

14th July 2020

Report of	Assistant Director: Place and Client Services	Author	Laura Chase
Title	Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community		
Wards affected	All wards		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The North Essex Authorities which include Braintree, Colchester and Tendring Councils have now received the Inspector's report outlining his views on the soundness of each authority's Section 1 Local Plan (as discussed in a separate report on this agenda). While the Inspector has concluded that he did not find the Colchester Braintree Borders and West of Braintree Garden Communities to be deliverable, he did conclude that development of the Tendring/Colchester Borders Garden Community (TCBGC) would enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework's policies.
- 1.2 On this basis, Colchester and Tendring propose to continue with the next stages of plan-making for TCBGC, subject to the decision of the Committee on the Local Plan item on this agenda. The next stage will involve the preparation of a Development Plan Document (DPD) to guide development. The DPD will provide the next level of detail required to progress the overall high-level Garden Community principles mandated by Section 1. Adoption of the DPD will entail joint working between the councils, in consultation with stakeholders at all stages of plan development. It is expected that the DPD will be a joint planning document adopted by both councils.
- 1.3 An initial consultation on Issues and Options was held on TCBGC from November 2017 - January 2018. The study work and responses from that consultation form a starting point for the next phase of work, bearing in mind the changes during the intervening period. In addition to Section 1 Local Plan developments, key amongst the changes was the Councils' successful bid for £99K in Housing Infrastructure Funding for a A120/A133 link road and a Rapid Transit Scheme to support the Garden Community. Work undertaken to inform the HIF projects has been carried out with the requirements of the Garden Community and its DPD in mind, so studies and masterplanning completed for these essential infrastructure projects will feed into the DPD process.
- 1.4 The Councils will work together to commission further evidence base and masterplanning work required to support the DPD. As with masterplanning work carried out for the Issues and Options stage, work will include focused consultation with stakeholders and existing communities in the vicinity of TCB GC.

- 1.5 The precise timetable for the DPD is not yet fixed but the Local Development Scheme will be brought back to this Committee as required for scrutiny, with adoption currently programmed for 2022.

2. Recommended Decisions

- 2.1 To note the proposals for preparation of a Development Plan Document for the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 To facilitate adoption of a DPD for the Tendring Colchester Garden Community in order to provide a robust and sustainable basis for guiding its future growth and development.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The Council could decide not to proceed with a Development Plan Document for the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community; however, this would leave its development without a clear framework for future growth and direction.

5. Background Information

- 5.1 Development based on Garden Community principles forms a core element of the Section 1 Local Plan jointly submitted by Braintree, Colchester and Tendring Councils. While the Inspector has concluded that he did not find the Colchester Braintree Borders and West of Braintree Garden Communities to be deliverable, he did conclude that development of the Tendring/Colchester Borders Garden Community (TCBGC) would enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework's policies.
- 5.2 The progression to adoption of Section 1 of the Local Plan is discussed in a separate report to this Committee. As the report notes, 'Confirmation of the soundness of the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community should also allow Tendring District Council and Colchester Borough Council to work together on the preparation of a 'Development Plan Document' (DPD) setting out more detailed parameters for the Garden Community.'
- 5.3 Section 1 Policy SP7 (Development and Delivery of a New Garden Community in North Essex) provides that '*A Development Plan Document (DPD) will be prepared for the garden community containing policies setting out how the new community will be designed, developed and delivered in phases, in accordance with the principles in paragraphs i-xiv below. No planning consent for any development forming part of the garden community will be granted until the DPD has been adopted.*' (Main Modification version)
- 5.4 More specifically, SP8 (Tendring/Colchester Borders Garden Community) provides that '*The Development Plan Document (DPD) required by Policy SP7 for the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community will define the*

boundary of the garden community and the amount of development it will contain.' (Main Modification version). The policy also specifies that the DPD must be contingent on the completion of a Heritage Impact Assessment; be produced in consultation with the local community and stakeholders; include a three dimensional indication of the urban design and landscape parameters that will be incorporated into any future planning applications; and a phasing and implementation schedule for necessary infrastructure.

5.5 In line with the above Local Plan objectives, Colchester and Tendring Councils have previously carried out initial work on Issues and Options for TDBG. An initial consultation on Issues and Options was held on TDBG from November 2017-January 2018. This document posed a series of questions on how the DPD should best address the following 10 defining principles of the North Essex Garden Communities Charter:

- Green Infrastructure
- Integrated and Sustainable Transport
- Employment Opportunity
- Living Environment
- Smart and Sustainable Living
- Good Design
- Community Engagement
- Active Local Stewardship
- Strong Corporate and Political Public Leadership
- Innovative Delivery Structure

The study work and responses from that consultation form a starting point for the next phase of work, bearing in mind the changes during the intervening period.

5.6 Work necessary to underpin the delivery of required transport infrastructure for TDBG has been aided by the successful bid made by Essex County Council in August 2019 for £99K from the Housing Infrastructure Fund. As HIF funding is intended to enable housing delivery, the funding was awarded on the basis that it will provide capacity and access to enable residential developments in TDBG. The two components of this bid were:

- A new link road running east of Colchester between the A120 and the A133 to provide greater connectivity into the proposed new development; and
- Rapid Transit development funding a route from TDBG via University of Essex into Colchester

5.7 The schemes will address a package of transport and access matters, enabling early implementation of sustainable transport options to stimulate behaviour change and address highway capacity constraints in east Colchester and west Tendring. ECC carried out a public consultation on possible options for the link road and RTS in November – December 2019. Following a review of consultation responses, ECC Cabinet approved a preferred route for the link road at its 26 May 2020 meeting; Option 1C, which accorded with the view of

the CBC response on options for the link road. ECC Cabinet also agreed to develop further analysis of options for RTS routing through Colchester.

5.8 A wide range of evidence base work will be required to support the DPD. The extent of work required will depend on the additional detail necessary on top of study work completed for the Colchester and Tendring Local Plans. In general, Section 1 work can be assumed to have addressed authority-wide issues of impact, context and need, but further work for TCBGC will be required to address Garden Community specific issues as follows:

- Housing – detailed analysis required of tenure split, affordability, Gypsy and traveller requirements, accessibility provision, and housing standards.
- Employment – identification of particular types of employment required to maximise links with University and potential of Garden Community model for new working arrangements
- Centres – analysis required of the role of Garden Community centres, and impact on other centres.
- Green Infrastructure – specific analysis required of level and types of provision, accessibility and relationship to surrounding area
- Heritage – Heritage Impact Assessment required providing detailed assessment of impact on existing heritage assets
- Health – Health Impact Assessment required providing a comprehensive approach to health and well-being that considers design and infrastructure in the context of active lifestyles, prevention, use of digital technology, and co-location of health facilities with other community facilities
- Sustainable Movement – Building on work carried out to support HIF, modelling work is needed analysing measures that will lead to modal shift away from car-based movements to other sustainable modes including walking, cycling and public transit.
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan – detailed analysis of physical, social and environmental infrastructure required to support each phase of development
- Viability – viability work will need to analyse proposal in the context of the chosen delivery model and the need to address Garden Community principles such as long-term stewardship.
- Sustainability and Climate Change measures - as an exemplar scheme for Garden Communities, TCBGC will be expected to adopt best practice across the board in all aspects of sustainable design, construction and in climate change adaptation measures. The DPD will need to be supported by evidence for ambitious targets and innovative projects.
- Minerals Resource Assessment – ensure safeguarded minerals sites are appropriately safeguarded and/or worked prior to development.
- Integrated Water Management Study – Phase 1 of the IWMS provided a high-level analysis of water supply, wastewater services and flood risk management for the three Garden Communities originally proposed in the Section 1 Local Plan. Phase 2 study is programmed

to identify and determine site specific water management measures which can serve to minimise demand as far as possible and set out how surface water and flood risk can be managed on site in an integrated way.

- Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Assessment work will inform all stages of plan development to ensure the DPD addresses all required sustainability and habitats protection requirements.

5.9 The work above largely needs to be completed by consultants due to its specialised nature, but clearly additional officer resources will need to be devoted to overall project co-ordination, consultant management, and public consultation. Colchester and Tendring officers are collaborating on an agreed work programme, timescale and budget. To avoid duplication and maximise efficiency, project co-ordination is also including identification of work required to support the examination of Section 2 policies and allocations as well as work being completed further to the HIF link road and RTS work.

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared for the Local Plan, and is available to view by clicking on this link:-
<https://cbccrmdata.blob.core.windows.net/noteattachment/CBC%20-%20How%20The%20Council%20Works%20-%20Policy%20and%20Corporate%20Equality%20Impact%20Assessments%20-%20Local%20Plan.pdf>

7. Strategic Plan References

7.1 The development of a robust planning framework for the Tendring Colchester Garden Community addresses all of the GROW objectives of the Strategic Plan as it will underpin the successful delivery of an exemplar development which would help make Colchester an even better place to live, work and visit.

8. Consultation

8.1 Consultation on the DPD will be carried out in line with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and relevant national guidance as contained in the NPPF and The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

9. Publicity Considerations

9.1 The DPD is likely to generate publicity for the Council when consultation is undertaken.

10. Financial implications

10.1 Development of a DPD will be undertaken within a budget allocated for its production, including updating of evidence documents, consultation and

examination. The budget considered by the 8th July Cabinet and scheduled to be considered by the 15th July Council provides for £250,000 for this purpose for 2020/21. Precise allocation of costs as the project develops will be contingent on the development model chosen, ie the Councils will assume more costs if they take on the lead developer function.

11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 Adoption of a new DPD will address the health, wellbeing and community safety implications of creating sustainable communities

12. Risk Management Implications

- 12.1 The adoption of the DPD will help ensure that the Council's planning policies for the Garden Community are robust and up-to-date and will help to reduce the risk of inappropriate development being permitted.