neighbourhood Plan will also set out the infrastructure requirements to support new development.

Proposals for development outside of the identified broad areas/ settlement boundary for growth will not be supported. This policy should be read in conjunction with the generic Neighbourhood Planning policy SG7, policy SG3 and policies in the Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan once it has been adopted.

## **6.240 Alternative option for Sustainable Settlements**

***Selection of alternative sites for development*** – The Council carefully considered a number of alternative sites, but only selected those sites which firstly, accorded with the overall spatial hierarchy and strategic policies for the Borough and secondly, satisfied the criteria for sustainable and deliverable sites set by the Strategic Land Availability Assessment and the Sustainability Appraisal. The alternative sites considered included both those received through the Call for Sites process as well as a number of other sites it was aware of from earlier assessments; current development allocations which remain undeveloped, and land in broadly sustainable locations which had not been put forward for assessment elsewhere. In addition the evidence base on the Settlement Boundary Review considered the relative sustainability of the settlements which informed the spatial hierarchy. It also assesses the potential capacity in each of the sustainable settlements taking into account a range of opportunities and constraints which together with the SLAA and the SA fully considered alternative sites.

## **Other Villages and Countryside**

6.241 National evidence indicates that villages in the catchment area of larger towns struggle to retain facilities, even when more housing is built. Colchester Town is the main provider of shopping, services, employment, and community facilities for

the Borough as a whole. Elsewhere in the Borough, only Wivenhoe, Tiptree and West Mersea provide a sufficient level of shops, services and employment to maintain a reasonable level of self containment. In general, rural communities do not provide sufficient shops, services and facilities to support significant growth.

6.242 Settlements within the Other Villages category as defined in the Settlement Hierarchy tend to be small villages which functionally act as local service centres which the local communities rely on for basic facilities and as social hubs. These smaller rural villages often operate as clusters by sharing key services which help provide a strong sense of community for the communities living and working there. These settlements can accommodate a limited amount of small scale development. Appropriate development proposals therefore that meet a local housing need, increase rural employment opportunities, optimise the sustainability of villages by contributing towards community facilities, or which help retain the vitality and sense of community will be supported.

6.243 Within the Countryside, there are a number of very small villages/hamlets and isolated clusters of dwellings which lack any community facilities or services and rely on nearby larger villages or towns to meet their daily needs. Development within the countryside will be limited to activities that either require a rural location, help sustain a rural community and local economy and which help protect the rural character of the areas where a development is being delivered.

6.244 The Council is also seeking to sustain and enhance local employment and rural enterprises in the Borough. Regard should be had to policy DM5 which sets out the planning approach for economic development in rural Colchester.

#### **Policy OV1 – Development in Other Villages and Countryside**

The Borough Council will support proposals that enhance the vitality of rural communities and help maintain the sense of community provided by smaller rural villages and in rural areas.

Within settlements classed as **Other Villages**, the council will support proposals for appropriate new infill developments, development on previously developed sites, extensions, restorations or alterations to existing buildings within the defined settlement boundaries.

The design and construction of new village development must be high quality in all respects, including design, sustainability and compatibility with the distinctive character of the locality. Development should also contribute to the local community through the provision of relevant community needs e.g. affordable housing, open space, local employment and community facilities or contribute to mitigating issues such as flooding.

Development outside but contiguous to defined village limits may be supported, primarily where it constitutes an exception to meet identified local affordable housing needs.



### **Countryside**

Development in the countryside, (outside defined settlement boundaries), will be restricted to small scale housing developments needed to meet local needs and will be considered favourably on appropriate sites where they are supported with a Local Housing Needs Assessment. Appropriately scaled and well designed conversions, extensions and renovation of existing dwellings/buildings will also be supported, subject to compliance with other policies in the plan, in particular Policy DM11 on alterations and extensions and DM12 on rural workers housing.

Proposals for sustainable rural business, leisure and tourism schemes, development essential to the effective operation of agriculture, horticulture, forestry, infrastructure, renewable energy generation; and minerals or waste operations in the adopted Essex Minerals and Waste Local Plans may also require a countryside location. Policy DM5 Employment in the Countryside, provides further guidance on the topic, in general, proposals for these types of developments will be supported if they are of an appropriate scale, meet a local employment need, minimise negative environmental impacts, and harmonise with the local character and surrounding countryside where they are being proposed.

Wormingford Airfield is located in the open countryside and is currently designated as an Local Economic Area. This LEA will continue to be protected for this use given its scale and the fact that the nature of the businesses operating from this LEA is more suited to a rural location. Proposals for development within Wormingford Airfield LEA will be required to accord with SG4.

#### **6.245 Alternative Options considered**

***No change to existing policy*** – retaining the existing policy ENV2 would be inconsistent with the new Settlement Boundary approach being proposed in the emerging Settlement Boundary Review. ENV2 does not distinguish between the development approach towards the type of development that could be supported in Other villages and the more restrictive approach to development in the Countryside. This clarification is needed to support the proposals in the Settlement Boundary to remove settlements boundaries from small villages and to demonstrate that removal of the settlement boundary will not prevent appropriate development and change in rural villages.

## 7. Development Management Policies

- 7.1 The development management policies below will guide the development management (planning application) process. They set out how development will be managed to ensure that it contributes towards the vision and objectives, via the strategic framework put in place by the policies contained in Part 1 and those covering Sustainable Growth, Climate Change, Environmental Assets and Places in Part 2.

### Health and Wellbeing

- 7.2 In recent years there has been a growing acknowledgement that the quality of the built environment and its sustainability are key factors in both the direct health of and the life style choices affecting the health of residents, workers and visitors of new developments.
- 7.3 Most development has a potential impact upon the health services and facilities that are provided in the Borough. Likewise, through the design of new development, healthy living can be promoted. The extent of these impacts needs to be assessed to ensure that adequate health services continue to be provided for the community as a whole. For developments which have relatively little impact upon health services, an initial assessment may be sufficient to satisfy the requirements of this policy. For developments where an initial assessment indicates more significant health impacts, a comprehensive Health Impact Assessment (HIA) will be required. The Borough Council will liaise with the NHS East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group when assessing the scope and scale of likely impacts. HIA should be prepared following the current best practice advice and reflect the most up to date evidence. Further details on preparing Health Impact Assessments can be found in the Guidance Note on HIAs produced by the Essex Planning Officers Association (March 2008).
- 7.4 Colchester has designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) due to levels of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) that exceed legally binding limits and have a significant impact on the health of local residents. Development schemes with a potential to cause harmful emissions to the atmosphere, including considerations of cumulative impact, will be required to assess these impacts and provide appropriate mitigation in line with the Borough's Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) and Low Emission Strategy (LES).

#### DM1 Health and Wellbeing

All development should be designed to help promote healthy lifestyles and avoid causing adverse impacts on public health through;

- Ensuring good access to health facilities and services;
- Providing a healthy living environment where healthy lifestyles can be promoted including green space and creating attractive opportunities for activities including walking and cycling;
- Providing appropriate mitigation to avoid harmful emissions.

Health Impact Assessments (HIA) will be required for all residential development in

excess of 100 units and non-residential development in excess of 2500 square metres and for other developments where the proposal is likely to have a significant impact on health and wellbeing. The purpose of the HIA will be to identify the potential health consequences of a proposal on a given population, maximise the positive health benefits and minimise potential adverse effects on health and inequalities. Any HIA must be prepared in accordance with the advice and best practice for such assessments.

All developments with the potential to cause a deterioration in air quality will be required to provide appropriate mitigation and where relevant, schemes will be required to provide an air quality assessment.

Measures to mitigate any adverse impacts of the development will be provided and / or secured by planning conditions, Section 106 contributions or CIL.

Development which will have an unacceptable significant impact on health and wellbeing which cannot be mitigated will not be permitted.

## 7.5 Alternative Options considered

***No change to existing policy*** - Whilst the policy may be adequate, reviewing the wording enables a clearer steer against which to determine applications where there are adverse impacts on the health and wellbeing of the community.

***Relate requirement for HIA to EIA development*** - It may emerge in the future that an HIA is incorporated into Environmental Health Impact Assessment (EIA) so by implication will be required only when an EIA is triggered. The revised EU EIA Directive provides an opportunity for an integrated impact assessment to be undertaken, incorporating HIA within the EIA process. Provided this is undertaken thoroughly, then the EIA may be an adequate vehicle for consideration of the effects of projects on human health. However, the mechanisms for dealing more comprehensively with health in EIA have not been tested through practitioners' best practice, public consultation, the decision-making processes, or the courts. HIA is much more of a subjective and qualitative process and currently does not lend itself well to specific predicted outcomes or levels of significance in terms of community health impacts. It is therefore considered premature for the requirement for an HIA to be linked to an EIA, furthermore there may still be smaller proposals which do not trigger the requirement for an EIA, but that there is justification to assess the health impacts and therefore require an HIA.

***No requirement for HIA*** - This would leave the Council open to challenge since it would not have any means to seek supporting information to measure the potential impacts of proposed development on health and wellbeing which in turn may lead to non-compliance with national policy.

## **Community Facilities**

- 7.6 Community facilities are an essential element of sustainable communities providing for education, childcare, health, culture, recreation, religion and policing (see Glossary). Policies elsewhere in the plan also cover protection and provision of open space and recreation facilities.
- 7.7 The Council needs to deliver a comprehensive range of high quality and accessible community facilities to meet the needs of new and existing communities in Colchester. Community projects which have been delivered recently, such as the Community Stadium and Firstsite, have regional and national significance. Local facilities such as schools and health centres also need to be delivered to support new and existing communities. A table will be included in the full/final plan) that will set out the key community facilities to be delivered in Colchester during the plan period. Additional facilities may also be delivered as part of new developments.
- 7.8 The Borough Council will safeguard existing facilities and will work with partners including the local community to bring together funding from a variety of public and private sources to deliver new community facilities. Development proposals will be required to review community needs and provide community facilities to meet the needs of the new population and mitigate impacts on existing communities.
- 7.9 The Council wishes to protect viable community facilities and services that play an important role in the social infrastructure of the area and support sustainable communities. In communities where access to alternatives may be very limited, the presence of key facilities may be very important in maintaining the quality of life. Examples of community sites and buildings include amenity open space, children's play areas, sports fields, village halls, local shops, leisure and cultural centres, public houses, community centres, churches, allotments, post offices, petrol stations, doctor's surgeries, libraries and schools, etc. In line with the NPPF (paragraph 70) the Council will guard against unnecessary loss of important facilities using processes such as listing facilities as Assets of Community Value where appropriate (under the provisions the Localism Act 2011).
- 7.10 The release of any community facilities must be fully justified. The Council will require any application involving the loss of a facility to be supported by written evidence and applicants should contact the Council at the earliest stage to discuss the details. The level of detail to be submitted will vary according to the level of access to alternative facilities and the extent to which the facility contributes towards sustainable communities but could be expected to include such evidence as:
- (i) In the case of a business, the current and projected trading performance;
  - (ii) In the case of a community facility, the current and projected patterns of use;
  - (iii) The nature and condition of the building and the cost of repairs, renovations or improvements needed to allow the facility to continue in operation;
  - (iv) The extent of the local catchment including the location of the premises in relation to local settlement pattern and accessibility;

- (v) The nature and location of comparable facilities;
- (vi) The potential to relocate the use into other premises in the community;
- (vii) In respect of public houses, the approaches and attempts to transfer from a chain of tied pubs to a free house;
- (viii) In the case of a business, evidence that it has been offered on the open market as a whole (parts having not been identified for separate sale) and at a realistic market value. This should be for a period of not less than six months by a competent agent. Evidence should include sales literature, details of approaches, and details of offers; and
- (ix) Evidence that the local community has been notified in writing of the intention to close the facility and has not, within a period of six months come forward with a realistic proposal to assume operation of the facility, including its proposals to finance and operate the facility.

7.11 The importance of particular facilities will vary between communities, and it is essential that the community is involved in considering the importance of any facility and the suitability of any proposals for alternative forms (and locations) of provision, and in developing means of retaining facilities, should their continued viability of operation be in doubt. Applicants proposing to redevelop or convert facilities valued by the community will be expected to consult local communities about the relative importance of the facilities which could be lost. Not all facilities satisfactorily meet the needs of local communities, and it may be that combining or rationalising facilities might be appropriate. This will be informed by the most up to date relevant evidence such as the Community Facilities Audit and Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities.

7.12 Support will be given to the provision of additional facilities where this will enhance the sustainability of community life and will meet the anticipated needs of a growing and changing population. The use of developer contributions and/or the Community Infrastructure Levy may well be appropriate in this respect. Further details of appropriate contributions can be found in the Community Facilities SPD and the Provision of Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities SPD.

### **Policy DM2 - Community Facilities**

The Council will seek the retention of all existing community facilities and services and allocations for such uses where they meet / will meet an identified local need.

Any proposal that would result in the loss of a site or building currently or last used for the provision of facilities, services, leisure or cultural activities that benefit the community, will only be supported in cases where the Council is satisfied that:

- (i) An alternative community facility to meet local needs is, or will be, provided in an equally or more accessible location within walking distance of the locality (800 m); or
- (ii) It has been proven that it would not be economically viable to retain the

- site/building for a community use; and
- (iii) The community facility could not be provided or operated by either the current occupier or by any alternative occupier, and it has been marketed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority in order to confirm that there is no interest and the site or building is genuinely redundant; and
  - (iv) A satisfactory assessment has taken place that proves that there is an excess of such provision and the site or building is not needed for any other community facility or use.

New development will be required to provide, or contribute towards the provision of community facilities including education to meet the needs of new and expanded communities and mitigate impacts on existing communities, which will be secured by Section 106 contributions or CIL.

Where existing facilities can be enhanced to serve new development, the Council will work with developers and local partners to audit existing facilities and assess the requirement for additional facilities to deliver comprehensive provision of services to serve these extended communities.

The Council will work with local partners, such as Parish Councils or Community Associations, to plan and manage community facilities.

## **Education Provision**

7.13 Expansion to existing as well as new primary schools, secondary schools and early years provision will be needed in the Borough to support the new homes and communities that are being created. The NPPF (paragraph 72) sets out that great importance should be placed on the need to provide new school places. It also states that local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, giving great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools. The amount of land required is specified by Essex County Council as Local Education Authority. New designations will be subject to detailed design and layout to ensure the schools are located in the best positions for new communities.

7.14 Existing schools and education facilities, including early years, higher and further education will be supported to ensure they are able to deliver high quality educational provision and act as hubs for their local community. Remodelling and expansion of schools and education facilities will be supported wherever possible. The loss of school grounds or school buildings themselves will only be supported where it has been proven that there is no longer an educational need for the site, now or in the future, or that improved accommodation is being provided in an alternative location. Applications for existing schools are often dealt with by the County Council, but in some circumstances the Borough Council will be the relevant local planning authority. The new policy will apply for decisions made by Colchester Borough Council, and will be used to inform any consultation responses submitted to applications which are determined by Essex County Council, or any other appropriate agency.

### **Policy DM3 -New Education Provision**

Sites proposed, or in current educational use, will be protected for that use. The change of use, or re-development of educational establishments and their grounds, will not be permitted unless:

- It can be clearly demonstrated that the use of the site is genuinely redundant and no other alternative educational, or community use can be found; and
- Satisfactory alternative and improved facilities will be provided; and
- The area of the site to be redeveloped is genuinely in excess of Government guidelines for playing field provision, taking into account future educational projections.

The Council will respond positively to and support appropriate and well-designed applications regarding the creation of new school and education facilities. As expressed in the NPPF, the Council will use a presumption in favour of the development of schools and educational uses. The Council will engage in pre-application discussions with promoters to develop a collaborative approach to suitable applications. Where necessary, the Council will utilise planning obligations to help to mitigate any adverse impacts of an educational development and assist in delivering development that has a positive impact on the community.

The Council recognises the differences in location and design requirements between rural and urban based education proposals in the Borough and will assess applications accordingly. For example, a rural based school application in particular must promote adequate and reliable public transport provision for its students.

#### **7.15 Alternative options considered**

**No Policy / Rely on the NPPF** - Whilst the NPPF provides support for the principles set out in the policy it is necessary to add more specific guidance to enable policy guidance to respond to the local priorities and context. In respect of policy on education, a strong permissive steer is to support new academies and free schools in the NPPF, so it is therefore important that a policy provides further guidance to provide the opportunity to inform proposals and seek appropriate mitigation if required.

### **Strategic Sports**

7.16 The existing sport, leisure and public and private open spaces within the Borough, represent important assets serving the communities in which they are located (or in some instances wider areas). This importance can relate not only to their function, but also to the amenity value and contribution to the character of an area in general in providing 'green lung', opportunities for a well-designed and inclusive public realm, and visual breaks in the built environment. If such provisions are lost to other uses it can be extremely difficult to find alternative locations particularly as open land is scarce and, therefore, at a premium.

- 7.17 Against this background, it is intended to secure the retention and enhancement of existing facilities unless a case can be made that alternative provision will be provided in a wholly acceptable manner. There are a wide range of organisations currently delivering sport and leisure facilities within the Borough including strategic sports providers such as the University of Essex, the Garrison and Colchester Institute.
- 7.18 A Strategic Sports Board has been established and a Sports Delivery Group is being formed to ensure that the delivery of sports and leisure facilities is planned and delivered in a coherent way.
- 7.19 The Council will work with the Strategic Sports Providers as well as developers, schools, sports governing bodies, sports clubs, Active Essex/Active Colchester and Sport England to plan for and secure the delivery of a range of new sport and leisure facilities across the Borough over the plan period to serve residents' needs, encourage active lifestyles and to increase participation in formal and informal recreation.
- 7.20 A number of documents will be used by the Council when assessing planning applications relating to proposed development of open space and sports facilities. These include the Sports Facilities Strategies (and subsequent updates) and Sports Development Plans prepared by other strategic sports providers in Colchester. Sport England will be consulted on any application that is likely to prejudice the use of or lead to the loss of use of land used as a playing field (whether presently used, or used within the last 5 years, or allocated for such use).

#### **DM4 - Sports Provision**

**CBC will work with a range of sports providers across the Borough to protect, enhance and deliver new sports and leisure facilities to encourage active lifestyles and to increase participation in formal and informal recreation.**

**The delivery of new sports facilities will be focused at hub sites including The Teys Garden Community and the University Garden Village; North Colchester; the University of Essex and the Garrison. Development at these locations will be required to contribute to the delivery of the sport and leisure needs identified in the Sports Facilities Strategies, in the respective Sports Development Plans for The Garrison, University of Essex and North Colchester (Northern Gateway).**

**Development at other locations in the Borough will be also required to contribute to the provision or enhancement of sport or leisure facilities where a need has been identified.**

**The Council will seek to secure community use as part of all new strategic sports proposals and as part of other smaller sport and leisure schemes submitted where it is practical to do so.**

**Development, including change of use, of any existing or proposed sports**



ground or playing field will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that:

- (i) Alternative and improved provision will be created in a location well related to the functional requirements of the relocated use and its existing and future users;
- (ii) The proposal would not result in the loss of an area important for its amenity or contribution to the green infrastructure network or to the character of the area in general; and
- (iii) It achieves the aims of the Colchester Sports Facilities Strategy.

Development proposals resulting in a loss of indoor or outdoor sport/recreational facilities must additionally demonstrate that:

- (iv) There is an identified excess provision within the catchment of the facility and no likely shortfall is expected within the plan period; or
- (v) Alternative and improved sport /recreational provision will be delivered at a location well-related to the functional requirements of the relocated use and its existing and future users.

In all cases, development will not be permitted that would result in any deficiencies in sports provision or increase existing deficiencies in the area either at the time of the proposal or be likely to result in a shortfall within the plan period.

## **Policy alternatives**

- 7.21 No change to existing policy** – the current policy could have been retained but new evidence has been gathered about sport and leisure needs in the Borough which is not reflected in the current policy.

## **Tourism, Leisure, Culture and Heritage**

- 7.22** Colchester's rich historic heritage and range of beautiful landscapes provides the basis for an important tourism sector which creates jobs and provides facilities, attraction and environments for visitors that also enhance the quality of life for local residents. Proposals to support this sector will accordingly be supported subject to their accordance with the Council's spatial hierarchy and policies. It is important to ensure that new development does not detract from the settings and features that make visitor destinations attractive and distinctive.
- 7.23** The Borough's historic Town Centre is the focal point for visitor attractions and accommodation as well as leisure and cultural facilities. In line with national policy, proposals falling within the category of 'town centre uses' as defined in the NPPF glossary will be subject to a sequential test to ensure they align with the Council's spatial hierarchy which prioritises the town centre.
- 7.24** In rural areas, the council recognises that existing visitor accommodation sites may be an acceptable location for further small-scale development although not readily accessible by public transport. In order to maximise the benefits of tourism

to rural economies it is important to locate new tourism development in locations where visitors can help to support local shops, pubs and other rural services. Some leisure and cultural facilities including sports facilities such as golf courses, sports pitches and water-based attractions require significant amount of open space and accordingly can be appropriate for suitable countryside locations. Given that they also entail environmental and visual impacts from built structures, increased traffic and landscape and habitat changes, it is important to ensure new facilities are evaluated carefully in light of considerations of amenity, environmental and landscape impact and accessibility. Proposals for new or extended visitor facilities will be assessed against their ability to help deliver policies SD1, SG4; ENV1 (Environment) OV1) (DM23) & DM24, ENV4 and WC3 and other relevant policies.

#### **DM5– Tourism, Leisure, Culture and Heritage**

**Development for new and extended visitor attractions, leisure, cultural and heritage facilities along with visitor accommodation (including hotels, bed & breakfast accommodation, self-catering accommodation, holiday lodges, static and touring caravans and camping sites) will be supported in suitable locations subject to minimising their impact on neighbouring areas. Proposals for tourism, leisure, culture and heritage development should be appropriate in scale and function to their surrounding area; be accessible by a choice of means of transport; and not cause significant harm to the amenity of people living and working nearby.**

**In locations where residential use would be inappropriate, developments of visitor accommodation will be limited by condition or legal agreement to holiday use only and/or certain periods of the year in order to prevent permanent or long-term occupation.**

#### **7.25 Alternative options considered**

***No policy/rely on the NPPF*** – The importance of the tourism, leisure and culture sectors to the Colchester economy and quality of place warrants specific policy attention to ensure an appropriate level of provision.

### **Economic Development in Rural Areas and the Countryside**

**7.26** The Local Plan supports rural communities and sets out a flexible approach that maintains a balance between environmental considerations and appropriate business growth. The countryside is viewed as a good location for some businesses, particularly those specific to rural tourism. Business preference for rural sites also reflects the pleasant environment and the availability of relatively cheaper premises in comparison with built-up areas. The Borough is also coming under particular pressure for employment based development in the countryside because there are a significant number of large agricultural buildings and other

rural buildings that are potentially suitable for conversion to employment use, coupled with the high rental values to be found within the built up area. This demand needs to be considered in the context of environmental impacts, accessibility and in relation to local rural economic development in the Borough, and specific economic needs. Improvements to rural broadband is also enabling more businesses to locate to rural areas.

- 7.27 Policy SG4 sets out the Council's approach for appropriate land uses within all sites across rural Colchester that are in employment use. The 'B' Use Class traditionally encompassed the majority of uses considered to constitute employment uses in planning terms. In some cases a more flexible approach around employment uses is now needed to ensure compliance with national planning policy and guidance.
- 7.28 The loss of employment land, in the Borough could affect the Council's ability to achieve its economic development objectives. The Local Plan establishes the scale and general location of land for employment purposes and states that as a general principle such land should be safeguarded. However, in accordance with the NPPF, land and premises will not be protected where there is no reasonable prospect of it being developed for an economic use.
- 7.29 In rural areas, where the local need for employment land can be met elsewhere, it may be that alternative uses could be considered favourably (within the context of the other policies in the Local Plan). Exceptionally, an alternative use may be preferable, providing evidence is submitted in support of the alternative use. Applicants will need to demonstrate that the site is no longer usable and viable for another form of employment use, for example where continuation of the employment use would be detrimental to other planning objectives such as regeneration, protecting or enhancing the appearance of the countryside, or where other economic benefits to the area might result such as through tourism.
- 7.30 Consideration of overall economic benefits must also extend to include addressing the future of any firms displaced through the redevelopment, including redevelopment for a new employment use. The Local Planning Authority is more likely to be supportive of the re-use and conversion of rural buildings that are adjacent to or closely related to a sustainable settlement. Conversely, change of use of isolated buildings is unlikely to be acceptable unless they would ensure the retention and preservation of a heritage building and the use does not result in a significant increase in the level of activity and traffic generation to and from the site. Each proposal will be considered on its merits in line with this policy, other relevant policies in the Local Plan and permitted development rights.
- 7.31 Schemes involving the re-use of historic rural buildings will be required to comply with the provisions of policy DM16. Proposals that are small-scale in nature and which respect local character are more likely to be supported, whereas those with the potential to generate traffic related problems may not be supported.
- 7.32 Preference will always be towards re-use and conversion of existing buildings where this is possible rather than the construction of new buildings. Consequently, where a building is to be replaced applicants will need to demonstrate to the

satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that any available buildings are not capable of renovation and may be requested to submit a structural survey. Where suitable developments can be identified, support may be given to the provision of workspace or incubator units.

- 7.33 There are a number of well-established employment sites in the rural parts of the Borough, where some important local companies are located. Companies are often seeking to expand their operations within the site and this can be more appropriate than the company seeking alternative premises outside of the Borough, in order to retain the economic and social benefits which can arise from companies located in rural areas. It will be beneficial for applications to expand existing operations to be supported by a business plan, depending on the scale of the development proposed. In some cases for the purposes of business or employment use replacement buildings can be more appropriate than the continued use of existing buildings. There are a number of sites in the rural areas of the Borough which are visually intrusive and where redevelopment could significantly enhance the local environment.
- 7.34 Landscaping and planting should be used to aid in the reduction of impact on the countryside of development. Proposals for new isolated buildings in the countryside will not normally be permitted in accordance with national policies. Change of use to residential will not be supported within allocated Local Economic Areas or at unallocated rural sites providing an economic uses.

#### **DM6 – Economic development in rural areas and the countryside**

The Council will protect Local Economic Areas in rural Colchester that provide an economic function both on allocated sites shown on the policy maps and at other rural locations that provide a similar function.

Sites and premises currently used or allocated for employment purposes in rural parts of the Borough will be safeguarded for appropriate economic uses to ensure local residents have access to local job opportunities without the need to travel. Proposals for alternative uses will be supported where they comply with policy SG4

Within allocated rural Local Economic Areas and on rural sites providing an economic function, the following uses are considered appropriate:

- (a) Business (B1), general industrial (B2), storage and distribution (B8);
- (b) Repair and storage of vehicles and vehicle parts, including cars, boats and caravans;  
and
- (c) Other employment-generating uses, such as those related to recreation and tourism, which meet local needs and/or promote rural enterprise.

Economic development proposals in the countryside, within a designated Local Economic Area or on a rural site providing a similar function, must contribute to the local rural economy and help sustain rural communities. The proposed use is likely to be small scale and not harm the rural character of the local area either by the nature and level of activity (including the amount of additional traffic generation on rural roads) or any other

detrimental effects such as noise and pollution.

The following additional considerations will also be taken into account where relevant:

**(A) Conversion and re-use of existing rural buildings:**

Proposals will only be supported where the building is capable of re-use without fundamental rebuilding, and the buildings are deemed to be desirable for retention. In the case of former agricultural or forestry buildings of recent construction (less than 10 years), it will also need to be demonstrated that the original need for the building was genuine and that it is no longer required for agricultural or forestry purposes.

**(B) Extension of existing rural employment buildings:**

Proposals will be supported where these are limited to expansion plans which are essential to the operation of the established business. All extensions shall be accommodated satisfactorily in terms of design, scale and appearance within the existing employment site boundary.

**(C) Replacement rural employment buildings:**

Replacement buildings will only be supported where the existing development is visually intrusive or otherwise inappropriate in its context and a substantial improvement in the landscape and surroundings will be secured through replacement. New buildings should not significantly increase the scale, height and built form of the original building.

**(D) New rural employment buildings:**

Proposals will only be supported in exceptional cases where there are no appropriate existing buildings, there is no available employment land and need has been adequately demonstrated.

**(E) Expansion of an existing business:**

Proposals to expand an existing employment use into the countryside will only be supported in exceptional cases where there is no space for the required use on the existing site, the need has been adequately demonstrated, and the proposals are essential to the operation of an established business on the site. Consideration must be given to the relocation of the business to available land within a Strategic or Local Economic Area site or alternative rural site providing an economic function and in a more sustainable location.

### 7.35 Alternative Options considered

No policy/rely on the NPPF – The current Local Plan includes two policies DM6 and DM9 that guide employment uses in rural areas. Both policies have been amended to reflect the introduction of the NPPF and also in response to recommendations about the future use of allocated Local Economic Sites in the Employment Land Needs Assessment Report.

## **Agricultural Development and Diversification**

- 7.36 Paragraph 28 of the NPPF promotes the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses. This may well involve adaptation to new markets and ways of operation, and diversification of activities.
- 7.37 The agricultural economy in the Borough is changing, as increasingly farmers are seeking to diversify in order to remain in farming. Accordingly the Council is seeking to encourage farm diversification schemes that are planned on a comprehensive basis to retain a viable agricultural unit by seeking additional incomes from other sources which still relate to the countryside. Whilst the Council will support appropriate farm diversification schemes, the Council will resist proposals that would harm the rural area or segregate the existing agricultural use or farm holding. A farm shop selling products produced on the farm unit itself and which does not require a new building is unlikely to require planning permission.
- 7.38 In order to protect the quality and distinctiveness of the local landscape, the Council wishes to prevent un-coordinated development in rural areas and the gradual stripping of assets from farms without regard for the viability of the holding. Applicants must also have regard to the policies regarding conversion and replacement of rural buildings. Appropriate sustainable business proposals could include tourism, conversion of buildings for employment and other uses related to an activity that would normally be found in rural areas. However, schemes that include or could lead to future pressure for new residential dwellings will not be permitted unless there are exceptional circumstances in line with national policy.
- 7.39 Proposals for farm diversification should also take account of other relevant policy criteria, in particular but not exclusively, policy DM6 in relation to the re-use of existing buildings and appropriate rural employment uses, policy DM16 in relation to the re-use of historic farm buildings and policy DM21 in relation to access considerations.
- 7.40 The Council recognises that provisions within the General Permitted Development Order 2015 (such as Classes P, Q, R and S) are in place to enable a speedy supply of rural-based businesses and a housing stock of smaller rural dwellings, that utilises existing buildings, under completely different sets of considerations to Planning applications. However, these measures should not be regarded as “fall-back” positions for speculative development by rural land-owners and will not be treated as such by the Council. Any applications falling outside the scope of Permitted Development will be considered against other relevant policies in the Local Plan in the interests of sustainable development.

### **DM7 - Agricultural Development and Diversification**

The Council supports appropriate proposals for rural diversification that help sustain the rural economy.

The Council will support and encourage appropriate farm diversification proposals where they help support the rural economy, are compatible with the rural environment and help to sustain the existing agricultural enterprise without the need for subdivision of the

holding or separate enterprises unrelated to the existing agricultural use.

All proposals must be accompanied by a satisfactory diversification plan according to the scale of proposals, which describes how it will assist in retaining the viability of the farm and how it links with any other short or long term business plans for the farm. Proposals for farm shops as part of a farm diversification scheme must identify the products produced on site or locally and demonstrate that the location of farm-based retailing is necessary to assure farm income where their needs cannot be met within a nearby town or District Centre.

Proposals that fall within the scope of Permitted Development will be considered on their individual merits. Ancillary development proposals submitted in conjunction with a Permitted Development scheme but falling outside the scope of the most up to date General Permitted Development Order will require the submission of a separate planning application.

Proposals for farm diversification schemes will be supported where they meet the following criteria:

- (i) Existing buildings are re-used wherever possible. Schemes involving the re-use of historic farm buildings shall maintain and enhance the historic environment; including the character of the built heritage;
- (ii) The development is well-related to existing buildings if no suitable buildings are available for re-use;
- (iii) The development is secondary to the main agricultural use of the farm; and
- (iv) The proposal will not be likely to require new dwellings within the rural area to support the enterprise either at the time of first submission or at any future date.

New agricultural buildings requiring planning permission will be guided to locations on the farm which are sensitive to their environment.

## **Alternative Options considered**

- 7.41 No policy/rely on the NPPF – The current Local Plan includes policies that guide employment uses in rural areas, including diversification. Policies have been amended to reflect the introduction of the NPPF and also in response to recommendations about the future use of allocated Local Economic Sites in the Employment Land Needs Assessment Report.

## **Affordable Housing**

- 7.42 The need for affordable housing is high in Colchester, as it is elsewhere in the Eastern region. The Council's evidence in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment supports a target of 30-35%, but this target must be balanced with viability considerations and allowance will need to be taken of the fact that some sites may not deliver affordable housing for example, due to government policy thresholds. Viability work will be updated as required to ensure the target reflects the balance between essential housing need and viability. Where 20% is not considered to be viable, applicants will need to submit information on viability.

The Council will expect developers to meet the Council's reasonable costs associated with viability appraisals in instances where the level of affordable housing is disputed. A target of 20% will optimise affordable housing delivery on greenfield land whilst facilitating the regeneration of rundown areas.

- 7.43 In instances where the provision of affordable housing is supported by the delivery of some open market units on a rural exception site, it will be essential to ensure that the number of open market units never dominates a particular scheme. In determining the number of open market units required to facilitate the delivery of affordable units, the Council will expect applicants to demonstrate viability calculations starting with 100% affordable housing. The same calculations should then be applied with the introduction of one open market unit at a time until a point is reached where the delivery of the rural exception site becomes viable. The number of open market units on a rural exception site should be less than the number of affordable units delivered.

#### **DM8 – Affordable Housing**

The Borough Council is committed to improving housing affordability in Colchester. The Council will be seeking to secure 20% of new dwellings (including conversions) on housing development for more than 10 dwellings to be provided as affordable housing (normally on site)

Where it is considered that a site forms part of a larger development area, affordable housing will be apportioned with reference to the site area as a whole.

This level balances the objectively assessed need for affordable housing in the Borough established by the Council's evidence base against the requirement for flexibility to take account of changing market conditions. For sites where an alternative level of affordable housing is proposed below the target, it will need to be supported by evidence in the form of a viability appraisal. The affordable housing provision should proportionately reflect the mix of market units and the requirement for Starter Homes. It should have regard to the latest assessment of local market conditions and housing need relative to supply in determining the optimum affordable housing mix.

In exceptional circumstances, where high development costs undermine the viability of housing delivery, developers will be expected to demonstrate an alternative affordable housing provision.

Affordable housing development in the villages of rural Colchester Borough will be supported on rural exception sites contiguous with village settlement boundaries, provided a local need is demonstrated by the Town/Parish Council on behalf of their residents based on the evidence gained from an approved local housing needs survey. A proportion of market housing which facilitates the provision of significant additional affordable housing may be appropriate on rural exception sites. Information to demonstrate that the market housing is essential to cross-subsidise the delivery of the affordable housing and that the development would not be viable without this cross-subsidy will be required. At the scheme level, the number of open market



units on the rural exception site will be strictly limited to only the number of units required to facilitate the provision of significant affordable housing units on a rural exception site. The number of affordable units on a site should always be greater than the number of open market units delivered in this way. The actual number will be determined on local circumstances, evidence of local need and the overall viability of the scheme. General design of the homes should be comparable regardless of tenure within a single integrated development layout.

The Council will require developments to integrate affordable housing and market housing, with a consistent standard of quality design and public spaces, to create mixed and sustainable communities. In schemes over 15 units the affordable housing should be provided in more than one single parcel. Elsewhere the affordable housing mix on any site should normally be “pepper potted” throughout the scheme in groups, the size and location of which should be discussed and agreed with the Council.

#### 7.44 **Alternative Options**

**No Policy / Rely on the NPPF** – The NPPF expects that Local Plans will provide further detail on how affordable housing will be provided given that targets need to reflect local circumstances as documented in the Council’s evidence base..

**Set an Alternative Target** – Alternative targets could be set, in particular given the ever increasing need for more affordable housing, but the current target of 20% is considered to represent the best balance between housing need and viability considerations.

#### **Housing Density**

7.45 The density of housing development can have significant implications for sustainability, local character, travel behaviour, development land take, and residential amenity.

7.46 New developments must enhance local character and optimise the capacity of accessible locations. Locations with good access to the Town Centre, are more suited to higher density development, although a flexible approach will be important to ensure that densities are compatible with the surrounding townscape. Higher density developments in these locations can accommodate more people at locations with good access to employment, shops and education, and allow residents to easily access their needs by walking, cycling and public transport. This in turn supports the provision of local business, services and infrastructure. However, high density development that is poorly located or poorly designed can have adverse impacts on the local community, built character, traffic and sustainability. High density developments need to have regard to biodiversity and open spaces provided within urban areas and on brownfield sites.

7.47 Densities therefore may need to be moderated at less accessible locations and to reflect local character. The provision of open space, parking and a mix of housing will also have moderating affect on densities. The density of developments also

needs to be informed by the provision of open space and parking, the character of the area, and the mix of housing.

### **DM9 Housing Density**

The Borough Council will seek housing densities that make efficient use of land and relate to the context. All residential development will need to be at an appropriate density and massing for the area having regard to;

- The character of the site and its immediate surroundings, as well as the wider locality
- The adequacy of the access and the local road network to accommodate the traffic likely to be generated by the proposed development as well as the level of access to sustainable modes of transport;
- The existing landscaping, trees and hedgerows on the site and the need for further landscaping;
- Provision of appropriate on site amenities to serve the development in accordance with policy SG6 and any relevant adopted guidance;
- Provision of appropriate parking to serve the development in accordance with relevant standards and policy DM22

The density of the residential development also needs to ensure an adequate standard of residential accommodation is provided for the occupants in accordance with policy DM12 which is also appropriate to the mix and type of housing provided as informed by the various housing policies set out in the local Plan0

### **7.48 Alternative options considered**

**Set Minimum / Maximum Densities** - The policy could specify a minimum or maximum density for all sites in the Borough. This may address the efficient use of land, however, it will not allow for the density to have regard to the character of the area and respond directly to site specific characteristics.

**Leave to NPPF** - This would not be a compliant approach as the NPPF requires LPAs to set their own densities which reflect local circumstances

### **Housing Diversity**

7.49 All housing developments in Colchester should be inclusive and accommodate a diverse range of households and housing need to create mixed communities. Housing developments must provide a range of housing types that can accommodate a range of different households, including families, single persons, older persons, those with care and/or support needs, and low income households.

7.50 There is an important relationship between housing diversity, density and the accessibility of the location. Town Centre locations, for example, are highly accessible and can support high density flats, but they also need to accommodate a range of household sizes. Suburban locations have moderate access and should accommodate a range of housing types and household sizes. Rural

locations have low accessibility and will suit low density development, but should also still provide for small and low income households.

- 7.51 In 2011, the average household size was 2.33 persons. Approximately 29% were single person households, roughly 36% were 2 person households, and another 29% of households had dependent children. In 2021, the average household size is projected to shrink to around 2.31 persons, and single person households are likely to grow to about 35% of the total. The Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment work indicates that the number of lone parent households is expected to increase the most in the Housing Market Area over the period 2015-2037, followed by one person households. Couples with children are projected to fall in number.
- 7.52 All housing developments therefore need to provide a more balanced range of housing types to reflect identified community need. The mix of housing should reflect the housing needs of the community, and therefore higher density developments in the urbanised areas still need to provide accommodation suitable to families and larger households, and low density developments in villages still need to provide housing for small and low income households.
- 7.53 The NPPF requires local authorities to have a clear idea of the housing needs of various subgroups in the population. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment undertaken to provide this understanding provides information on the following sub-groups:-

- **Older persons and specialist housing** – Colchester is expected to record a 60.6% increase in its population of those age 65 and over. In response to this growth, the SHMA indicates that if occupation patterns of specialist accommodation remain at current levels there is a requirement for 2,147 additional specialist units of which 2,066 should be sheltered housing and 81 extra care housing. In Colchester, this means that an additional 94 sheltered and extra care housing units should be provided each year. This is in addition to the requirement for housing suitable for the needs of older people which allows people to live in their own homes for as long as possible.

Essex County Council is the provider of social services in the Borough. It is encouraging the provision of specialist accommodation in Essex as a means by which older people can continue to live healthy and active lives within existing communities and for Colchester Borough has set the target of delivering 205 additional units of specialist accommodation to enable older people to live independently within the community by 2020. This target is set out in the Essex County Council's Independent Living Position Statement (2015). This approach to meeting the specialist accommodation needs of older people is intended to reduce the demand for residential/nursing home care, which is a considerably more expensive way of meeting the needs of older people, and can unnecessarily restrict independence within this age group.

- **Self-build/custom build housing** – As required by national guidance, Colchester maintains a register of those interested in self-build/custom build plots and will use this information to guide delivery of new self-build units.

Policy for Garden Communities (Part One policies SP8 and SP9) will provide specific allocations for self-build allocations.

- **Gypsies and travellers** – The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment prepared for Essex local authorities provides that Colchester should provide 15 pitches to 2033. Policy DM11 provides criteria and allocations for meeting this need.
- **Students** – The University of Essex had 11,657 students registered for the 2015-16 academic year. The University plans to expand to accommodate around 15,000 students by 2019. The University has long term plans to extend its accommodation provision to respond to increasing numbers. Additionally, the Wivenhoe and Hythe areas house a number of students in both purpose-built and private rented accommodation.

#### **DM10– Housing Diversity**

Colchester Borough Council intends to secure a range of housing types and tenures on developments across the Borough in order to create inclusive and sustainable communities. Housing developments should provide a mix of housing types to suit a range of different households as identified in the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment, whilst also realising the opportunities presented by accessible locations. The Council will seek to provide for the needs of particular groups as follows:

**Older people** – The Council will require developers to demonstrate how their proposal will be capable of meeting and adapting to the long term needs of its increasing numbers of older residents. This would include the provision of Lifetime Homes and other measures to support independent living, further to the support for these types of dwellings in the Housing Standards policy DM10.

**Specialist Housing-** The Council will support provision of schemes providing higher levels of care for specialist groups including the disabled, those with care needs and other vulnerable people. New development proposals for these groups will be supported where there is a proven need; they are located within settlements; and are accessible by public transport.

**Self-build/custom housing** – The Council will support proposals for self-build housing, where demand as indicated by registrations on the Council's Self-Build Register and where this demand is realistic in terms of the financial capacity of applicants, both on individual sites and as part of larger schemes, including rural exception sites. Policies for Garden Communities (Part One SP8 and SP9) include specific targets for self-build/custom build allocations to help ensure their delivery.

**Gypsies and Travellers** – The Council will meet identified need for gypsy and traveller accommodation, with specific allocations and policy considerations set out in Policy DM11.

**Students** - Planning permission will be granted for purpose-built student accommodation subject to other policies in this plan and where:

- a) the location is appropriate in terms of access to public transport and

<p>university and college facilities; and</p> <p>b) the proposal will not result in an excessive concentration of student accommodation in any one locality.</p> <p>c) Specific proposals for University based accommodation are contained in policy EC1.</p> <p><b>St Helena Hospice</b> – The Council will support the provision of hospice care in the local community through the use of existing or new sites.</p>
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#### 7.54 **Alternative options considered**

***Set specific allocations for every type of specialist housing*** – this would increase levels of certainty that provision is made, but would not allow for sufficient flexibility for categories such as older people’s housing that could be provided in a range of types and locations.

### **Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople**

7.55 The Borough Council will seek to provide appropriate sites to meet the needs of the gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople in the Borough as identified through the latest Gypsy and Traveller assessment work and further to guidance from Government set forth in ‘Planning policy for traveller sites’. These sites need to provide gypsy and traveller communities with good access to education, health, welfare and employment infrastructure, bearing in mind the need to have due regard to the protection of local amenity and local environment.

#### **DM11 Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople**

The Council will identify sites to meet the established needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople in the Borough.

The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment carried out for the Essex area in 2014 identified a need for 15 pitches to be provided in Colchester by 2033, broken down as follows:

Years	2013-18	2018-23	2023-28	2028-33	Total
No. of pitches	3	3	4	5	15

The need for 6 pitches by 2023 can be met by expansion of the existing site at Severalls. The existing site has successfully operated since 2012 and is considered a sustainable location for small scale expansion. The need for the remainder of the plan period will be met through allocation of gypsy and traveller provision in the Garden Communities, to be finalised through the process of agreeing detailed allocations and masterplans for those areas.

Proposals for any further applications will be judged on the basis that sites should be located within reasonable proximity to existing sustainable settlements, and with access to shops, schools and other community facilities. Sites should also provide adequate space for vehicles and appropriate highway access. Any identified need for ‘transit’ (temporary) sites for gypsies

and travellers will be met in appropriate locations related to the current working patterns of the travelling community.

## **Housing Standards**

- 7.56 It is important to strike an appropriate balance between providing freedom and flexibility for the housing market to operate and ensuring that a range of sites are available for different areas of the housing market. However, the different types of dwelling should be suitably designed to consider the potential needs of their perspective occupiers and the Design and Access statements submitted with planning permissions should cover this point. It is expected that new residential development will address the requirements of Lifetime Homes standards, which incorporate 16 design features providing a flexible blueprint for accessible and adaptable housing to meet the needs of people at all stages of life. While Lifetime Homes can be converted to full wheelchair accessibility, there is a particular need for housing that is wheelchair accessible from the outset. The revised Part M building regulations require the minimum standard for all new dwellings which makes them suitable to be visited by a wheelchair user. Anything over and above this baseline standard will only be permitted where the council has demonstrated a clearly evidenced need, and where their impact on viability has been considered, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Guidance.
- 7.57 Accessible, well-designed and easy to use waste and recycling facilities will be needed in new developments to help the Council meet its recycling targets. High quality sustainable development also includes adequate arrangements for servicing and refuse vehicles, storage, parking for cars and cycles and electric vehicle charging points, in accordance with Policy DM22.

### **DM12 - Housing Standards**

Residential development will be guided by high standards of design, construction and layout. In considering proposals for new residential development, the Council will have regard to the following:

- i. New buildings or extensions should be designed to minimise the overshadowing of neighbouring properties as well as to avoid other adverse microclimatic effects resulting from high density layouts;
- ii. Acceptable levels of daylight to all habitable rooms and no single aspect north-facing homes;
- iii. Acceptable levels of privacy for rear-facing habitable rooms and sitting-out areas;
- iv. A management and maintenance plan to be prepared for multi occupancy buildings and implemented via planning conditions to ensure the future maintenance of the building and external spaces;
- v. Flexibility in the internal layout of dwellings to allow adaptability to

- different lifestyles incorporating the design principles of Lifetime Homes wherever appropriate to do so;
- vi. Internal space standards to be in accordance with the National described space standard (DCLG 2015) or any future replacement of this
  - vii. Vehicle parking as set by Policy DM22. In the case of flats, secure cycle storage should be incorporated into flat blocks and readily located at the building entrances;
  - viii. An accessible bin and recycling storage area, and external drying areas;
  - ix. Electric car charging points; and
  - x. Provision of broadband and other required infrastructure as referenced in Policy SG6.

## **Domestic Development: Residential alterations, extensions and outbuildings**

- 7.58 There have been a number of changes to planning regulations in recent years which have increased the forms and scope of domestic development proposals not requiring planning permission. Further guidance on the types of development that do not require planning permission can be obtained from the government's Planning Portal: [www.planningportal.co.uk](http://www.planningportal.co.uk).
- 7.59 This policy should be read in conjunction with Policy DM1 (Design and Amenity). Together the policies set out the criteria for assessing planning applications for domestic development proposals which includes residential alterations, extensions and annexes as well as replacement dwellings and flat conversions. In addition to these policies the Council may publish further guidance relevant to domestic development which should be consulted prior to submitting a planning application.
- 7.60 The Council wishes to retain and promote a balanced mix of dwelling types and sizes in the borough and avoid the loss of smaller and more affordable units. Therefore extensions and annexes should always be compatible and subordinate to the original dwelling and not result in the over-development of residential plots.
- 7.61 The Council also wishes to ensure that dwellings do not incrementally grow by a succession of small extensions which cumulatively can alter the scale and character of the original dwelling. Therefore the Council will take into account the cumulative impact of development when determining applications for domestic development proposals. For the purposes of this policy, the 'original' dwelling is defined as the building as it existed on 4th November 1993, or as it was originally built, if later than this date.
- 7.62 In order to retain the availability of smaller and more affordable dwellings in the countryside, replacement dwellings should be of an appropriate scale to their rural setting and not result in any greater adverse impacts than the dwellings they replace. For the purposes of this policy the countryside means all areas outside of defined settlement boundaries.

- 7.63 In order to protect the borough's countryside, proposals for extensions of domestic gardens into the open countryside will not be permitted if they result in an adverse impact on the surrounding countryside; result in the loss of good quality agricultural land; or set a precedent for unacceptable extensions to gardens at one or more neighbouring properties. Where planning permission is granted, applicants will be expected to relinquish their permitted development rights over the new area of garden.
- 7.64 The Council recognises the important contribution flat conversions make to the provision of smaller and more affordable dwellings in the borough, particularly in urban areas where demand for such units are at their highest. However flat conversions will only be permitted where they are sympathetic to the original dwelling and make appropriate provision for amenity, storage and parking. Importantly flat conversions should not result in unsatisfactory living conditions for future residents.
- 7.65 Domestic development proposals represent a large number of planning applications received by the Council. The wording of policies must reflect the competing interests of planning applicants and other stakeholders, including those most affected by development proposals such those occupying neighbouring dwellings.
- 7.66 The policy has to allow householders the freedom to develop their property in a manner they choose whilst ensuring that proposals do not adversely affect the original dwelling or the surrounding area.
- 7.67 From a strategic perspective the policy must recognise the requirement to retain and promote a balanced housing stock by preventing smaller and more affordable properties from being either extended into a much larger property or being replaced with a larger dwelling.
- 7.68 Finally the policy must ensure that the conversion of dwellings into flats is carried out in a satisfactory way from both the perspective of the original dwelling's appearance but also prospective residents who have the right to satisfactory living conditions.

#### **DM13 – Domestic development: Residential alterations, extensions and outbuildings**

Residential alterations, extensions and outbuildings will be permitted, provided the proposal meets the following criteria:

- (i) It is compatible with the scale, appearance and character of the original dwelling including taking into account the cumulative impact of such development;
- (ii) It does not result in the over-development of the plot out of scale to its surroundings, taking into account the footprint of the existing dwelling and the relationship to neighbouring plot boundaries;
- (iii) Proposals for extensions and outbuildings will be subordinate to the original dwelling in terms of design and position;
- (iv) It will not result in unacceptable adverse impacts on the amenities of neighbouring residential properties, including on privacy, overbearing



- impact, overshadowing or loss of light;
- (v) It will not result in adverse impact to the appearance of the street scene and character of the area.

### **Residential annexes**

Residential annexes will be supported where the need for additional space cannot be met within an existing dwelling or buildings suitable for conversion on the site in the first instance, provided the proposal meets the following criteria:

- (i) It is physically attached or closely related to the main dwelling so that it cannot be subdivided from the main dwelling;
- (ii) It retains some form of demonstrable dependence on the main dwelling, such as shared access (including both vehicular access and doorways) and communal amenity spaces (the use of annexes as a separate dwelling will not be permitted and the desire for annexed occupants to be independent from existing residents will not be considered as adequate justification to allow self-contained dwellings in annexes);
- (iii) It respects and enhances both the character of the original dwelling and the context of the surrounding area through high quality design; and
- (iv) It does not result in the loss of amenity to neighbouring properties.

### **Replacement dwellings in the countryside**

Replacement dwellings in the countryside within existing curtilages will be supported, provided the proposal meets the following criteria:

- (i) It is on a one-for-one basis and the property to be demolished is a permanent lawful dwelling;
- (ii) It is of a high quality design that is appropriate to the rural area in scale and character and preserves or enhances access, siting and dwelling orientation; and
- (iii) It provides high quality landscaping, where necessary, to integrate the new dwelling into the wider rural context with no greater adverse impacts than the existing dwelling.

### **Flat conversions**

Proposals for the conversion and sub-division of existing residential premises within settlement boundaries into flats and other self-contained residential units will be considered having regard to the intensity of the use proposed and the sustainability of the location in respect of the proximity of the site to key services and public transport provision. Proposals should also be in accordance with the requirements set out in the Housing Standards policy.

In addition to those considerations proposals for the conversion and sub-division of existing residential premises and, in cases of conversions of non-residential buildings where planning permission is required, will only be supported if they meet the following criteria:

- (i) It does not result in detrimental effects to the appearance of the building by reason of unsympathetic additions or alterations, either in isolation or due to cumulative impact;
- (ii) Appropriate provision is made for parking, private amenity space, cycle

- storage and refuse storage facilities, in a visually acceptable manner;
- (iii) The internal layout minimises possible noise disturbance and/or overlooking to the immediate neighbours; and
- (iv) Overall, the proposal will not result in an unsatisfactory living environment for prospective occupiers.

## 7.69 Alternative Options

**No Policy / Rely on National Guidance** - if there was no domestic development policy included in the Local Plan there would have to be a reliance on the NPPF and PPG to inform the determination of such proposals. Given that both national policy and national guidance do not provide any detail on the types of development proposals covered in this policy, on their own they would not be sufficient to ensure development is of an acceptable standard. Although permitted development rights have increased the types and scale of development which doesn't require planning permission, the proposed policy is required to ensure development proposals for alterations, extensions, annexes, replacement dwellings and flat conversions outside of permitted development rights are carried out in a way which respects local areas as well as protecting the needs of existing and future neighbours and residents.

## Rural Workers Housing

- 7.70 The NPPF states that one of the few circumstances where a new dwelling within the countryside may be justified is when accommodation is required to enable agricultural or rural workers to live at or in the immediate vicinity of their place of work.
- 7.71 While Colchester Council's preference is for such workers to live in nearby towns or villages, or suitable existing dwellings to avoid new and potentially intrusive development in the countryside, it acknowledges that there will be some instances where the nature and demands of certain rural businesses will make it essential for one or more people engaged in the enterprise to live at, or very close to, their place of work.
- 7.72 Such a need however must be essential to the successful operation of the rural business. Any proposal for a new agricultural/rural workers dwelling will be expected to satisfy all the criteria set out in Policy H6.
- 7.73 The need for a rural workers dwelling could be generated by a range of traditional rural land activities such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, rural estate management, certain equestrian businesses and horticulture.
- 7.74 Applications will be subject to a functions test to establish whether it is essential for the proper functioning of the business enterprise for one or more workers to be readily available. Such a requirement might arise where a worker or workers need to be available round the clock to respond to situations where livestock/animals or agricultural processes require essential care at short notice or emergencies that

could otherwise cause a serious loss of crops or products e.g. by frost or failure of automatic systems.

- 7.75 Given the restrictions on the delivery of new dwellings in the countryside, the scale and design of any proposals for rural workers' dwellings should reflect their countryside location and their function as housing for a rural worker. While many people work in rural areas e.g. in offices, schools, workshops, garages and garden centres, it is unlikely that they will have an essential need to live permanently at or near their place of work. Being employed in a rural location is not considered sufficient justification to qualify as a rural worker with an essential housing need.
- 7.76 Changes in the scale and character of agricultural and forestry businesses have the potential to affect the longer-term requirement for dwellings in the countryside particularly where these had an "agricultural worker occupancy" condition attached when planning permission was granted. In such cases, the Borough Council recognises that it would fulfil no purpose to keep such dwellings vacant, or that existing occupiers should be obliged to remain in occupation simply by virtue of a planning condition that has outlived its usefulness.
- 7.77 Nevertheless, the Borough Council will expect applications for the removal of an occupancy condition to demonstrate convincingly that there is no long-term need for an agricultural dwelling in the locality. Such dwellings could be used by other agricultural and rural workers seeking accommodation within the wider surrounding area, therefore it will need to be demonstrated to the Borough Council that the dwelling tied to an occupancy condition has been effectively marketed to likely interested parties in the area concerned, and that no genuine interest has been shown regarding the purchase or rental of the dwelling for a rural worker with an essential need to live in the local community.

#### **DM14- Rural workers housing**

##### **Permanent Rural Workers Dwellings**

Planning permission will be granted for new agricultural/rural workers dwellings as part of existing businesses where all of the following criteria are met :

- (i) evidence is provided to show that there is an essential functional need for a permanent dwelling
  - (ii) the need is related to a full time worker who is primarily employed locally in agriculture, forestry or some other rural based business that requires a new dwelling in the countryside
  - (iii) the size and design of dwelling is commensurate with the needs of the rural business
  - (iv) the business has been established for at least 3 years, has been profitable for at least one of them, is financially viable and is likely to remain so in the future
  - (v) the functional need cannot be met by another suitable and available dwelling.
- Conversion of an existing building should be considered in preference to new build
- (vi) the proposed development satisfies all other Local Plan policy requirements

##### **Temporary Rural Workers Dwellings**

Where a new dwelling is essential to support a new activity, whether a newly-created unit

or an established one, it will normally, for the first three years, be provided by a caravan or other temporary accommodation.

Applications will need to be supported with the following information:

- (i) clear evidence of a firm intention and ability to develop the enterprise concerned (significant investment in new buildings is often a good indication of intentions);
- (ii) essential functional need
- (iii) clear evidence that the proposed enterprise has been planned on a sound financial basis. The evidence should include a business plan of at least 3 years duration;
- (iv) the functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit, or any other existing accommodation in the area
- (v) If permission for temporary accommodation is granted, permission for a permanent dwelling is unlikely to be granted within 3 years. If, after 3 years, a permanent dwelling is approved, the temporary dwelling must be removed from the site.

Conditions will be attached to any permissions granted for new rural workers dwellings to remove permitted development rights and restrict the occupancy to that required for the rural business concerned or other agricultural/rural use nearby. Where a rural dwelling is no longer needed to support a rural business, applications to remove the occupancy restrictions will have to meet the following criteria.

Evidence should be submitted that an essential functional need no longer exists at the property and is unlikely to in the foreseeable future. The applicant will be expected to provide details of instructions to estate agents, and the response to that advertising, demonstrating that:-

- (i) the property has been marketed for rent or sale for at least 18 months and advertised continuously in that period at a price reflecting the occupancy condition; and
- (ii) the advertising should be within both local newspapers and relevant national agricultural magazines; and
- (iii) the property has been offered both for sale and to rent on the same basis as above to all farmers, horticulturalists and other rural businesses where a dwelling may be justified in the locality (i.e. having holdings within a two mile radius of the dwelling.)

#### 7.78 **Alternative Options considered**

**No policy/rely on NPPF** – the NPPF makes reference to the need to plan for rural workers housing needs in paragraph 55 but only at a very high level. A more detailed Local Plan policy is required to provide the local policy context clarify the criteria that applications. Policy OV2 is a new policy that was adopted in 2014. It is NPPF compliant and the policy sets clear guidance about the circumstances when proposals for rural workers houses will be supported and provides guidance about future uses of such dwellings when they are no longer required for a rural worker.

## Design and Amenity

7.79 Good design is indivisible from good planning and a key NPPF requirement for ensuring sustainable development. High quality design benefits everyday users and society as a whole, by creating desirable, functional and efficient places, which help support improved amenities, inclusive communities, economic activity and reduced environmental impact. Design quality is particularly relevant in Colchester given the need to generate local support for planned growth, complement historic assets and to ensure regeneration activities leave a lasting place-making legacy.

7.80 In Colchester, as elsewhere in the UK, there is a need to deliver high quality design, whilst still ensuring sustainable development is viable. As a result there is a need to make sure policy guidance helps achieve best practice, providing clarity and securing development which is both good enough to approve and deliverable.

7.81 The promotion of good processes will be important in raising standards, including as appropriate for guidance/development:

- Good design team selection;
- Design guidance (e.g. masterplans, design codes, development briefs and neighbourhood plans) for priority growth and regeneration areas. These might be produced by The Council or other key stakeholders as appropriate;
- Site and context analysis to identify issues and opportunities;
- Alternative options to test the pros and cons of alternative proposals;
- Pre-application dialogue (perhaps as part of a Planning Performance Agreement), to help identify improvements;
- Independent Design Review on appropriate schemes;
- Proposals being informed by key stakeholder consultation;
- Supporting well designed self and community led development;
- Submission of design material which allows for accurate assessment;

7.82 Requests by the Council for information in relation to applicant's design proposals will be reasonable and proportionate to the nature and scale of the proposal. The NPPF highlights the importance of plan-led development through to detailing, especially on larger scale developments. This can be achieved by following the principles of Garden Cities or those of other potentially appropriate urban design models, such as urban, village and arcadian case studies outlined in the Essex Design Guide.

7.83 Development must positively contribute to the public realm, preserving or enhancing the sense of place, including historic interest, landscape, townscape, streetscape, character areas, route hierarchy, roofscapes, key views, gateways, nodes, edges, landmarks, green links and spaces. Guidance does not attempt to impose architectural styles or personal tastes, though high quality traditional/contemporary designs and materials should positively respond to their physical and cultural context, and be correctly interpreted through to forms and detailing. Common design risks should be avoided such as excessive standardisation, mono-use sprawl, ungainly forms, uninspired public realm design, parking dominated streets, use of second-rate materials, poorly applied design styles, weakly defined spatial enclosure, screening as justification for poor design and a lack of townscape interest or legibility.

- 7.84 The promotion of walking, cycling and public transport will assist in creating an environment that is attractive, healthy, sociable and safe, whilst more generally helping promote sustainable forms of development. This might be achieved in different ways, including through compact development models, good connectivity especially for strategic desire lines, high quality streetscape and landscape, shared space, filtered permeability, carfree zones and wayfinding measures.
- 7.85 Well-thought out site plans include a consideration of how design can reduce anti-social behaviour by orientating and placing buildings, windows and access points to provide clear lines of sight and natural surveillance. Public and private open space should be clearly differentiated, avoiding piecemeal and isolated patches of public space that could be prone to vandalism.
- 7.86 The Council's Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) provide further design guidance, which is updated from time to time. Reference may also be made to relevant nationally produced guidance, such as By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System and the Urban Design Compendium. The Building for Life assessment tool is promoted for use on major housing schemes. It is the industry standard, endorsed by Government, for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods, helping prompt improvements, qualitative review and performance monitoring.
- 7.87 Internal infrastructure and services necessary for a development to function effectively should be provided in conjunction with the commencement of the development so as not to place undue strain on the existing environment and local economy.

#### **DM15 Design and Amenity**

**All development, including new build, extensions and alterations, must be designed to a high standard, positively respond to its context, achieve good standards of amenity, and demonstrate social, economic and environmental sustainability. Great weight will be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help raise the standard of design more generally in the area. Poor design will be refused including that which fails to take the opportunity for good design or improving the local area. The Council will use and/or promote a range of planning processes and tools to help achieve high quality design. Ultimately, development proposals must demonstrate that they, and any ancillary activities associated with them, will:**

- (i) Respect and, wherever possible, enhance the character of the site, its context and surroundings in terms of its layout, architectural approach, height, scale, form, massing, density, proportions, materials, townscape and/or landscape qualities, and detailed design features. Wherever possible development should positively integrate existing built/landscape/heritage assets and remove problems as part of the overall development proposal;**
- (ii) Help establish a visually attractive sense of place for living, working and visiting, through good architecture and landscaping;**
- (iii) Promote and sustain an appropriate mix and density of uses which are well located and integrated, optimise the efficient use of land (including sharing),**

contribute to inclusive communities, and support retail centres and sustainable transport networks;

(vi) Provide attractive, well connected and legible streets and spaces, which encourage walking, cycling, public transport and community vitality, whilst adequately integrating safe vehicle access;

(v) Protect and promote public and residential amenity, particularly with regard to privacy, overlooking, security, noise and disturbance, pollution (including light and odour pollution), daylight and sunlight;

(vi) Create a safe, resilient and secure environment, which supports community cohesion and is not vulnerable to neglect;

(vii) Provide functional, robust and adaptable designs, which contribute to the long term quality of the area and, as appropriate, can facilitate alternative activities, alterations and future possible development;

(viii) Minimise energy consumption/emissions and promote sustainable drainage, particularly with regard to transport, landform, building orientation, massing and landscaping. For the purpose of this policy ancillary activities associated with development will be considered to include vehicle movement; and

(ix) Incorporate any necessary infrastructure and services including utilities, recycling and waste facilities, highways and parking. This should be sensitively integrated to promote successful place-making.

(x) Demonstrate an appreciation of the views of those directly affected and explain the design response adopted. Proposals that can demonstrate this inclusive approach will be looked on more favourably.

## Historic Environment

7.88 Colchester's importance as a historic town warrants a policy detailing and reinforcing the need to protect and enhance the historic environment. The policy is also applicable to heritage assets in rural areas of the Borough and will help to protect and enhance assets in these areas. In the local area there are a number of buildings which detract from the appearance of heritage assets and the opportunities for redevelopment should be encouraged.

7.89 There will be a presumption in favour of the physical preservation *in situ* of nationally important archaeological remains (whether scheduled or not). The more important the asset, the greater the weight will be for preservation *in situ*. In accordance with national legislation, preservation of remains may require the refusal of development that could be detrimental.

7.90 Developers will be required to make provision for the recording of any heritage assets adversely impacted by development and to make provision for full analysis and reporting, and to ensure this, and any archive generated, this is publically accessible. Provision will be required to enhance the Urban Archaeological Database and to provide for the long term curation of the archive.

7.91 Where appropriate, provision will be required for interpretation and access *in situ*, where public access is possible without detriment to the site, or at a suitable off-

site location, and for realising the social, cultural, economic and environment benefits of the historic environment.

- 7.92 There are a number of existing buildings and built environments within the Borough, which do not have a statutory basis for protection, but which nevertheless retain a distinctive historical or architectural character that it is considered desirable to keep. The Council, working with local experts, will prepare a Local List of buildings and groups of buildings, which are considered to be of particular historic or architectural merit; this will be used to ensure that when assessing applications for planning permission their particular character is considered. Conditions will be applied to allow for the inspection and recording of buildings on the Local List.
- 7.93 There are also a number of neighbourhoods within the Borough that are characterised by spacious properties built at low density within a well treed setting, or else that retain a particular “period” character. Context appraisals will be required for all development and where a proposal is within a neighbourhood with a distinctive character which it is desirable to keep, the proposal will need to demonstrate that it protects and enhances the special qualities of the area.

#### **DM16- Historic Environment**

**Development will not be permitted that will adversely affect a listed building, a conservation area, historic park or garden or important archaeological remains (including development that adversely affects the setting of heritage assets).**

**Development affecting the historic environment should seek to conserve and enhance the significance of the heritage asset and any features of specific historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest. In all cases there will be an expectation that any new development will enhance the historic environment or better reveal the significance of the heritage asset, in the first instance, unless there are no identifiable opportunities available. In instances where existing features have a negative impact on the historic environment, as identified through character appraisals, the Local Planning Authority will request the removal of the features that undermine the historic environment as part of any proposed development. The Local Planning Authority will request the provision of creative and accessible interpretations of heritage assets impacted by development.**

**Conservation of the historic environment will also be ensured by:**

- (i) Identifying, characterising, protecting and enhancing Conservation Areas;**
- (ii) Protection and enhancement of existing buildings and built areas which do not have Listed Building or Conservation Area status but have a particular local importance or character which it is desirable to keep. Such buildings or groups of buildings will be identified through a Local List which will be adopted by the Council;**
- (iii) Preserving and enhancing Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, including their respective**



settings, and other features which contribute to the heritage of the Borough; and

(iv) Sites of archaeological interest will be clearly identified and protected, and sites that become known, whether through formal evaluation as part of a Planning Application or otherwise, will similarly be protected according to their importance.

Heritage Statements and/or Archaeological Evaluations will be required for proposals related to or impacting on the setting of heritage assets and/or known or possible archaeological sites, and where there is potential for encountering archaeological sites so that sufficient information is provided to assess the significance of the heritage assets and to assess the impacts of development on historic assets together with any proposed mitigation measures.

#### 7.94 Alternative options considered

**No Change to Policy** - The policy would not reflect the most up to date position regarding available evidence and also would not provide clarity in relation to the importance of the significance of the heritage asset as required by the NPPF.

### Open Space

7.95 Existing open spaces, green link networks and allotments provide the people of Colchester with opportunities for passive and active recreation and encourage healthy and active lifestyles. It is important that all residents have access to open space within walking distance of their home. Strategic green links provide valuable corridors for the movement of people. The green spaces along the Colne River, for example, connect the town centre, suburbs, countryside, villages and the coast. These corridors provide alternative means for people making journeys into and across Colchester. The Council will therefore seek to protect and enhance these important links.

7.96 The Council commissioned an Open Space Study in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework to identify areas with deficiencies of open space. Development will be required to make contributions towards meeting these deficiencies in accordance with Council's adopted SPD for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (updated as required). The Open Space Study sets specific targets to guide the provision of different types of open space across the borough.

7.97 All housing developments, including higher density development, should provide new residents with access to private and/or communal open space, in addition to public open space requirements. At least 25sqm per dwelling of private/communal open space will be sought for flats and maisonettes, whilst houses should provide larger private garden. Higher density schemes will be encouraged to utilise innovative design solutions to provide open space on difficult sites.

- 7.98 The existing public and private open spaces including allotments within the Borough, represent important assets serving the communities in which they are located (or in some instances wider areas). This importance can relate not only to their function, but also to the amenity value and contribution they make to the character of an area in general by providing a 'green lung', opportunities for a well-designed and inclusive public realm, and visual breaks in the built environment. They also provide alternative green spaces which help alleviate pressure on Internationally designated sites. If such provisions are lost to other uses it can be extremely difficult to find alternative locations particularly as open land is scarce and, therefore, at a premium. An Appropriate Assessment will be prepared to accompany the Submission Local Plan which may identify additional open space needs. Further discussion will be needed with Natural England regarding this issue.
- 7.99 Against this background, it is intended to secure the retention of existing facilities unless a case can be made that alternative provision will be provided in a wholly acceptable manner. Alternative provision could comprise existing provision in the locality of the type of open space as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework, providing there is not a deficiency in that type of open space. A number of documents including the PPG17 Audit and Assessment of the Borough's public); Colchester Parks and Green Spaces Strategy (2008) and Colchester Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011) and any updated evidence as appropriate will be used by the Council when assessing planning applications relating to proposed development of open space and sports facilities.
- 7.100 Well designed open spaces can deliver multiple functions. As well as their value for wildlife, quality of life, health and recreation, they also provide opportunities for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) for surface water runoff management.
- 7.101 The Essex Design Guide sets standards for amenity space provision for new residential developments. The Urban Place Supplement recognised these standards were not always helpful for producing good quality development in compact urban developments and this evaluation has informed the requirement of this policy that generally seeks the provision of 25m<sup>2</sup> of high quality, private amenity space for each dwelling. It is important that new developments avoid the piecemeal provision of small areas of open space and instead provide sufficiently large areas of open space to serve as accessible and attractive zones for residents' leisure activity and recreation. Green links alongside existing hedgerows and tree lines can also have high amenity value.
- 7.102 New development can place increasing pressure on existing open spaces. Developments therefore will be expected to deliver areas of open space to meet the varying needs of residents for recreation and leisure and also deliver attractive high quality neighbourhoods for people to live in. At least 10% of the total gross site area should be provided as local open space as an integral part of new development proposals. Where this is not possible, particularly where a development site is small, the site developer will be expected to provide a commuted sum towards the provision of open space off site subject to this being within any pooling restrictions which apply at the time.

7.103 Developments should help contribute to the accessibility, quantity and quality standards set out in Appendices N, P and Q in the Borough Council's PPG17 Open Space, Sport and Recreation study (or updates as required). All open space shall be provided in a timely manner (so as to enable reasonable and appropriate access by new residents to this facility); should be fully equipped in a satisfactory manner as agreed by the Local Planning Authority; and, laid out at the expense of the developer and where appropriate, dedicated to the Council with suitable provision for ongoing maintenance. Further guidance on the level of contributions for commuted sums and the methodology for their calculation is set out in the Supplementary Planning Document on Provision of Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities, (which will be updated as required).

**DM17 - Retention of Open Space and outdoor and indoor sport and recreation facilities**

**The Council will protect and enhance the existing network of green links and open spaces and secure additional areas where deficiencies are identified. The provision of public open space in developments should be informed by an appraisal of local context and community need and up to date evidence, with a particular regard to the impact of site development on biodiversity.**

**Development, including change of use, of any existing or proposed public or private open space, including allotments (as identified on the Proposals Map) will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that:**

- (i) Alternative and improved provision will be created in a location well related to the functional requirements of the relocated use and its existing and future users;**
- (ii) The proposal would not result in the loss of an area important for its amenity or contribution to the green infrastructure network or to the character of the area in general; and**
- (iii) It achieves the aims of any relevant prevailing strategy relating to open space, sport and / or recreation**

**Development proposals resulting in a loss of open space must additionally demonstrate that:**

- (iv) There is an identified excess provision within the catchment of the facility and no likely shortfall is expected within the plan period; or**
  - (v) Alternative and improved provision will be supplied in a location well-related to the functional requirements of the relocated use and its existing and future users.**
- In all cases, development will not be permitted that would result in any deficiencies in public open space requirements or increase existing deficiencies in the area either at the time of the proposal or be likely to result in a shortfall within the plan period. Additionally, development that would result in the loss of any small incidental areas of open space, not specifically identified on the Proposals Map but which contribute to the character of existing residential neighbourhoods, and any registered common, heathland or village green or which contribute to green infrastructure will not be permitted.**

### **DM18 - Provision for Public Open Space**

New development must provide for the recreational needs of new communities and mitigate impacts on existing communities. This open space provision as well as alleviating recreational pressure on sites of high nature conservation value (e.g. Natura 2000) from the growing population will also increase opportunities for participation in healthy lifestyles.

All new residential development will be expected to provide new public areas of accessible open space. Precise levels of provision will depend on the location of the proposal and the nature of open space needs in the area but as a guideline, at least 10% of the gross site area should be provided as useable open space. This will be secured through planning obligations or CIL. Where the Council accepts commuted sums in lieu of open space, the commuted sums will be used to provide additional open space or to improve existing open space in the locality of the development. Contributions may be pooled (within pooling restrictions that apply at the time) to provide larger areas of strategic open space where a need has been identified. A commuted sum is only likely to be acceptable in the following circumstances:

- (i) smaller developments of less than 0.5 ha, or where for some other reason open space requirements cannot be met within the site;
- (ii) developments of dwellings for the elderly (where some compensating increase in private amenity space may be required);
- (iii) in a town centre location or where it is justified by an outstanding urban design approach based on site constraints and opportunities.

### **DM19 - Private Amenity Space**

The Borough Council will expect all new homes to provide easy access to private/communal open space. The area of open space should be informed by the needs of residents and the accessibility of the location. Private/communal open space must be designed to optimise its use and meet the recreational needs of residents.

All new residential development shall provide private amenity space to a high standard, where the siting, orientation, size and layout make for a secure and usable space, which has an inviting appearance for residents and is appropriate to the surrounding context. All private amenity spaces shall be designed so as to avoid significant overlooking. For the most accessible developments where, in accordance with Policy DM9, a higher density may often be appropriate, a minimum of 25m<sup>2</sup> of useable private amenity space shall be provided for each home (either as gardens, balconies or roof gardens/terraces). Elsewhere, the following standards shall apply:

For houses:

- One or two bedroom houses – a minimum of 50m<sup>2</sup>

- **Three bedroom houses – a minimum of 60m<sup>2</sup>**
- **Four bedroom houses – a minimum of 100m<sup>2</sup>**

**For flats:**

- **a minimum of 25m<sup>2</sup> per flat provided communally (where balconies are provided the space provided may be taken off the communal requirement)**

**A higher standard of private amenity space may be required for small infill (including backland) schemes, to reflect the character of the surrounding area, Development will not be permitted if it unacceptably reduces the level of existing private amenity space provision for existing buildings, particularly dwellings.**

#### **7.104 Alternative options considered**

**No Change to Policies** - This would retain elements of unnecessary repetition and also include some references which are no longer relevant;

**No policies and rely on NPPF** - This would not be compliant with national policy as there is a requirement for Local Plans to cover the local application of evidence to ensure adequate protection and provision of open space, sport and recreation to meet the needs of the local community.

### **Promoting Sustainable Transport and Changing Travel Behaviour**

7.105 The Spatial Strategy ensures that development is located to reduce the need to travel or development is of a scale that promotes sustainable transport that is accessible for all.

7.106 The NPPF requires the transport system to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes while recognising that different policies and solutions will be necessary in different areas. 2011 Census data shows that car ownership is highest in the rural areas of the Borough and lower in urban areas. However, the car is still the highest mode of travel used for journeys to work, even in urban areas, and congestion and air quality affect many of the roads within the urban areas. Therefore sustainable transport will continue to be encouraged where possible, particularly where growth is planned.

7.107 Good accessibility and access to a high quality and efficient transport network is essential to support new development and ensure that it is sustainable, enabling the community to access their needs (eg employment, shopping, schools) easily and without always needing a car. The Council will continue to work closely with Essex County Council, as the highway authority, Highways England, Network Rail, public transport infrastructure providers and operators to deliver projects in the Borough.

7.108 Active modes such as walking and cycling are a high priority, being an essential and highly sustainable means of transport which also support a healthy lifestyle. Census data shows that 69% of people who live within Colchester borough work within the borough. The majority of Colchester residents live within 5km of the

town centre and therefore walking and cycling have great potential. To encourage walking and cycling within Colchester, and to the town centre, the Council will seek to make improvements to the network to remove barriers to pedestrians and cyclists and enhancing the environment to provide people-friendly streets which give priority to sustainable modes of transport. Priority, safety and convenience for walking and cycling should be ensured at the design stage of any road schemes and all users should be considered.

- 7.109 Public transport has a crucial role to play in Colchester. Providing a quality public transport network that offers a genuinely attractive alternative to the car is vital. Transit corridors that prioritise public transport over other traffic will attract people to use public transport. Park and Ride facilities that offer easy access to the town via transit corridors will also help reduce congestion. For this reason it is important to safeguard land for new public transport infrastructure, such as bus lanes, interchange facilities and junction improvements.
- 7.110 The Council will also seek to deliver improvements to transport interchanges and public transport gateways. At present there are over 5million passenger movements at Colchester's railway stations each year. Enhancing transport interchanges such as the railway and bus stations will present a more attractive gateway to businesses, commuters, tourists and local residents. The Colchester Station Travel Plan aims to manage congestion in the area by investing in infrastructure; increasing accessibility; encouraging access by sustainable travel and encouraging a high level of connectivity linking the station to the town centre and other key destinations.
- 7.111 The private car will continue to be a major mode of transport. However, growth in car travel and traffic needs to be managed to reduce congestion, improve air quality and promote a high quality of life and economic growth in Colchester. Car travel demand can be more carefully managed in urban areas through the use of alternatives and new technologies. Combining demand management of car traffic with improvements to sustainable alternatives and improved street design can greatly benefit the local community, businesses and the environment.
- 7.112 Road freight and servicing will be facilitated where appropriate to promote economic and employment growth. Support will be given for improvements to the strategic road and rail network to accommodate growth. Consideration will be given to measures that discourage the use of high emission vehicles.
- 7.113 It is recognised that different policies and measures will be required in different communities and opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas. Those living in rural areas are often most affected by lack of transport choices. Where appropriate, the council will encourage connectivity by sustainable modes of transport including enhancing and promoting rural bus services.
- 7.114 There are two rail branch lines off the main Great Eastern mainline in the Borough serving rural communities: the Gainsborough Line that links Marks Tey to Sudbury, serving both Chappel and Wakes Colne and Bures Stations; and the Sunshine Coast line; the Colchester to Clacton/Walton line. The Council will work with partners, including the Community Rail Partnership, to make the best use of rural rail stations, increase accessibility to stations and promote and increase the

use of the branch lines in the Borough. We support the aim to provide at least 2 trains an hour to all stations, including the rural branches.

#### **DM20-Promoting Sustainable Transport and Changing Travel Behaviour**

**The Council will work with developers and other partners to increase modal shift towards sustainable modes by improving accessibility of development through the promotion of walking and cycling as an integral part of development, and by further improving public transport. In line with policy SG1 Colchester Spatial Strategy development that reduces the need to travel will be encouraged and sustainable transport will be improved to provide better connections between communities and their needs. This will be achieved by:**

- (i) Safeguarding existing and proposed routes for walking, cycling and public transport, including rapid transit and park and ride, from development. New development will be expected to contribute towards maintaining continuity and enhancing these connections where appropriate.**
- (ii) Focusing new walking and cycling improvements on areas of employment, education and health facilities, and on the town centre and public transport interchanges.**
- (iii) Ensuring new developments are supported by quality public transport linking them to the main urban areas and major centres of employment, health and education. Access to public transport should be within walking or cycling distance of any new development.**
- (iv) Enhancing public transport gateways to Colchester to provide attractive entry points to, and excellent onward connections from, the rail stations in urban Colchester and Marks Tey and Colchester Bus Station.**

**The Borough Council will also work with partners to accommodate necessary car travel making the best use of the existing network and managing the demand for road traffic. The Council will support improvements to the strategic road, rail and cycle network where appropriate evidence is provided and local consultation undertaken.**

**Improvements will be made to the road network to support sustainable development and to reduce the impact of congestion. The demand for car travel will be managed to prevent adverse impacts on sustainable transportation, air quality, safety, local amenity and built character by:**

- (v) Encouraging a reduction in through traffic in the town centre to encourage trips to be undertaken by more sustainable modes;**
- (vi) Encourage use of new technology to better manage traffic, provide alternatives, facilitate the use of ultra-low emission vehicles and reduce the need to travel, particularly at peak times.**

**Where appropriate the use of sustainable travel in rural areas will be encouraged to minimise the impact of transport on sensitive rural areas. The council will seek to make best use of rural rail services through promotion and improving access at stations.**

#### 7.115 **Alternative Options considered**

**Retain existing policies as separate policies:** the policy has been updated to reflect NPPF priorities and guidance.

#### **Sustainable Access to Development**

- 7.116 Good easy access to a high quality and efficient transport network is essential to support new development and ensure that it is sustainable. The NPPF sets out the Government's approach to the location and design of developments to ensure that plans protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people. The Council will work closely with Essex County Council as the highways authority to help promote good access to high quality, sustainable modes of travel within and from new developments.
- 7.117 One of the best ways to encourage sustainable modes is to fully consider them at design stage. Public transport has a crucial role to play in encouraging sustainable travel patterns at an early stage from new developments. Walking and cycling are also a high priority being healthy, affordable sustainable modes of travel and priority, convenience and safety for both modes should be ensured through design layout and the provision of on-site facilities. The needs of all users should be considered as part of a planned approach to inclusive design. The current Colchester Cycling Delivery Strategy was adopted as SPD in January 2012. The latest version of this document should be taken account in the design stage of new development to ensure cyclists and cycling facilities are taken into consideration through the provision of quality infrastructure and funding promotion and cycle training to increase levels of cycling and create more sustainable and healthy travel patterns. The infrastructure appendix to the current SPD illustrates the network of existing and planned routes in Colchester.
- 7.118 Electric vehicle charging points and facilities for other ultra-low emission vehicles, or the infrastructure to ensure their future provision, should be provided within a development where appropriate to help reduce carbon emissions from transport.
- 7.119 Any proposals must include sufficient information to assess the likely impact of the development. Transport Assessments or Transport Statements will be required for all development likely to generate significant amounts of movement. The Essex County Council Development Management Policies and Guidance provide further detail on the thresholds for Transport Assessments and Statements. Developers will need to demonstrate that the opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up, safe and suitable access for all can be achieved and the impacts can be effectively mitigated within the transport network. Where significant impacts are identified, development will not be permitted when the residual cumulative impacts are severe.
- 7.120 Developers will also be required to provide a Travel Plan for developments that generate significant amounts of movement in accordance with Essex County Council Travel Plan guidelines. Current ECC guidance requires all non-residential development proposals with 50 employees or more to produce a Travel



Plan. Developments that generate significant amounts of movement will also be required to become members of the Colchester Travel Plan Club which provides a range of resources to promote travel behaviour change for local business and organisations in Colchester.

#### **DM21- Sustainable Access to Development**

**All new developments should seek to enhance accessibility for sustainable modes of transport, by giving priority to people walking, cycling and accessing public transport, ensuring routes are safe, convenient and attractive and linked to existing networks. Proposals for development should:**

- (i) Give priority to the movement of people walking and cycling;**
- (ii) Create safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic, cyclists and pedestrians;**
- (iii) Link the development to the surrounding walking, cycling and public transport networks taking into consideration the Cycle Strategy SPD;**
- (iv) Provide and give access to quality public transport facilities;**
- (v) Ensure streets and junctions are designed to provide people-friendly street environments and to give priority to sustainable transport;**
- (vi) Incorporate charging facilities for electric and other ultra-low emission vehicles where appropriate;**
- (vii) Ensuring accessibility for those with impaired mobility;**
- (viii) Accommodate the efficient delivery of goods and services.**

**Access to all development should be created in a manner which maintains the right and safe passage of all highway users. Where development requires a new road or road access it should be designed to give high priority to the needs of pedestrians and cyclists.**

**Development will only be allowed where there is physical and environmental capacity to accommodate the type and amount of traffic generated in a safe manner. Developments that generate significant amounts of movement will require a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment in line with the thresholds set in the latest Essex County Council Development Management Policies and guidance. A masterplan approach to assess cumulative impacts maybe required in complex locations with closely related developments.**

**All non-residential developments that generate significant amounts of movement will be required to produce a Travel Plan in accordance with Essex County Council Travel Plan Framework guidance and where appropriate will be required to become members of the Colchester Travel Plan Club. All new residential developments will be required to produce a Travel Plan or provide Residential Travel Packs in accordance with Essex County Council Travel Plan Framework guidance.**

- 7.121 ***Alternative Options Considered*** Retain existing policy: the policy has been updated to reflect NPPF guidance and priorities, and local circumstances.

## **Parking**

- 7.122 The Council will work with partners to ensure that car parking is managed to support the economy and sustainable communities. The lack of, or poor planning or parking provision, can have a negative impact on the public realm and the local highway network and can restrict the accessibility and mobility needs of people and businesses. Over provision and poor management can lead to the inefficient use of land and can also discourage greater use of more sustainable modes of transport.
- 7.123 Essex County Council (ECC) carried out an Interim Review of the Essex Parking Standards in 2016 in light of NPPF guidance and in response to feedback from Local Planning Authorities requiring clarification of certain aspects of the document to facilitate implementation of the guidance. The Interim Review focused on the design of car parking and the standards for residential and non-residential parking remain the same as the 2009 standards which were adopted by Colchester Borough as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in November 2009. ECC aim to undertake a fundamental review once a new evidence base has been established and this will include a reassessment of the need for maximum parking standards for commercial sites.
- 7.124 The Essex Parking Standards provide the Council with advice and guidance on the provision and role of parking within residential, commercial and leisure areas. However, the Council recognises that there needs to be flexibility to provide appropriate car and cycle parking based on local circumstances. The adopted SPD will continue to inform this policy and will provide guidance on levels of parking considered necessary to serve development. Developers will be expected to provide car parking on new developments in accordance with the most up to date standards, having regard to the nature of the development and location. The maximum parking standard will be used as a point of reference for non-residential development but a more flexible approach will be considered if the applicant can demonstrate through parking surveys and accumulation data that less than the maximum standard is acceptable.
- 7.125 The Parking SPD will be reviewed to ensure it is applicable locally with regard to the most recent evidence and Census data regarding local car ownership and car usage.
- 7.126 The current Essex Parking Standards set out the following standards for residential development: a minimum of 1 car parking space should be provided for each 1-bedroom dwelling or 2 car parking spaces for each dwelling of 2 or more bedrooms, in addition to 0.25 spaces per dwelling for visitors. A lower standard may be acceptable or required where it can be clearly demonstrated that there is a high level of access to services, such as a town centre location.
- 7.127 Where new development requires the submission of a Travel Plan, it will be necessary to ensure that the Travel Plan integrates proposals for parking with

proposals to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport. Parking for staff, visitors and operational uses will be managed as part of the Travel Plan.

- 7.128 Car free and low car development will be encouraged in the Town Centre where it can be demonstrated that this is appropriate as a result of effective alternative modes of transport.
- 7.129 Where the Council receives an application for a stand-alone new car park, or for the expansion of an existing car park, this will be considered on its merits based on evidence of need. Developers should provide justification of the need for a new car park based on a parking survey. In the town centre, short stay car parking will be provided where necessary to facilitate the economic and social wellbeing of the town centre. Redevelopment of existing surface car parks will be considered. Greater use of park and ride will be encouraged and additional sites will be sought that support growth, help manage congestion and can deliver more people sustainably to the key destinations in and around the town centre. Disabled, cycle and motorcycle parking will be provided where appropriate.
- 7.130 Encouraging the use of electric vehicles helps reduce carbon emissions and reduces harmful emissions particularly as Colchester has a number of transportation related air quality issues. With the growth in electric vehicles owners will need to have suitable infrastructure to re-charge vehicles. Infrastructure needs to be installed at a variety of locations to enable effective recharging. Different chargers will be needed such as slow, fast or rapid chargers depending on location and the target market.
- 7.131 To encourage greater take up of electric vehicles more charging points are required either at home or in car parks (public and private). With the market and technology still developing charging points should be initially installed at new residential dwellings where it is expected demand is at its greatest based on market trends. A phased approach will be adopted and be appropriate to start with larger dwellings of 4 or more bedrooms. The development of technology will be monitored but suggest where overnight charging is possible “slow” chargers should be installed. In other areas (including smaller residential properties) passive provision should be made for future retrofitting of charging equipment by owners in the future as required. In public and private car parks provision should be made with the type of charger specified to match the duration of stay but suggest where there is the potential to charge over 2 to 4 hour period “fast” chargers should be installed. In locations close to the trunk road network “rapid” charging (30 to 40 minute) should be installed, especially if the development serves as a trunk road service area.

## **DM22 – Parking**

**The amount of car parking to be provided in association with new residential development will be assessed using the most recent local Parking Guidance taking account of the following factors:**

- **Levels of local accessibility**
- **Historic and forecast car ownership levels**

- The size, type, tenure and location of the dwellings
- The appropriate mix of parking types including opportunities for car-sharing (eg unallocated, on-street, visitor etc)

Cycle parking facilities should be provided where suitable private storage is not provided.

Parking standards for non-residential development should be agreed through joint discussions with the local Highway Authority and the Local Planning Authority in accordance with the most recent local Parking Guidance, with a more flexible approach to the maximum standard if supported by a parking survey and accumulation data. Parking for staff, visitors and operational uses should be managed as part of a Travel Plan. Where opportunities arise, for example on mixed use sites, shared parking and car sharing will be encouraged as part of an agreed Travel Plan to make efficient use of land to support quality development.

In appropriate circumstances, namely sustainable locations, served by sustainable travel alternatives and alternative parking locations, parking standards may be relaxed in order to reflect accessibility by non-car modes, and/or if lower provision would protect or enhance the character of sensitive locations. Car-free or low car ownership development may be considered acceptable where there is clear justification, having regard to the location and the current and proposed availability of alternative transport modes and/or where there are available/provided car parking spaces in public/communal facilities within approximately 400m walking distance of dwellings.

Applications for new or expanded car parking provision will be considered on an individual basis in relation to evidence and need. The existing car parking availability, current usage and, where appropriate, the existence of a Travel Plan and the current use of non-car modes, should all be demonstrated.

Redevelopment of existing surface car parking will be considered to make efficient use of land, improve the townscape and support regeneration.

Greater use of Park & Ride will be encouraged especially for trips to the town centre and other major establishments along the route of the service. Further Park and Ride sites will be developed to help support growth and give access to the town centre.

Parking should incorporate facilities for electric vehicle charging and other ultra-low emission vehicles where appropriate, including parking courts and at non-residential locations. The type and number of chargers will vary dependant on location.

The Council will work with transport providers and highways authorities to provide facilities for freight and servicing.

### 7.132 ***Alternative options considered***

Retain existing policy and rely on Essex Parking Standards: It is considered that there needs to be flexibility to provide appropriate car and cycle parking based on local circumstances and the maximum standard is not always considered appropriate. A flexible approach ensures that the standard is applicable locally.

## **Flood Risk and Water Management**

- 7.133 National policy categorises zones of flood risk as Zone 1 (low probability), Zone 2 (medium probability), Zone 3a (high probability) and Zone 3b (functional floodplain). These flood zones are defined in Table 1 of the Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework and are illustrated by the flood maps including the updated Flood Map for Surface Water, produced by the Environment Agency (EA) and available from their website.
- 7.134 National guidance states that the overall aim should be to steer new development to Flood Zone 1 (low risk), however it does set out a flood risk vulnerability classification for different land uses and provides a 'compatibility' table for allowing particular land uses in the different flood zones (including 3a and 3b in certain circumstances). It identifies the importance of assessing flood risk early in the planning process. It requires the production of Strategic Flood Risk Assessments to assess flood risk at a strategic level and individual Flood Risk Assessments in certain circumstances to assess flood risk at the site specific level. Accordingly Colchester Borough Council commissioned a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment to support the development of the Local Plan.
- 7.135 The national guidance stipulates that site specific Flood Risk Assessments should be submitted with planning applications for development proposals on sites of 1ha or more in Flood Zone 1 or for all development proposals in Flood Zone 2 or 3. It also sets out the requirements for the use for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to minimise the risk of flooding from new development. These and the Council's most up to date SFRA will be used to consider planning applications where relevant.
- 7.136 The risk from flooding to property and people will be minimised by applying the sequential test in accordance with the NPPF and National Technical Guidance. New developments will be directed away from areas at risk from all types of flooding, as identified in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). Where development occurs in areas with a known flood risk, practical and safe mitigation measures will need to be adopted to alleviate risk to people and property.
- 7.137 Development in higher risk flood zones will be restricted to certain categories where an identified need for that type of development in that location exists. The Exception Test allows for development in high risk areas but is only to be applied where there is no other option i.e. where there are large areas of land in Flood Zones 2 and 3 and the Sequential Test cannot deliver acceptable alternative sites, but where some continuing development is necessary. Advice on the Exception test is included in the Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 7.138 Small sites (less than 1ha) in Flood Zone 1 that are surrounded by Flood Zone 2 or 3 land, i.e. dry islands, are likely to be treated in the same way as the surrounding land. Each area will have its unique characteristics and a site specific Flood Risk Assessment may be required even for those sites less than 1ha to ensure that safe access / egress exists for the development and that the land will be sustainable for the duration of the flood period.
- 7.139 The use of SuDS to manage water run-off can be an important tool in minimising flooding by increasing permeable surfaces in an area that allows water to seep gradually into the ground rather than running directly into a drainage network, thereby reducing the risk of overloading the system.. SuDS can also help reduce the impact of diffuse pollution from run-off and flooding. The effective use of permeable surfaces, soakaways and water storage areas or SuDS should be incorporated in all new development where technically possible. Early consideration should be given to the potential to use SuDS to identify when/where the use of such technologies is feasible and to also identify which type of SuDS is most appropriate to local site conditions. Developers will be encouraged to enter into early discussions with the Council and the Lead Local Flood Authority and as part of discussions maintenance and long term adoption responsibilities should be explored and agreed where possible as part of the SuDS approval process, prior to the start of development.
- 7.140 The Colchester Surface Water Management Plan (Urban Colchester) has identified Critical Drainage Areas (CDAs) and Local Flood Risk Zones (LFRZs). This delineates the areas where the impact of surface water flooding is expected to be greatest, although it is acknowledged that the CDAs (and LFRZs) do not account for all the areas that could be affected by surface water flooding. It is therefore important that the policies seek to reduce the risk from surface water flooding throughout the whole Borough The SWMP also encourages Essex County Council also to implement similar policies, so that both authorities promote and apply Best Management Practises to the implementation of SuDS and the reduction of runoff volumes.
- 7.141 Ensuring a continual supply of water in the Borough is likely to become increasingly important in light of climate change. It will be important that water resources continue to be protected for present and future generations. They should be used efficiently to make the maximum use of the resource and to reduce the need for major new water storage facilities and related infrastructure.

#### **DM23 -Flood Risk and Water Management**

**The Council will seek to direct development away from land at risk of flooding in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Technical Guidance (or any future national policy /guidance), including areas where the risk of flooding is likely to increase as a result of climate change. The sequential test as set out in national guidance has informed the allocation of sites in the Local Plan and will also be applied in determining planning**

applications on new sites coming forward outside of those allocated.

Development will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposal meets requirements set out in the NPPF and most recent Technical Guidance, recommendations in Colchester's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Proposals will be required to include satisfactory flood defence measures or flood mitigation measures such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to minimise the risk of increased flooding both within the development boundary and off site in all flood zones and to help protect water quality through the management of pollution. Proposals that include measures to enhance the flood resilience of new or renovated buildings will be encouraged, particularly in areas with a history of local flooding.

All development proposals shall incorporate measures for the conservation and sustainable use of water. These measures shall include appropriate SuDS for managing surface water runoff within the overall design and layout of the site and measures to conserve water within individual building designs. The use of SuDS will be particularly important as part of green field developments (but not exclusively).

Where Proposals which require planning permission include driveways / hardstanding or paving, the use of permeable materials and landscaping will be sought to minimise the cumulative impacts of flooding from such developments.

Developments are required to comply with the following as indicated in the Surface Water Management Plan (or updates if appropriate);

- All developments across the catchment (excluding minor house extensions less than 50m<sup>2</sup>) which result in a net increase in impermeable area are to include at least one 'at source' SuDS measure (e.g. water butt, rainwater harvesting tank, bio-retention planter box etc). This is to assist in reducing the peak volume of runoff discharging from the site.
- Proposed 'brownfield' redevelopments of more than one property or area greater than 0.1 hectare are required to reduce post-development runoff rates for events up to and including the 1 in 100 year return period event with an allowance for climate change (in line with NPPF and UKCIP guidance) to that of its greenfield condition.
- Developments located in Critical Drainage Areas (CDAs), Local Flood Risk Zones (LFRZs) and for redevelopments of more than one property or area greater than 0.1 hectare should seek betterment to a greenfield runoff rate. It is recommended that a SuDS treatment train is utilised to assist in this reduction.
- New developments in Critical Drainage Areas will be required to provide or contribute towards the provision of Flood Mitigation options via CIL and S106 contributions, as identified in the Colchester Surface Water

Management Plan, in order to mitigate any impacts on the risk of flooding to the existing properties located within the CDA as well as to accommodate the drainage needs of the new developments.

#### **DM24 - Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems**

All new development of 10 dwellings or more and major commercial development, car parks and hard standings should incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDs) appropriate to the nature of the site. Such systems shall provide optimum water runoff rates and volumes taking into account relevant local or national standards and the impact of the Water Framework Directive on flood risk issues. SUDs design quality will be expected to conform with standards encompassed in the relevant BRE, CIRIA standards and Essex County Council's SUDs Design Guide (and as updated) to the satisfaction of the Lead Local Flood Authority.

Maximum use should be made of low land take drainage measures such as rain water recycling, green roofs, permeable surfaces and water butts. Appropriate pollution control measures shall be incorporated where necessary to manage surface water run-off rates, and in areas close to underground aquifers and landfill sites to reduce the risk of pollution. Surface water should be managed as close to its source as possible and on the surface where practicable to do so.

Opportunities shall be taken to integrate sustainable drainage with the development, creating amenity and enhancing biodiversity.

Only where there is a significant risk of pollution to the water environment, inappropriate soil conditions and/or engineering difficulties, should alternative methods of drainage be considered. It will be necessary to demonstrate why it is not achievable. If alternative methods are to be considered, adequate assessment and justification should be provided and consideration should still be given to pre and post runoff rates.

SUDS design should be an integral part of design proposals and clear details of proposed SuDS together with how they will be managed and maintained will be required as part of any planning application. Only proposals which clearly demonstrate that a satisfactory SUDs layout with appropriate maintenance is possible, or compelling justification as to why SUDs should not be incorporated into a scheme, or are unviable, are likely to be successful. Contributions in the form of commuted sums may be sought in legal agreements to ensure that the drainage systems can be adequately maintained into the future. The sustainable urban drainage system should be designed to ensure that the maintenance and operation requirements are economically proportionate.

7.142 ***Alternative Options Considered*** Retain existing policy. Retaining the same policy was not an option as the current policies ENV1 and DP20 were not up to date. The new policy includes updates in relation to the use of Sustainable Drainage in new developments.



## **Renewable Energy, Water, Waste and Recycling**

- 7.143 Climate change is an important issue, which underpins the Local Plan. New developments will need to help address the challenges of climate change, and contribute positively towards the future sustainability of Colchester Borough.
- 7.144 To tackle climate change and improve sustainability, it is important for the Council to promote energy, water, waste & recycling efficiency and renewable energy in new developments. In its commitment to deliver sustainable developments the Council is seeking to create communities that use natural resources sustainably, and minimise waste.
- 7.145 Nationally 15% of energy is required to come from renewable energy sources by 2020 increasing to 30% by 2030 ( UK Climate Change Committee, 2011). Whilst this is a national target the Council must contribute to meet and exceed it where possible. Regard must be had to any future national targets.
- 7.146 The Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy E1( 2011), identifies wind energy as the biggest potential for renewable energy in the UK. Wind technologies are considered to have the potential to deliver 30% of the UK's electricity needs by 2020 (UK Climate Change Committee, 2011).
- 7.147 The Council will support proposals for on shore and offshore wind farms (and associated infrastructure), solar farms that satisfy the broad objectives set out in the policy above. The Council will also support the development of community led renewable energy schemes as part of Neighbourhood Plans and encourage the delivery of District Heating Schemes within the West Colchester Garden Community and University Garden Village and as part of future development in the Northern Gateway and East Colchester. The Council, enabled by DECC, has commissioned a Heat Network Feasibility Study for the Northern Gateway and East Colchester, which provides a basis for future implementation of district heating in these areas.
- 7.148 Further policy guidance for the delivery of renewable energy proposals within internationally designated sites, the Dedham Vale AONB and within the Coastal Protection Belt is set out in policies x, xx and xxx.
- 7.149 To help contribute to renewable targets, new residential development will be required to meet energy efficiency targets in part L of national Buildings Regulations ( or in any higher standards subsequently introduced later in the plan period).
- 7.150 The Water Cycle Study assesses the impact of planned growth on the Borough's water resources to ensure its sustainable management in recognition of the increasing demand for water the Council will encourage developments that incorporate water saving measures, in line with Part G2 of national Building Regulations 125/l/person/day). To deliver even greater water efficiencies in new builds, the Council will encourage developers to meet the tighter optimal water standards specified in G2 of the national Buildings Regulations 110/l/per person/day ( or above).

7.151 The Council has a current aspirational target of 60% recycling of household waste. At present approximately 48 % of household waste is being recycled. The Council will continue to improve services and information to further help increase recycling rates over the new plan period. New developments will be expected to support this objective by employing best practice technology to optimise the opportunities for recycling and minimising waste and by providing better recycling facilities.

#### **DM25 – Renewable Energy, Water, Waste and Recycling**

The Council's commitment to carbon reduction includes the promotion of efficient use of energy and resources, alongside waste minimisation and recycling.

The Council will support housing developments that help reduce carbon emissions in accordance with national Building Regulations. As a minimum, new residential developments will be required to comply with current energy standards in Part L of the Building Regulations (or the relevant standard at the time of submission of an application.) Non-residential developments will be encouraged to achieve a minimum BREEAM rating of 'Very Good'.

The Council will also encourage the use of sustainable construction techniques in tandem with high quality design and materials to reduce energy demand, waste and the use of natural resources, including the sustainable management of the Borough's water resources.

The Council will support proposals for renewable energy projects including micro-generation, offshore wind farms (plus land based ancillary infrastructure) solar farms, wind farms, District Heating Networks and community led renewable energy initiatives at appropriate locations in the Borough to help reduce Colchester's carbon footprint.

Within internationally designated sites and nationally designated landscapes (Dedham Vale AONB) renewable energy schemes, will only be supported in exceptional circumstances, where it can be demonstrated that the designation objectives for the area will not be compromised, that adverse impacts can be adequately mitigated or where it can be demonstrated that any adverse impacts are clearly outweighed by the social and economic benefits provided by the energy proposal.

All applications for renewable energy proposals should be located and designed in such a way to minimise increases in ambient noise levels. Landscape and visual impacts should be mitigated through good design, careful siting and layout and landscaping measures. Transport Assessments covering the construction, operation and decommissioning of any wind farm or solar farm proposal will be required and should be produced at the pre-application stage so acceptability can be determined and mitigation measures identified. A condition will be attached to planning consents for wind turbines and solar farm proposals to ensure that the site is restored when the turbines or panels are taken out of service.

All proposals for solar farm development or wind farms should have regard to the advice

in the Council's Guidance Note 'Designing solar farm renewable energy development' and criteria in the National Policy Statement for Energy EN1/3?

As a minimum new residential development will be required to satisfy part G2 of the current Building Regulations (or subsequent updates to national Building Regulations in relation to water efficiency). The Council however will encourage developers to meet the higher optimal water standards in national Buildings Regulations to achieve greater efficiencies in new builds.

The Council is seeking to minimise waste and improve reuse and recycling rates through better recycling services and public awareness programs. To assist this aim, the Council will support proposals for sustainable waste management facilities identified in the Waste Management Plan which minimise impacts on the communities living close to the sites (noise, pollution, traffic) and on the local environment and landscape. New developments will also be expected to support this objective by employing best practice technology to optimise the opportunities for recycling and minimising waste and by providing better recycling facilities.

7.152 **Alternative options considered-** No change to policies ER1 and DP25– using the same policies would retain elements of unnecessary repetition and retain targets in relation to energy efficiency and water which are out of date or completely obsolete now.

## **8. Delivery Strategy and Implementation**

- 8.1 The Council will work in partnership with a range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations to co-ordinate investment and ensure the successful implementation and delivery of the Local Plan Vision, Objectives and policies. To achieve this aim, the Council will use a range of mechanisms including masterplanning, planning performance agreements, and formation of delivery bodies. This work will occur both at the strategic Garden Communities level, as explained in Part 1 of the plan, and at the more local level, as provided in the policies and allocations for sites in Colchester set forth in Part 2 of the Plan. The Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan will set out the infrastructure requirements of new development across the Borough along with information on delivery partners, timing and funding.
- 8.2 A key mechanism for implementing the Local Plan is the consideration of planning applications through the development management process. The Local Plan should be read as a whole and applications for planning permission will be considered against all relevant policies in the Local Plan and the NPPF.
- 8.3 The Council is assessing the Local Plan to ensure its policies and allocation support economic prosperity and development viability. As explained in Policy SG5, Developers will be required to contribute towards providing and enhancing strategic infrastructure through the Community Infrastructure Levy. Planning obligations through Section 106 will continue to provide funding to mitigate negative impacts relating to a specific development. CIL will complement and not duplicate planning obligations.

## 9. Monitoring

- 9.1 The Local Plan will need to be monitored regularly in order to assess the effectiveness of policies and identify the need for review of any or all policies. The following table of Targets and Monitoring Indicators lists the indicators that will be used to monitor delivery and progress on plan targets. The Council will gather monitoring information together in its annual Authority Monitoring Report (AMR). The AMR will measure progress on the implementation of policies and the delivery of new development and supporting infrastructure using appropriate targets and indicators. The AMR will include an annual updated housing trajectory which will set out the net additional dwellings completed to date and the estimated future completions for the remainder of the plan period.

**Table 1: Monitoring Targets and Indicators**

	Local Plan Objectives	Targets	Key Indicators in Authority Monitoring Report
SG-Sustainable Growth Policies	Ensure new development is sustainable and minimises the use of scarce natural resources and addresses the causes and potential impacts of climate change, and encourages renewable energy. Focus new development at sustainable locations to create new communities with distinctive identities whilst supporting existing communities, local businesses, and sustainable transport. Provide high quality housing of all tenures at accessible locations to accommodate our growing community. Ensure there are sufficient sites allocated in the right locations to support employment growth over the plan period.	<p>Deliver new employment land in line with spatial strategy and evidence base target of up to 55 ha business use floorspace.</p> <p>Deliver new housing in line with spatial strategy and Objectively Assessed Need target of 920 units per annum.</p> <p>Increase share of non-motorised transport.</p> <p>Delivery of infrastructure schemes identified in the Local Plan.</p>	<p>Amount of floorspace development for employment and leisure by type.</p> <p>Housing completions per annum (net).</p> <p>Monitor modal splits and self-containment via Census; measure traffic levels on key routes; and take-up of Travel Plans</p> <p>Key infrastructure projects delivered.</p>

	<p>Focus development at accessible locations which support public transport, walking and cycling, and reduce the need to travel.</p> <p>Secure infrastructure to support new development.</p> <p>Promotion of healthy lifestyles through the provision and enhancement of sport and recreation facilities, public open space and green infrastructure.</p>		
CC Climate Change Policy	<p>Shape places and secure new development so as to minimise vulnerability and provide resilience to impacts arising from climate change, and to do so in ways consistent with cutting greenhouse gas emissions.</p>	<p>Reduce carbon emissions by 40% from 2008 baseline data by 2020.</p> <p>New development to comply with building regulations requiring reductions in carbon emissions</p>	<p>Reduce emissions in Borough via measures in CBC Environmental Sustainability Strategy.</p>
ENV Environment Policies	<p>Protection of the countryside and coast</p> <p>Developing a green infrastructure network across the borough</p> <p>Ensure new development avoids areas of flood risk and reduce future flood risk where possible.</p> <p>Protection and enhancement of landscapes, biodiversity, green spaces, air and water quality, and river corridors.</p>	<p>Minimise impact of new development in areas designated due to their environmental importance</p> <p>Zero applications to be approved contrary to Environment Agency advice of flood risk/flood defence grounds.</p> <p>All developments to incorporate water management schemes including Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs).</p> <p>Zero percent loss of Local Wildlife Sites; ancient woodland; and</p>	<p>Amount of development in designated areas.</p> <p>Number of planning applications approved contrary to advice given by the EA</p> <p>Number of schemes incorporating water management schemes.</p> <p>Number and area of sites/habitats within the Borough.</p>

		<p>priority habitats and species.</p> <p>Manage visitor numbers at European Sites at levels that do not cause damage or affect site integrity.</p> <p>No increase in number of Air quality management Districts (AQMDs)</p>	<p>Number of visitors to Natura 2000 sites.</p> <p>Number of AQMDs.</p>
Place Policies	<p>Ensure the unique qualities of different communities and environments in the Borough are identified, protected and enhanced through policies and allocations which ensure high quality, consistency, equity and responsiveness to local character.</p> <p>Promote high quality design and sustain Colchester's historic character, found in its buildings, townscape and archaeology.</p> <p>Improve streetscapes, open spaces and green links to provide attractive and accessible spaces for residents to live, work and play.</p>	<p>Assist communities in the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans.</p> <p>Ensure a high quality of design in new development which is compatible with local context and incorporates sustainable development principles</p> <p>Zero percent of new developments to result in loss of Grade I and II* and scheduled monuments at risk.</p> <p>New development to contribute to open space, green infrastructure and streetscape improvements.</p> <p>All development to comply with amenity space requirements.</p> <p>Provide 20% of all housing as affordable housing.</p> <p>All schemes to comply with adopted Parking Standards</p>	<p>Number of Neighbourhood Plans adopted.</p> <p>Number of masterplans and development briefs approved as guidance.</p> <p>Register of Building at Risk.</p> <p>Delivery of public open space, green infrastructure and streetscape improvements.</p> <p>Number of homes with provision of private/communal open space.</p> <p>Percentage of affordable housing units provided</p> <p>Number of schemes complying with adopted Parking Standards.</p>

## Glossary

**Affordable Housing** – The council’s definition will accord with the current definition in the National Planning Policy Framework. It includes social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Affordable housing should meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.

**Air Quality Management Areas** – Areas designated by local authorities because they are not likely to achieve national air quality objectives by the relevant deadlines.

**Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** – Areas of high scenic quality that have statutory protection in order to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of their landscapes.

**Authority Monitoring Report** – A report published annually by the Borough Council monitoring progress in delivering progress in Local Plan policies and allocations.

**Brownfield Site (also known as Previously Developed Land)** - Previously developed land that is unused or may be available for development. It includes both vacant and derelict land and land currently in use with known potential for redevelopment. It excludes land that was previously developed where the remains have blended into the landscape over time.

**Community Facilities** - Are buildings, which enable a variety of local activity to take place including, but not limited to, the following:

- Schools, Universities and other educational facilities
- Libraries and community centres
- Doctors surgeries, medical centres and hospitals
- Museums and art galleries
- Child care centres
- Sport and recreational facilities
- Youth clubs
- Playgrounds
- Places of worship
- Emergency services

Some community activities can also be provided via privately run facilities (eg pubs and village shops).

**Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** – A mechanism by which local authorities can set a standard charge on specified development in their area to pay for new infrastructure required to support growth.

**Development** – The definition in Section 55 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 is ‘means the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operation in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any building or other land’.



**Development Plan Document (DPD)** - Development Plan Documents that the council are required to prepare include the core strategy, site specific allocations of land and area action plans. There will also be a proposals map, which will illustrate the spatial extent of policies that must be prepared and maintained to accompany all development plan documents. All Development Plan Documents must be subject to rigorous procedures of community involvement, consultation and independent examination, and adopted after receipt of the inspector's binding report.

**Garden Community** – Communities which are holistically planned new settlements that respond directly to their regional, local and individual site context and opportunities to create developments underpinned by a series of interrelated principles which are based on the following TCPA Garden City Principles:

- Land value capture for the benefit of the community.
- Strong vision, leadership and community engagement.
- Community ownership of land and long-term stewardship of assets.
- Mixed-tenure homes and housing types that are genuinely affordable.
- A wide range of local jobs in the Garden City within easy commuting distance of homes.
- Beautifully and imaginatively designed homes with gardens, combining the best of town and country to create healthy communities, and including opportunities to grow food.
- Development that enhances the natural environment, providing a comprehensive green infrastructure network and net biodiversity gains, and that uses zero-carbon and energy-positive technology to ensure climate resilience.
- Strong cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable, vibrant, sociable neighbourhoods.
- Integrated and accessible transport systems, with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of local transport.

**Green Infrastructure**— Green infrastructure is a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. Green infrastructure includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, street trees, allotments and private gardens. Green infrastructure provides attractive, safe and accessible spaces which contribute to positive social, economic and environmental benefits, improving public health, well-being and quality of life. Green infrastructure also provides the opportunity for sustainable travel between areas, adding to biodiversity.

**Greenfield Site** - Land which has never been built on before or where the remains of any structure or activity have blended into the landscape over time.

**Gypsies and Travelers** - For the purposes of section 225 of the Housing Act 2004 (duties of local housing authorities: accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers) "gypsies and travellers" means:

- a. persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan:  
and
- b. all other persons of a nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin, including -
  - i. such persons who, on grounds only of their own or their family's or

dependant's educational or health needs or old age, have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently; and  
ii. members of an organised group of Travelling Show people or circus people (whether or not travelling together as such).

**Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)** - The Habitat Regulation Assessment is a statutory requirement under the Conservation (Natural Habitats) (Amendment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006. An HRA is required for a plan or project which, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects is likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of a European site (one that forms part of the Natura 2000 (N2K) network), plus Ramsar sites (collectively 'international sites').

**Life Time Homes** - Lifetime Homes make life as easy as possible, for as long as possible because they are thoughtfully designed. They are homes for everyone and bring benefits to anyone who lives in them because of the individual choices that they make possible. The flexibility and adaptability of Lifetime Homes accommodate life events quickly, cost-effectively and without upheaval. ([www.lifetimehomes.org.uk](http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk)).

**Local Development Scheme (LDS)** - This is the project plan for a three year period for the production of all documents that will comprise the Local Development Framework. It identifies each Local Development Document stating which are to be Development Plan Documents (see above) and which are to be Supplementary Planning Documents, and establishes a timetable for preparing each.

**Local Wildlife Sites** – Habitats identified by Essex Wildlife Trust as important for the conservation of wildlife.

**Main Town Centre Uses** – As defined in the National Planning Policy Framework, main Town Centre uses include retail development (Including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment facilities the more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, night-clubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres, and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

**Natura 2000 network** - The European network of protected sites established under the Birds Directive and Habitats Directive (includes SPA, SAC, Ramsar).

**National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** - Government planning policy which replaces a large number of Planning Policy Guidance notes and Planning Policy Statements with one single document. It sets out new planning requirements and objectives in relation to issues such as housing, employment, transport and the historic and natural environment amongst others.

**Neighbourhood Plan** - A plan prepared by a Parish Council, Neighbourhood Forum, or other locally constituted community group, for a particular neighbourhood.

**Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAHN)** – The National Planning Policy Framework requires that local planning authorities should use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, including identifying key sites which are critical to the delivery of the housing strategy over the plan period. Further guidance provided in Planning Practice Guidance provides that ‘The assessment of development needs is an objective assessment of need based on facts and unbiased evidence. Plan makers should not apply constraints to the overall assessment of need, such as limitations imposed by the supply of land for new development, historic under performance, viability, infrastructure or environmental constraints. However, these considerations will need to be addressed when bringing evidence bases together to identify specific policies within development plans.’

**Permitted Development Rights** – The level of development that can take place before planning permission is required, as stated in The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995.

**Planning Practice Guidance** – Guidance and detail supporting the National Planning Policy Framework which is published online and regularly updated.

**Planning Obligation/Section 106 Agreement** – A legally binding agreement between a local planning authority and any person interested in land within the area of the local authority, in which development is restricted, specified operations, activities or uses required; or a financial contribution to be made. See also **Community Infrastructure Levy** for contributions to strategic infrastructure outside the site of development.

**Previously Developed Land (PDL) (also known as Brown field land)** - Previously developed land that is unused or may be available for development. It includes both vacant and derelict land and land currently in use with known potential for redevelopment. It excludes land that was previously developed where the remains have blended into the landscape over time.

**Ramsar Site** – An area identified by international agreement on endangered habitats.

**Rural Diversification (also known as Farm Diversification)** – The alternative use of land or buildings which were once used for farming purposes or rural activity such as grain store, stables or poultry shed. The Local Plan definition is “alternative use of land or buildings that remains within the farming unit in the ownership of the farmer and run from the existing house.

**Sequential Test (Retail)** – A test required to demonstrate that no other sites are available in a location which is ranked as preferable in the Council’s spatial hierarchy.

**Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)** - Land notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as an ecosystem of flora and/or fauna considered by English

Heritage to be of significant national value and interest to merit its conservation and management.

**Spatial Planning** – “Spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function. This will include policies which can impact on land use, for example, by influencing the demands on or needs for development, but which are not capable of being delivered solely or mainly through the granting of planning permission and may be delivered through other means.” (PPS 1 ODPM, 2004, pp3).

**Special Area of Conservation (SAC)** - A site of European Community importance designated by the member states, where necessary conservation measures are applied for the maintenance or restoration, at favourable conservation status, of the habitats and/or species for which the site is designated.

**Special Protection Area (SPA)** - A site designated under the Birds Directive by the member states where appropriate steps are taken to protect the bird species for which the site is designated.

**Starter Homes** – Newly built properties that must be sold to someone who is a first-time buyer below the age of 40, with a discount of at least 20 per cent off the market value.

**Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)** - This will set out the standards that the council intend to achieve in relation to involving the community and all stakeholders in the preparation, alteration and continuing review of all Local Development Plan Documents and in significant planning applications, and also how the local planning authority intends to achieve those standards. The Statement of Community Involvement will not be a Development Plan Document (see above) but will be subject to independent examination. A consultation statement showing how the council has complied with its Statement of Community Involvement should accompany all Local Development Documents.

**Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)** - A study prepared for the Council's Evidence Base further to national guidance which assesses the overall state of the housing market and advises on future housing policies used to inform the Council's Housing Strategy.

**Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA)** - A study prepared for the Council's Evidence Base further to national guidance which identifies sites with development potential for development and assesses their developability, deliverability and capacity.

**Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)** – A document produced by the Council to add further detailed guidance and information on a particular subject such as Sustainable Construction or Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities. An SPD is subject to a formal consultation period and then is used as a material consideration when determining planning applications.

**Sustainability Appraisal (SA)** - An appraisal of the economic, social and environmental effects of a plan from the outset of the preparation process, so that decisions can be made that accord with sustainable development.

**Sustainable Communities** are places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all.

**Sustainable Construction** – is the name given to building in an energy efficient way. The incorporation of many new technologies and energy saving techniques into a building can dramatically reduce the CO2 emissions and carbon foot print of a building. Initiatives include grey water recycling systems, solar panels, home recycling, wind turbines and ground water heating systems. Full details can be found in the Council's Sustainable Construction SPD.

**Sustainable Development** - Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

**Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs)** – A sustainable drainage system is designed to reduce the potential impact of new and existing developments with respect to surface water drainage discharges.

**Sustainable Transport** - Sustainable Transport refers to walking, cycling and public transport, including train and bus. Sustainable Transport is transport that makes efficient use of natural resources and minimises pollution. In particular, Sustainable Transport seeks to minimise the emissions of carbon dioxide – a greenhouse gas associated with climate change – as well as nitrogen oxides, sulphur oxides, carbon monoxide and particulates, all of which affect local air quality.

**Town Centre** - The Town Centre is cultural and commercial heart of the Borough. Colchester's Town Centre includes the historic core of Colchester and is characterised by a mix of retail, residential, office, community facilities and other uses. See **Main Town Centre Uses** for a list of town centre uses.

**Travel Plan** - A plan demonstrating how a development would encourage its users to use more sustainable methods of transport to access a development.

**Use Class** - Different uses are given a classification as defined by The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (As amended). For example an A1 use refers to retail and a C3 use would refer to a residential use.

## Appendix 1 – Summary of changes proposed in the Local Plan

Table 1 - Changes proposed to settlements classed as Countryside.

<b>Countryside areas</b>	<b>Change proposed</b>
Boxted - Mill Road & Workhouse Hill	Permanent deletion of Settlement Boundary
Chappel - Rose Green, Swan Street & Wakes Street	Permanent deletion of Settlement Boundary
Dedham - Bargate Lane & Lamb Corner	Permanent deletion of Settlement Boundary
Ford Street	Permanent deletion of Settlement Boundary
Great Horkesley – School Lane	Permanent deletion of Settlement Boundary
Great Wigborough – South Maldon Road	Permanent deletion of Settlement Boundary
Hardy's Green	Permanent deletion of Settlement Boundary
Langenhoe	Permanent deletion of Settlement Boundary
Layer de la Haye – Maltings Green	Permanent deletion of Settlement Boundary
Layer Marney	Permanent deletion of Settlement Boundary
Little Tey	Permanent deletion of Settlement Boundary
Seven Star Green	Permanent deletion of Settlement Boundary
Tiptree Heath	Permanent deletion of Settlement Boundary
Wakes Colne - Inworth Lane & Middle Green	Permanent deletion of Settlement Boundary

Table 2 – Changes to District Centres

<b>Former District Centres</b>	<b>Change proposed</b>
Highwoods	Renamed as Commercial Areas managed in accordance with policy SG5
Peartree Road	Renamed as Commercial Areas managed in accordance with policy SG5
Turner Rise	Renamed as Commercial Areas managed in accordance with policy SG5

Table 3 – Changes proposed to Local Economic Areas

Local Economic Area	Change proposed
<b>Urban Colchester</b>	
Bruff Close – Big Yellow	De-allocate LEA designation and reallocate for mixed use as part of North Station area
St Peters Street (North)	De-allocate as site is being developed for residential
<b>Outside Urban Colchester</b>	
Laver Marney – Oak Farm	De-allocate – site too small to justify allocation
Marks Tey - Andersons Site	De-allocate- future use of site to be determined through the Marks Tey Neighbourhood Plan
Marks Tey- Poplars Nursery	De-allocate as Poplars Nursery operates as a successful Garden Centre
Peldon – Land south Peldon Common (Lower Road)	De-allocate – site too small to justify allocation

Table 4 - Changes proposed to Neighbourhood Centres

Neighbourhood Centre	Proposed Change
<b>Urban Colchester</b>	
St Lukes Close, St Johns	Delete
Hawthorn Avenue, Greenstead	Delete
Hawthorn Avenue, Greenstead	Delete
Nayland Road, Mile End	Delete
Villa Road, Stanway	Delete
Blackberry Road, Stanway	Delete
London Road, Lexden	Delete
The Commons, Prettygate	Delete
Iceni Way, Shrub End	Delete
Lordswood Road, Berechurch	Delete
Butt Road	Delete
Crouch Street	Delete
Mersea Road, The Willows	Delete
Queen Elizabeth Way Monkwick	Delete
William Harris Way	Delete
Mersea Road	Delete
Military Road	Delete
Barrack Street	Delete
<b>Marks Tey</b>	
London Road	Delete
<b>Wivenhoe</b>	
Colchester Road	Delete
Wivenhoe Cross	Delete
The Avenue	Delete

Table 5 New Areas of Public Open Space in CBC management between 2010/11-2015/16

<b>2010-2011</b>
West Way residential development - (Barratts) 0.21ha
Groves Close Mile End (Hopkins Homes) – 0.08ha
Tile House Farm (Phase 1) – 2.26ha
East Road West Mersea (Glebe Extension Phase 2) - 2.84ha
<b>2011-2012</b>
Tile House Farm (Phase 2) - 2.25ha
<b>2012-2013</b>
Firstsite Lawn – 0.36ha
Berryfields Park Ph1 – 0.40ha
Westland Country Park – 1.02ha
<b>2013-2014</b>
Caxton Close Tiptree - 0.02ha
Garland Road Pocket Park - 0.06ha
Woden Ave - 1.59ha
Rouse Way POS - 0.83ha
Rouse Way conservation area - 2.46ha
Wivenhoe Cooks Crescent play site - 0.13ha
<b>2014-2015</b>
Tile House Farm POS (Phase 3) - 0.17 ha
Corunna Drive POS - 0.14 ha
Lordswood Road POS - 0.63 ha
Ypres Road POS - 0.51 ha
Circus Square Play site - 0.22 ha
<b>Total – 16.1 ha</b>