Local Plan Committee Meeting

Grand Jury Room, Town Hall, High Street, Colchester, CO1 1PJ
Monday, 07 August 2023 at 18:00

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

Information for Members of the Public

Access to information and meetings

You have the right to attend all meetings of the Council, its Committees and Cabinet. You also have the right to see the agenda (the list of items to be discussed at a meeting), which is usually published five working days before the meeting, and minutes once they are published. Dates of the meetings are available here:
https://colchester.cmis.uk.com/colchester/MeetingCalendar.aspx.
Most meetings take place in public. This only changes when certain issues, for instance, commercially sensitive information or details concerning an individual are considered. At this point you will be told whether there are any issues to be discussed in private, if so, you will be asked to leave the meeting.

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https://colchester.cmis.uk.com/colchester/HaveYourSay.aspx.

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Access

There is wheelchair access to the Town Hall from St Runwald Street. There is an induction loop in all the meeting rooms. If you need help with reading or understanding this document please take it to the Library and Community Hub, Colchester Central Library, using the contact details below and we will try to provide a reading service, translation or other formats you may need.

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Toilets with lift access, if required, are on each floor of the Town Hall. A water dispenser is available on the first floor.

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COLCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
Local Plan Committee
Monday, 07 August 2023 at 18:00

The Local Plan Committee Members are:

Councillor Tim Young	Chairman
Councillor Michelle Burrows	Deputy Chairman
Councillor Lewis Barber	
Councillor Paul Dundas	
Councillor Richard Kirkby-Taylor	
Councillor Kayleigh Rippingale	
Councillor Lee Scordis	
Councillor Paul Smith	
Councillor Michael Spindler	
Councillor William Sunnucks	

The Local Plan Committee Substitute Members are:
Other than the Local Plan Committee members, all members of the Council who are not members of the Planning Committee.

AGENDA
THE LIST OF ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING
(Part A - open to the public)

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

Live Broadcast

Please follow this link to watch the meeting live on YouTube:

(107) ColchesterCBC - YouTube

1   **Welcome and Announcements**

The Chairman will welcome members of the public and Councillors and remind everyone to use microphones at all times when they are speaking. The Chairman will also explain action in the event of an emergency, mobile phones switched to silent, audio-recording of the meeting. Councillors who are members of the committee will introduce themselves.

2   **Substitutions**

Councillors will be asked to say if they are attending on behalf of a Committee member who is absent.

3   **Urgent Items**

The Chairman will announce if there is any item not on the published agenda which will be considered because it is urgent and will explain the reason for the urgency.

4   **Declarations of Interest**

Councillors will be asked to say if there are any items on the agenda about which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest which would prevent them from participating in any discussion of the item or participating in any vote upon the item, or any other registerable interest or non-registerable interest.

5   **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The Councillors will be invited to confirm that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2023 are a correct record.

2023-06-12 CCC Local Plan Committee Minutes

6   **Have Your Say! (Hybrid Council meetings)**

Members of the public may make representations to the meeting. This can be made either in person at the meeting or by joining the meeting remotely and addressing the Council via Zoom. Each representation may be no longer than three minutes. Members of the public wishing to address the Council remotely may register their wish to address the meeting by e-mailing democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk by 12.00 noon on the working day before the meeting date. In addition a written copy of the representation will need to be supplied for use in the event of unforeseen technical difficulties preventing participation at the meeting itself.

There is no requirement to pre register for those attending the meeting in person.

7   **Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document**

The Committee are invited to approve the publishing of the Draft Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document for public consultation in accordance with the Planning Regulations and Statement of Community Involvement.

8   **Active Travel Supplementary Planning Document**

The Committee are invited to approve the publication of the draft Active Travel Supplementary Planning Document for public

consultation in accordance with the Planning Regulations and Statement of Community Involvement.

The Committee are invited to agree the approach outlined regarding the Issues and Options engagement and to agree the engagement and consultation strategy appended to the report as Appendix A.

The Committee are invited to note the update on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Biodiversity Net Gain.

11   **Exclusion of the Public (not Scrutiny or Executive)**

In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public, including the press, from the meeting so that any items containing exempt information (for example confidential personal, financial or legal advice), in Part B of this agenda (printed on yellow paper) can be decided. (Exempt information is defined in Section 100I and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).

Part B
(not open to the public including the press)

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE
12 June 2023</td></tr>
</table>

Present: -	Councillors T. Young (Chair), Barber, Burrows, Dundas, Kirkby-Taylor, Rippingale, Scordis, Spindler, and Sunnucks
Substitute Member: -	
Also in Attendance: -	

265.   Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 3 April 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.

266. Have Your Say!

Nick Chilvers addressed the Committee pursuant to provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5 (1). The Committee heard that the Colchester needed to have a Masterplan and that questioned the scheme that had been put before the Committee and detailed that Members did not discuss what would happen next and raised concern about the overuse of technical language that was used in the consultation document. The speaker detailed that the Committee should have looked into this further in the previous meeting in April and queried how the preparation for the Consultation was going and what Councillors on the Committee thought of this.

Karen Syrett , Head of Planning, detailed that the consultation of the City Centre Masterplan had been was guided by the Statement of Community Involvement providing the minimum standards of consultation that the Council could undertake. The Head of Planning detailed that the Consultation would go beyond the minimum requirements and that they supported the speakers request for the use of plain English and that there were different ways to respond to the consultation.

Nick Chilvers responded to the points raised by the Head of Planning and detailed that there was more to life than heritage and art and expected the Council to understand that concluded that they would have like to have heard other Councillors views on this. The Chair responded that the Committee would be keeping a close eye on the consultation.

Sir Bob Russell addressed the Committee pursuant to provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5 (1). The Committee heard that they did not expect to have full answers to their questions but would expect one after the meeting. The speaker questioned who was running the consultation of the Trinity Churchyard and asked that a copy of the biodiversity statement for the works be provided to them. The speaker continued by detailing that their concern at the Council's request for the bingo club in Osborne Street to move out as well as Iceland, Wilkinsons, the Samaratins, and the Salvation Army and whether any of these businesses and charities had been informed.

The Head of Planning detailed that they would look at the points raised around Holy Trinity

Church and respond to the speaker and the Committee. The Committee heard that all the changes in the proposal were subject to the consultation and that nothing was set in stone and that there were no changes expected except for Wilkinsons where there were other points about the leases on the building.

Sir Bob Russell responded to the points raised and commented that it would have been courteous for the Council to inform the businesses and Charities before the information got into the public domain and that they should have been approached that they would be included in the proposed Masterplan.

267. Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document

Shelley Blackaby, Principal Planning Officer (Environment), presented the report to the Committee and detailed that the Draft Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document had been presented to the Committee and that approval had been given to go out to consultation. The Committee heard that the consultation took place between the 22 February 2023 until the 22 March 2023 from which nine organisations responded and that the draft document had been amended accordingly. The Senior Principal Planning Officer outlined that the Council was preparing other Supplementary Planning Documents in light of the Climate Emergency which were currently being worked upon and would subsequently guide the policies in the Colchester Local Plan. Members were asked to note that the Biodiversity Net Gain Supplementary Planning Document would support policy ENV1 which detailed the mitigation hierarchy as well as the enhancement of biodiversity. The Committee heard that further work was being looked into regarding the Biodiversity net gain which included a cross authority Supplementary Planning Document that could be used by other Councils following the requirement coming into effect.

The Senior Principal Planning Officer responded to questions from the Committee on issues including: that the proposal before the Committee did not include biodiversity net gain and that this would be looked at in a cross authority template but that this would include provisions that were on and off site, that there was an intention to make the document slightly smaller however this was not possible without compromising on the detail required for the subject area. The Senior Principal Planning Officer elaborated that the issue of maps and their accuracy had been brought up at a previous meeting and that these could be cross referenced with the most up to date versions to ensure accuracy when planning applications were put in.

Members debated the Supplementary Planning document on issues including the length of the document and whether it could be shorter and whether it would hinder development by adding another hurdle for applicants, that the proposal would help identify the areas within Colchester which included irreplaceable habitat and whether regenerative fields had been considered for the future.

The Senior Principal Planning Officer responded to the points raised in the debate and detailed that regenerative fields would be something that the Council would look into and possibly adopt in the future if the Council was minded to endorse this approach.

Members concluded the debate with some Members expressing concern that the additional documents the Council was creating would create significant costs for developers.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY) that the Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document is adopted by the Local Plan Committee.

268. Neighbourhood Planning Update

Laura Goulding, Planning Policy Officer, presented the report on the Neighbourhood Planning Update detailing that there were currently 8 Neighbourhood Plans in Colchester which had been "made" and adopted by the Council. The Committee heard that the most recent one adopted was Tiptree in May 2023 following a confirmatory referendum. The Planning Policy Officer detailed that the there was the anticipation that Copford and Easthorpe Neighbourhood Plan will be made and adopted later this year along with Myland and Braiswick review. The Committee were asked to note that Great Tey and Great Horkesley were at the evidence gathering stage and plan preparation and that Myland and Braiswick had commenced their review and had recently completed their regulation 16 consultation.

The Committee debated the update and noted the weight that was afforded to Neighbourhood Plans in the Planning Process. The Committee asked Officers to detail the main learning points that had been gained from the previous plans that had been supported and adopted by the Council.

Sandra Scott, Place Strategy Manager, detailed that a lot of points had been learnt since the introduction of Neighbourhood Plans and have been relaying this information into new groups and Parish Councils that have been starting the process. The Committee heard that when starting new plans the Council had involved authors of adopted plans to speak and give their experience of the time and commitment that was needed as well as what hurdles that they had to overcome. An example was given that representatives from Eight Ash Green Parish Council visited a community looking at starting a neighbourhood plan who fed back to officers that their input was invaluable.

The Committee discussed the effort that was required by Parish Councils and the routes that were available to other areas of the City where areas were not parished and how they could create Neighbourhood Plans as well. Members agreed that the creation of the plan was a large investment of time for all involved within the community and praised all the Communities that had made a Neighbourhood Plan and those working towards one.

The Neighbourhood Planning Update was noted by the Committee.

269. Colchester Local Plan – Update and Future Work

The Place Strategy Manager presented the report to the Committee which outlined the proposed future work on the Local Plan and what Members could expect to come before them. The Committee were asked to note that it was a statutory requirement to have a Local Plan and that additional Supplementary Planning Documents would be prepared for the Committee for approval. The Place Strategy Manager detailed that the Local Plan needed to be reviewed every five years and this would mean that Section 1 of the Local Plan would need to be reviewed in 2026. Members were asked to note that there was a significant amount of work around this including a large lead in time to complete the document on schedule. This would include the evidence gathering as well as consulting with residents and a call for sites.

In response to questions from the Committee the Place Strategy Manager and Head of Planning confirmed that the standard methodology that was applied previously would be higher in a new Local Plan and which would mean building approximately 1100 new

dwellings per year but this would be linked with the monitoring of the current housing land supply, and the strategic housing land assessment.

Members raised concern on the status of Middlewick in the Local Plan and what its current status was and that the standard methodology could impact on Colchester's building record. In response to these points the Head of Planning Detailed that there was currently no news regarding Middlewick and that the provisions for the Middlewick site in the Local Plan were still valid. The Committee also heard that the current plan was due to last 15 years but that a review was required under law which would have to take into account new factors including the updated standard methodology from the Government. The Head of Planning explained that Colchester had previously benefitted from the standard methodology however this was not looking to the case going forward with the Council having to review housing numbers, employment sites and community infrastructure.

The Debate concluded with Members querying the impact of not having a plan and allocated sites in place and what consequences this would lead to if the targets were not met which was being discussed by the Government. The Head of Planning confirmed that where a Local Plan had been withdrawn and not adopted it did leave the local authority open to speculative development and that a Plan led approach, even with some unpopular sites, would be preferable to speculative proposals across the board. The Head of Planning concluded by detailing that as the proposals for amending Local Plans were only in a consultation phase they could not be taken into account.

The Colchester Local Plan – Update and Future work report was noted by the Committee.

	Local Plan Committee	**Item**
		7
	7 August 2023	
Report of	**Shelley Blackaby and Rachel Forkin, Planning Service**	07977 184926 or 01206 282625
Title	**Draft Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document**	
Wards affected	All wards affected	

1. Executive Summary

1.1 The Planning Policy Team are preparing three Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) to address the climate emergency. These SPDs are: Active Travel, Biodiversity and Climate Change. This report presents the draft Climate Change SPD and the Committee are asked to approve publishing this draft for public consultation.

1.2 The Climate Change SPD aims to clearly set out the principles the Council expects to ensure that development proposals respond to the climate emergency by delivering sustainable buildings, which are highly energy efficient, include renewable energy and incorporate green infrastructure. This SPD is ambitious and explains how applicants can successfully integrate a best-practice approach towards the climate emergency in their development proposals.

2. Recommended Decision

2.1 It is recommended that the Local Plan Committee (LPC) approve publishing the draft Climate Change SPD for public consultation in accordance with the Planning Regulations and Statement of Community Involvement.

2.2 It is recommended that minor changes to the draft Climate Change SPD can be approved by the Head of Planning in consultation with the Chair of the Committee prior to the consultation commencing.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

3.1 The Council has declared a climate emergency and the climate emergency SPDs provide guidance to supplement relevant policies in the Local Plan and encourage applicants to go further than Local Plan requirements.

4. Alternative Options

4.1 The alternative option is to not produce a Climate Change SPD and rely on Local Plan policies.

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5.   Background Information

5.1   Supplementary planning documents (SPDs) build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies in an adopted local plan. As they do not form part of the development plan, they cannot introduce new planning policies. They are a material consideration in decision-making but should not add unnecessarily to the financial burdens on development.

5.2   The Council has adopted the Biodiversity SPD and is drafting two other SPDs to communicate Colchester City Council's ambitions in respect of the climate emergency for all development within the city. The three climate emergency SPDs build on the adopted Local Plan and explain how development proposals should respond to the climate and ecological emergency. The SPDs are: Active Travel, Biodiversity, and Climate Change. All development proposals should strive to achieve ambitious carbon reductions, biodiversity enhancement and promotion of active travel to contribute towards Colchester becoming a greener city that is resilient to the climate and ecological emergency.

5.3   The most relevant Local Plan policies to the Climate Change SPD are Policies CC1 (Climate Change) and DM25. These policies are set out below.

Policy CC1: Climate Change
Colchester Borough Council made a Climate Emergency declaration in 2019. A Climate Challenge and Sustainability Strategy and a Carbon Management Plan will support the Climate Emergency Action Plan and will set out detailed specific carbon reduction projects. In addressing the move to a low carbon future for Colchester, the Local Planning Authority 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:
(i) Encouraging and supporting the provision of renewable and low carbon technologies.
(ii) Encouraging new development to provide a proportion of the energy demand through renewable or low carbon sources.
(iii) 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.
(iv) A Canopy Cover Assessment will be required for all major applications. Development proposals should seek where appropriate to increase the level of canopy cover on site by a minimum of 10%. In circumstances, where this is not possible or desirable, compensatory provision should be identified and secured through a legal obligation.
(v) Requiring both innovative design and technologies that reduce the impacts of climate change within the garden community.
(vi) 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.
(vii) Requiring development in the Northern Gateway to connect to or be capable of connecting to the district heating scheme where there is capacity to supply the proposed development and where it is appropriate and viable to do so.
(viii) Supporting energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings in the Borough where appropriate.

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(ix) Minimising waste and improving reuse and recycling rates.
(x) Development will be directed to locations with the least impact on flooding or water resources. All development should consider the impact of and promotion of design responses to flood risk for the lifetime of the development and the availability of water and wastewater infrastructure for the lifetime of the development.
(xi) Green infrastructure should be used to manage and enhance existing habitats. Opportunities should be taken to create new habitats and assist with species migration. Consideration should be given to the use of green infrastructure to provide shade during higher temperatures and for flood mitigation. The potential role of green infrastructure as 'productive landscapes' should also be considered.

Policy DM25: Renewable Energy, Water, Waste and Recycling

The Local Planning Authority's commitment to carbon reduction includes the promotion of efficient use of energy and resources, alongside waste minimisation and recycling. The Local Planning Authority will support residential developments that help reduce carbon emissions in accordance with national Building Regulations. The use of the Home Quality Mark will be supported. Non-residential developments will be encouraged to achieve a minimum BREEAM rating of 'Very Good'.

The Local Planning Authority will 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.

To achieve greater water efficiencies new residential developments will be required to meet the Building Regulation optional higher water efficiency standard of 110 litres per person per day, as set out in Building Regulations part G2.

To help meet waste reduction and recycling targets, the Local Planning Authority 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 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.

The Local Planning Authority will support proposals for renewable energy projects including micro-generation, offshore wind farms (plus land based ancillary infrastructure) solar farms, solar panels on buildings, wind farms, District Heating Networks and community led renewable energy initiatives at appropriate locations in the Borough, which will need to be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment and if necessary an Appropriate Assessment, to help reduce Colchester's carbon footprint.

Renewable energy schemes with potential for adverse effects on internationally or nationally designated nature conservation sites, sites or nationally designated landscapes (Dedham Vale AONB) and heritage assets, 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

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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.

5.4   The Draft SPD is appended to this Report as Appendix A. Chapter 1 of the SPD introduces the climate emergency and the SPD. Chapter 2 sets out the background and context and provides a summary and links to relevant reports.

5.5   Chapter 3 sets out the Colchester context. It includes relevant Local Plan policies and discusses Colchester City Council's climate emergency declaration. Reference is made to the Net Zero Carbon Toolkit developed by Levitt Bernstein, Elementa, Passivhaus Trust and Etude commissioned by West Oxfordshire, Cotswold and Forest of Dean District Councils, funded by the LGA Housing Advisers Programme. This resource was prepared by leading technical experts from Etude, the Passivhaus Trust, Levitt Bernstein and Elementa Consulting. It contains the very latest design approach and good practice within the field of Net Zero buildings. The Council encourages applicants to follow this good practice and elements of the toolkit have been included in this SPD.

5.6   Chapter 4 includes guidance on improving layout and building design. Topics covered in this chapter include passive design, building orientation and massing, overshadowing, windows, building fabric and materials, ventilation and air tightness, reducing overheating, working from home space, and green-blue infrastructure.

5.7   Chapter 5 provides advice on renewable and low carbon energy. The Council's ambition is that development should be fossil free and residual energy demand for heating, hot water and other uses is met from renewable or low carbon energy sources.

5.8   Chapter 6 explains the LETI standard, which the Council supports to achieve net zero carbon buildings. The LETI standard of net zero carbon includes energy use targets rather than a reduction in emissions.

5.9   Chapter 7 includes advice on electric vehicle charging, which is included in the Essex Design Guide. Chapter 8 sets out the water efficiency measures that the Council encourages. Reducing the risk of drought is crucial in adapting to a changing climate. Finally, chapter 9 provides advice for householder applications.

5.10   This SPD is ambitious – it recommends that development proposals go further than adopted planning policies. The SPD sets out how applicants can successfully integrate a best-practice approach towards the climate emergency in their development proposals. The Council recommends that applicants follow the good practice set out in the Net Zero Carbon Toolkit, which contains the very latest design approach and good practice within the field of net zero buildings. With the advent of extremely high energy costs the ongoing, relatively low running costs of net zero homes may become a positive sales point.

5.11   The ambition is that all development should achieve an energy balance on-site and should seek to achieve LETI's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Achieving an energy balance on-site means that renewable energy generation should be equal to or greater than the development's energy consumption (or energy use intensity) over the course of a year. The aim should be to provide renewable or low carbon heating systems for

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heating and hot water so that new development does not connect to the gas grid. Rather than a focus on carbon reduction, the SPD supports the metric of energy use rather than a carbon reduction target. The SPD supports the LETI approach, which is best practice and is in line with climate change targets. The LETI approach has recently been found sound as part of the local plan examinations of Bath and North East Somerset, Cornwall, and Central Lincolnshire's Local Plans.

5.12   This SPD sets out the direction we need to take to build sustainable, future proofed buildings. New buildings in Colchester city should reflect the direction of travel and be future proofed so that people and businesses can save money and people can live, work, and play in more liveable and comfortable buildings. LETI believes that to meet our national climate change targets, by 2025 all new buildings must be designed to deliver net zero carbon.

5.13   There is a wealth of information, guidance, toolkits, and best practice available. This SPD is intended to be concise and does not attempt to distill all this information and guidance into one document. Links are provided throughout the SPD to more detailed guidance for those who want to read more.

5.14   The Climate Change SPD has been designed by the Council's Corporate and Improvement Service and uses the same design as the Biodiversity SPD. The design is intended to make the SPD user friendly and easier to read.

5.15   Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening has been carried out, which has concluded that SEA is not required.

Engagement

5.16   As part of the process of drafting this SPD, Planning Policy Officers engaged with Development Management Officers, the cross-service Climate Opportunities Working Group, Members and Essex County Council's Climate and Planning Unit. In November 2022, all Members were invited to give thoughts and ideas for matters which they wish to see addressed in the climate emergency SPDs. The key points raised in relation to the Climate Change SPD were:
- Include any relevant elements in respect of the marine environment.
- Look at opportunities to require / encourage solar panels in all new developments.
- Include EV charging points in all new development.
- Encourage the greenest building standard.
- Look at opportunities to encourage innovative low carbon building techniques such as straw bale housing construction (North Kesteven Strawbale Council Housing).

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

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

https://cbccrmdata.blob.core.windows.net/noteattachment/Equality%20Impact%20Assessment%20June%202017.pdf

7. **Strategic Plan References**

7.1 'Tackling the climate challenge and leading sustainability' is a Strategic Plan theme. 'Respond to the climate emergency' is one of the priorities and is relevant to this SPD. The purpose of this SPD is to respond to the climate emergency. Other priorities in this theme are relevant to the Biodiversity and Active Travel SPDs.

8. **Consultation**

8.1 It is a requirement of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 to consult on draft SPDs for a minimum of 4 weeks and to prepare a statement setting out who was consulted, a summary of the main issues raised and how those issues have been addressed in the SPD.

9. **Publicity Considerations**

9.1 The SPD consultation will be publicised through written / email consultations with statutory consultees, general consultees on our database, other relevant stakeholders, individuals and organisations who have expressed a wish to be consulted or have previously made comments as set out in the Statement of Community Involvement.

10. **Financial implications**

10.1 There are no financial implications.

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

11.1 The three climate emergency SPDs will bring multiple benefits including benefits to health and wellbeing. A healthy environment plays a role in improving health and wellbeing.

12. **Health and Safety Implications**

12.1 No direct implications.

13. **Risk Management Implications**

13.1 No direct implications.

14. **Environmental and Sustainability Implications**

14.1 The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and has committed to being carbon neutral by 2030. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has

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three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. These are economic, social and environmental objectives.

14.2 The Council is drafting three SPDs to communicate Colchester City Council's ambitions in respect of the climate emergency for all development within the city. SPDs are material considerations in planning decisions. They build on adopted planning policy and provide guidance on how policy requirements should be implemented. The three climate emergency SPDs build on the adopted Local Plan and explain how development proposals should respond to the climate and ecological emergency. The SPDs are: Active Travel, Biodiversity, and Climate Change. All development proposals should strive to achieve ambitious carbon reductions, biodiversity enhancement and promotion of active travel to contribute towards Colchester becoming a greener city that is resilient to the climate and ecological emergency.

Appendices

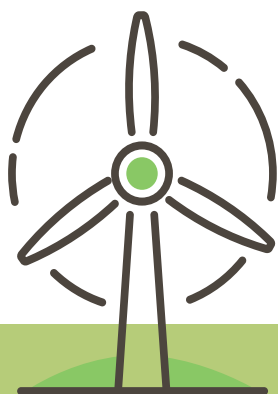Appendix A Draft Climate Change SPD

Colchester City Council's

Climate Change SPD

Contents

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Glossary

Carbon dioxide (CO2)
A gas in Earth's atmosphere. It occurs naturally and is also a by-product of human activity such as burning fossil fuels and land-use change. It is the principal anthropogenic greenhouse gas.

Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2e)
CO2e (carbon dioxide equivalent) is the metric measure used to compare the emissions from various greenhouse gases on the basis of their global-warming potential (GWP).

Climate
Average weather and its variability over a period of time, ranging from months to millions of years. The World Meteorological Organization standard is a 30-year average.

Climate change
A change in the climate's mean and variability for an extended period of decades, or more.

Fossil fuels
Biomass lain down in the Earth millions of years ago, such as coal, oil, and natural gas, which when burnt produce carbon dioxide.

Global warming
A rise in the Earth's temperature, often used with respect to the observed increase since the early 20th century.

Greenhouse gases
Gases in the atmosphere, which absorb thermal infra-red radiation emitted by the Earth's surface, the atmosphere and clouds e.g. water vapour, carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide.

SuDS management train, or treatment train
The management train concept promotes division of the area to be drained into sub-catchments with different drainage characteristics and land uses, each with its own drainage strategy. Dealing with the water locally not only reduces the quantity that has to be managed at any one point, but also reduces the need for conveying the water off the site. The management train starts with preventing run-off.

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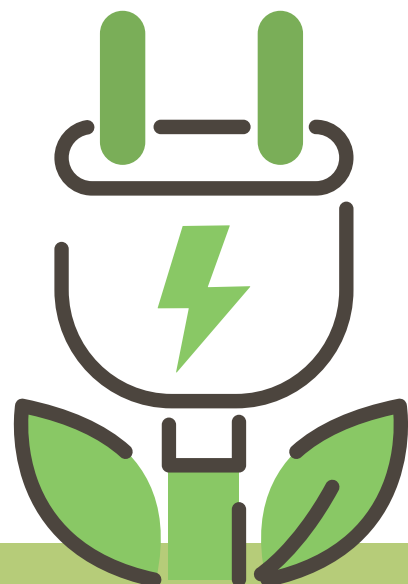
Chapter 1: Introduction
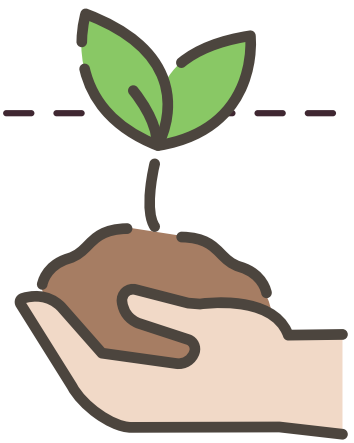
Climate change is a global issue affecting everyone. Co-ordinated action from all sectors, national and local governments, and individuals is needed to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The science tells us that to avoid catastrophic effects we need to limit the increase in global temperature to 1.5oC. Mitigation measures are required to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and limit global temperature rise. However, even with efforts to limit the cause of global warming, further climatic changes are inevitable in the future and the UK will need to adapt to the growing risks from climate change.

Colchester City Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and since then have carried out numerous pieces of work across the organisation and city to respond to the climate emergency. The infographics, below, highlight the key areas of work in 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22.

Colchester's Climate Emergency Response

July 2019
Climate Emergency Declared

September 2019
57% less chewing gum on town centre streets

October 2019
Joint top climate friendly area in East of England

October 2019
Clean Air for Colchester survey with residents, schools and businesses

Februrary 2020
10,000+ trees given out

January 2020
Climate Emergency Action Plan published

January 2020
40% reduction in carbon emissions

Februrary 2020
Phasing out of plastics in Council operations

March 2020
4486 trees planted in 19/20 for the Woodland Project

May 2020
Received funding for 25 electric cargo bikes

June 2020
Colchester Orbital maps produced

Colchester's Climate Emergency Response

July 2020
Boreholes tested for Northern Gateway Heat Network

August 2020
LED lighting installed in St Mary's and St John's Car Parks

September 2020
Greening Colchester Policy launched

October 2019
CAReless Pollution Campaign launched

November 2020
eCargo bikes for businesses distributed

December 2020
Fleet decarbonisation strategy produced £4.5m agreed for increasing energy efficiency of Council homes

January 2021
£528,250 grant to transform Rowan House to a low carbon office

February 2021
No idling signage trial began

March 2021
• 14,000 trees planted for Woodland and Biodiversity Project
• 3842 miles travelled by eCargo bikes
• Escooter trial starts in Colchester

April 2021
Green tariff secured for Council's electricity usage

May 2021
Climate Challenge and Sustainability Strategy - consultation

June 2021
Updated Climate Emergency Action Plan (2021 - 2023)

July 2021
Supported Essex Schools 'Green Day'

Colchester's Climate Emergency Action 2021-2022

August 2021
Launch of the social media A-Z waste reduction campaign

September 2021
9% increase in engine switch offs through CAReless pollution campaign

October 2021
Castle Park, Highwoods Country Park and Colchester Cemetery and Crematorium all get green flag awards!

November 2021
Electric refuse collection vehicle trialled

December 2021
Home Burning campaign launch to raise awareness of air pollution from stoves/fire.

March 2022
7170 trees planted over planting season with over 400 volunteers | Launch of first litter picking hubs in Colchester for 'on the go' litter picking | 4 Smart waste bins announced for Dedham as pilot

February 2022
Over 50 people in Colchester received free bike training from Essex County Council

January 2022
Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan rated as 2nd best in Essex | 3 EV chargers installed in Priory Street Car Park – First in CBC owned car parks

April 2022
Careless pollution campaign 'highly commended' in Edie Sustainability Leader Awards | Signage produced by schools to explain no mow areas

May 2022
Community Cycle project to repair and rehome old bikes restarts

June 2022
Six electric vans purchased – The start of the Council's fleet transition

July 2022
Council supports 11 schools as part of Essex Schools Green Day!

We are in a climate and ecological emergency – the time to act is now

The Council is drafting 3 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) to communicate Colchester City Council's ambitions for all development within the city. SPDs are material considerations in planning decisions. They build on adopted planning policy and provide guidance on how policy requirements should be implemented. The 3 climate emergency SPDs build on the adopted Local Plan and explain how development proposals should respond to the climate and ecological emergency. The SPDs are: Active Travel, Biodiversity, and Climate Change. All development proposals should strive to achieve ambitious carbon reductions, biodiversity enhancement and promotion of active travel to contribute towards Colchester becoming a greener city that is resilient to the climate and ecological emergency.

The 3 climate emergency SPDs will bring multiple benefits including benefits to health and wellbeing. A healthy environment plays a role in improving health and wellbeing. Many of the actions proposed in the 3 SPD's will also achieve health benefits for our communities. An increase in active travel will lead to more walking and cycling. More energy efficient homes will be good for people's wellbeing and reduce heating costs. An increase in biodiversity and green infrastructure is good for people's mental wellbeing.

This is the Climate Change SPD. It aims to clearly set out the principles the Council expects to ensure that development proposals respond to the climate emergency by delivering sustainable buildings, which are highly energy efficient, include renewable energy and combine green infrastructure. This SPD is ambitious and explains how applicants can successfully integrate a best-practice approach towards the climate emergency in their development proposals.

Chapter 2 of the SPD sets out the background and context and provides a summary and links to relevant reports. Chapter 3 sets out the Colchester context. It includes relevant Local Plan policies and discusses Colchester City Council's climate emergency declaration. Chapter 4 includes guidance on Improving Layout and Building Design. Topics covered in this chapter include passive design, building orientation and massing, overshadowing, windows, building fabric and materials, ventilation and air tightness, reducing overheating, working from home space, and green-blue infrastructure. Chapter 5 provides advice on renewable and low carbon energy. The Council's ambition is that development should be fossil free and residual energy demand for heating, hot water and other uses is met from renewable or low carbon energy sources. Chapter 6 explains the LETI standard, which the Council encourages to achieve net zero carbon buildings. The LETI standard of net zero carbon includes energy use targets rather than a reduction in emissions. Chapter 7 includes advice on electric vehicle charging, which is included in the Essex Design Guide. Reducing the risk of drought is crucial in adapting to a changing climate and chapter 8 sets out water efficiency measures that the Council encourages. Chapter 9 provides advice for householder applications.

There is a wealth of information, guidance, toolkits, and best practice available. This SPD does not attempt to distill all this information and guidance into one document. Links are provided throughout the SPD to more detailed guidance for those who want to read more.

Chapter 2: Background and Context
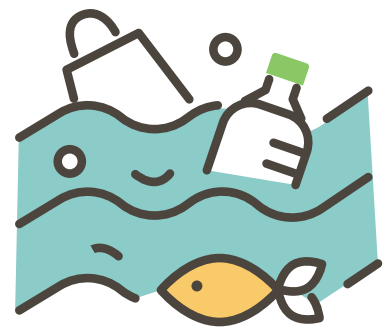
In December 2015, the UK joined 195 countries in signing an historic global deal to tackle climate change. The Paris Agreement commits the international community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to avoid some of the most severe impacts of climate change. The UK has long-term, legally-binding targets to bring greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050.

The government's Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener (October 2021) sets out policies and proposals for decarbonising all sectors of the UK economy to meet the net zero target by 2050. The strategy states that the science could not be clearer: by the middle of this century the world has to reduce emissions to as close to zero as possible, with the small amount of remaining emissions absorbed through natural carbon sinks like forests, and new technologies like carbon capture. The strategy recognises the importance of the planning system to common challenges like combating climate change and supporting sustainable growth. One of the key commitments in the strategy is: ensure the planning system can support the deployment of low carbon energy infrastructure.

The Climate Change Committee's Sixth Carbon Budget was introduced into law in 2021 and this sets a target to reduce UK greenhouse gas emissions by 78% by 2035 (compared with 1990 levels). Meeting the Sixth Carbon Budget, which delivers three-quarters of the emissions reductions needed to reach net zero by 2050, is the only way that the UK can deliver on its contribution to the Paris Agreement. It requires the UK to reduce emissions by 2.25% of 1990 levels per year. Alongside the Sixth Carbon Budget, the Climate Change Committee has published a report for local authorities detailing their commitments to net zero and how to achieve them.

In May 2019, the Climate Change Committee published the report: Net Zero – The UK's contribution to stopping global warming, which proposed the net zero target. The report found that the target will be met through known technologies alongside improvements in people's lives. Different sectors are set out; for buildings the report finds that net zero can be achieved through efficiency, heat networks and heat pumps in the 2020s and electrification, expanded heat networks and potential switch to hydrogen in the 2030/40s. For land use, the report finds that afforestation and peatland restoration are needed. The report acknowledges that societal and behaviour changes are important. The report recommends that the foundations for change are in place, but a major ramp up in policy effort is required. We can all play our part in mitigating and adapting to climate change and a major ramp up across all sectors, including local government, is needed.

The State of Nature 2019 reported that climate change is one of the most significant threats to global biodiversity. While climate change has had the second largest impact (after agricultural change) on

UK nature over the last 40 years, impacts on wildlife have been mixed. There is growing evidence that climate change is driving widespread and rapid changes in the abundance, distribution, and ecology of the UK's wildlife, causing changes to species communities and will continue to do so for decades or even centuries to come. Conserving and restoring nature-rich areas of the UK will contribute to mitigating climate change and benefit species, while strategies to counter the negative effects of climate change will help species to adapt to its increasing influence in future.

National Planning Policy and Legislation

There is a strong duty placed on plan-making to mitigate and adapt to climate change by Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 Section 19. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) brings the Climate Change Act 2008 target regime (via footnote 53) into plan-making. The Planning and Energy Act 2008 empowers local authorities to set higher standards on energy efficiency.

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF makes clear that mitigating and adapting to climate change is a core planning objective. To be in conformity with the NPPF, local development plans should reflect this principle, ensuring that planning policy clearly and comprehensively deals with climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Section 14 of the NPPF (paras 152-173): Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change is relevant. The NPPF says that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure (paragraph 152). The NPPF states that plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures (paragraph 153).

New development should be planned for in ways that avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change (through adaptation measures including the planning of green infrastructure), and help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through location, orientation, and design (paragraph 154).

Paragraph 155 says that to increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat, plans should provide a positive strategy for energy from these sources, consider identifying suitable areas for renewable energy, and identify opportunities for development to draw its energy supply from decentralized, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems.
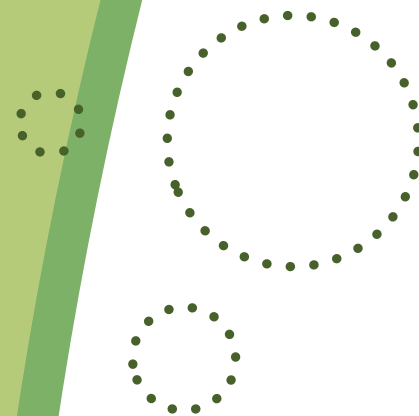
Building Regulations

The Future Homes and Buildings Standard is a set of rules that will come into effect from 2025 to ensure new buildings produce less carbon emissions. The government introduced major Building Regulations changes in June 2022, with new homes in England now needing to produce around 30% less carbon emissions from the energy uses that are covered by Building Regulations (known as regulated energy use, e.g. heating, lighting and hot water) compared to the old regulations. However, regulated energy use is estimated to only make up 50% of the total energy use in homes. Councils in Essex, including Colchester City Council as part of the Local Plan Review, are looking at developing net zero planning policies to ensure new development is the best it can be in terms of climate mitigation and adaptation (including minimising emissions from all energy use not just regulated emissions) and contribute to wider energy system objectives so we stay on track with the UK 2050 target.

Further government consultation on changes to Building Regulations is expected in 2023 with legislation introduced in 2024, ahead of implementation of the Future Homes Standard in 2025.

Essex Climate Action Commission

Essex County Council (ECC) has formed an Essex Climate Action Commission, which recognises the role of planning in mitigating and adapting to climate change. The first report – Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral was published in July 2021.

The plan brings together the work of the Commission across the past year. The Commission recognise that the natural world is our best ally in reversing climate change – it is key to absorbing and storing carbon. Risks from already changing weather systems – more flooding, over-heating, soil degradation, subsidence and water shortage can be tackled by making space for green infrastructure and nurturing our natural world.

The report says that if we are to succeed in our goal of Essex becoming a net zero county by 2050, the bulk of the work needs to be done in the next decade. In this report, the Essex Climate Action Commission, makes recommendations that they believe are both necessary for Essex to be net zero by 2050 as well as achievable. Many of them are for measures to be taken, or be well underway, by 2030. The Commission believe that the measures detailed in the report will also lead to an improved natural environment for people to enjoy and a vibrant economy for the benefit of local jobs and livelihoods. By transforming Essex into a net zero county, it can become a sustainable, thriving place to live, work and play.

The Commission's work is structured around the following six core themes: land use and green infrastructure, energy, the built environment, transport, waste, and community engagement.

The emissions from our buildings account for 26% of the UK's total emissions. 18% of this total is from our homes. Tackling these emissions is essential to mitigating climate change, and also would benefit occupiers too. It is therefore important for new homes to be designed and built to use significantly less energy which also means they would cost a lot less to run. Building to higher fabric standards also means that our buildings will be more resilient to the impacts of a changing climate and improve the comfort, health and wellbeing of occupants.

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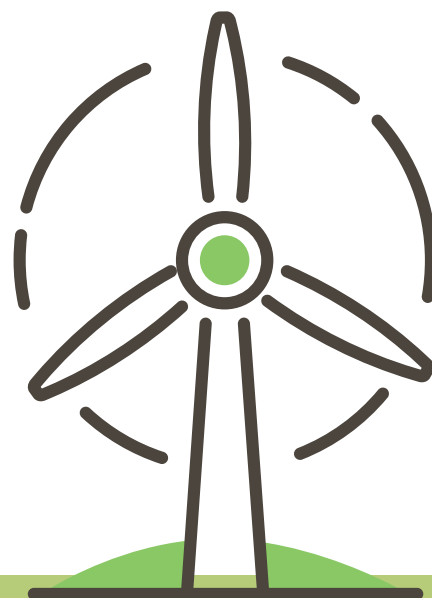
Chapter 3: Colchester context

Colchester Borough Council's Climate Emergency

Colchester Borough Council declared a climate emergency on 17 July 2019.

The Council noted the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) warning that we have 12 years to make the necessary changes to limit a rise in global temperatures to 1.5oC. Failure to act will see a marked increase in sea levels and flooding, extreme and abrupt changes to weather patterns, crop failures, extinctions of plant, insect and animal species, and global economic disruption and crisis. Total populations of mammals, birds, fish, and reptiles have declined globally by 60% since 1970, and all of the 20 warmest years on record, have occurred in the past 22 years. Failure to take immediate and decisive action on this will detrimentally impact on the wellbeing of the people of Colchester and billions of people around the world.

At the Global Climate Talks in Poland in December 2018 the UK along with over 200 nations agreed action on climate change with a much greater role strongly implied for local and regional authorities, like Colchester, in assisting governments to achieve their carbon emission savings.

It is everyone's duty to do what they can to stop this existential threat to our planet. Through declaring a climate emergency, it has become a priority of Colchester City Council to spur urgent action to reduce our carbon footprint and promote sustainable urban environments and economies.

In passing and following through on the climate emergency declaration, Colchester City Council intends to take a radical step forward in tackling climate change and conservation as a local authority.

The first Colchester Climate Emergency Action Plan was reported to Cabinet in January 2020. The Action Plan is a 10 year journey for the Council to become net carbon zero by 2030. The most recent iteration of the Climate Emergency Action Plan published in January 2023 has nine themes and one of these themes is Sustainable Planning.

The Council initially set a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2020 relative to 2008/09 levels. This was achieved by 2020 with 2020/21 emissions totalling 5406.4 tonnes of CO_2e, a 46.7% reduction on 2008 levels (10,150 tonnes of CO_2e). The most recent emissions report for the Council showed the emissions to be 5887.2 tonnes of CO_2e in 2021/2022. The Council's baseline greenhouse gas emissions for measuring progress have been measured at 6549.3 tonnes of CO_2e and this is the level from which the Council will aim to meet its target of becoming carbon neutral in its operations and services. The emissions included in this target refer to those from fuels used in Council fleet operations, gas used to heat Council owned buildings and offices, emissions associated with the generation of electricity that the Council uses in its owned buildings and other service operations e.g. car parks, street lighting, disposal and treatment of waste produced from Council services, supply and treatment of water consumed in Council operations, business travel conducted by Council employees and employee commuting.

Policy CC1: Climate Change

Colchester Borough Council made a Climate Emergency declaration in 2019. A Climate Challenge and Sustainability Strategy and a Carbon Management Plan will support the Climate Emergency Action Plan and will set out detailed specific carbon reduction projects. In addressing the move to a low carbon future for Colchester, the Local Planning Authority 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:

(i) Encouraging and supporting the provision of renewable and low carbon technologies.

(ii) Encouraging new development to provide a proportion of the energy demand through renewable or low carbon sources.

(iii) 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.

(iv) A Canopy Cover Assessment will be required for all major applications. Development proposals should seek where appropriate to increase the level of canopy cover on site by a minimum of 10%. In circumstances, where this is not possible or desirable, compensatory provision should be identified and secured through a legal obligation.

(v) Requiring both innovative design and technologies that reduce the impacts of climate change within the garden community.

(vi) 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.

(vii) Requiring development in the Northern Gateway to connect to or be capable of connecting to the district heating scheme where there is capacity to supply the proposed development and where it is appropriate and viable to do so.

(viii) Supporting energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings in the Borough where appropriate.

(ix) Minimising waste and improving reuse and recycling rates.

(x) Development will be directed to locations with the least impact on flooding or water resources. All development should consider the impact of and promotion of design responses to flood risk for the lifetime of the development and the availability of water and wastewater infrastructure for the lifetime of the development.

(xi) Green infrastructure should be used to manage and enhance existing habitats. Opportunities should be taken to create new habitats and assist with species migration. Consideration should be given to the use of green infrastructure to provide shade during higher temperatures and for flood mitigation. The potential role of green infrastructure as 'productive landscapes' should also be considered.'

Policy DM25: Renewable Energy, Water, Waste and Recycling

The Local Planning Authority's commitment to carbon reduction includes the promotion of efficient use of energy and resources, alongside waste minimisation and recycling.

The Local Planning Authority will support residential developments that help reduce carbon emissions in accordance with national Building Regulations. The use of the Home Quality Mark will be supported. Non-residential developments will be encouraged to achieve a minimum BREEAM rating of 'Very Good'.

The Local Planning Authority will 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.

To achieve greater water efficiencies new residential developments will be required to meet the Building Regulation optional higher water efficiency standard of 110 litres per person per day, as set out in Building Regulations part G2.
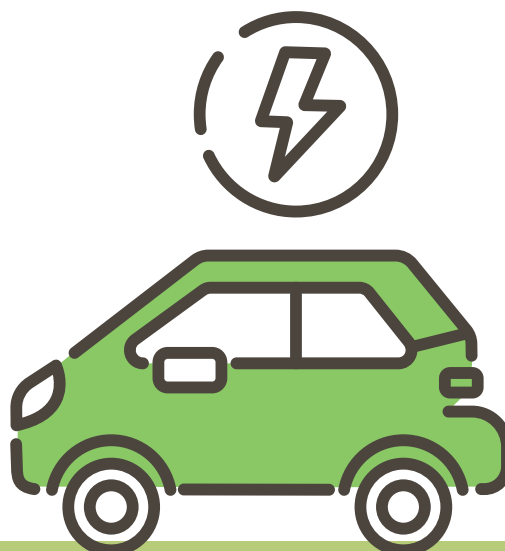
To help meet waste reduction and recycling targets, the Local Planning Authority will support proposals for sustainable waste management facilities identified in the Waste Management Plan which minimise impacts on the communities living close to the sites (noise, pollution, traffic) and on the local environment and landscape. New developments will 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.
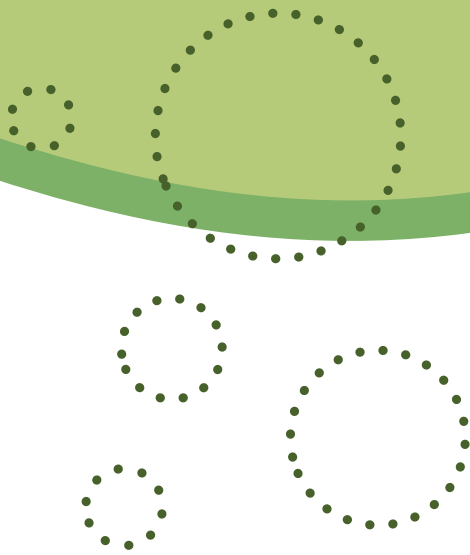
The Local Planning Authority will support proposals for renewable energy projects including micro-generation, offshore wind farms (plus land based ancillary infrastructure) solar farms, solar panels on buildings, wind farms, District Heating Networks and community led renewable energy initiatives at appropriate locations in the Borough, which will need to be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment and if necessary an Appropriate Assessment, to help reduce Colchester's carbon footprint.

Renewable energy schemes with potential for adverse effects on internationally or nationally designated nature conservation sites, sites or nationally designated landscapes (Dedham Vale AONB) and heritage assets, 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.'

This SPD provides guidance on the implementation of these policies. It is structured around five key objectives that relate to Policies CC1 and DM25:

- Improving Layout and Building Design
- Renewable and low carbon energy
- Net zero carbon buildings (the LETI approach)
- Electric Vehicles
- Water efficiency measures

The SPD also includes a section relevant to householder applications.

Climate Change SPD

This SPD is part of the Council's response to the climate emergency. It expands on the adopted Local Plan and Climate Emergency Action Plan and outlines how these policies and ambitions can be met.

This SPD is ambitious – it recommends that development proposals go further than adopted policies. The adopted policies were written before the plan was submitted in 2017. Since then, the Council has declared a climate emergency and this SPD includes measures to address the climate emergency. Whilst the Council cannot set new policies through this SPD, the SPD sets out what the Council would support from development proposals and how applicants can successfully integrate a best-practice approach towards the climate emergency in their development proposals. Climate change affects us all and we should all play our part in mitigating and adapting to climate change and creating communities and buildings that are resilient.

The most effective way to build a development which successfully addresses the climate emergency and is resilient to a changing climate is to design for it from the outset. This reduces the complexity of the build, the associated costs and gives clear direction to all involved in the development process on what the objectives are.

Applicants should refer to the Net Zero Carbon Toolkit developed by Levitt Bernstein, Elementa, Passivhaus Trust and Etude commissioned by West Oxfordshire, Cotswold and Forest of Dean District Councils, funded by the LGA Housing Advisers Programme. This resource was prepared by leading technical experts from Etude, the Passivhaus Trust, Levitt Bernstein and Elementa Consulting. It contains the very latest design approach and good practice within the field of Net Zero buildings. The Council encourages applicants to follow this good practice. The Net Zero Carbon Toolkit is aimed at everyone: small or medium -size house builders, architects, self -builders, consultants, etc. The Toolkit helps explains how net zero carbon can be delivered through construction. Elements of this toolkit have been included in this SPD.

Chapter 4:
Improving Layout and Building Design
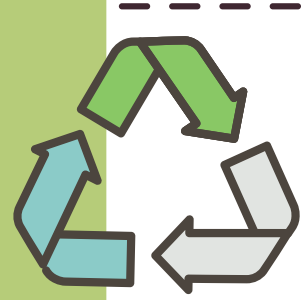
This chapter include various layout and design principles. It is important that the design principles included should form part of a cohesive and comprehensive design approach for the wider application/proposal.

Passive Design

Passive design is the optimisation of the layout and orientation of new buildings. Passive design maximises natural environmental factors to help reduce energy needs by avoiding overshadowing, maximising passive solar gain, maximising the potential internal daylight levels and providing ventilation. There is the need to balance this with the need to mitigate overheating risk and avoiding the need for energy intensive technology for cooling.

The Essex Solar Design Guide (2022) has been produced by Etude and Levitt Bernstein on behalf of Essex County Council, to give developers, architects and homeowners an easy-to-use guide, laying out the key considerations for good solar design. The core principles of good solar design are to balance the needs of daylighting, useful solar gain and mitigating overheating. The Council recommends that applicants take into account this guidance and incorporate the 'design actions' that are included throughout the guide into development proposals.

Optimising building form can make it easier and cheaper to achieve lower levels of space heating demand (the LETI KPI for space heating demand for residential dwellings is 15-20 kWh/m2/yr – see chapter 6).

Notwithstanding the policy requirement (Policy DM15) for development proposals to be designed to a high standard which responds positively to its context, development and building form should be as simple and compact as possible. This will reduce the exposed surface area reducing the amount of heat that is lost through the walls and roof. The use of stepped roofs, roof terraces, overhangs, inset balconies, dormers and bay windows should be avoided as these features will decrease the building's energy efficiency.

Buildings with a lower form factor (form factor = exposed external surface area/gross internal floor area) are more energy efficient. This is not to say all homes should become boxes, high quality design is important, but strategic decisions should be taken on adding articulation to the building forms (such as dormers, bay windows, built in undercroft parking etc.). Joining of homes together into terraces further reduces heat loss from the building. Consideration to the number of more exposed forms such as detached and semi-detached should therefore be given.

Passive solar design should be used to harness energy from the sun for heating and for daylighting to avoid the need for artificial lighting. This reduces winter heating load, limits summertime overheating and aids natural ventilation. To maximise useful solar gains in winter, rooms where people spend most of their time should be positioned along the south side of the building to maximise natural daylight and warmth in the winter. Site layout should maximise number of

dwellings with a main living room that has at least one window on a wall facing 90° due south. Bedrooms should avoid west elevations because they receive solar gain at end of the day just before they are occupied so carry risk of overheating.

Building Orientation and Massing

The massing and density of a development can influence access to sunlight, daylight, and solar gains to internal and external spaces. It is best practice to avoid placing higher elements to the south of a site, ideally these should be placed to the north to avoid excessive shading of other buildings and external amenity spaces. Consideration should also be given to surrounding buildings off site. Strategic breaks should be included in building massing to let sunlight in. When designing for sunlight, consider the sun's angle at different times of the day across different seasons. Housing layouts should be designed to maximise daylight and sunlight while taking into account other factors, such as privacy and the attractiveness of the wider streetscape whilst balancing the risk of overheating. The orientation and massing of the building should be optimized to allow useful solar gains and prevent significant overshadowing in winter. Buildings should be south facing (+/- 30°) with solar shading and dual aspect should be prioritised. Overshadowing of buildings should be avoided as it reduces the heat gain from the sun in winter.

Where urban design principles necessitate the move away from a predominantly north/south orientation, even slight twists to the building orientation can assist to reduce energy demand. Decisions on orientation and window area should also be balanced with the risk of overheating, with window shading considered to mitigate against this.

A building's form, orientation and window proportions are all aspects that do not add extra construction cost, but if optimised within the design can significantly improve the building's efficiency.

Overshadowing

Building spacing and street proportions should be assessed to reduce the extent of overshadowing. Priority should be given to the south in orientating masterplans, angling the roofs to make the most of PV opportunities to the south. It is good practice to allow a distance of 1 to 1.5 times the buildings height between buildings to avoid overshadowing and impacting the internal solar gains. High density developments should consider and demonstrate that year-round sun paths have been included in the design to allow as many dwellings as possible to receive sunlight throughout the year.

Sunlight is a welcome feature of external spaces such as communal gardens, public squares and roof terraces. The BRE guidance Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight: a guide to good practice advises that it is best practice to design for at least half of the total area of amenity space to receive direct sunlight for two hours on the 21st March (spring equinox).

While a room facing north will not receive direct sunlight, it can still be adequately daylit as it receives diffuse light (i.e. reflected or scattered light). The amount of daylight a room receives is dependent on external overshadowing from neighbouring buildings; overhangs or balconies; the size and location of windows; the depth of the room; the materials and colours used; and the visible light transmittance of the windows. These issues should all be considered as part of the design to maximise the amount of daylight entering and building.

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Windows

To minimise heat loss to the north, smaller windows should be installed and to provide sufficient solar heat gain from the south larger windows should be installed. Consideration should be given to the portion of the window that is useful for daylight, solar gain, ventilation, privacy, and views. Shading should be provided to avoid overheating in summer.

Horizontal windows are more effective than vertical windows in terms of improving room lighting distribution and increasing the amount of openable area available for ventilation. Side-hung windows are favoured to top-hung windows.

Building fabric and materials

Airtightness significantly improves energy efficiency and comfort, often for a relatively modest cost. Excellent levels of insulation and airtightness, and minimal thermal bridging are required to meet the LETI KPI for space heating demand for residential dwellings of 15-20 kWh/m2/yr (see chapter 6). The list below outlines the things to consider.

- Insulation standards, or U-values (W/m2), are a measure of how well heat passes through an element. The lower the u-value the better the insulator.

- Thermal bridging is where a building component allows significantly more heat to travel through it than the materials surrounding it. This can create "cold" spots and sources of heat loss and mould.

- Airtightness (m3 /h/m2) is a measure of the leakiness of a building and how much air passes between different building elements and junctions. This uncontrolled ventilation leads to heat loss.

- Thermal mass plays a big part in thermal comfort. Thermal mass (such as brick or blockwork) inside the building helps to stabilise internal temperatures throughout the day. Lightweight buildings with little thermal mass will be subject to larger temperature swings. An allowance for appropriate wall thickness needs to be made at an early stage in the design process to ensure the number of homes expected on site will fit and can be delivered.

- Choose materials that have certification from the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), the Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC), ISO 14001 (Environmental Standard), BES 6001 Framework for Responsible Sourcing, CARES steel certification.

Ventilation and air tightness

Natural ventilation improves thermal comfort in summer. Where possible, windows should be designed to be fully openable and floors plans arranged to allow cross ventilation, which is the most effective form of natural ventilation.

Excellent levels of air-tightness and Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) are required to meet the LETI KPI for space heating demand for residential dwellings of 15-20 kWh/m2/yr (see chapter 6).

The key to energy efficient ventilation in all buildings is being in control of where, when, and how air flows through a building. This starts with very good airtightness to limit any uncontrolled infiltration. Trickle vents should be avoided as they do not control infiltration. Practical guidance on how to achieve good levels of airtightness can be found in the Forest of Dean, Cotswold and West Oxfordshire District Councils' Net Zero Carbon Toolkit.

A key component to energy efficient, airtight homes is Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MHVR). MVHR is suitable for all building types. Long used in non-domestic buildings, it is increasingly used in homes to ensure good indoor air quality and to remove and replace stale air in an energy efficient

manner. MVHR units supply air into occupied spaces, and extract air from circulation spaces, or kitchen and bathroom spaces in the case of homes, it does this using very little energy and recovers heat energy from outgoing air. Units should be positioned close to an external wall to prevent heat loss from the ductwork that connects to the outside. These ducts should be accurately fitted with adequate insulation to prevent heat loss, and generally ductwork should avoid having sharp bends which could affect pressure loss and flow. MVHR units include filters that must be changed regularly (usually at least once per year but check the manufacturer's instructions).

Reducing overheating

Climate change is already bringing warmer summers with more extreme temperature highs. In June 2021, the Committee on Climate Change released its Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk. It said in the last 5 years, "over 570,000 new homes have been built that are not resilient to future high temperatures". Overall in England, the summer of 2022 was the joint hottest on record. 2022 was also the hottest year on record between January-August 2022, and the driest so far since 1976. The highest ever recorded temperature of 39°C for the county of Essex was recorded in July 2022. These high temperatures led to a notable increase in wildfires, with several experienced in the borough of Colchester (in Mersea, Stanway and on Middlewick).

Overheating in buildings is becoming an increasing threat to occupants' health and wellbeing, particularly for vulnerable people. In future years, this is set to become even more of an issue.

Overheating can be reduced through good design and all developments should demonstrate how the risk of overheating has been sufficiently mitigated through good design.

All developments should:

1. Ensure glazing areas are not excessive i.e. no more than 20-25% of facade on south or west façades.

2. Favour dual aspect homes to allow cross ventilation.

3. Provide appropriate external solar shading. South façades should have horizontal shading over the window and the west façade should ideally have efficient movable shading e.g., shutters. Do not rely on internal blinds – these can be ineffective and removed by residents.

4. Ensure good levels of secure natural ventilation are possible. Design window openings to take advantage of cross-ventilation (from one side to another) and/or stack ventilation (from bottom to top). Avoid fixed panes and maximise opening areas of windows. Side hung windows typically allow more ventilation than top hung.

5. Select a g-value (the solar factor indicating how much heat is transmitted from the sun) for glass of around 0.5 where possible. Avoid reducing it too much as this would also reduce free winter solar gains.

6. Utilise thermal mass in buildings to help dampen temperature swings throughout the day, and work with secure natural ventilation to provide passive night-time cooling

7. Utilise green and blue infrastructure to provide natural cooling to the local environment and reduce the urban heat island effect.

The Good Homes Alliance has developed a tool and accompanying guidance which aims to help planners and design teams identify and mitigate overheating risks in new homes at an early stage.

CIBSE have a detailed methodology to assess overheating risk to occupiers over the lifetime of a development. Assessing the overheating risk and ensuring mitigation measures are incorporated into the design, will help ensure the comfort, health and wellbeing of occupiers and improve resilience of the development to a changing climate. Using the CIBSE methodology for assessing and mitigating overheating risk from not only current climate, but also projected future climate, is encouraged on major development proposals.

Working from home space

All new dwellings should be designed to accommodate the space and services necessary for comfortable home working. This will reduce the need to travel. As a guide, a suitable home office should include:

- A high-speed internet connection.
- A room or space with a wall length of at least 1.8m, capable of accommodating a desk and shelving.
- Good internal daylight, reducing the need for artificial lighting.
- Consider north facing home offices to avoid glare.

Green-blue infrastructure

The Biodiversity SPD and Active Travel SPD both refer to green-blue infrastructure. Green-blue infrastructure, such as parks, open spaces, waterways, and the connections between them, is central to Colchester's climate change adaptation and resilience. Green-blue infrastructure can improve the resilience of habitats and vulnerable species in a changing climate and help to reduce flood risk. Green-blue infrastructure reduces the environmental impact of development in terms of carbon emissions, air, soil, light, noise, and water, while also improving air, soil, and water quality. Green-blue infrastructure can also deliver a range of related benefits by improving opportunities to walk and cycle, which in turn reduces carbon emissions, and improving the health and wellbeing of local communities.

According to Natural England, good green-blue infrastructure has five key characteristics. It is:

1. **Multifunctional –** Whilst traditional grey infrastructure typically has one key function, green-blue infrastructure offers a range of functions. For example, increased tree coverage may provide flood protection, reduce heat, promote biodiversity, and provide aesthetic value.

2. **Varied –** Varying green and blue spaces is particularly important for wildlife in the context of a changing climate and has a positive impact on human health.

3. **Connected –** Promoting connectivity addresses fragmentation, enabling the movement of people and wildlife through green networks and strengthening resilience.

4. **Accessible –** For people to experience and (re-) connect with nature, green-blue infrastructure must be inclusive, safe, welcoming, well-managed and accessible for all.

5. **Responding to a local area's character -** An area's natural, historical, and cultural landscape makes a place distinctive and helps people recognise and connect to their local environment. Green-blue infrastructure should preserve and maintain the existing character of an area and enhance it by strengthening existing characteristics.
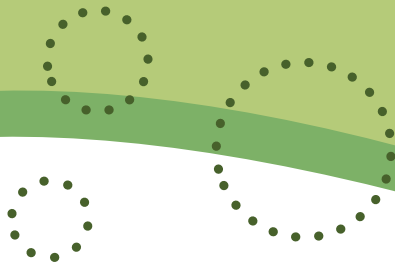
Trees can provide additional shading to buildings and public realm. Deciduous trees allow for sunlight and solar gains to reach the buildings in winter when the leaves fall, while providing shading in summer. The size and age of trees can make the amount and longevity of shading difficult to predict. Therefore, shade from trees should not be relied upon as an overheating mitigation measure, they simply supplement the overall building design. When designing external spaces consider how much sunlight will be received on planted areas and select appropriate species to suit. The Council require major applications to submit a tree canopy cover assessment and have adopted guidance to explain this requirement.

Green and blue infrastructure helps to cool the surrounding environment naturally and reduces the urban heat island effect. Water bodies are known to cool the air and can contribute to a cooler microclimate on the site. Trees outside a building can provide some shade, but they should not be depended on as the sole source of solar shading.

Chapter 5:
Renewable and low carbon energy

Solar farm proposals with a generating capacity of greater than 50MW, under the Planning Act 2008, are classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) requiring a Development Consent Order (DCO). Smaller solar farm proposals with a generating capacity of below 50MW can be determined by the relevant Local Planning Authority (LPA) through the normal planning application process.

The Government Energy White Paper (2020) states that onshore wind and solar will be key building blocks of the future generation mix, along with offshore wind and sustained growth in the capacity of solar and onshore and offshore wind will be needed in the next decade to ensure the country is on the path to a low-cost, clean electricity system by 2050. The Climate Change Committee's Sixth Carbon Budget (The UK's path to Net Zero, December 2020) report highlights that a portfolio of zero and low-carbon energy generating technologies will be needed to meet future electricity demands including expanding new solar generating technology capacity by 3,000MW on average every year to 2030 and beyond.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021) states that "The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; ... and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure." The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development as defined in the NPPF. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. These are economic, social and environmental objectives.

Policy DM25: Renewable Energy, Water, Waste and Recycling of Colchester's adopted Local Plan states:

"The Local Planning Authority will support proposals for renewable energy projects including micro-generation, offshore wind farms (plus land based ancillary infrastructure) solar farms, solar panels on buildings, wind farms, District Heating Networks and community led renewable energy initiatives at appropriate locations in the Borough, which will need to be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment and if necessary an Appropriate Assessment, to help reduce Colchester's carbon footprint.

Renewable energy schemes with potential for adverse effects on internationally or nationally designated nature conservation sites, sites or nationally designated landscapes (Dedham Vale AONB) and heritage assets, 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."

Policy ENV1 (Environment) states:

"Development proposals that have adverse effects on the integrity of habitats sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest or significant adverse impacts on the special qualities of the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (including its setting) (either alone or in-combination) will not be supported."
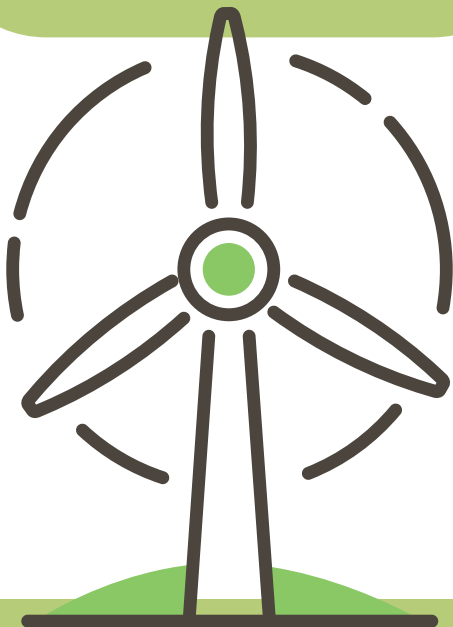
Support for renewable energy

Planning applications for renewable energy schemes in appropriate locations will be supported by the Council. It is accepted that there will be an impact, as there is with any development, but any adverse impacts can be minimised and mitigated. Large scale renewable energy schemes are Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development and so large-scale applications are accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES), which fully considers environmental impacts. ES often recommend appropriate conditions to secure any necessary mitigation. The principle of renewable energy will not be questioned by the Council. The Council has declared a climate emergency and renewable energy schemes will contribute to reducing carbon emissions across the city. A solar farm generating 49.99 megawatts (MW) could generate enough power to provide electricity to over 16,000 homes. Renewable energy schemes play a major role in reducing carbon emissions across the city, contributing to the climate emergency and supporting the sustainable development objectives in the NPPF, and will be supported in principle.

Whilst the climate emergency declaration of net zero emissions by 2030 relates to the Council as an organisation, the Council in declaring a climate emergency in July 2019, acknowledged that urgent action is needed to limit the environmental impacts produced by the climate crisis.

As stated in the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022/23, "Energy is linked into all parts of our lives, from powering our individual homes to larger businesses. Energy demand, particularly for electricity, is increasing as people look to decarbonise their lifestyles and electrify their heating and vehicles. To support this demand, extra energy supply is required and the Council, through its wholly owned energy company Colchester Amphora Energy Limited, is looking to generate more renewable energy."

Biodiversity benefits

Solar farms can deliver significant biodiversity net gain. To maximise environmental benefits, the Council encourages all solar farm proposals to deliver biodiversity net gain of at least 50% and an increase in tree canopy cover of at least 50%.

The Council's ambition is that all development should achieve an energy balance on-site. This means that renewable energy generation should be equal to or greater than the development's operational energy consumption (or energy use intensity) over the course of a year. For clarity this means both regulated and unregulated energy use, but excludes the energy used for electric vehicle charging.

The aim should be to provide net zero or low carbon heating systems for heating and hot water so that new development does not connect to the gas grid. This is the direction we need to take to build sustainable, future proofed buildings. Net Zero carbon buildings do not burn fossil fuels for energy. Net Zero carbon in operation can only be achieved by increasing renewable electricity generation. Solar PVs represent a mature and easy to use technology and heat pumps are an efficient low carbon heat source. Solar Thermal is the process of capturing energy from the sun via the use of solar panels, to heat water for use in the home. Solar thermal offers much lower heating costs than traditional gas or electric-powered heating systems and produces fewer CO_2 emissions.

Generating electricity onsite, at the point of use, provides cheap electricity close to demand that can offset electricity consumption at full retail price; directly powers building systems or charge electric vehicles from rooftop solar energy; and immediately decarbonises electricity supplies (rather than having to wait for the UK grid to decarbonise). It is also more efficient in terms of the grid because very little energy will be lost through transmission and distribution because it's a short distance from generation to where it is used.

Heat pumps

Heat pumps are an energy efficient means of heating. They can achieve CO_2 emissions reduction when powered by a less carbon-intensive electricity grid. Heat pumps can provide both space heating and domestic hot water and can serve individual homes and buildings or communal heating systems. They are a solution for all building types at all scales when buildings are designed to high energy efficiency standards. For major development, consideration should be given to installing a communal heating system, or heat network, rather than individual heat pumps for every building. Heat pumps need to be sensitively located so as not to cause detriment to public and residential amenity.
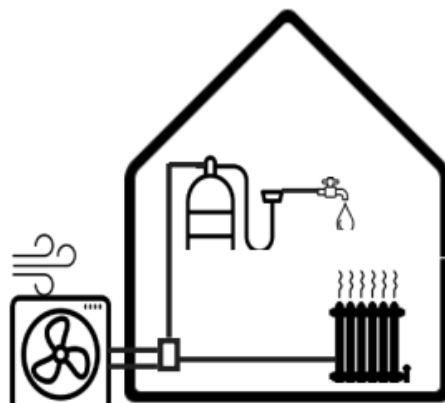
A typical air source heat pump system. The heat pump is located on external wall gathers heat from surrounding air. The heat pump alternates between providing space heating and hot water in the dwellings.

Solar photovoltaics (PV)

Solar photovoltaics (PV) are ideally suited to buildings. Solar photovoltaic (PV) panels generate electricity when exposed to sunlight. They are the most appropriate form of renewable energy generation for a building as they are a simple, mature, and durable technology and can be installed on both roofs and suitable facades. Solar photovoltaics should be considered at the very earliest of design stages in order that the roof shape and orientation is optimised to maximise solar photovoltaic output and returns for occupants.

Heat Networks

A heat network is a way to distribute heat from heat source(s) via underground pipes to multiple buildings. Heat can be generated, e.g. from a heat pump, or recovered, e.g. energy from waste. In the UK, heat networks are predicted to provide 18% of heat demand by 2050. The Council is delivering the Northern Gateway heat network. The Northern Gateway heat network will use an open loop ground source heat pump as the primary heat source to provide a low carbon heat solution to 200 houses, 450 flats, 35,000 m² of office space and 9,000 m² of healthcare facilities. The project is the first of its kind to be used on this scale in the UK, using a confined chalk aquifer, and will deliver 5.5 GWhrs of heat a year with 75% of hot water for heating and washing being generated by the heat pump.

At the time of writing this SPD, the government is consulting on heat network zones. These are areas where heat networks would be optimal to install based on heat demand in the area, density of the heat demand and potential sources of low carbon heating.

The Council encourages applicants to consider installing a heat network and/or connecting development to an existing heat network.
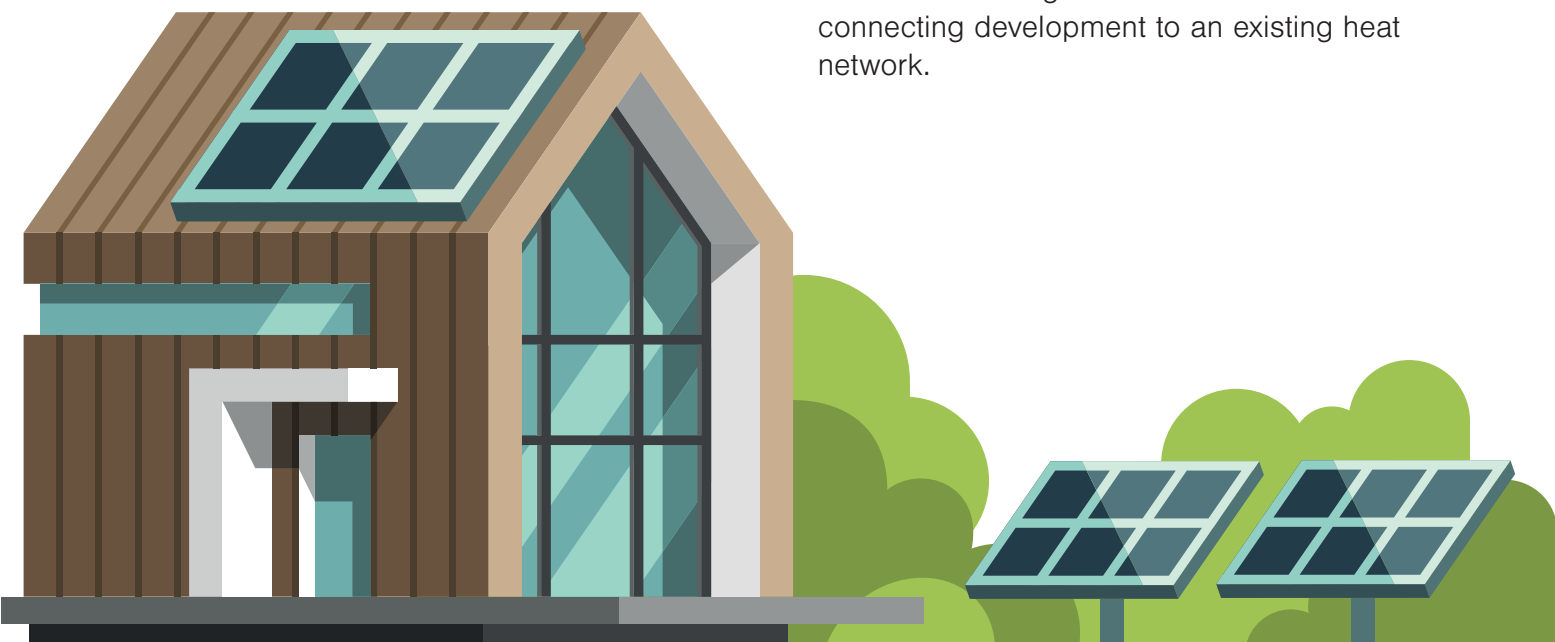
Chapter 6: Net Zero Carbon Buildings (the LETI approach)

The Low Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI) was established in 2017 to support the transition of London's built environment to net zero carbon, providing guidance that can be applied to the rest of the UK. LETI is a network of over 1,000 built environment professionals who are working together on the path to a zero carbon future. LETI believe that to meet our climate change targets all new buildings must operate at net zero carbon by 2030 and all buildings must operate at net zero carbon by 2050. In order to achieve this, LETI believes that by 2025, all new buildings must be designed to deliver net zero carbon.

The Council encourages all new buildings to be built to net zero carbon standards as defined by LETI and should seek to achieve LETI's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). LETI's three core principles and KPIs are outlined below. Energy use targets are more transparent and robust than carbon reductions targets and are the best way to ensure zero carbon is delivered in practice.

This policy approach to net zero carbon based on energy metrics has now been accepted by the Planning Inspectorate through the examinations into Cornwall and Bath and North East Somerset Local Plans. LETI's definition of net zero carbon means whole life carbon. Whole life carbon is formed of operational and embodied carbon.

Operational carbon is the emissions from the energy consumed by a building associated with heating, hot water, cooling, ventilation, and lighting systems as well as equipment such as fridges, washing machines, TVs, and cooking. For buildings, embodied carbon is the carbon emissions emitted from producing a building's materials, their transport and installation on site as well as their disposal at end of life.

The diagram shows the KPIs for residential but LETI have developed KPIs for a wide range of uses and these are set out in the LETI Climate Emergency Design Guide.

For LETI, a net zero carbon building in operation means a building which does not burn fossil fuels, is 100% powered by renewable energy and achieves a level of energy performance in-use in line with our national climate change targets. There are 3 core principles:

1 – Energy efficiency

Buildings should use energy efficiently. The lower the energy demand of the building, the easier it is to achieve net zero in use. Space heating demand expresses the amount of energy the building needs for heating and is impacted by site and orientation, window design, form, building fabric, materials and detailing, and ventilation.

Energy Use Intensity (EUI) expresses the total amount of energy a building uses and can be measured in-use through the energy meter) with kWh/m2.yr as a unit. It is impacted by the space heating demand, the choice of heating system, ventilation system, lighting, cooking, appliances, and equipment. LETI believe that EUI should replace carbon emission reductions as the primary metric used in policy, regulations, and design decisions.

2 – Low carbon heating

All new buildings should be built with a low carbon heating system and must not connect to the gas network.

3 – Renewable energy generation

In new buildings, annual renewable energy generation should be at least equal to the residual total energy use of the building (the EUI) (i.e. the regulated and unregulated energy use but excluding EV charging). If this is not possible on-site, it should be demonstrated that the equivalent of 120 kWh/m2 (footprint)/yr of renewable energy is generated across the development.

The diagram, below, produced by LETI and included in their Climate Emergency Design Guide, summarises the LETI approach to net zero carbon.
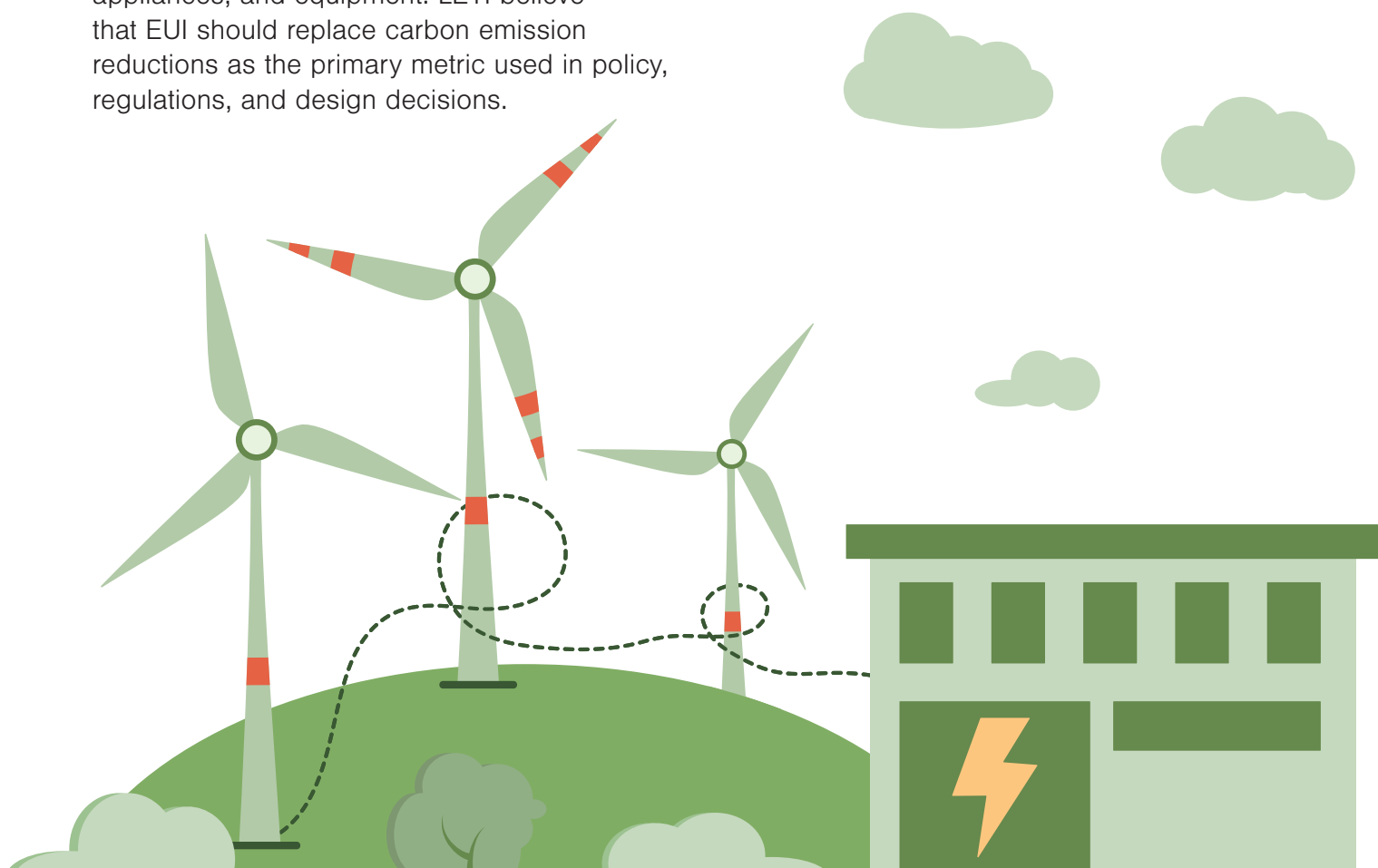
Net Zero Operational Carbon

Ten key requirements for new buildings

By 2030 all new buildings must operate at net zero to meet our climate change targets. This means that by 2025 all new buildings will need to be designed to meet these targets. This page sets out the approach to operational carbon that will be necessary to deliver zero carbon buildings. For more information about any of these requirements and how to meet them, please refer to the: UKGBC - Net Zero Carbon Buildings Framework; BBP - Design for Performance initiative; RIBA - 2030 Climate Challenge; GHA - Net Zero Housing Project Map; CIBSE - Climate Action Plan; and, LETI - Climate Emergency Design Guide.

Low energy use

1 Total Energy Use Intensity (EUI) - Energy use measured at the meter should be equal to or less than:
- **35 kWh/m²/yr** (GIA) for residential[1]

For non-domestic buildings a minimum DEC B (40) rating should be achieved and/or an EUI equal or less than:
- **65 kWh/m²/yr** (GIA) for schools[1]
- **70 kWh/m²/yr** (NLA) or **55 kWh/m²/yr** (GIA) for commercial offices[1,2]

2 Building fabric is very important therefore space heating demand should be less than **15 kWh/m²/yr** for all building types.

Measurement and verification

3 Annual energy use and renewable energy generation on-site must be reported and independently verified in-use each year for the first 5 years. This can be done on an aggregated and anonymised basis for residential buildings.

Reducing construction impacts

4 Embodied carbon should be assessed, reduced and verified post-construction.[3]
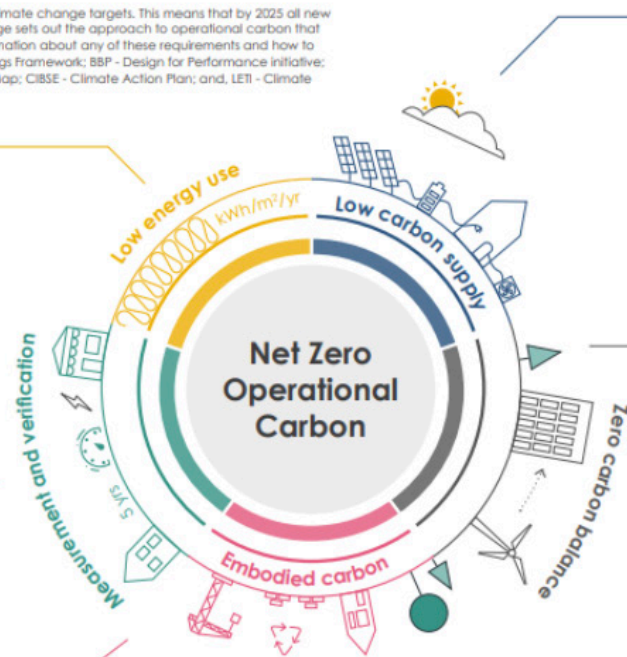
Low carbon energy supply

5 Heating and hot water should not be generated using fossil fuels.

6 The average annual carbon content of the heat supplied (gCO₂/kWh) should be reported.

7 On-site renewable electricity should be maximised.

8 Energy demand response and storage measures should be incorporated and the building annual peak energy demand should be reported.

Zero carbon balance

9 A carbon balance calculation (on an annual basis) should be undertaken and it should be demonstrated that the building achieves a net zero carbon balance.

10 Any energy use not met by on-site renewables should be met by an investment into additional renewable energy capacity off-site OR a minimum 15 year renewable energy power purchase agreement (PPA). A green tariff is not robust enough and does not provide 'additional' renewables.

Net Zero Operational Carbon

(Low energy use · Low carbon supply · Zero carbon balance · Embodied carbon · Measurement and verification)

Notes:

Note 1 – Energy use intensity (EUI) targets
The above targets include all energy uses in the building (regulated and unregulated) as measured at the meter and exclude on-site generation. They have been derived from: predicted energy use modelling for best practice; a review of the best performing buildings in the UK; and a preliminary assessment of the renewable energy supply for UK buildings. They are likely to be revised as more knowledge is available in these three fields. As heating and hot water is not generated by fossil fuels, this assumes an all electric building until other zero carbon fuels exist. (kWh targets are the same as kWh___.) Once other zero carbon heating fuels are available this metric will be adapted.

Note 2 – Commercial offices
With a typical net to gross ratio, 70 kWh/m² NLA/yr is equivalent to 55 kWh/m² GIA/yr. Building owners and developers are recommended to target a base building rating of a 4 star using the BBP's Design for Performance process based on NABERS.

Note 3 – Whole life carbon
It is recognised that operational emissions represent only one aspect of net zero carbon in new buildings. Reducing whole life carbon is crucial and will be covered in separate guidance.

Note 4 – Adaptation to climate change
Net zero carbon buildings should also be adapted to climate change. It is essential that the risk of overheating is managed and that cooling is minimised.


Calculations should be carried out using predictive energy modelling tools, such as Passivhaus Planning package (PHPP) or equivalent.

Post occupancy monitoring should be undertaken on a percentage of homes (e.g. 30%) and be spread across phases for a period of 5 years to demonstrate the energy performance standards and aid learning, innovation and skills development in the design and construction industry. The post occupancy evaluation should include qualitative (occupant satisfaction questionnaires) and quantitative data (energy monitoring to review against targets set).

Measuring and reporting of upfront embodied carbon emissions is encouraged on major development proposals using a recognized standard methodology such as RICS. Developments should be designed to reduce embodied carbon emissions and best practice targets should be aimed for. LETI sets out some KPI for upfront embodied carbon emissions (building life cycle stages A1-A5); this includes the following elements: substructure, superstructure, MEP, facade & internal finishes.

Chapter 7:
Electric Vehicles
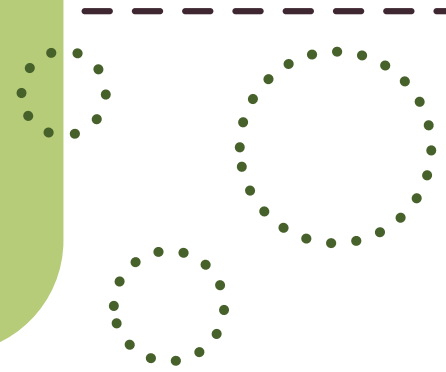
The guidance in this chapter is taken from the Essex Design Guide. Further guidance on electric vehicle charging is expected in the emerging Parking Standards guidance document.

A ban on the sale of diesel and petrol cars and vans is expected to come into force in 2030, so it is important to ensure drivers can easily switch to other modes or where this is not conveniently feasible and make use of alternative fuel vehicles. All new cars and vans will be required to be fully zero emission at the tail pipe by 2035.

To support transition to electric vehicles, motorists must be able to charge them.

The support and use of electric vehicles in residential developments provides a number of benefits and layouts should therefore give consideration to how charging infrastructure can be integrated:

- Decreased air pollution in the vicinity due to the lack of exhaust emissions.

- Decreased noise pollution.

- Opportunity to provide ancillary services to the local power grid, enabling the use of higher share of variable renewable energy and potentially avoiding costly grid reinforcements.

Electric vehicles still contribute to congestion. Less private travel is therefore by far the most effective way to reduce transport emissions, but where journeys are necessary then these need to be decarbonised as far as practically possible.

Types of Chargepoint

There are three types of charging equipment, each with an associated charging time and typical application.

Type of chargepoint	Typical power output	Typical charging time	Typical application
Standard	<7kW	4-7 hours	Residential, workplace
Fast	7-22kW	2-4 hours	Retail, leisure, public
Rapid	>22kW	30-45 minutes	Public, fleet, strategic highway network
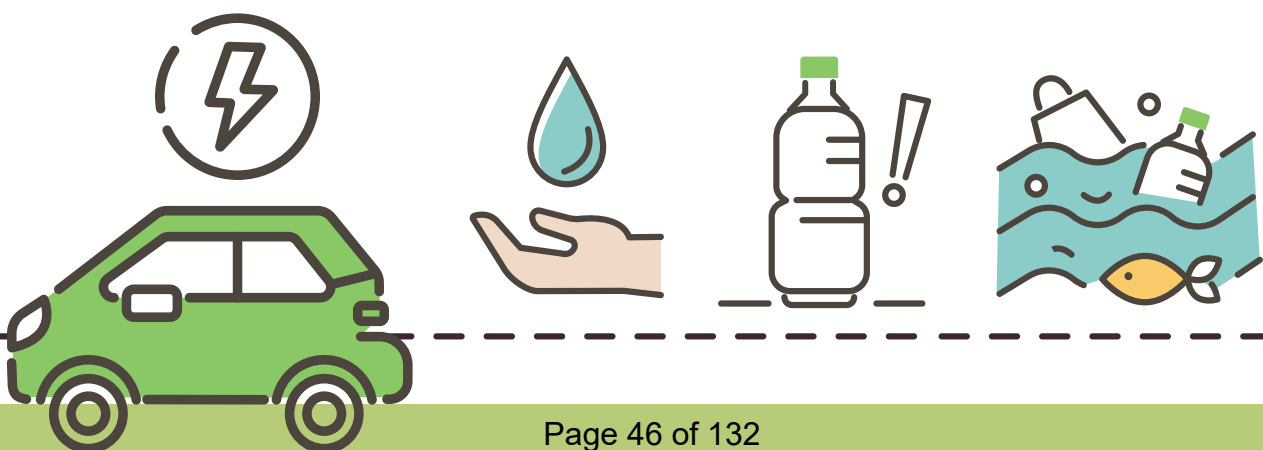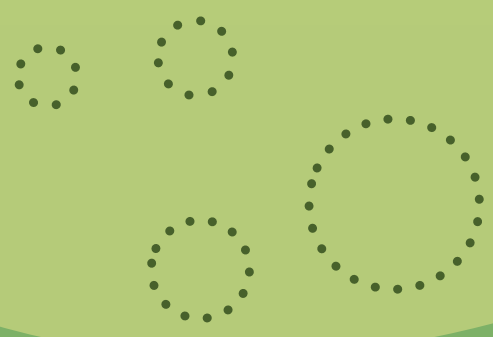
The majority of charging currently occurs at home, usually overnight when electricity is cheapest. For residential developments the standard 3-7kW chargepoints are sufficient to provide a full charge overnight. The same chargepoints are suitable for employee parking spaces where cars would typically be parked during office working hours.

Fast chargepoints are suitable for public and retail car parks, leisure centres, visitor car parks and other amenities where drivers can top-up their battery while visiting the location for other reasons.

Rapid chargepoints can provide up to 80% power in about 30 minutes, and are best suited for transport hubs (for example, airports, taxi ranks etc.), electric vehicle (EV) charging hubs and along the strategic highway network, where a quick charge is essential.

Number of Chargepoints

For housing developments with garages and/or dedicated off-street parking, each new dwelling should be fitted with a standard (3-7kW) chargepoint.

For housing developments with no off-street parking, 10% of the unallocated parking bays should have an active (i.e. wired and ready to use) chargepoint. A further 10% should have the necessary underlying infrastructure (i.e. cabling and ducting) to enable quick, simple installation at a later date when there is sufficient demand.

Chapter 8: Water efficiency measures

Reducing the risk of drought is crucial in adapting to a changing climate. There is a need for a significant reduction in personal water consumption.

The Environmental Improvement Plan (2023) states that sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) will become mandatory in all new developments by 2024. SuDS, which include a range of eco-friendly measures such as ponds, reed beds and shallow drainage channels, will be required in all new developments in order to reduce the risk of flooding, storm overflow discharges and pollution caused by surface water runoff.

The Colchester Water Cycle Study (WCS) concluded that, allowing for the planned resource management of Anglian Water Services South Essex Resource Zone, Colchester would have adequate water supply to cater for growth over the plan period. However, the WCS identified that there are long term limitations on further abstraction from the raw water resources supplying the Borough and that there is a drive to ensure the delivery of sustainable development for Colchester. Hence there are key drivers requiring that water demand is managed for all new development in order to achieve long term sustainability in terms of water resources.

Policy DM25 of the Section 2 Local Plan requires residential developments to meet the Building Regulation optional higher water efficiency standard of 110 litres per person per day, as set out in Building Regulations part G2. To reduce the demand for water, all development proposals should include water efficiency measures. Applicants should submit a water efficiency calculator report to demonstrate compliance with the policy requirement for 110 litres per person per day water efficiency standard. Applicants should consider reducing water use to the lower water efficiency standard of 80 litres per person per day.

To reduce water demand, water use should first be minimised through efficient fittings. Rainwater harvesting systems and water reuse systems further reduce water usage and the incorporation of these systems should be considered in all new developments.

There are simple measures that can easily be included in new buildings, and retrofitted to old, to help reduce householders' water usage often at little or no cost to the developer. For example: aerated and low flow showerheads reduce the flow and amount of water but don't compromise on pressure; dual flush toilets; A rated appliances.

A rainwater harvesting system allows residents to collect, filter and store rainwater within an underground tank. When stored underground, the rainwater captured remains clean and fresh. Rainwater harvesting also helps manage surface water. As a minimum, all homes should be provided with a water butt.

Water re-use, or greywater recycling, collects, processes and stores greywater for subsequent re-use as non-potable water, ie for toilet-

flushing, clothes-washing machines, and irrigation. Greywater is the wastewater from showers, baths and wash-hand basins.

Green-blue infrastructure can contribute to making areas less vulnerable to flood risk whilst ensuring development doesn't increase flood risk to third parties. Through its key role in sustainable drainage, drought mitigation, flood and water stress reduction, providing opportunities for attenuation or infiltration that can help to recharge aquifers, and maintaining levels in watercourses or other blue infrastructure features. The incorporation of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), that mimic natural drainage and encourage its passive infiltration and attenuation, will be required in all new developments. To avoid increased flood risk and make effective use of existing and planned drainage infrastructure,

rainwater should be managed as a valuable resource rather than a waste product. A multi-functional approach to the delivery of SuDS provides multiple benefits such as the provision of public open space and increase biodiversity. The Council has adopted the Essex County Council SuDS Design Guide as SPD and development proposals should demonstrate how they have complied with this.

There is a target for 75% of water bodies to be 'good' status by 2027. Currently only 7% of water bodies in Essex are 'good' status. SuDS are important for water quality benefits and it is important that the SuDS management train or 'treatment train' is followed.

Essex County Council are preparing an Essex Water Strategy and applicants should have regard to this.

Chapter 9: Householder applications

The existing housing stock contributes a significant amount to carbon emissions across the country. All homes will need to decarbonise over the next decade. The Council has agreed to set a target for the Council's housing stock to reach net zero emissions by 2050, and for all homes within the Council's housing stock to achieve an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) C by 2030.

Extensions and refurbishment works offer opportunities for improving the environmental performance of a home. Improving the energy efficiency of your home can save you money and make your home more comfortable. Undertaking works as part of an extension can be a cost effective way of improving your home. The guidance in this chapter should be considered as part of all householder applications.

In 2020, the Council prepared a householders guide to sustainability and energy efficiency improvements. The LETI Climate Emergency Retrofit Guide sets out what a best practice and exemplar retrofit looks like to support our national transition to net zero carbon.

Energy Hierarchy

The energy hierarchy should be followed, which is:

1. reduce the need for energy at home,

2. install different types of energy efficiency measures and

3. install renewable energy measures.

Following sustainable design principles such as orientation to maximise natural daylight, avoiding overheating and natural ventilation will help you reduce energy demand.

Any new appliances should be energy efficient.

Orientation

When designing extensions, there is an opportunity to orient them to the south to maximise natural daylight and sunlight into your house and take advantage of passive solar gain (absorbing the sun's heat energy to warm internal spaces). However, it is important to consider that rooms facing south should be designed with shaded glazing to exclude high-angle summer sun and good ventilation to help with natural cooling during high temperatures.

Airtightness

Where airtightness is improved through replacement of windows or doors, mechanical ventilation with heat recovery should be installed to reduce the risk of condensation building up which can lead to damp, mould and poor indoor air quality.

Building fabric and materials

Existing buildings can be retrofitted to improve thermal performance. Care should be taken to select the right materials to ensure moisture can pass freely through the building element and not get trapped. More information on this can be found in the Forest of Dean, Cotswold and West Oxfordshire District Councils' Net Zero Carbon Toolkit. By selecting insulation with some thermal mass (e.g. wood fibre board) temperature variations throughout the day can be moderated.

Work from home

In a post Covid-19 society, more people will be working from home and this trend is likely to continue as our digital infrastructure continues to develop. If your home does not currently have a room or space for working from home consider incorporating a work from home space into your extension.

Renewable and low carbon energy

All existing buildings should replace fossil fuel based systems with low carbon heat alternatives as a matter of priority.

Air Source Heat Pumps use heat from the air outside (even when its freezing) to heat your home via radiators, underfloor heating or to heat water in a storage tank for use in the kitchen or bathroom. Air Source Heat Pumps can be retrofitted into existing buildings if there is a suitable location for the outdoor unit. Heat pumps are suited to underfloor heating and larger radiators. However, existing radiators may be sufficient if the building is moderately energy efficient. If the existing building has poor energy efficiency, improvements should also be made to the building fabric, as part of a considered whole house retrofit plan. If a gas boiler is being replaced during an extension or refurbishment replace with an Air Source Heat Pump.

Solar photovoltaic (PV) systems turn sunlight into electricity through the 'solar cells' they contain - this electricity can be used to power home appliances. To install solar PV, your roof should face south and have between 2-5 sq.m of available space free of shading.

Listed buildings and conservation areas should seek the advice of the Conservation Officer.

Consider installing a charging point for electric vehicles to help support sustainable movement.

There are financial incentives available for installation of renewable energy technologies. These change over time and so are not listed in this SPD. Up to date information can be found on the Energy Saving Trust website.

Water efficiency measures

To reduce water demand, water use should first be minimised through efficient fittings. Rainwater harvesting systems and water reuse systems further reduce water usage.

There are simple measures that can easily be included in new bathrooms and kitchens, but that can also be added to existing. Anglian Water Services include water saving information on their website.

Consider installing a rainwater harvesting system, which collects, filters and stores rainwater within an underground tank, or a greywater recycling system, which collects, processes and stores greywater (wastewater from showers, baths and wash-hand basins) for subsequent re-use as non-potable water, ie for toilet-flushing, clothes-washing machines, and irrigation. If you do not have a water butt in the garden, consider investing in one as a way of collecting rainwater which can be used for watering the garden.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

As the Climate Change Committee report: Net Zero – The UK's contribution to stopping global warming says, a major ramp up in policy effort is required. Climate change affects us all and we should all play our part in mitigating and adapting to climate change. This SPD sets out how the development industry can play its part.

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF makes clear that mitigating and adapting to climate change is a core planning objective. New development should be planned for in ways that avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change (through adaptation measures including the planning of green infrastructure), and help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through location, orientation, and design.

The Essex Climate Action Commission recognise that the natural world is our best ally in reversing climate change – it is key to absorbing and storing carbon. Risks from already changing weather systems – more flooding, over-heating, soil degradation, subsidence and water shortage can be tackled by making space for green infrastructure and nurturing our natural world. By transforming Essex into a net zero county, it can become a sustainable, thriving place to live, work and play and many of the measures proposed have multiple benefits.

Through declaring a climate emergency, it has become a priority of Colchester City Council to spur urgent action to reduce our carbon footprint and promote sustainable urban environments and economies.

It is everyone's duty to do what they can to stop this existential threat to our planet.

This SPD is ambitious – it recommends that development proposals go further than adopted planning policies. The SPD sets out how applicants can successfully integrate a best-practice approach towards the climate emergency in their development proposals. The Council recommends that applicants follow the good practice set out in the Net Zero Carbon Toolkit. The Toolkit contains the very latest design approach and good practice within the field of net zero buildings. With the advent of extremely high energy costs the ongoing, relatively low running costs of net zero homes may become a sales point.

The Council's ambition is that all development should achieve an energy balance on-site and should seek to achieve LETI's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Achieving an energy balance on-site means that renewable energy generation should be equal to or greater than the development's energy consumption (or energy use intensity) over the course of a year. The aim should be to provide renewable or low carbon heating systems for heating and hot water so that

new development does not connect to the gas grid. Rather than a focus on carbon reduction, the Council supports the metric of energy use rather than a carbon reduction target. The Council supports the LETI approach, which is best practice and is inline with climate change targets.

This SPD sets out the direction we need to take to build sustainable, future proofed buildings. New buildings in Colchester city should reflect the direction of travel and be future proofed so that people and businesses can save money and people can live, work, and play in more liveable and comfortable buildings. LETI believes that to meet our national climate change targets, by 2025 all new buildings must be designed to deliver net zero carbon.

Climate change affects us all and we should all play our part in mitigating and adapting to climate change and creating communities and buildings that are resilient.

Further reading and references

Cheltenham Borough Council (2022) Cheltenham Climate Change SPD. PowerPoint Presentation (cheltenham.gov.uk)

Defra (2023) Environmental Improvement Plan 2023. Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Essex County Council Essex Design Guide Climate Change Section Climate Change | Essex Design Guide

Essex County Council Essex Design Guide Solar Design Guide https://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/climate-change/solar-orientation/

Essex County Council (2022) Essex Green Infrastructure Standards. Essex Green Infrastructure Standards | Essex Design Guide

Essex County Council (2014) Sustainable Drainage Systems Design Guide (adopted by CBC as a Supplementary Planning Document) suds design guide.pdf.pdf (windows.net)

HM Government (2023) Environmental Improvement Plan 2023. First revision of the 25 Year Environment Plan. Environmental Improvement Plan (publishing.service.gov.uk)

HM Government (2021) Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener October 2021. net-zero-strategy-beis.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Levitt Bernstein, Elementa, Passivhaus Trust and Etude commissioned by West Oxfordshire, Cotswold and Forest of Dean District Councils, funded by the LGA Housing Advisers Programme (2021) Net Zero Carbon Toolkit. Net Zero Carbon Toolkit (cotswold.gov.uk)

London Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI) (2020) Climate Emergency Desging Guide. Climate Emergency Design Guide | LETI

Waterwise (2022) UK Water Efficiency Strategy to 2030. J37880-Waterwise_Water_Efficiency_Strategy_Inners_Landscape_WEB.pdf

	Local Plan Committee	**Item**
		8

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2"></td><td colspan="2">7 August 2023</td></tr>
<tr><td>Report of</td><td>Rachel Forkin, Principal Planning Policy Officer</td><td>01206 282625</td></tr>
</table>

Title	**Active Travel Supplementary Planning Document**	
Wards affected	All wards affected	

1.   Executive Summary

1.1   The Planning Policy Team are preparing three Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) to address the climate emergency. These SPDs are: Active Travel, Biodiversity and Climate Change. This report presents the draft Active Travel SPD and the Committee are asked to approve publishing this draft for public consultation.

1.2   The Active Travel SPD aims to clearly set out the principles the Council expects to ensure that development proposals respond to the climate emergency by delivering a high quality cohesive network of active travel routes and support sustainable growth in line with the adopted Local Plan.

2.   Recommended Decision

2.1   It is recommended that the LPC approve publishing the draft Active Travel SPD for public consultation in accordance with the Planning Regulations and Statement of Community Involvement.

2.2   It is recommended that minor changes to the draft Active Travel SPD can be approved by the Head of Planning in consultation with the Chair of the Committee prior to the consultation commencing.

3.   Reason for Recommended Decision

3.1   The Council has declared a climate emergency and the climate emergency SPDs provide guidance to supplement relevant policies in the Local Plan and encourage applicants to go further than Local Plan requirements.

4.   Alternative Options

4.1   The alternative option is to not produce an Active Travel SPD and rely on Local Plan policies.

5.   Background Information

5.1   Supplementary planning documents (SPDs) build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies in an adopted local plan. As they do not form part of the development plan, they cannot introduce new planning policies. They are a material consideration in decision-making but should not add unnecessarily to the financial burdens on development.

5.2   The Council has adopted the Biodiversity SPD and is drafting two other SPDs to communicate Colchester City Council's ambitions in respect of the climate emergency for all development within the city. The three SPDs build on the adopted Local Plan and explain how development proposals should respond to the climate and ecological emergency. The SPDs are: Active Travel, Biodiversity, and Climate Change. All development proposals should strive to achieve ambitious carbon reductions, biodiversity enhancement and promotion of active travel to contribute towards Colchester becoming a greener city that is resilient to the climate and ecological emergency.

5.3   The most relevant Local Plan policies to the Active Travel SPD are Policies ENV3 (Green Infrastructure), DM20 (Promoting Sustainable Transport and Changing Travel Behaviour) and DM21 (Sustainable Access to Development). These policies are set out below.

Policy ENV3: Green Infrastructure

The Local Planning Authority will aim to protect, enhance and deliver a comprehensive green infrastructure network comprising strategic green links between the rural hinterland, urban Colchester, river corridors and open spaces across the Borough. It will seek to protect and enhance the existing network of green and blue infrastructure features and to secure the delivery of new green infrastructure where deficiencies and gaps are identified that will benefit communities, wildlife and the environment. The Council will work with access stakeholder/groups to support the delivery 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 Project Audit Paper and the Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Essex will be positively supported.

The Local Planning Authority 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 secured between existing green infrastructure assets, existing development, and the Orbital routes 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 Local Planning Authority will seek contributions or require work to be undertaken as part of new development where appropriate, to create new paths where gaps are evident in the existing green infrastructure network/Orbital routes or to enhance the quality of the existing route.

The use of land and buildings as new allotments, orchards, community gardens and for local food growing spaces and production will be supported, including the temporary use of vacant or derelict land or buildings and the use of incidental open space on housing estates and other open space areas, where this does not conflict with other policy objectives.

Green infrastructure that contributes to the protection and enhancement of water bodies will be supported, including de-culverting, creation and management of ecological buffer strips and new wetland areas to help manage flood risk and reduce diffuse pollution.

Policy DM20: Promoting Sustainable Transport and Changing Travel Behaviour

The Local Planning Authority 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 (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, park and ride, and green infrastructure, 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)   Reducing the need to travel by car by promoting higher densities near retail centres and public transport hubs, and encouraging mixed use development in appropriate locations;

(v)   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, Wivenhoe, and Colchester Bus Station.

The Local Planning Authority 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 Local Planning Authority 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:

(vi)   Encouraging a reduction in through traffic in the town centre to encourage trips to be undertaken by more sustainable modes;

(vii)   Encouraging 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 Local Planning Authority will seek to make best use of rural rail services through promotion and improving access at stations

Policy DM21: Sustainable Access to Development
All new developments should seek to enhance accessibility for sustainable modes of transport.
Proposals for development should:
(i)   Give priority to the movement of people walking and cycling;
(ii)   Create safe, secure, convenient and attractive 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, or as a minimum the ability to easily introduce such facilities in the future;
(vii)   Ensuring accessibility for those with impaired mobility; and

(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 relating to highways. Where lower than standard trip rates are proposed development will be expected to demonstrate through a package of sustainable transport measures that the proposed trip rates can be achieved. A masterplan approach to assess cumulative impacts may be required in complex locations with closely related and located 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 and schools will be required to produce a Travel Plan or provide Residential Travel Packs in accordance with Essex County Council Travel Plan Framework guidance.

5.4   The Active Travel SPD aims to clearly set out the principles the Council expects to ensure that development proposals respond to the climate emergency by delivering a high quality cohesive network of active travel routes and support sustainable growth in line with the adopted Local Plan.

5.5   Chapter 1 of the SPD introduces the climate emergency and the SPD. Chapter 2 sets out the background, a definition of active travel and reasons why an active travel SPD has been drafted.

5.6   Chapter 3 sets out the national context and provides links to relevant reports. Chapter 4 sets out the Colchester context. It includes relevant Local Plan policies and relevant local strategies and documents. Chapter 5 provides details of the active travel infrastructure in Colchester.

5.7   Chapter 6 sets out the elements that should be considered as part of new development proposals to encourage and support journeys by active modes. The chapter includes information on providing good quality infrastructure; improvements to existing infrastructure; provision of sufficient and good quality cycle and wheel parking; and information about other sustainable

travel measures, promotion and community projects that will all help to encourage active travel. Chapter 7 sets out planning application expectations in relation to active travel modes.

5.8   There is a wealth of information, guidance, toolkits, and best practice available. This SPD is intended to be concise and does not attempt to distill all this information and guidance into one document. Links are provided throughout the SPD to more detailed guidance for those who want to read more.

5.9   The Active Travel SPD will be designed by the Council's Corporate and Improvement Service and use the same design as the Climate Change and Biodiversity SPDs. The design is intended to make the SPD user friendly and easier to read.

5.10   Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening has been carried out, which has concluded that SEA is not required.

Engagement

5.16   As part of the process of drafting this SPD, Planning Policy Officers engaged with Officers from ECC, other officers from CCC and Members to help inform the draft. In November 2022, all Members were invited to give thoughts and ideas for matters which they wish to see addressed in the climate emergency SPDs. The key points raised in relation to the Active Travel SPD were:

- **Ensure good permeability between routes** and developments and connectivity with the wider network;
- **Ensure sufficient lighting** along cycleways and pedestrian routes;
- **Provision of secure cycle parking** (covered and lockable) in key locations including at some popular bus stops / hub areas. This should be considered also in rural areas – allowing cycling to a bus stop to get the bus to Colchester but need somewhere safe to store bikes.
- **Identify key routes** where safe segregated cycling / walking is required especially on popular routes including to schools. A route may be safe for most of the way to key locations but missing bit unsafe therefore not used.
- **Ensure network is joined up**, safe and inviting to use and perceived as safe by parents for use by school children to encourage alternative to the car to travel to school;
- **Build on opportunities** that can be provided in the SPD to be proactive to promote / encourage behaviour change particularly among school children- Key to making an impact is to change behaviours of the young- but need the infrastructure to be right and safe to do so.

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

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

https://cbccrmdata.blob.core.windows.net/noteattachment/Equality%20Impact%20Assessment%20June%202017.pdf

7. Strategic Plan References

7.1 'Tackling the climate challenge and leading sustainability' is a Strategic Plan theme. 'Respond to the climate emergency' is one of the priorities and is relevant to this SPD. The purpose of this SPD is to respond to the climate emergency. Other priorities in this theme are relevant to the Biodiversity and Climate Change SPDs.

8. Consultation

8.1 It is a requirement of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 to consult on draft SPDs for a minimum of 4 weeks and to prepare a statement setting out who was consulted, a summary of the main issues raised and how those issues have been addressed in the SPD.

9. Publicity Considerations

9.1 The SPD consultation will be publicised through written / email consultations with statutory consultees, general consultees on our database, other relevant stakeholders, individuals and organisations who have expressed a wish to be consulted or have previously made comments as set out in the Statement of Community Involvement.

10. Financial implications

10.1 There are no financial implications.

11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

11.1 The three climate emergency SPDs will bring multiple benefits including benefits to health and wellbeing. A healthy environment plays a role in improving health and wellbeing.

12.   Health and Safety Implications

12.1   No direct implications.

13.   Risk Management Implications

13.1   No direct implications.

14.   Environmental and Sustainability Implications

14.1   The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and has committed to being carbon neutral by 2030. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. These are economic, social and environmental objectives.

14.2   The Council is drafting three SPDs to communicate Colchester City Council's ambitions in respect of the climate emergency for all development within the city. SPDs are material considerations in planning decisions. They build on adopted planning policy and provide guidance on how policy requirements should be implemented. The three climate emergency SPDs build on the adopted Local Plan and explain how development proposals should respond to the climate and ecological emergency. The SPDs are: Active Travel, Biodiversity, and Climate Change. All development proposals should strive to achieve ambitious carbon reductions, biodiversity enhancement and promotion of active travel to contribute towards Colchester becoming a greener city that is resilient to the climate and ecological emergency.

Appendices

Draft Active Travel SPD

Colchester City Council's Active Travel SPD

Colchester City Council
Active Travel Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

1. Introduction

Climate change is a global issue affecting everyone. Co-ordinated action from all sectors, national and local governments, and individuals is needed to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The science tells us that to avoid catastrophic effects we need to limit the increase in global temperature to 1.5°C. Mitigation measures are required to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and limit global temperature rise. However, even with efforts to limit the cause of global warming, further climatic changes are inevitable in the future and the UK will need to adapt to the growing risks from climate change.

Colchester City Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and since then have carried out numerous pieces of work across the organisation and city to respond to the climate emergency. The infographics, below, highlight the key areas of work in 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22.

The Council is drafting 3 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) to communicate Colchester City Council's ambitions in respect of the climate emergency for all development within the city. SPDs are material considerations in planning decisions. They build on adopted planning policy and provide guidance on how policy requirements should be implemented. The 3 climate emergency SPDs build on the adopted Local Plan and explain how development proposals should respond to the climate and ecological emergency. The SPDs are: Active Travel, Biodiversity, and Climate Change. All development proposals should strive to achieve ambitious carbon reductions, biodiversity enhancement and promotion of active travel to contribute towards Colchester becoming a greener city that is resilient to the climate and ecological emergency.

We are in a climate and ecological emergency – the time to act is now.

The 3 climate emergency SPDs will bring multiple benefits including benefits to health and wellbeing. A healthy environment plays a role in improving health and wellbeing. Many of the actions proposed in the 3 SPD's will also achieve health benefits for our communities. An increase in active travel will lead to more walking

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and cycling. More energy efficient homes will be good for people's wellbeing and reduce heating costs. An increase in biodiversity and green infrastructure is good for people's mental wellbeing.

This is the Active Travel SPD. It aims to clearly set out the principles the Council expects to ensure that development proposals respond to the climate emergency by contributing towards a high quality cohesive network of active travel routes and support sustainable growth in line with the adopted Local Plan.

Although this SPD applies primarily to major planning applications, some of the guidance may also be relevant to many minor applications (as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework, NPPF). The Active Travel section of the Climate Emergency Checklist provides further information on what is relevant to your application.

The Council is consulting on this document in accordance with regulations and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. All responses received will be considered in preparing the final adopted version of this SPD. This SPD will form a material consideration in the determination of all planning applications for development including applications for renewal of consents.

Chapter 2 of the SPD sets out the background, a definition of active travel and reasons why an active travel SPD has been drafted. Chapter 3 sets out the national context and provides links to relevant reports. Chapter 4 sets out the Colchester and Essex context. It includes relevant Local Plan policies and relevant local strategies and documents. Chapter 5 provides details of the active travel infrastructure in Colchester. Chapter 6 sets out the elements that should be considered as part of new development proposals to encourage and support journeys by active modes. This chapter includes information on providing good quality infrastructure; improvements to existing infrastructure; provision of sufficient and good quality cycle and wheel parking; and information about other sustainable travel measures, promotion and community projects that will all help to encourage active travel. Chapter 7 sets out planning application expectations in relation to active travel modes.

There is a wealth of information, guidance and best practice available. This SPD does not attempt to distil all this information and guidance into one document. Links are provided throughout the SPD to more detailed guidance for those who want to find out more.

2. The Active Travel SPD

The previous Colchester Cycling Delivery Strategy SPD was adopted in 2012. Since then, it is apparent that other modes of wheeling travel would benefit from safe and sufficient routes. These, in addition to walking and cycling, are collectively known as modes of active travel. Active travel can also be used to access other forms of sustainable modes of transport such as public transport and car clubs.

> **Active Travel** refers to modes of travel that involve a level of physical activity; including walking, wheeling (trips made by wheelchairs [self-propelled or powered], mobility scooters, pushchairs and adapted bicycles) and cycling (including electric bikes, e-cargo bikes and other bicycle schemes).

New policies, strategies and guidance have also been published and adopted by national Government and Essex County Council since the Colchester Cycling Delivery Strategy was adopted by the Council. Revised guidance on delivering active travel infrastructure has been produced. National and local guidance recognises that active travel are the least carbon-intensive ways to travel.

The Active Travel SPD will supersede the Cycling Delivery Strategy SPD, which will ensure that the SPD is up to date and in line with the most recent policy and guidance. The Active Travel SPD is also being prepared to help everyone to understand the important role of active travel within the city of Colchester. This will enable a cohesive, comprehensive and legible active travel infrastructure network to be delivered.

In addition to new policy and guidance updates, there are 3 key themes that support and highlight the need for active travel infrastructure. These are travel patterns and habits, health and responding to the climate emergency. These are set out below.

TRAVEL PATTERNS

The Colchester Borough Travel to Work Patterns (2015) was produced, based on Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2011 Census data and shows where and how people travel to work by either rural or urban workplace zones. The document highlighted that the city at that time was quite self-contained with 69% of employees that live in Colchester travel to work in Colchester by either a car or a van.

The 2021 Office for National Statistics (ONS) census data, which was still in the pandemic recovery phase, highlights that 47% of employees travel by either car or a van with only 11% travelling by active modes (2.5% by bicycle and 8.7% on foot).

The Colchester Future Transport Strategy results (July 2022), show that there is significant car use within the city over short distances which could be made by alternative modes to help relieve pressure and congestion on the growing road network. It demonstrates why active travel has so much potential opportunity in the

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city and why it is important to encourage more people to walk, wheel or cycle, whether it be for trips to work, school, college, shopping or leisure.

The future transport strategy states about 20% of us travel 2km or less to work by car and 40% travel 5km or less. Edge of town residential areas are continuing to produce the highest car use for commuting.

CLIMATE

In 2019, Colchester City Council declared a climate emergency. Promoting active travel not only helps with people's health and wellbeing but it is also environmentally friendly. If every household changed just one short car journey per week, to travel via an active mode, it would help save multiple thousands of tonnes of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2) and CO_2 emissions helping to tackle climate change and improve air quality throughout the city.

The Transport Decarbonisation Plan (2021) and the Net Zero Strategy (2021) nationally sets milestones for journeys in towns and cities of 50% journeys walked or cycled by 2030 and every place in the UK will have its own net zero emission transport network before 2050.

> *About 60% of car trips are less than 3km (2miles), with 45% of car trips to work under 1.5km (1mile); this is a 15-20 minute walking distance. About 36% of trips are under 5km (3miles) and 59% under 10km (6miles) which suggest that sustainable & active modes of travel must be main pillars of the forward strategy in order to tackle/improve these three agendas. (National Travel Survey 2021)*

HEALTH

There is now significant evidence which proves the direct links and significant benefits of physical activity for health, both physically and mentally. It can help to prevent and manage over 20 chronic conditions and diseases, including some cancers, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and depression. Even a minimum amount of physical activity is better than doing nothing; and using modes of active travel can contribute towards the Chief Medical Officers' recommended 150 minutes of physical activity for adults each week, which provides significant benefits for health and wellbeing. By becoming more active throughout the day people can easily achieve these recommended activity levels.

Unfortunately, the UK population is around 20% less active now than in the 1960s and if the current trajectory continues, it will be 35% less active by 2030. Physical inactivity is one of the leading risk factors for non-communicable disease mortality (cardiovascular diseases [heart attacks and stroke], chronic respiratory diseases [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease COPD and asthma] and cancers). People who are insufficiently active have a 20% to 30% increased risk of death compared to

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people who are sufficiently active. Physical inactivity is associated with 1 in 6 deaths in the UK and is estimated to cost the UK in excess of £10 billion annually (including £1 billion to the NHS alone) (Health Matters 2016).

People with disabilities or long-term health conditions are twice as likely not to be active enough for good health and one in four people would be more active if advised by a healthcare professional. Quality inclusive active travel infrastructure could remove any potential barriers for the remaining three in four people to be more physically active, which is a unique opportunity to increase physical activity for all.

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3. National Context

Climate and Transport Strategy Context

In December 2015, the UK joined 195 countries in signing an historic global deal to tackle climate change. The UK has long-term, legally-binding targets to bring greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050.

The Governments **Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener** (October 2021) sets out policies and proposals for decarbonising all sectors of the UK economy to meet the net zero target by 2050. The strategy recognises the importance of the planning system to common challenges like combating climate change and supporting sustainable growth. The Strategy aims to increase the share of trips taken by public transport cycling and walking, making these modes the natural first choice for all who can take them. It recognises that as more journeys are cycled or walked, the carbon, air quality, noise and congestion benefits will be complemented by significant improvements in public health and wellbeing.

The Governments **Transport Decarbonisation Plan: Decarbonising Transport A Better, Greener Britain** (2021) sets out the governments commitments and the actions needed to decarbonise the entire transport system in the UK and includes the wider benefits net zero transport can deliver.

The Government's first **Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy** (CWIS1) was published in April 2017. It aimed to 'make cycling and walking the natural choices for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey'. It stated, 'we want more people to have access to safe, attractive routes for cycling and walking by 2040'.

The Government published '**Gear Change: a bold vision for cycling and walking**' in 2020. The plan set out a vision for cycling and walking in England, recognising that to make England an active travel nation, '*we need to take action to tackle the main barriers. We need to attract people to active travel by building better quality infrastructure, making streets better for everyone, and we need to make sure people feel safe and confident cycling. To deliver this, we need to ensure active travel is embedded in wider policy making.*.'

The actions to achieve this were grouped under four themes: Better streets for cycling and people; putting cycling and walking at the heart of transport, place-making and health policy; Empowering and encouraging local authorities; and enabling people to cycle and protect them when they cycle.

The second **Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy** (CWIS2) was published in July 2022 and covers the period from April 2021 to March 2025. The aims and targets in CWIS1, alongside the vision set out in Gear Change, informed a revised set of objectives to:

- Increase the percentage of short journeys in towns and cities that are walked or cycled.
- Increase walking.
- Double cycling.
- Increase the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 who usually walk to school.

Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20 'Cycle infrastructure design' was published in July 2020 and provides guidance on delivering high quality, cycle infrastructure including:

- Planning for cycling
- Space for cycling within highways
- Transitions between carriageways, cycle lanes and cycle tracks
- Junctions and crossing
- Cycle parking and other equipment.

Active Travel England (ATE) was established in July 2020 with the overall objective to enable achievement of the vision set out in the governments walking and cycling action plan, 'Gear Change'. The strategic aims of ATE are to increase levels of walking and cycling in towns and cities by:

- Creating better streets and networks for cycling and walking that are built to the 'key design principles' as set out in Gear Change and Local Transport Note 1/20.
- Putting walking and cycling at the heart of transport, place-making, and health policy so travelling without a car is easy and accessible utilising a long-term walking and cycling programme and budget.

Active Travel England became an executive agency of the Department for Transport (DfT) in 2022 and act as a statutory consultee in the planning system and will review active travel provision in all major planning applications (developments that meet the following minimum thresholds 150 residential units; 7,500m2 commercial area; or site area of over 5ha).

Active Travel England have prepared a planning application assessment toolkit to be used by local planning authorities in conjunction with applicants. In addition to the toolkit, Active Travel England have published a Standing Advice Note for Active Travel and Sustainable Development (July 2023) and a Development management procedural note for local planning authorities (July 2023).

The Government's **National Design Guide** was updated in January 2021 and sets out characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates how well designed places can be achieved in practice. It sets out ten characteristics of well-designed places, which includes movement, and states that patterns of movement for people are integral to well-designed places.

National Planning Policy

Paragraph 8 of the **National Planning Policy Framework** (NPPF) makes clear that mitigating and adapting to climate change is a core planning objective. To be in conformity with the NPPF, local development plans should reflect this principle, ensuring that planning policy clearly and comprehensively deals with climate change mitigation and adaption.

Section 9 of the NPPF (paragraphs 104-113) 'Promoting Sustainable Transport' is relevant to this SPD. The NPPF (para 106) states that planning policies should provide for attractive and well-designed walking and cycling networks with supporting facilities such as secure cycle parking. It states that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan making and development proposals so that opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport are identified and pursued; and so that patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes and contribute to making high quality places (para 104).

4. Local Context

In 2008 Colchester was designated as a Cycling Town following Cycling Demonstration Town work. This work showed that for a modal shift to occur three aspects need to be considered; these were infrastructure, training and marketing. The project enabled the Council, working in partnership with Essex County Council (ECC), to improve the then town (now city) cycle network, increase the number of cycle parking spaces and deliver several training and promotional campaigns.

The **Colchester Cycling Delivery Strategy**, adopted by Colchester City Council as SPD in 2012, was created to provide guidance and support this work. Over the years it has been used as guidance for many of the infrastructure changes and updates to the current networks. It was also used to inform the ECC Colchester Cycling Action Plan and the Colchester Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). **This Active Travel SPD will replace the Colchester Cycling Delivery Strategy SPD.**

Colchester Local Plan

This SPD aligns with the Councils adopted policies in the Local Plan, expands upon the existing planning policy on the provision of appropriate infrastructure requirements contained within the Local Plan; as well as supporting future initiatives, including for example, the emerging City Centre Masterplan.

The **Colchester Local Plan** is in two sections. Section 1 provides a shared strategic policy context and was adopted in February 2021. Section 2 of the Local Plan was adopted in July 2022 and provides the policy framework, site allocations and development management policies for the borough. The most relevant Local Plan policies to this SPD are summarised below.

Policy SP7: Place Shaping Principles – which requires all new development to reflect a number of place shaping principles including creating 'well-connected places that prioritise the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport services above use of the private car'.

Policy SG7: Infrastructure Delivery and Impact Mitigation – requires all new development to be supported by, and have good access to, all necessary infrastructure. It sets out that 'Permission will only be granted if it can be demonstrated that there is sufficient appropriate infrastructure capacity to support the development or that such capacity will be delivered by the proposal'. It also states 'Where a development proposal requires additional infrastructure capacity, to be deemed acceptable, mitigation measures must be agreed with the Local Planning Authority and the appropriate infrastructure provider.'

Policy ENV3: Green Infrastructure – states that the 'Local Planning Authority will aim to protect, enhance and deliver a comprehensive green infrastructure network comprising strategic green links ..' It seeks to protect and enhance the existing network and to secure the delivery of new green infrastructure where deficiencies and gaps are identified. It states the Local Planning Authority will 'seek opportunities

from future developments, where appropriate, to improve the connectivity between the Colchester Orbital route, new developments and the wider countryside.'

Policy PP1: Generic Infrastructure and Mitigation Requirements – which, in addition to site specific requirements, requires all proposals to make contributions to the cost of infrastructure improvements as required and supported by up-to-date evidence from appropriate sources. In addition, proposals must as relevant, address a number of borough wide requirements including 'safe pedestrian access from the site to existing footways to enhance connectivity'.

Policy DM1: Health and Wellbeing – which requires all development to be designed to help promote healthy and active lifestyles including through 'providing a healthy living environment where healthy lifestyles can be promoted including green space and creating attractive opportunities for activities including walking, cycling, horse riding and formal sport, as well as clearly seeking to improve opportunities to increase levels of physical activity within the community.'

Policy DM20: Promoting Sustainable Transport and Changing Travel Behaviour – seeks 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.

Policy DM21: Sustainable Access to Development – states that 'All new developments should seek to enhance accessibility for sustainable modes of transport.' To achieve this, proposals for development should:

   i.   Give priority to the movement of people walking and cycling;
   ii. Create safe, secure, convenient and attractive 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, or as a minimum the ability to easily introduce such facilities in the future;
   vii. Ensuring accessibility for those with impaired mobility; and
   viii. Accommodate the efficient delivery of goods and services.

Policy DM22: Parking – contains requirements for secure cycle parking to be provided. The Essex **Parking Standards: Design and Good Practice document** was published in 2009 and adopted by Colchester Borough Council as SPD in 2012. This document, which is currently being updated, includes information on the quantity and quality of cycle parking required in new developments as well as location and layout.

Essex Transport Policy

The **Essex Cycling Strategy** was published in November 2016. This strategy aims to encourage Essex residents, workers and visitors to enjoy the health benefits of cycling; it acts as the over-arching policy framework to enable, provide and promote cycling in Essex.

The **Essex Walking Strategy** was published in October 2021. This strategy is a response to the challenges and opportunities of walking in Essex. It outlines in detail the steps being taken to encourage walking at present and the direction that will be taken in the future.

The **Colchester Cycling Action Plan (CCAP)** was published by Essex County Council in January 2018 as part of a commitment in the Essex Cycling Strategy to create Cycling Action Plans for every district. The CCAP aims to:

- Identify how cycling levels could be increased in the city area.
- Enable any funding for new cycling schemes in Colchester to be prioritised.
- Create a useable, high-quality cycle network.
- Create opportunities to increase recreational cycling in Colchester.

The **Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)** was developed in 2018. This plan aims to see the introduction of new walking, wheeling and cycling networks making it easier and safer for people to walk and cycle in our city. Key outputs of the LCWIP include:

- A network plan for walking, wheeling and cycling which identifies preferred routes and core zones for further route development;
- A prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment; and
- A report which sets out the underlying analysis carried out and provides a narrative which supports the identified improvements and network.

The [Colchester Transport Strategy](#), published in July 2022, contains a vision 'To transform Colchester into a place which prioritises active and safe sustainable travel to bring about health, environmental and economic benefits.' The Future Transport Strategy focuses on the type of journey – short, medium and long distance. This is achieved through creating zones: Zone 1 (City Centre); Zone 2 (Wider City Area); Zone 3 (Borough Boundary); and Zone 4 (Strategic Corridors).

5. Active Travel Infrastructure in Colchester

The Colchester City Council area is varied and encompasses a diverse range of places with unique characteristics. The urban area of Colchester includes the city centre and the surrounding built up areas, identified in the Local Plan as North, South, East and West (including Stanway). The Local Plan also identifies Sustainable Settlements. Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe are the largest of the Sustainable Settlements and provide essential services. These areas are surrounded by other villages and the rural hinterland.

Within the urban areas of the city of Colchester, active travel infrastructure comprises networks of footways, public footpaths and cycle routes. The quality of these routes varies in terms of segregation, widths, continuity and surfacing. Cycle route provision includes:

- Traffic free routes;
- Shared walking and cycle routes with varying levels of segregation;
- Infrastructure adjacent to and/or on the carriageway;
- Signed on-road routes.

The Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network, which includes public footpaths and bridleways, provides links across the Colchester City Council urban and rural areas. The [PRoW Interactive Map | Essex County Council (essexhighways.org)](essexhighways.org) provides more detail.

Cycle networks are less well established in other urban areas (e.g. Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe) and in the rural areas. National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 1 and 51 run through the city linking Colchester to Tiptree and Harwich to Oxford. The Colchester Orbital provides a circular route around the city following Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and links with cycle routes wherever possible.

Although much of the formal walking and cycling network is focused on the Colchester urban area, quality active travel infrastructure is important across the city-wide area, to link residents to their destinations as well as providing active travel routes for leisure and recreation. Therefore, the principles set out in this SPD relate to the whole of the Colchester City area.

In rural areas, it will be important to take into account the differing speed limits that exist and ensure that the most appropriate infrastructure is delivered. Country lanes are part of our rural environment, but the volume and speed of traffic, and the presence of heavy lorries, can make them uninviting and intimidating. The opportunities for specific active travel requirements of the rural communities can be identified through partnership working with the Parish and Town Councils and where appropriate may be considered through Neighbourhood Plans.

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6. The elements needed to encourage active travel

If a place is designed to support and encourage active travel, more people are likely to travel by active modes for some of their journeys. Neighbourhoods should be designed so that facilities for daily essentials and recreation are within easy reach. Good onward connections through walking and cycle networks and public transport should be provided to enable travel further afield.

This SPD supports the 'key design principles' set out by the Governments Walking and Cycling Plan Gear Change; the '10 principles of Active Design' set out by Sport England; and the 10 Healthy Streets Indicators by Healthy Streets.

Encouraging walking, wheeling or cycling is not just about infrastructure, although it is an important element. Providing quality active travel routes and parking at origin and destination will only go some way to encouraging the use of active travel modes. Encouraging adults, and the next generation of adults, to make active travel their preferred mode of transport will also be achieved through engagement with local communities, training and promotion.

The following elements should be considered, where relevant, as part of any new development proposal:

- **Provision of Good Quality Infrastructure in New Developments**
- **Improvements to Existing Infrastructure**
- **Cycle and Wheel Parking**
- **Other Sustainable Travel Measures, Promotion and Community Projects**

These elements are outlined in more detail below.

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Provision of Good Quality Infrastructure in New Developments

Plan to accommodate active travel infrastructure to create an active sustainable development from the outset.

Local Plan Policy DM21: Sustainable Access to Development requires that all new developments '*should seek to enhance accessibility for sustainable modes of transport.*'

All new developments that are expected to increase the number of movements to and from the site will be required to provide quality active travel infrastructure, on the site itself and provide links to the surrounding network where appropriate linking the development to key local amenity destinations.

People will naturally choose a method of travel that is convenient, reliable, quick and safe. If this is the case for active modes of travel then more people are likely to use them, increasing physical activity, reducing congestion and improving air quality.

The design of active travel routes and infrastructure is key to facilitating the change in how a community travel. If the active routes between origins and destinations are safe, continuous, direct and attractive to use, this will encourage more people to consider using them.

> **Walking, cycling and wheeling share many similarities including many of the barriers that impact on them being used as a mode of travel. However, there are also differences between them for design purposes and the distinct needs should be taken into account when designing infrastructure. Improving conditions for one active mode should not be at the expense of another.**

This will be achieved by ensuring all new active travel infrastructure is:

- **Accessible for all** – coherent; direct; continuous; and inclusive
- **Safe and Secure** – consideration of natural surveillance; lighting; well-designed routing; and personal security.
- **Comfortable** – e.g. adequate surfacing; well maintained; adequate widths; quality of the surrounding environment; seating (as rest points).
- **Attractive** – attractive public realm will encourage use.

'Accessible for All'
Active travel infrastructure should be coherent, direct, safe and accessible for all users. LTN1/20 refers to the importance of accessibility for all as a requirement that should always be considered in relation to the principles representing the core requirements for people wishing to travel by cycle or on foot.

- To encourage use, infrastructure should provide the most direct route between origin and destinations, making it the most attractive mode for shorter journeys.

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- Routes should also where possible follow desire lines, minimise detours and be continuous (with no gaps in the provision of infrastructure). Routes within a new development should link with existing and proposed pedestrian and cycle routes outside of the development area providing onward connections to key destinations. Proposed routes include those routes shown on the Essex County Council Colchester Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and any refresh of this map.
- To ensure routes are accessible for all users, routes should be step-free and uncluttered. Unnecessary barriers should not be installed. Where barriers are required, they should be of a design to enable access for all intended users including buggies, wheelchairs, adapted bikes and cargo bikes.
- Severance can be a major obstacle in many parts of the city. Severance can be caused by busy roads, railway lines, rivers as well as large open areas that are difficult to cross. Where a route needs to cross a road, crossing facilities should be well-designed and on desire lines, and allow for direct crossing opportunities.
- Routes should be legible, easy to find and easy to follow. Signage and wayfinding should be continuous and legible providing information on key destinations. Signage can also act as a promotional tool to highlight the existence of walking and cycling routes and shortcuts.

'Safe and Secure'

Active travel infrastructure should be designed to be safe, and perceived to be safe, if it is to be inclusive and support active travel for all.

- Routes should be designed to encourage natural surveillance, and where appropriate lighting should be provided.
- LTN1/20 refers to the importance of inclusive design. Accessibility should run through the core design principles and designers should always aim to provide infrastructure that caters for the broadest range of people.

'Comfortable'

- Where possible, pedestrians, cyclists and traffic should be segregated. The appropriate type of segregation will be dependent on the location and the volume and flow of traffic. Active travel routes should be constructed to appropriate widths. More information is available in LTN1/20.
- Surfacing should be level, smooth and well maintained. Adequate drainage should also be ensured to avoid standing water.

'Attractive'

The attractiveness of the route and its surroundings will affect whether users choose to use it and choose active travel as a means of transport. Infrastructure and the surrounding environment should therefore be well-designed to encourage use.

Active travel infrastructure can also help to deliver public spaces that are well designed and finished so that people want to spend time using them.

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Within larger developments and communities, creating neighbourhoods where speed limits are low, or where through traffic and 'rat runs' are discouraged on residential streets through filtered permeability can also encourage the use of active travel as a means of transport.

Active Travel Provision around Schools

Large scale developments where a school is proposed should consider the location of that school within the new community to ensure it is accessible and central to the local community (along with other key local amenities depending on the scale of the development).

All schools should be located within largely traffic free 'school zones'. Of prime importance is the area outside the main pupil entrance, which must be entirely traffic free. Such pedestrianised public areas provide a space for children, parents and younger siblings to congregate safely at the beginning and end of the school day and foster a sense of community. Such spaces should be well connected to walking, cycling and bus routes that make sustainable modes of travel attractive. In addition to the environmental benefits, there is a clear link between active travel and health and well-being.

Further Guidance

This section outlines the design guidance that form the basis for delivering good quality active travel infrastructure in new developments and should be designed in accordance with the principles laid out in the guidance.

For more detailed design guidance, the following guidance documents and any updates should be taken into account:

- National Design Guide
- Essex Design Guide
  - New Schools
  - School Design Guidance
  - Health Impact Assessments
- DfT Inclusive Mobility: A guide to Best Practice
- CIHT Planning for Walking
- Sport England's Active Design Guidance
  - Foundation Principle
  - 3 principles around Active Travel (Walkable communities, Providing connected active travel routes & Mixing uses and co-locating facilities)
- Healthy Streets 10 Indicators
- Active Travel England guidance notes
- LTN1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design
- Manual for Streets
- Sustrans traffic-free routes and greenways design guide

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Improvements to Existing Infrastructure

Safeguarding and improving the existing active travel network in Colchester

Local Plan Policy DM20: Promoting Sustainable Transport and Changing Travel Behaviour encourages development that reduces the need to travel and improvements to sustainable transport to provide better connections between communities and their needs. It states this will be achieved by safeguarding existing and proposed routes including for walking, cycling and green infrastructure. It also states '*New development will be expected to contribute towards maintaining continuity and enhancing these connections where appropriate*.'

The existing active travel infrastructure is described in Chapter 5 and consists of a network of footways and cycle routes across the Colchester area, in addition to the wider Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network and the Colchester Orbital.

Much of the existing cycle infrastructure is focussed on the urban area of Colchester with a network of on and off-road routes. However, many of the dedicated cycle routes are unconnected and there are a gaps and barriers along the network that impact on the continuity of routes. In addition, many current routes in the city were constructed a number of years ago and do not meet current LTN1/20 standards or may require maintenance or improvement to bring them up to current standards and encourage use.

It is important that the existing active travel network is safeguarded and that gaps in provision and any improvements to the network are, where appropriate, delivered as part of new development proposals to create a coherent network that is accessible by all, safe and secure, comfortable, and attractive and thereby encourages future use.

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Cycle Parking

Provide cycle parking that is convenient, covered, safe and secure

The provision of safe, convenient and secure cycle parking will support the development of the cycle network in Colchester, enabling and encouraging residents, employees and visitors to use bicycles and wheeled vehicles and safely store them. New developments will be expected to incorporate cycle parking both at the point of origin (normally a dwelling) and at destinations to link into current infrastructure.

Local Plan Policy DM22: Parking requires that '*secure cycle parking should be incorporated into all residential development proposals and should be accessible, convenient to use, well laid out and used exclusively for cycle parking*.'

Cycle parking needs to be located as near to the entrance of a building as possible, under surveillance, and be safely, directly and easily accessible from the surrounding cycle and wheel network. Well located cycle and wheel parking, conveniently close to the destination, plays a significant role in minimising journey times.

Cycle Parking in New Development

Developments including residential development across different typologies, flats, offices, leisure facilities and other places of work, should provide long-stay secure, covered cycle parking facilities for residents and users of the development. Cycle parking facilities should be convenient to access (at grade or via a ramp) and where possible should be integrated into the building. If external storage is provided then these must be convenient, covered, secure and overlooked.

In addition to provision for long-stay users (eg residents and staff) all development should include secure, covered visitor cycle parking close to visitor entrances. In larger developments with a number of units, this parking should be provided in separate units across the site close to all entrances.

Key principles:

- All cycle parking should be well signed.
- Charging provision for electric bikes should also be considered, particularly at longer stay parking.
- In designing cycle parking, consideration should be given to non-standard and inclusive cycles that may be used, such as, cargo bikes, tricycles, bicycles with trailers, recumbent bikes, wheel-chair friendly bikes and scooters. For example, leaving a larger gap at the end of a row of Sheffield stands and offsetting further from the wall will allow larger bikes and trikes to make use.
- There should be adequate cycle parking to meet demand. The appropriate quantity and type of cycle parking differs between locations.
- Schools should have sufficient areas dedicated to cycle and wheel parking within their premises. Existing schools without these facilities could benefit from having this planned into future infrastructure to enhance their active travel offering.

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What is '**Secure**' Cycle Parking

Consider:
- Location of the cycle parking within the property or development.
- Levels of visibility and lighting.
- Quality and security of cycle parking stands and locks – embed cycle parking equipment in the ground, use tamper proof fixings.
- Is the facility open to the public or restricted to selected users.
- Consider secure access to parking compounds (eg by app or fob) for residents, employees and those parking for longer periods.

Further information can be found on the Secured by Design website: https://www.securedbydesign.com/ which is the official police security initiative that works to improve the security of buildings and their immediate surroundings.

Further guidance and standards can also be found in LTN1/20 and in Secured by Design Homes (2023) and the Bicycle Association - Standards for Public Cycle Parking (June 2021).

Cycle Parking in the Public Realm

Provision of cycle parking will be encouraged across the City Council area. Within existing residential neighbourhoods where residents don't have anywhere to store their bikes, the provision of secure, covered cycle parking in appropriate locations will be supported where a need is identified locally.

Provision of cycle parking within larger car parks in the city centre and beyond will also be encouraged.

Further Guidance

Guidance on the quantity of cycle parking, in addition to further information on standards and design guidance, can be found in the Essex Parking Standards.

LTN1/20 provides further guidance on the design of cycle parking and this, and any future guidance, should be taken into account.

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Sustainable Travel, Promotion and Community Projects

Additional considerations to encourage the use of active travel for journeys in and around the city

In addition to specific active travel infrastructure, there are other sustainable travel elements that can complement the infrastructure and encourage the use of active travel modes. These include shared transport; integration with public transport; travel plans; promotion and training; and engagement and community projects. Further information can be found on the Colchester City Council website and on the Essex County Council Sustainable Travel webpage.

Shared transport

Shared transport includes car clubs, shared bikes, e-bikes and e-cargo bikes and mobility hubs. Further information on shared travel can be found on the CoMoUK website and information on shared travel in Colchester can be found on the Colchester City Council website.

Car clubs allow users to access a vehicle without owning one and can offer a flexible, cost effective alternative to private first or second car ownership. Car clubs therefore have potential to have a significant impact on reducing car ownership when provided in or close to residential developments, particularly in city centre locations. They provide socially inclusive, low emission mobility which helps to break dependency on private car ownership and enhance use of active travel modes. The inclusion of a car club within a new residential site can also be an attractive feature for prospective residents.

Local Plan Policy DM22 states that in appropriate circumstances, namely urban locations '…*parking standards may be relaxed or car free development may be acceptable in order to reflect accessibility by non-car modes, and/or to enhance the character of sensitive locations. The use/establishment of a car club may be required*.'

Colchester's first all-electric car club vehicle launched in 2023 and is located in Priory Street Car Park in the city centre. This is the beginning of the provision of a network of car club cars across Colchester that will be rolled out over the next few years.

The provision of a car club space, recharging infrastructure and financial support to provide vehicles for a period of time until established, plus marketing and incentivisation of membership, should be considered as part of residential development proposals, particularly in urban areas. Guidelines will be produced to support the provision of car clubs including information on the type and scale of development that could support a car club.

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Further information can be found in various guidance including the DfT Guidance
Car Clubs: local authority toolkit and through the national charity for shared transport
CoMoUK.

Bike Share is any scheme where bikes, e-bikes, cargo or e-cargo bikes are available to multiple users. This can include public bike share schemes or other forms such as workplace pool bikes or community led shared bike schemes. Benefits of bike share schemes include encouraging lapsed cyclists back into cycling, providing a sustainable means of transporting children or bulky/heavy goods, providing access to a range of sustainable transport without the cost of ownership and interchange with public transport.

New development proposals could consider providing space or support to help facilitate further Shared Bike schemes where appropriate.

> The City Centre shared eBike Hub, located in the Secure Bike Park in Portal Precinct (off Sir Isaac's Walk) has a range of different electric bikes available on a pay as you go basis. The bikes are available to book by the hour. Further information can be found on the Colchester City Council website and on the Cycle Colchester website.

Mobility Hubs provide co-location of a variety of transport facilities that can extend travel choice beyond the private car, promoting active and sustainable travel. Mobility hubs bring together various forms of shared transport, public transport and active transport in spaces designed to improve the public realm.

Larger developments could consider a mobility hub approach which co-locates mobility options and other community facilities. This could include access to a range of electric vehicles including e-cars, e-bikes, and e-cargo bikes, in order to encourage use for longer journeys whilst offering a viable alternative to personal car use and ownership. Further guidelines will be produced to support the provision of mobility hubs and when and where these may be appropriate.

Integration with public transport

Many journeys are short, and the entire trip can be made by active modes. Some longer journeys can combine active travel with public transport, thus reducing dependency on the private car. To encourage integration with public transport, bus stops, interchanges and stations require high quality active travel routes to them that are well signposted. As with other infrastructure, routes should be as direct as possible, well-lit and well maintained.

Bus stops should be designed so that they can be easily accessed by people of all abilities. The design of the space around existing and new bus stops should be

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considered when designing active travel routes so that any potential conflict between users is minimised.

Bus stops along main public transport routes that are well connected to the cycle network may benefit from dedicated cycle parking. Any parking provided should be secure to allow for varying length of stay and a variety of different sized bikes and should not restrict the space available for other users.

Travel Plans

Travel plans aim to promote the use of more sustainable modes of travel. They are long term management strategies for integrating proposals for sustainable transport into the planning process. They are based on evidence of the anticipated transport impacts of development and set measures to promote and encourage sustainable travel (including active modes).

Travel Plans can be useful tools to help people make active choices in their daily travel. Travel Plans should provide information and support for new residents and employees to help them find local active travel routes and facilities, and information on schemes and any discounts available.

Local Plan Policy DM21: Sustainable access to development requires '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.' The Policy also requires 'All new residential developments and schools will be required to produce a Travel Plan or provide Residential Travel Packs in accordance with Essex County Council Travel Plan Framework guidance.'

- Residential Travel Plan – A document containing a mixture of measures to encourage sustainable travel by residents and visitors to and from the site alongside discouragements to driving.
- Business Travel Plan – maybe required if the development will have a significant impact on the local road network and/or if there are existing transport, infrastructure, congestion or pollution problems.
- Travel Plan Co-ordinator – A permanent member of staff with the appropriate skills, budgetary provision and resources to produce and update the Travel Plan and manage the continued implementation of the Travel Plan.

Detailed guidance can be found on the ECC planning and sustainable travel website: https://www.essex.gov.uk/sustainable-travel. This includes guidance on residential travel plans, business travel plans and school travel plans.

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Travel Plans should be considered in parallel to development proposals and be readily integrated into the design and occupation of a new development rather than retrofitted after occupation; they should incorporate ambitious but achievable mode share targets and contain details of the monitoring process and what further measures will be required if the targets are not met.

Colchester Travel Plan Club was first formed in 2004 by local organisations to manage their demand for car parking and who were concerned about the impact of local traffic congestion on their business, the community and the environment. Since then, the Colchester Travel Plan Club has expanded its network of businesses and organisations committed to promoting active and sustainable travel. The Colchester Travel Plan Club offers experience and expertise in creating positive travel behaviour change, resources, ongoing support and benefits that can be passed on to staff.

Promotion and Training

In addition to infrastructure, working with communities to remove barriers and change perceptions about active travel is important. Provision of training and the marketing of active travel modes to illustrate the ease and benefits of using these modes of travel to make short journeys is important. New developments should provide a package of measures as part of their travel plans to encourage new residents, visitors and employees to use active travel modes. This could include:

- Maps showing the existing active travel networks in the area
- Specific marketing material for new developments
- Personalised travel planning
- Cycle training
- Led rides
- Cycle maintenance hubs and training
- Provision of discount vouchers for purchases or for bike hire
- Information on local support network including voluntary organisations such as Bike Kitchens

The Council can provide further advice on appropriate packages to suit individual development proposals.

Community Schemes and Projects

A big challenge to active travel is perception. Projects and schemes that promote active travel should take account of the needs of different members of the community and create local solutions that address and meet local community needs, enabling residents and local communities to help shape the way they interact with

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their local environment. However, this can only be achieved through meaningful engagement with residents and stakeholders to understand their wants and needs in this regard.

Working and engaging with communities and stakeholders is the best way to understand their needs and the issues where they live. Identifying key gaps in existing local active travel networks and areas where new infrastructure and other projects would benefit that community and encourage active travel as part of everyday life are important.

Similarly, active travel projects should be promoted in local communities, particularly those that are local to those communities. Travel Plans could consider introducing community schemes and projects, in partnership with those communities, to further encourage the use of active travel as part of everyday life.

7. Planning Application Expectations

The Council expects applicants to demonstrate how the active travel principles set out in this SPD including the provision of good quality infrastructure, improvements to existing infrastructure, cycle and wheel parking proposals and other sustainable travel measures, have been incorporated into the design of the development proposal. Where relevant, compliance with the principles set out in this SPD should be shown on the relevant application plans, e.g. the location and type of cycle parking.

Applicants must submit the Climate Emergency Checklist in support of their application. This Checklist covers the issues included in this SPD, the Climate Change SPD and the Biodiversity SPD. It is a means for applicants, Development Management officers and Planning Committee Members to understand the measures that have been incorporated into a development proposal to ensure compliance with the three Climate Emergency SPDs and the policies they build upon, and to demonstrate that they have been considered.

Opportunities to promote active travel modes should be identified at the earliest stages of development proposals.

Developer Contributions

Developer contributions is a collective term mainly used to refer to Planning Obligations (commonly referred to as Section 106 or S106 obligations after S106 of the Planning Act) and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). At present Colchester City Council does not charge a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The Colchester Local Plan contains policies setting out contributions expected from development. These policies (Section 1 Policy SP5 Infrastructure and Connectivity; and Section 2 Policy SG7 Infrastructure Delivery and Impact Mitigation) ensure new development supports delivery of required infrastructure.

Essex County Council (ECC) is the Highway Authority for the Colchester City area, and Colchester City Council consults ECC on planning proposals that affect the highway network. ECC provide advice on the scope of obligations for highway infrastructure works where it is considered that there is a need to mitigate the impact of new development on the highway network. Development proposals need to mitigate their own impact through the provision of appropriate measures which may include footway and cycle links, crossings and contributions to car clubs. The Essex County Council 'Developer's Guide to Infrastructure Contributions' provides details of the impacts that development may have on ECC services and infrastructure.

The principles outlined in the previous sections provide the basis for ensuring that good quality active travel infrastructure is proposed and provided as part of new development. In addition to the provision of infrastructure, contributions where appropriate towards active travel infrastructure on site as part of the development proposal, and a contribution where appropriate towards provision or enhancement of facilities off site to ensure that the development is linked to the existing walking and

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cycling networks may be required. The precise level of any contribution will depend on the size of the development and the infrastructure required.

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Further Reading and References

Local Plans, Strategies and Guidance

- ☐ Colchester Local Plan https://www.colchester.gov.uk/local-plan/
- ☐ Colchester Cycling Delivery Strategy (January 2012) https://www.colchester.gov.uk/info/cbc-article/?catid=adopted-guidance&id=KA-02222
- ☐ Colchester Transport Strategy (July 2022) https://www.essexhighways.org/uploads/colchester%20future%20transport%20strategy%20-%20march%202022.pdf
- ☐ Colchester Orbital https://www.walkcolchester.org.uk/the-colchester-orbital
- ☐ Shared travel in Colchester (CCC website) https://www.colchester.gov.uk/sustainability/green-shared-travel-hubs/
- ☐ Essex County Council: Essex Cycling Programme https://www.essexhighways.org/getting-around/cycling/cycle-programme
- ☐ Draft LCWIP Summary: https://www.essexhighways.org/uploads/lcwip-summary-august-2022.pdf
    - ▪ Essex Cycling Strategy (November 2016)
    - ▪ Colchester Cycling Action Plan (CCAP) (January 2018)
    - ▪ Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) (2018)
    - ▪ LCWIP Summary for Basildon, Braintree, Chelmsford & Colchester (August 2022)
- ☐ Essex Design Guide https://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/
- ☐ Essex Walking Strategy (October 2021) https://www.essexhighways.org/uploads/road-strategies/walkingstrategy_october2021_final-web.pdf
- ☐ Vehicle Parking Standards https://www.colchester.gov.uk/info/cbc-article/?catid=adopted-guidance&id=KA-02222
- ☐ ECC Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions (Revised 2020) Planning advice and guidance: Guidance for developers — Essex County Council
- ☐ Essex County Council Sustainable travel website https://www.essex.gov.uk/sustainable-travel

National Policy, Strategies and Guidance

- ☐ Government Net Zero Strategy Build Back Greener (October 2021) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/net-zero-strategy
- ☐ Government Transport Decarbonisation Plan: Decarbonising Transport A Better, Greener Britain (2021) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transport-decarbonisation-plan
- ☐ National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework—2
- ☐ DfT First Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (April 2017) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy
- ☐ DfT Gear change (2020) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-plan-for-england
- ☐ DfT Second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (July 2022) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-second-cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy
- ☐ Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20 'Cycle infrastructure design' (July 2020) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-120
- ☐ Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/07 'Traffic Calming' (March 2007) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/traffic-calming-ltn-107

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- ☐ Active Travel England (launched 2022) https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/active-travel-england
- ☐ Standing Advice Note for Active Travel and Sustainable Development https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/active-travel-england-sustainable-development-advice-notes (July 2023)
- ☐ Development management procedural note for local planning https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/active-travel-england-development-management (July 2023)
- ☐ Manual for Streets https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/manual-for-streets
- ☐ MHCLG National Design Guide 2021 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide
- ☐ DfT Inclusive Mobility; A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure (December 2021) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-mobility-making-transport-accessible-for-passengers-and-pedestrians
- ☐ CIHT Planning for Walking (March 2015) and Designing for Walking (March 2015)
- ☐ DfT Guidance Car clubs: local authority toolkit (April 2022) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/car-clubs-local-authority-toolkit
- ☐ Public Health England: Health matters (July 2016) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-getting-every-adult-active-every-day/health-matters-getting-every-adult-active-every-day
- ☐ Public Health England: Spatial Planning for Health (June 2017) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/729727/spatial_planning_for_health.pdf

Other Guidance and References

- ☐ CoMoUK: the national charity for shared transport https://www.como.org.uk/.
- ☐ Transport for New Homes: https://www.transportfornewhomes.org.uk/
- ☐ Sport England 'The 10 principles of Active Design' https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design
- ☐ Secured by Design https://www.securedbydesign.com/
- ☐ Bicycle Association - Standards for Public Cycle Parking (June 2021) https://www.bicycleassociation.org.uk/parkingstandard/
- ☐ Sustrans traffic-free routes and greenways design guide https://www.sustrans.org.uk/for-professionals/infrastructure/sustrans-traffic-free-routes-and-greenways-design-guide/

		Item
	Local Plan Committee	9
Colchester	**7 August 2023**	
Report of	**Sandra Scott, Place Strategy Manager**	01206 282975
Title	**Colchester Local Plan Review – Issues & Options**	
Wards affected	All wards affected	

1. Executive Summary

1.1 A Local Plan is a statutory requirement as outlined in Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The Local Plan contains policies to guide development by identifying a spatial strategy, site allocations for employment and housing development and seeks to protect the environment, land and buildings for certain uses to ensure delivery of sustainable communities.

1.2 The Local Plan Committee's primary focus is to oversee the production and adoption of a Local Plan for Colchester and ensure that it remains up to date. There is a statutory requirement for the Local Plan to be reviewed every 5 years, which in the case of Colchester means a new Local Plan will be required by February 2026. This report sets out Officer's thoughts on an iterative approach to Issues and Options and provides an initial, high-level programme for the Local Plan Review. An Engagement and Consultation Strategy has been prepared and, if approved, will be published on the Council's website to explain the approach to engagement and consultation for the Local Plan Review.

2. Recommended Decision

2.1 Members are asked to:

(i) agree the approach outlined to the Issues and Options engagement; and

(ii) agree the Engagement and Consultation Strategy appended to this Report as Appendix A.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

3.1 To enable Officers to progress with work on the Local Plan Review.

4. Alternative Options

4.1 The alternative is to publish a stand-alone Issues and Options document for a single consultation period, which is what was prepared for the adopted Local Plan and the Local Plan before that.

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5.   Background Information

5.1   Local Plan Committee considered a report at the June meeting, which included a reminder of the current position with the development plan and the further work needed to review the Local Plan. The development plan is at the heart of the planning system with a requirement set in law that planning decisions must be taken in line with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It is essential that plans are in place and kept up to date.

5.2   To be effective plans need to be kept up-to-date. The National Planning Policy Framework states policies in local plans and spatial development strategies, should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every 5 years, and should then be updated as necessary.

5.3   The Local Plan is underpinned by an extensive evidence base which provides the justification for the policy approach taken and is considered as part of the Independent Examination which all Local Plans are subject to, as part of the plan making Regulations.

5.4   Preparing an up-to-date Local Plan is a significant undertaking and the lead in time commences with the updating and gathering of evidence. The timing for review of the Colchester Plan stems from the Section 1 Local Plan as it is the plan which sets out the Strategic Policies for the area. A new Local Plan will therefore be required by February 2026, as indicated in the Local Development Scheme agreed by the Local Plan Committee in February 2023. The Local Development Scheme shows that initial document preparation including preparing the evidence base will take place from May – November 2023, the Issues and Options will be drafted July-November 2023 with consultation in November/ December 2023. However, since the Local Development Scheme was approved, Officers have been considering ways in which the Issues and Options could be approached differently to improve engagement in this early plan making stage. See below for further details.

5.5   The current Local Plan is in two parts with Section One shared with Tendring and Braintree District Council's as the North Essex Strategic Plan. Section Two provides the Colchester City Specific policies and development management policies. The shared Section One Plan includes the Broad area of growth for the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community (TCBGC). The Development Plan Document for the Garden Community has progressed and following consultation is due to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination imminently.

5.6   Consideration has been given to the need for the Local Plan Review to be in two sections as before. However, all matters linked to the Garden Community will be taken forward in the DPD. In addition to this the Section One Plan provides the strategic policy context across North Essex and sets requirements for housing and employment provision for the plan period, identified individually for each Local Authority Area. It is considered that there is no need for a shared plan to set these requirements. It has always been the case that evidence may be

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prepared jointly, particularly for shared strategic housing market areas and this will be explored again with the relevant neighboring authorities.

5.7 There will be an opportunity for the Local Plan review for both Colchester and Tendring to include common strategic policies which cover the issue of housing and job numbers to be delivered as part of the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community and the contribution which these will make to the housing requirements and provision in the next plan period. This can be explored through the plan making process with both authorities carrying out their own single Local Plan review. There is no specific justification known at this time for a shared plan or policies with Braintree and there is no particular added value identified in doing so with either authority in the next Plan making round. The consideration to the approach to the Local Plan Review and Issues and Options for Colchester are therefore based on one single Local Plan for the City area covering strategic policies, site allocations and development management policies for the next plan period.

5.8 However, if a need arose through the plan making process officers would reconsider the single plan approach. Reasons for doing this could include the promotion of a large scale development opportunity across the administrative border(s), or in light of national planning reform or issues raised through the duty to co-operate.

Issues and Options

5.9 Issues and Options consultations take place at an early stage in plan making and usually include a single document, which is consulted upon for 6 weeks and forms part of the Regulation 18 consultation. Issues and Options itself is not a statutory requirement. The statutory requirement (Regulation 18) is for a local planning authority to notify consultees of the subject of a local plan and invite them to make representations about what a local plan ought to contain (Often know as Preferred Options). Officers suggest that for this Local Plan Review we take a more iterative approach to engagement rather than produce a single Issues and Options document, between Autumn 2023 and Spring 2024. The benefits to this, are that it will be quicker to process continuous smaller engagement than one consultation; engagement can be fed back to the Local Plan Committee on a continuous and ongoing basis so Members have more meetings to absorb what is being said by stakeholders on different topics; and engagement can tie in with the development of the evidence base. An Engagement and Consultation Strategy (Appendix A) is a background paper to this report. If approved, it will be published on the Council's website to explain the approach to engagement and consultation for the Local Plan Review.

5.10 Officers consider that engagement could include the key themes of the green network and waterways; vision for the city; climate change mitigation and adaptation; Call for Sites; design and place; and health and wellbeing.

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5.11   Officers have already commenced work on a framework for the green network and waterways. The existing green network and waterways network has been mapped as an audit and baseline of the current location and condition of all types of green and blue spaces. The intention is to engage with stakeholders and local communities, including Town and Parish Councils, to enable them to provide an important local perspective on this evidence and to think about opportunities to enhance the green network and waterways through the Local Plan Review. If the Committee agree the suggested approach for the Issues and Options, Officers will publish the baseline green network and waterways map online and seek comments on whether it is correct, the condition of green spaces and waterways and opportunities to improve the network. These opportunities will then be considered alongside the sites submitted as part of the Call for Sites and the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy (a separate report is presented to this committee meeting providing information about the Local Nature Recovery Strategy). Officers consider that new housing allocations, which will be needed as part of the Local Plan Review, could facilitate new green spaces including creating better linkages between existing green spaces and waterways for the benefit of people's health and wellbeing and for wildlife.

5.12   The next stage of work will be a Call for Sites. This will include a call not just for housing and employment sites, but also sites for offsite biodiversity net gain (BNG) and green spaces. At a future meeting, the Local Plan Committee will be asked to approve the methodology for the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA).

5.13   Other engagement as part of an iterative Issues and Options, could include asking stakeholders for ideas on the vision for the city. This could be through an online tool where stakeholders can write as much or as little about the city they want to see in 15 years. Emerging work on climate change policies that could be applied across Essex could be shared online, asking stakeholders for their views on whether emerging draft policies go far enough or are too stringent. Officers would like to explore the potential for design codes as part of the Local Plan and would like to engage with the health sector to ensure that health and wellbeing is a key thread running through the Local Plan Review.

5.14   These are just some initial ideas, and more details will be presented to the next Local Plan Committee meeting. One of the benefits of an iterative Issues and Options engagement is linking this to the evidence base and allowing stakeholders to share their views on the evidence base as it emerges and as the plan is being drafted.

5.15   Officers intend to update the Local Plan Committee at each meeting on the progress with the Local Plan, including any Issues and Options engagement which has taken place. The engagement also allows for informal workshops/briefings with Members at each key stage. This will ensure that Members are kept informed of the views of stakeholders throughout the plan preparation process. Officers will also prepare an overview of the iterative Issues and Options engagement activities, including a summary of the headline issues and connections between themes.

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Evidence base

5.16   Local plans require a thorough and up to date evidence base. The table below
shows the evidence base that Officers suggest is needed for the Local Plan
Review and an indication of whether this could be undertaken in-house or
whether specialist consultants are needed. The table also suggests at which
stage in the plan making process the evidence will be needed. This table is
presented for information and will develop as work progresses on the Local Plan
Review.

Evidence	Purpose	Inhouse, consultants or hybrid	Timescale
Green network and waterways framework	To map the green network and waterways in the city and consider improvements to this as part of the spatial strategy	Inhouse	Baseline map prepared – publish for engagement mid-late 2023
Call for sites	To identify potential sites for green infrastructure, BNG, housing, employment	Inhouse	Mid-late 2023
Strategic Land Availability Assessment	To consider the suitability of all sites submitted by landowners/ developers	Inhouse	LPC to agree methodology late 2023 – SLAA to follow call for sites
Settlement boundary review	To review the boundaries of all settlements within the city and consider alongside the sites submitted as part of the call for sites. Combine with discussions with Parish/ Town Councils about neighbourhood planning.	Inhouse	Prepare alongside the SLAA
Housing needs assessment/ Strategic Housing Market Assessment	To establish the housing requirement & mix of housing required	Consultants	During preferred options preparation
Affordable housing/ housing mix	To establish and justify the affordable housing figure. To include housing mix – combine with above	Consultants	During preferred options preparation
Sustainability Appraisal (SA)	Legal requirement for all DPDs	Consultants - but could	Throughout plan preparation:

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Evidence	Purpose	Inhouse, consultants or hybrid	Timescale
		carry out scoping inhouse	Scoping late 2023/ early 2024 Draft SA at preferred options & SA at submission
Habitat Regulations Assessment	To confirm no adverse effects on the integrity of habitats sites	Consultants	Draft to support preferred options & final report at submission
Water Cycle Study	To demonstrate that water can be supplied, wastewater treated and development won't cause flooding	Consultants	During preferred options preparation
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	To identify areas at risk of flooding	Consultants – possibly ECC	During preferred options preparation
Employment study	To understand the amount and type of employment space needed in the plan period	Consultants	During preferred options preparation
Town centre & retail study	To understand the amount and type of retail space needed in the plan period	Consultants	During preferred options preparation
Transport Modelling	Transport impact of different options, links with Transport Strategy, LCWIP etc. Identification of mitigation measures.	ECC/Jacobs (cost)	During preferred options preparation
Infrastructure Delivery Strategy	To document the infrastructure required

Initial work- Infrastructure Audit | Inhouse or hybrid | Work has commenced on the infrastructure audit. Needed during preferred options preparation & updated before submission |
Viability assessment	To demonstrate that the submitted plan is viable	Consultants	During submission version plan preparation
GTAA	To identify the need for gypsy and traveller plots	Consultants – Essex wide	Work already underway
Energy and climate change	To justify policies and targets in relation to energy and climate change	ECC & consultants commissioned by ECC	ECC have commissioned evidence base & have commenced work on

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Evidence	Purpose	Inhouse, consultants or hybrid	Timescale
			model climate change policies to be applied across Essex
Health impact assessment	To consider the health impacts of the plan	Inhouse	Prepare a draft HIA during PO preparation Update and finalise before submission
Equality impact assessment	Update existing	Inhouse	Before submission

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

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

https://cbccrmdata.blob.core.windows.net/noteattachment/Equality%20Impact%20Assessment%20June%202017.pdf

7. Strategic Plan References

7.1 The current Local Plan provides a key strategic delivery vehicle for many Strategic Objectives in the Council's Strategic Plan (April 2023-April 2026). In particular the following Strategic Objectives are particularly relevant; Respond the Climate Emergency through policies which seek to conserve and enhance biodiversity; Improve health, wellbeing and happiness, through placemaking and provision of appropriate infrastructure; Deliver homes for those most in need, through housing targets, site allocations and policies providing for affordable housing and a mix of evidenced housing needs; and Grow our economy so everyone benefits, through policy seeking to provide and manage economic growth throughout existing and new communities.

8. Consultation

8.1 No consultation on matters in this report is required at this stage but future engagement and consultation will be undertaken at appropriate stages on preparation of evidence and plan making in accordance with the Planning Regulations and Statement of Community Involvement.

9. Publicity Considerations

9.1 None at this stage.

10. Financial implications

10.1 There is a significant financial implication in preparing a Local Plan. All evidence base documents that need to be prepared by consultants have an associated cost along with all consultation exercises and the eventual examination. An up to date local plan does however help avoid costly appeals.

11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

11.1 There are no specific health, wellbeing and community safety implications.

12. Health and Safety Implications

12.1 No direct implications.

13. Risk Management Implications

13.1 No direct implications.

14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

14.1 The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and has committed to being carbon neutral by 2030. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. These are economic, social and environmental objectives.

14.2 The Local Plan review will take account of any updated evidence and changes in legislation that help contribute towards achieving carbon neutral by 2030. Further consideration of future policy development on the environment, climate change, biodiversity, place making and active environments will seek opportunities towards Colchester becoming a greener city that is resilient to the climate change challenges.

Background papers

Appendix A- Engagement and Consultation Strategy

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Colchester Local Plan Review
Engagement and Consultation Strategy

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Contents

Introduction

This Engagement and Consultation Strategy outlines how we will engage and communicate with various stakeholders in order to help produce a new Local Plan for Colchester (the Local Plan Review). Details of this are set out in the sections on engagement and consultation on pages 8-12 below. The preceding sections set out the context for the Colchester Local Plan, and explain the background for the process and timing of the review.

Colchester's development plan

Local Plans are the key documents through which local planning authorities can set out a vision and framework for the future development of the area, engaging with their communities in doing so. Plans set out a vision and a framework for the future development of the area, addressing needs and opportunities in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure – as well as a basis for conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment, mitigating and adapting to climate change, and achieving well designed places.

The Local Plan provides a degree of certainty for communities, businesses and investors, and a framework for guiding decisions on individual planning applications. Local Plans are a key component of the planning system. They shape how land use and places will change and develop in the future. The current development plan for Colchester comprises:

- Section 1 Local Plan (adopted February 2021)

- Section 2 Local Plan (adopted July 2022)

- Tiptree Jam Factory DPD (adopted 2013)

- Essex Mineral Local Plan (2014)

- Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan (2017)

Neighbourhood Plans for:

- Myland and Braiswick;

- Boxted;

- Wivenhoe;

- West Bergholt;

- Eight Ash Green;

- Marks Tey;

- West Mersea;

- Tiptree.

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The section 1 Local Plan requires a DPD to be produced to provide more detail in relation to the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community (TCBGC). This is being produced jointly with Tendring District Council and is overseen by a Joint Committee.

Importance of an up to date development plan
The development plan is at the heart of the planning system with a requirement set in law that planning decisions must be taken in line with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It is essential that plans are in place and kept up to date.

Section 19(1B) - (1E) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets out that each local planning authority must identify their strategic priorities and have policies to address these in their development plan documents (taken as a whole).

The importance of having an up-to-date Local Plan cannot be overstated. Without a Local Plan to identify where and how the City and areas beyond should develop, planning applications are determined in accordance with national policy which does not provide the local context for Colchester. Without a Local Plan, Colchester would be at significant risk from speculative development. A Local Plan provides certainty of where development can be delivered sustainably across the City area.

To be effective plans need to be kept up-to-date. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states policies in local plans and spatial development strategies, should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every 5 years, and should then be updated as necessary.

Under regulation 10A of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) local planning authorities must review local plans, and Statements of Community Involvement at least once every 5 years from their adoption date to ensure that policies remain relevant and effectively address the needs of the local community. Most plans are likely to require updating in whole or in part at least every 5 years. Owing to the time since submission of the adopted Local Plan and the changes to national policy, including introduction of the standard methodology, the whole plan requires updating.

The NPPF is clear that strategic policies should be prepared over a minimum 15 year period and a local planning authority should be planning for the full plan period. Policies age at different rates according to local circumstances and a plan does not become out-of-date automatically after 5 years. The review process is a method to ensure that a plan and the policies within remain effective. Applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their consistency with the NPPF. It will be up to the decision-maker to decide the weight to give to the policies.

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When determining whether a plan or certain policies within a plan should be updated there are many factors to consider, including the following;

- conformity with national planning policy;

- changes to local circumstances; such as a change in Local Housing Need;

- Housing Delivery Test performance;

- whether the Council can demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable sites for housing;

- whether issues have arisen that may impact on the deliverability of key site allocations;

- appeals performance;

- success of policies against indicators in the Development Plan as set out in their Authority Monitoring Report;

- plan-making activity by other authorities, such as whether they have identified that they are unable to meet all their housing need;

- significant economic changes that may impact on viability.; and

- whether any new social, environmental or economic priorities may have arisen.

Evidence base

Local Plans are underpinned by an extensive evidence base which provides the justification for the policy approach taken and are considered as part of the Independent Examination which all Local Plans are subject to, as part of the plan making Regulations.

A local planning authority may need to gather new evidence to inform their review. Proportionate, relevant and up-to-date evidence should be used to justify a decision not to update policies.

Timing

Preparing an up-to-date Local Plan is a significant undertaking and the lead in time commences with the updating and gathering of evidence. The timing for review of the Colchester Plan stems from the Section 1 Local Plan as it is the plan which sets out the Strategic Policies for the area. A new Local Plan will therefore be required by February 2026, as indicated in the Local Development Scheme (LDS) agreed by the Local Plan Committee in February 2023. An extract from the LDS is set out on the following page.

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LDS Timetable 2022 - 2026

Legend:
- Document preparation
- Public consultation
- Hearing Sessions
- Document adoption
- Member approval
- Submission to Secretary of State
- Inspector's Report
- Publish modifications

Rows:
- Colchester Local Plan Review
- Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community DPD
- Planning Obligations SPD
- Affordable Housing SPD
- Self and Custom Build and Specailist Housing SPD
- Climate Change SPD
- Biodiversity SPD
- Active Travel SPD
- Shop Front Design Guide SPD
- City Center Masterplan SPD

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Local Plan Process

A Local Plan must be prepared in accordance with national policy, guidance, and regulations. The plan making process can be summarised as:

Stage 1 – Evidence Gathering – reviewing and developing a range of evidence base documents to inform the Plan. These may be completed by the Council or Consultants appointed, depending upon the subject matter.

Stage 2 – Issues and Options – identifying and understanding the main issues to be addressed in the Local Plan and considering the different approaches, including a public consultation.

Stage 3 – Preferred Options – Having considered the various options and responses from the consultation, a revised Plan is produced and subject to public consultation. This is known as the Regulation 18 Consultation.

Stage 4 – Publication Draft – Having considered the latest round of public consultation responses and any further updates to the evidence base, a final draft version of the Local Plan which the Council wishes to submit is prepared and published for consultation. This is known as the Regulation 19 Consultation.

Stage 5 – Submission. Following the statutory period of consultation, the Publication Draft Local Plan, evidence base and all representations are submitted to the Secretary of State.

Stage 6 – Examination. The Government will appoint an independent Planning Inspector to carry out an Examination of the Local Plan. This will consider if the Plan has correctly followed the legal process and meets national policy and will include a Public Examination. It will consider the representations received and there will be an opportunity for stakeholders and the public to participate in writing or in person at Hearing sessions. The Council will create an 'Examination website' to keep the public and stakeholders informed.

Stage 7 – Modifications. Following Examination, the Inspector is likely to recommend some changes to the Local Plan. These modifications will be subject to a public consultation and all representations will be sent to the Inspector for their consideration. The Inspector will then issue a Report, concluding the examination.

Stage 8 – Adoption. If the Local Plan has passed the examination, the Local Plan, incorporating any modifications recommended by the Inspector, will be presented to Full Council to formally adopt. Once adopted the Plan will have full weight in planning decisions. The Plan will be published on the Council's website. Throughout the process, the CCC website will be updated with the latest information.

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Engaging in a different way

The adopted development plan documents were all subject to extensive consultation and engagement in accordance with the relevant Planning Regulations and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) states that at the following three plan making stages: Issues and Options, Preferred Options and Submission, consultation will include a minimum of 6 weeks and will use the following methods: written / email consultations with statutory consultees, general consultees on our database, other relevant stakeholders, individuals and organisations who have expressed a wish to be consulted or have previously made comments; consultation documents available on the Council's website and hard copies available at the Council offices, and libraries, as appropriate, and; invitations for representations to be made on the document will be through the Council's website and/or social media. The preferred method for submitting representations will be via the consultation portal.

The emerging Development Plan Document (DPD) for the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community was prepared with extensive engagement led by a dedicated Communications Manager. Engagement included the establishment of a Community Liaison Group and numerous online engagement activities prior to work commencing on drafting the DPD and masterplan. Engagement at the earliest stage of plan making has helped to incorporate the views of stakeholders into the DPD and a similar approach will be taken for the Local Plan Review.

We want to take the learning from the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community DPD early engagement; break down barriers to engaging in the plan making process (e.g. a lack of will to read dense and complicated planning documents; a lack of confidence to engage or a lack of transport to attend events in places like village halls in order to participate; a feeling that a minimum level of knowledge of the planning process is needed; and a lack of time, among many others); and take digital opportunities, building on the development of new interactive functions on the JDi Consultation portal, to engage in a new way – a way that goes beyond village hall events and embraces modern, efficient and accessible activities at the earliest stage of plan making.

Issues and Options
Rather than the Issues and Options consultation consisting of one consultation document which is consulted upon for a 6-week period, we want the Issues and Options to be an iterative process focussed on different themes.

We intend to carry out various engagement activities, which will be hosted on the Council's website. Consultees will be notified by email. Examples of engagement activities include:

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- The baseline green network and waterways map will be published online and we will seek comments on whether it is correct, the condition of green spaces and waterways and opportunities to improve the network.
- A Call for Sites will be undertaken using the Council's interactive consultation database. This will include a call not just for housing and employment sites, but also sites for offsite biodiversity net gain (BNG) and green infrastructure.
- We will ask stakeholders for their ideas on the vision for the city through an online tool where stakeholders can write as much or as little about the city they want to see in 15 years.
- Emerging work on model climate change policies that could be applied across Essex could be shared online, asking stakeholders for their views on whether emerging draft policies go far enough or are too stringent.
- Views on whether design codes would be appropriate and which elements of the National Model Design Code should be adapted for a local approach.
- Views from the health sector of the ways that health and wellbeing can be integrated into the Local Plan.

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Our stakeholders

We recognise how important it is to involve our communities and stakeholders in the development of the Local Plan Review. Our various audiences will play a very important role in contributing to the preparation of the Local Plan Review.

We have a statutory **Duty to Cooperate**[1] with the following organisations, on strategic planning issues: Office of Rail and Road; Environment Agency; Highways Agencies; Historic England; Integrated Transport Authorities; Natural England; Sport England; Highway Authorities; Civil Aviation Authority; Marine Management Organisation; Homes England; The South East Local Enterprise Partnership; Clinical Commissioning Groups; Neighbouring Local Authorities; NHS England; and Essex County Council.

We are also required to consult 'specific' and 'general' consultation bodies and other consultees including the community, neighbourhood plan groups, businesses and third sector groups. The following list of organisations will be informed of any consultation being undertaken, as appropriate:

Specific Consultation Bodies: Neighbouring Local Authorities; All Parish Councils within and adjoining the boundary of Colchester Borough as appropriate; Essex Police; The Environment Agency; Historic England; Natural England; The Secretary of State for Transport; Electronic Communication Providers; Telephone Operators; Electricity Suppliers; Gas undertakers; Sewage Undertakers; The Homes and Communities Agency; The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government; Marine Management Organisations; Network Rail; National Highways; Public Health England; Electricity and Gas Suppliers; Sport England.

General Consulting Bodies: Voluntary Bodies; Ethnic / Racial / National Groups; Religious Groups and Churches; Disabled Groups; Local Business Support Agencies

Other Consultees: Health Agencies; Learning Agencies; Schools; Transport Bodies and Groups; Sports Clubs; Recreation Bodies; Infrastructure and Service Providers; Design, Town Planning, Conservation and Landscape and Nature Conservation Bodies; Environmental Groups; Planning Consultants and Agents; The Development Industry; Other miscellaneous bodies.

Communities
We will also engage and consult with individual residents who have requested to be added to the consultation database; local community/hobby/interest groups of all kinds; local action groups; local schools, Colleges and the University; local charities; audiences from diverse groups and backgrounds; disabled people and access groups; and people who expressed interest in previous consultation/engagement exercises, among others.

Member engagement

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[1] In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

Local Plan Committee will be asked to agree to each of the iterative engagement opportunities / consultations as well as receiving feedback on an ongoing basis. They will also receive updates on the evidence base as it progresses and informs the emerging work. The Committee will agree to the formal consultations for each of the statutory processes with agreement at the time of the details for those consultations.

What we mean by engagement and consultation

We want to be clear on how we define 'engagement' and 'consultation' and the roles that each will have. For this strategy we have adopted the following definitions, which are compatible with the definitions in the Tendring Colchester Borders Engagement and Consultation Strategy:

Engagement: A variety of online activities we will run as part of an iterative Issues and Options stage, to have conversations and gather ideas and insights from a wide range of stakeholders including local organisations, businesses, charities and individuals to help contribute to the preparation of the Local Plan Review.

Consultation: Statutory consultations we will run for the Local Plan, prior to it being examined. This will encourage formal feedback and representations (comments) on draft plans. This type of consultation is in accordance with our duties to the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. For the Local Plan Review, it will involve consultation on a Preferred Options Plan (or draft plan) in accordance with Regulation 18: Preparation of a local plan of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012; and consultation on the Publication Draft (the plan the Council will submit for examination) in accordance with Regulation 19: Publication of a local plan of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The range of consultation methods appropriate for each stage of plan making will be explored and considered further at the relevant stage, taking into account the issues, the statutory requirements and the Statement of Community Involvement.

Indicative Local Plan Review Timetable

Mid-late 2023

We will start to consider what evidence is required for the Local Plan Review and make a start at preparing the evidence base. This will include engagement on the city's green network and waterways and a call for sites.

Early 2024

We will continue to engage with stakeholders through our iterative Issues and Options engagement. This may include asking stakeholders for their ideas on the vision for the city; asking stakeholders for their views on emerging climate change policies; asking for views on whether design codes would be appropriate; and asking the health sector how health and wellbeing can be integrated into the Local Plan.

Mid/late 2024

We will review all comments made as part of the Issues and Options iterative engagement and the emerging evidence base and share these with Local Plan Committee on an ongoing basis. We will start drafting a Preferred Options Plan.

Late 2024

We will publish our Preferred Options Plan for public consultation and consider all representations made. We will continue to develop the evidence base and prepare a Publication Draft Plan.

Mid/ late 2025

We will publish the Publication Draft Plan for public consultation and submit to the Secretary of State for examination.

Late 2025/ early 2026

The Local Plan Review will be examined. An Inspector will consider if the Plan has correctly followed the legal process and meets national policy. The Inspector will consider the representations received and there will be an opportunity for stakeholders and the public to participate in writing or in person at hearing sessions. Following the hearing sessions, the Inspector will publish main modifications for public consultation.

Early 2026

The Inspector will issue the Final Report and the Local Plan Review will be adopted and form part of the development plan.

Keep in touch

Visit the Planning Policy pages of our website: · Colchester City Council

Email us: planning.policy@colchester.gov.uk

You can request to be added to our consultation database to receive notifications of all planning engagement activities and consultations.

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	Local Plan Committee	**Item**
		10
	7 August 2023	
Report of	**Shelley Blackaby Principal Planning Policy Officer (Environment)**	07977 184926
Title	**Local Nature Recovery Strategy & Biodiversity net gain**	
Wards affected	All wards affected	

1. Executive Summary

1.1 The Environment Act introduced Local Nature Recovery Strategies and mandatory biodiversity net gain. This report provides an introduction to both for Members information.

2. Recommended Decision

2.1 This report is for information only.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

3.1 This report is for information only.

4. Alternative Options

4.1 The alternative is not to update the committee but owing to the links between Local Nature Recovery Strategies and biodiversity net gain and the Local Plan Review, it is useful for Members to be kept informed.

5. Background Information

5.1 The Environment Act 2021 introduced Local Nature Recovery Strategies and mandatory biodiversity net gain. This report provides an introduction to both for Members information. The Local Plan Review will need to take into account the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy and biodiversity net gain and Members will be kept informed of the progress of both through the ongoing work on preparing the Local Plan.

Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS)

5.2 Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) were introduced in the Environment Act 2021. They are a new system of spatial strategies, which will:
- support efforts to recover nature across England;
- help planning authorities incorporate nature recovery objectives;
- support the delivery of biodiversity net gain; and
- help deliver national environment targets.

5.3 The Government published LNRS regulations and statutory guidance earlier this year which effectively establishes the 'rules' to enable high quality and consistent LNRSs to be prepared across England. It is understood that government is working on guidance about how LNRS and Local Plans will work together and your Officers have been involved in workshops, led by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS), to discuss this. The diagram, below, is included in the statutory guidance and sets out the step-by-steps rules to be followed.
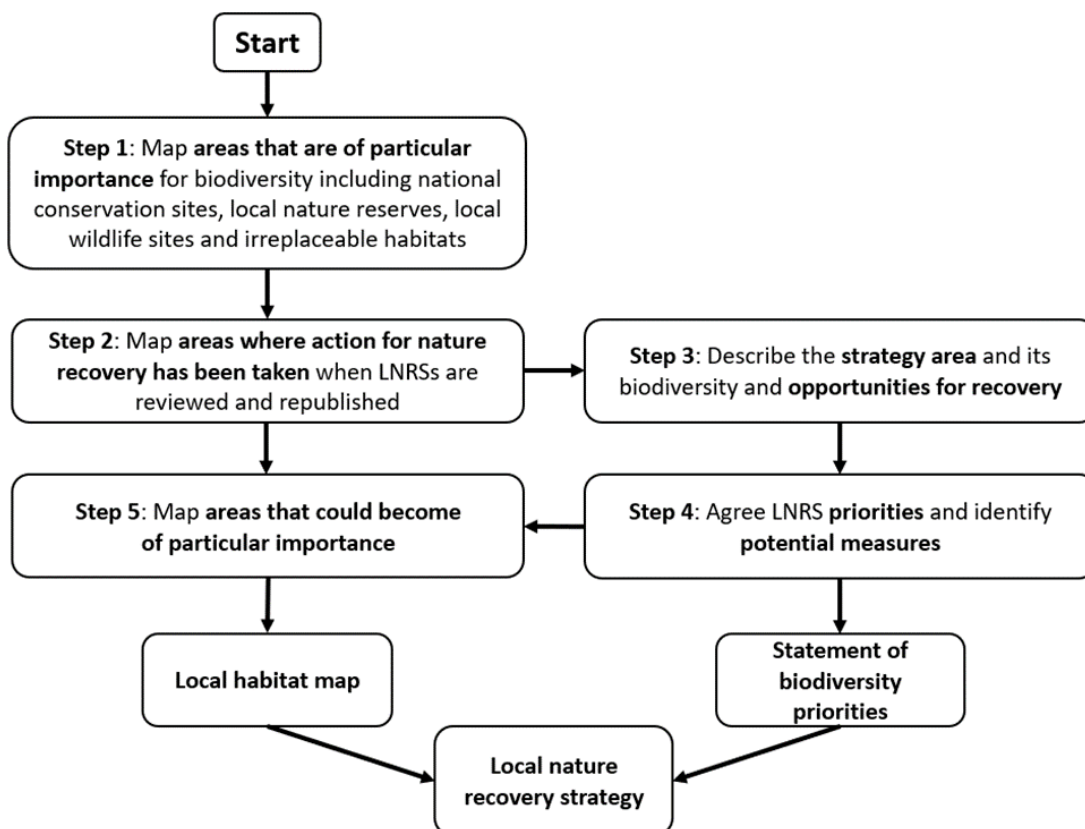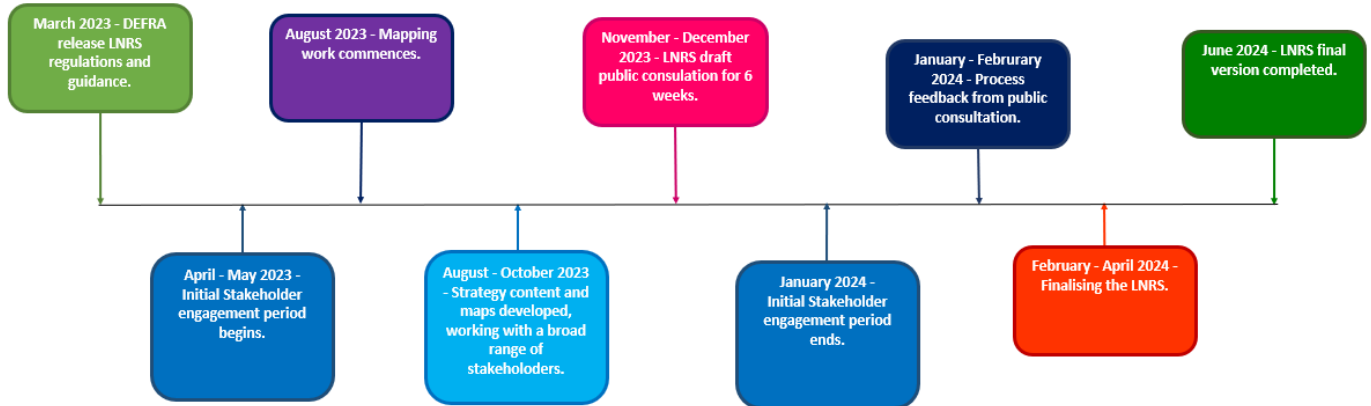
5.4 Essex County Council is the 'Responsible Authority' and has responsibility for preparing the Essex LNRS. Colchester City Council is a 'Supporting Authority'. The Council has a role to play in preparing the Essex LNRS and as local planning authority, we have a role to play in incorporating the Essex LNRS into the Local Plan Review and ensuring that the Essex LNRS takes account of work on the emerging Local Plan.

5.5 The LNRS regulations state that Responsible Authorities must "take reasonable steps to involve" supporting authorities, "have regard" to their opinions, share information with them and seek their agreement before consultation and publication. Officers have met with Essex County Council's Local Nature Recovery Co-ordinator and monthly meetings have been set up to involve Supporting Authorities and allow two-way exchange of information. The Colchester Representatives are from the Planning Policy team, who are engaging with other relevant Officers to ensure all relevant interests are covered from CCC. There are numerous other stakeholders involved in the LNRS and the diagram, below, sets out the delivery structure.

LNRS Delivery Structure Diagram

5.6 Essex County Council has prepared a timetable for production of the Essex LNRS, see below. It is expected that the LNRS will be finalised in June 2024. Officers will engage and collaborate and ensure that, when needed, a Council response is prepared within the timeframes when requested.

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Local Nature Recovery Strategy Timeline 2023 - 2024

March 2023 - DEFRA release LNRS regulations and guidance.

August 2023 - Mapping work commences.

November - December 2023 - LNRS draft public consulation for 6 weeks.

January - Februrary 2024 - Process feedback from public consultation.

June 2024 - LNRS final version completed.

April - May 2023 - Initial Stakeholder engagement period begins.

August - October 2023 - Strategy content and maps developed, working with a broad range of stakeholoders.

January 2024 - Initial Stakeholder engagement period ends.

February - April 2024 - Finalising the LNRS.

Biodiversity net gain

5.7   Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is an approach to development that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand. It is not business as usual – it is a different way of designing a development scheme to leave the natural environment in a better state than it was found. Biodiversity net gain delivers measurable improvements for biodiversity by creating or enhancing habitats in association with development. Biodiversity net gain can be achieved on-site, off-site or through a combination of on-site and off-site measures.

5.8   BNG will become mandatory for major applications in November 2023 and for minor applications in April 2024. Secondary legislation and government guidance is yet to be published. The adopted Local Plan includes a requirement for 10% BNG and Officers are implementing this policy ahead of BNG becoming mandatory.

5.9   BNG has many benefits, including:
   • contributes towards nature recovery by enhancing existing or creating new habitat;
   • creates and connects habitats in which species can thrive and in doing so can help wildlife adapt to climate change;
   • contributes towards strategic scale and better joined up green and blue infrastructure networks;
   • delivers priorities for nature set out in Local Nature Recovery Strategies;
   • improves our health and wellbeing by creating new or enhancing existing greenspaces;
   • creates greener neighbourhoods that are more attractive places to live, work and do business;
   • helps mitigate climate change through the restoration and protection of nature.

5.10   BNG is measured using the Biodiversity Metric, the latest version of this is 4.0. The Biodiversity Metric is a biodiversity accounting tool that can be used for the purposes of calculating BNG. The Biodiversity Metric is a habitat based approach

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used to assess a sites value to wildlife. The metric uses habitat features to calculate a biodiversity value. Habitats are classified using the UK Habitat classification system. The Biodiversity Metric calculates how a development will change the biodiversity value of a site. The metric calculates the value as biodiversity units. The Biodiversity Metric uses changes in the extent and quality of habitats as a proxy for nature and compares the habitat found on a site before and after development.

5.11   Four key factors underpin this comparison: habitat size (area or length); condition; distinctiveness (based on the type of habitat and its distinguishing features, e.g. consideration of species richness and rarity), and strategic significance (value given to habitats located in optimal locations or which meet local objectives for biodiversity in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy). To use the biodiversity metric calculation tool, applicants will need to know the types of habitat on-site and off-site; the size of each habitat parcel in hectares or kilometres if it is linear (rivers and streams, hedgerows and lines of trees); the condition of each habitat parcel; and whether the site is in locations identified as local nature priorities.

5.12   Biodiversity units are given for post development BNG measures, these can be onsite, offsite, or as a last resort, through purchasing statutory credits. Onsite units are delivered through habitat creation/enhancement via landscaping/green infrastructure. Offsite units are delivered through habitat creation/enhancement, including via habitat banks, with public and private landowners. A national register will be established whereby landowners can register sites and applicants can purchase units to demonstrate to the LPA BNG of at least 10%. As a last resort, where BNG cannot be delivered onsite or offsite, credits can be purchased, which fund and deliver through large-scale habitat projects delivering high value habitats which can also provide long-term nature-based solutions.

5.13   The LNRS can be used to target offsite BNG so that it contributes to the Local Nature Recovery Network. Offsite BNG sites that deliver the best outcomes for nature can be encouraged by the Council.

5.14   Officers have been part of an Essex-wide group of Officers who have produced a template BNG Supplementary Planning Document. Once secondary legislation and government guidance has been published this will be updated.

Strengthened biodiversity duty

5.15   Section 102 of the Environment Act also introduces a strengthened duty under s40 of Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 for Councils to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Public authorities must periodically consider what actions they can take to conserve and enhance biodiversity and then take that action.

5.16   Local Authorities must publish biodiversity reports, which contain:
   • A summary of the action the authority has taken over the reporting period and plans for actions over the subsequent period.

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- A summary of the action taken by the authority in carrying out its functions under the BNG obligation.
- Information about any biodiversity gains resulting from biodiversity gain plans approved by the authority.
- A summary of the authority's plans for carrying out those functions over the subsequent reporting period.

5.17   The first Biodiversity Report must be published no longer than three years after the day the strengthened duty comes into force (January 2023, so January 2026 at the latest). Subsequent reports must be published no longer than 5 years after the previous.

Local Plan Review

5.18   The Local Plan Review will take account of the LNRS. This could be through showing on the policies map, areas in the LNRS that may become important and including measures set out in the LNRS in policies.

5.19   Through the Local Plan Review, the Council can consider whether it would be appropriate and viable to set a BNG target above 10%. As part of the call for sites, Officers intend to ask landowners to submit sites for offsite BNG.

6.   Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

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

https://cbccrmdata.blob.core.windows.net/noteattachment/Equality%20Impact%20Assessment%20June%202017.pdf

7.   Strategic Plan References

7.1   'Conserve and enhance biodiversity' is one of the priorities under the 'Respond to the climate emergency' theme. Relevant goals include enhance environments to create more space for nature to grow and thrive through natural seeding and greening; discover, nurture and enable the work led by communities that promotes biodiversity; plant native species and manage our woodlands, meadows and greenspace whilst sustaining existing habitats; and work alongside communities to maintain clean, green neighbourhoods and urban spaces that we all look after and enjoy.

8.   Consultation

8.1   Not relevant as this report is for information. Government has consulted on LNRS Regulations and guidance and BNG.

9.   Publicity Considerations

9.1   Essex County Council are the Responsible Authority for the LNRS and will publicise it.

10.   Financial implications

10.1   These new duties involve considerable work for the Council. Government has issued a new burdens grant which will help in the short term.

11.   Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

11.1   A healthy environment plays a role in improving health and wellbeing. An increase in biodiversity and green infrastructure is good for people's mental wellbeing.

12.   Health and Safety Implications

12.1   No direct implications.

13.   Risk Management Implications

13.1   No direct implications.

14.   Environmental and Sustainability Implications

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14.1   The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and has committed to being carbon neutral by 2030. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. These are economic, social and environmental objectives.

14.2   The Essex LNRS and BNG will contribute to all three sustainable development objectives, but particularly the environmental objective.

Appendices

None

Local Plan Committee - Background Information

What is a Local Plan?

A Local Plan is the strategy for the future development of a local area, drawn up by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) in consultation with the community. The Local Plan sets out the vision, objectives, spatial strategy and planning policies for the entire Colchester Borough. A Local Plan provides the overall framework for the borough in terms of employment and housing growth, infrastructure needs and identifying areas that require protection i.e., open space and community uses. The plan making process includes several rounds of public consultation with local communities, stakeholders and statutory consultees.

The Local Plan usually covers a 15-year period and identifies how communities will develop over the lifetime of the Plan.

In law, this is described as the Development Plan Documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. A Local Plan must be prepared in accordance with national policy and guidance.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states at paragraph 15 that "*The planning system should be genuinely plan-led. Succinct and up to date plans should provide a vision for the future of each area, a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings*".

Planning involves making decisions about the future of our cities, towns and countryside. This is vital to balance our desire to develop the areas where we live and work with ensuring the surrounding environment is not negatively affected for everyone. It includes considering the sustainable needs of future communities.

Independent Planning Inspectors must examine all Local Plans that local authorities in England prepare. This examination is the last stage of the process for producing a Local Plan. The process should have fully involved everyone who has an interest in the document, and they should have had the chance to comment.

Why is a Local Plan important?

A Local Plan is a statutory requirement as outlined in Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

The Local Plan contains policies to guide development by identifying a spatial strategy, site allocations for employment and housing development and protecting the environment, land and buildings for certain uses to ensure delivery of sustainable communities.

Without a Local Plan to identify where and how the borough should develop, planning applications are determined in accordance with national policy which does not provide

the local context of Colchester. Without a Local Plan, the borough would be at significant risk from speculative development. A Local Plan provides certainty of where development can be delivered sustainably across the Borough.

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

The Localism Act 2012 devolved greater powers to neighbourhoods and gives local communities more control over housing and planning decisions.

A Neighbourhood Plan is a planning document that communities can put together to set out how they would like their town, parish or village to develop over the next 15 years. The Neighbourhood Plan is prepared by the local community for a designated neighbourhood area, usually this is undertaken by the Parish/Town Council or a Neighbourhood Plan Development Forum can be established for areas without a parish/town council.

A Neighbourhood Plan enables communities to identify where new homes and other developments can be built and enables them to have their say on what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided. This provides local people the ability to plan for the types of development to meet their community's needs.

A Neighbourhood Plan must undergo a number of formal processes to ensure it is robust and well-evidenced. This includes two formal consultation periods, independent examination and a public referendum.

A Neighbourhood Plan is subject to examination where the Examiner must determine if the Neighbourhood Plan complies with the Basic Conditions as set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). Following an Examination, the Neighbourhood Plan must be subject to a referendum. In order for the Neighbourhood Plan to pass a referendum and be 'made' (adopted) the majority of voters (more than 50%) must be in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan.

If a Neighbourhood Plan passes the referendum, this becomes part of the Statutory Development Plan for that area. Where a Neighbourhood Plan has been 'made', both the Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan are used when determining planning applications alongside national policy.

What is included in the Development Plan for Colchester?

The Development Plan is a suite of documents that set out the LPAs policies and proposals for the development and use of land and buildings in the authority's area. This includes Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans and is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Within Colchester Borough this currently includes:

- Section 1 Local Plan (adopted February 2021);
- Section 2 Local Plan (adopted July 2022);
- Tiptree Jam Factory DPD (adopted 2013);
- Neighbourhood Plans.

Section 1 of the Colchester Local Plan sets out the overarching strategy for future growth across Braintree, Colchester and Tendring, including the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community as well as including policies setting the overall housing and employment requirements for North Essex up to 2033. Section 2 provides the policy framework, site allocations and development management policies for Colchester Borough up to 2033.

In Partnership with Tendring District Council, a Development Plan Document (DPD) is being prepared to further guide development on the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community. This process is being governed by the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community Joint Committee.

There has been considerable neighbourhood planning activity within Colchester with seven 'made' (adopted) Neighbourhood Plans across the borough. These are:

- Myland and Braiswick
- Boxted
- Wivenhoe
- West Bergholt
- Eight Ash Green
- Marks Tey and
- West Mersea

Four further Neighbourhood plans are at various stages of the plan making process. These include Copford with Easthorpe, Great Horkesley, Great Tey and Tiptree.

For minerals and waste matters, Essex County Council are the authority responsible for production of the Waste and Minerals Local Plans, which forms part of the Colchester Development Plan. At present the adopted plans for Essex are:

- Essex Minerals Local Plan (2014)
- Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan (2017)

What is included within the Development Framework for Colchester?

The Local Development Framework (LDF) is a non-statutory term used to describe a folder of documents, which includes all the local planning authority's local development documents. A Local Development Framework is comprised of:

1. **Development Plan**

   Currently for Colchester this includes:

   - Section 1 Local Plan (adopted February 2021)
   - Section 2 Local Plan (adopted July 2022)
   - Neighbourhood Plans (Myland and Braiswick, Boxted, Wivenhoe, West Bergholt, Eight Ash Green, Marks Tey and West Mersea)
   - Essex Minerals Local Plan (2014)
   - Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan (2017)

2. **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)**

   An SPD is a document produced by the Local Planning Authority to add further detailed guidance and information on a particular subject such as Sustainable Construction or Open Space, Sports and Recreational Facilities. An SPD is subject to a formal consultation period and then is used as a material consideration when determining planning applications.

   Currently for Colchester these are:

   - Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) – August 2020
   - Affordable Housing – August 2011
   - Backland and Infill – December 2010
   - Better Town Centre – December 2012
   - Cycling Delivery Strategy – January 2012
   - Provision of Community Facilities – July 2013
   - Provision of Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities – July 2006, updated April 2019
   - Shopfront Design Guide – June 2011
   - Street Services Delivery Strategy – October 2012 revised February 2016
   - Sustainable Design and Construction – June 2011
   - Sustainable Drainage Systems Design Guide – April 2015
   - Vehicle Parking Standards – September 2009
   - ABRO Development Brief SPD (December 2021)
   - Archaeology and Planning (2015)

A number of these will be reviewed and updated along with new SPDs to be compliment with new policies in the Adopted Local Plan.

3. Local Development Scheme (LDS)

The LDS is a project plan for a three-year period for the production of all documents that will comprise the Development Plan. It identifies each Local Development Plan Document and establishes a timescale for preparing each.

4. Authority Monitoring Report (AMR)

The AMR is a report published annually by the LPA, monitoring progress in delivering the Local Plan policies and allocations. The report covers the financial year from 1 April to 31 March and for Colchester is published in December.

5. Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

The SCI sets out the standards that the Local Planning Authority (LPA) 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. The SCI also outlines how the LPA intends to achieve those standards. The SCI itself, is not a development plan document, but is subject to independent examination. A consultation statement showing how the LPA complies with its SCI should accompany all Local Development Plan documents.

What are housing targets and why do we have them?

The Government have committed to delivering 300,000 new homes per year across England to significantly boost the supply of homes.

A Local Plan identifies the minimum number of homes needed through policies which are informed by a local housing need assessment produced in accordance with the Standard Methodology as outlined in national planning guidance, unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach. The Standard Method was introduced through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2019.

For Colchester, the minimum housing requirement has been established in the Section 1 Local Plan. Policy SP4 set out the minimum housing requirement figure for Colchester as 920 dwellings per annum and 18,400 new homes over the period 2013 to 2033. This number was based on the previous assessment method outlined in the NPPF 2012 known as the Objectively Assessed Need. The Local Plan has been examined in accordance with the transitional arrangements outlined in the NPPF 2019, which requires examination of the Plan under the NPPF 2012.

The Council are required to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement figure as set out in the Local Plan, this is often referred to as the five year housing land supply (5YHLS).

The Council publish annually a Housing Land Supply Statement. This sets out Colchester's housing land supply position over a five-year period from 1 April of each year and explains how this position complies with the requirements of national policy and guidance. The Statement is prepared by the LPA with engagement from developers and agents regarding expected delivery of new homes.

What happens if the borough does not meet their housing target?

If an LPA cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of housing, national planning policy takes precedence over the Local Plan. The *'presumption in favour of sustainable development'* as outlined in national policy (NPPF paragraph 11d) will be triggered.

This means that if a planning application is considered to deliver sustainable development, then planning permission should be granted, even if the site is not identified for development in the Local Plan. In effect, the Council would have little control over where new homes are built and would be required to approve planning applications for sites that they may not have chosen for development. Many authorities can reject these schemes, but the decision can be overturned, and planning permission granted on appeal.