



Colchester
City Council

Local Plan Committee Meeting

**Grand Jury Room, Town Hall, High Street,
Colchester, CO1 1PJ
Monday, 11 December 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

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<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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COLCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
Local Plan Committee
Monday, 11 December 2023 at 18:00

The Local Plan Committee Members are:

Councillor Tim Young	Chairman
Councillor Michelle Burrows	Deputy Chairman
Councillor Lewis Barber	
Councillor Richard Kirkby-Taylor	
Councillor Kayleigh Rippingale	
Councillor Lee Scordis	
Councillor Rhys Smithson	
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 the 24 May 2023 and 2 October 2023 are a correct record.

2023-05-24 Colchester City Council Local Plan Committee Minutes 7 - 8

2023-10-02 CCC Local Plan Committee Minutes 9 - 20

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 Colchester Local Plan review proposed Vision Engagement and progress update 21 - 30

The Committee are asked to note the progress made on the Local Plan Review and to agree to public engagement in early 2024 to inform a vision for the Local Plan Review.

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|----|--|--------------|
| 8 | Colchester Local Plan Review - Strategic Land Availability Assessment Methodology | 31 - 84 |
| | The Committee are invited to note the summary of consultation responses and agree the Strategic Land Availability Assessment Methodology. | |
| 9 | Adoption of Active Travel and Climate Change Supplementary Planning Documents | 85 - 180 |
| | The Committee are invited to adopt the Active Travel Supplementary Planning Document and the Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document. | |
| 10 | Infrastructure Funding Statement | 181 -
208 |
| | The Committee are invited to review the information contained within the Infrastructure Funding Statement. This report is for information only and no decision is required. | |
| 11 | Authority Monitoring Report 2023 | 209 -
272 |
| | The Committee are invited to approve the 2023 Authority Monitoring Report for publication on the Council's website. | |
| 12 | 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). | |
| | Local Plan Committee Background Information Version 2 July 2022 | 273 -
278 |

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

LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE
24 May 2023

<i>Present:-</i>	Councillors Barber, Burrows, Dundas, Kirkby-Taylor, Ripplingale, Scordis, Smith, Spindler, Sunnucks, and T. Young
<i>Substitute Member:-</i>	

269. Appointment of Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Tim Young be appointed Chairman for the forthcoming Municipal Year.

270. Appointment of Deputy Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Burrows be appointed Deputy Chairman for the forthcoming Municipal Year.

LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE

2 October 2023

<i>Present: -</i>	Councillors T. Young (Chair), Barber, Cox, Kirkby-Taylor, Naylor, Smalls, Smith, Sommers, Spindler, and Sunnucks
<i>Substitute Member: -</i>	Councillor Cox for Councillor Rippingale Councillor Smalls for Councillor Scordis Councillor Naylor for Councillor Dundas
<i>Also in Attendance: -</i>	Councillor Luxford-Vaughan

282. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 7 August 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.

283. Have Your Say!

Nick Chilvers addressed the Committee pursuant to provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5 (1). The Committee heard that at the previous meeting of the Committee officers had outlined that the masterplan for Middlewick would need to involve people in the area and engage with workers and families in the area and to look at more creative methods of seeking views on transport and infrastructure. The speaker outlined that Members of the public could spot a steered survey from miles away and thanked Cllr Harris for his shopping list for open space and an independent biodiversity statement as the current one that was referred to by Officers was a year out of date. The Committee were asked to look at travel patterns along Mersea Road which needed to be embraced into any survey and that some junctions were under considerable stress and that the speaker had watched the Planning Inspectorate review the roads and concluded with their view that Essex County Council Highways Department were complacent.

Sandra Scott, Place Strategy Manager responded to the points raised and thanked the speaker for their comments. The Committee heard that valid suggestions were being put forward by the speaker and that the Council was at the stage to carry out consultation work with various agencies and stakeholders but confirmed that the Council was not currently at the stage for creating the Masterplan and detailed that there would be full engagement on the Middlewick Masterplan and that this would take into account further works with transportation and Highways.

Nick Chilvers responded to the points made and detailed that they were always grateful to have their say and that detailed that there were people making constructive contributions to the project who had good local knowledge which was invaluable to any Masterplan.

The Chair encouraged the speaker to make sure that they contributed to the consultation to ensure that Councillors could make a decision based on local information.

Richard Martin addressed the Committee pursuant to provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5 (1). The Committee heard that in the past week a document regarding the

Fourth Estate had been published which detailed that species trends across the UK were in danger and that there was a significant depletion of species with the prediction that one in 6 species in the UK were threatened with extinction. The Committee heard that this crisis in nature was on their doorstep with some of the species noted being in residence on Middlewick such as the White Spotted Pinion and noted in one research session over 260 species were surveyed on site in areas that were not deemed as diverse and asked how these would be accommodated on site as well as the inspectors conditions of biodiversity net gain if development was to progress. The Committee heard that there were options for improvement that could be included in the next iteration of the Local Plan including on a call for new sites but raised concerns about the biodiversity metric scores being fudged. The speaker concluded by detailing that a local photographer had been shortlisted for their work on Middlewick highlighting the biodiversity on site.

The Place Strategy Manager responded to the points raised and detailed that there was ecological interest on the Middlewick site and that various groups had been undertaking surveys and that further surveys would need to be undertaken for Master planning which would be carried out at the appropriate time and that the Council would include valid data that was sent to officers.

Richard Martin responded to the points made and detailed that they had over 3,500 followers on their social media groups with many residents and outlined that if any Members wished to join the group, then they would be welcome to.

Alan Short addressed the Committee pursuant to provisions of Meetings general Procedure Rule 5 (1). The Committee heard that they had attended the most recent Environment and Sustainability Panel of the Council where they had detailed their concern regarding the conditions for the Middlewick site as being draconian and queried how the Council would enforce these conditions prior to development. The Committee heard that the enforcement of the conditions would be expensive and detailed that it would be best to use the Garden Village approach whereby the replacement biodiversity would be going in ahead of the dwellings being built.

The Place Strategy Manager responded to the points raised and detailed that the infrastructure plan and conditions for development on Middlewick were very descriptive and needed to be completed prior to building on the site. It was noted no developer could be unclear on the conditions that they would have to adhere to and that when plans did come before the Planning Committee then these would be scrutinised with the information set out for the Committee to judge against.

John Crookenden addressed the Committee pursuant to provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rul 5 (1). The Committee heard that they were speaking as a Member of the Great Tey Neighbourhood Plan Group and detailed that if there was to be a review of Section 1 and 2 of the Adopted Local Plan then this should only be on the basis of whether the policies complied with legislation. The Committee heard that there was no need for a new call for sites or an increase in housing numbers and outlined that they had been advised by officers that these were required due to changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and that these needed to be explained. Further to this it was outlined that there was the anticipated publication of changes to the NPPF and planning system which had been expected in June 2023 and asked that the Council wait until these were published before reviewing the Local Plan. The Committee heard that people were tired of endless consultations which were then subsequently ignored and detailed that North Hertfordshire District Council had convinced the Planning Inspectorate to lower housing numbers and detailed that Colchester City Council should do more to resist interference from government

to build more houses especially when the Council had built its share when no corresponding infrastructure had been provided. The Committee heard that the Chair had been a strong supporter of this approach in the past and outlined that Councillors should be given access to all documents and reports as this was not the case some years ago. It was detailed that infrastructure costs needed to be calculated correctly and have a contingency as well as in advance and that the Neighbourhood Plan Group needed to be supported and that this was not the case for Great Tey for the development of their plan as they were criticised for the consultation on the new Barn Road development as the plan was insufficiently advanced.

Karen Syrett, Joint Head of Planning, responded to the points raised and detailed that the extent of the review of the Local Plan had been decided at the previous meeting of the Local Plan Committee in August 2023 and detailed that the 2019 NPPF required a different approach to defining housing numbers and housing targets so it could be argued the Colchester Local Plan was already out of date. However, it was noted that the Adopted Local Plan was based off the 2012 which was based off a different approach to calculate housing numbers which had since been superseded by the Standard Methodology. The Committee heard that any review had to be completed within 5 years and had to take into account changes of national policy and legislation and noted that any change in the plan would have implications for the remainder of the document which required a call for sites and the review of infrastructure. Members were advised that documents were published well in advance of meetings so that Councillors could review all the necessary information and outlined that there was an expectation that Councillors would put themselves forward for appropriate meetings so that they can review the information in the allowed timescales. The Committee heard that they disagreed with point raised about the amount of support for the Great Tey Neighbourhood Plan Group and detailed that it was a number of years since the area for the Great Tey Neighbourhood Plan had been designated and that it was unfortunate that the Neighbourhood Plan had not been progressed like others that were now carrying full weight in the decision-making process. The Joint Head of Planning concluded by outlining that it was for local communities to create their own Neighbourhood Plans and that Colchester City Council would provide support through officer attendance which was noted on multiple occasions by the Joint Head of Planning and said local communities would be supported but that Officers were not there to write them for communities.

John Crookenden responded to the points as detailed by the Joint head of Planning and said that the City Council had not supported the Great Tey Neighbourhood Plan group for two years and that was why progress had not been made as the Group had been told that the Consultation that they had undertaken was not valid as the plan was not significantly advanced and that if everyone had written to the Council separately they would have been considered individually but it was wrong that the Neighbourhood Plan Group was consulted and then were ignored because the plan was not significantly advanced.

The Joint Head of Planning responded by detailing that what was being described was a blurring of the lines between a consultation for the Neighbourhood Plan and a Planning Application consultation and that this could be addressed before the planning application came before the Committee.

284. Approach to the Colchester Local Plan Review

The Place Strategy Manager presented the report to the Committee and detailed that there was a requirement for the Local Plan to be reviewed every five years and that officers had taken an iterative approach to the options which set out the scope of the reviews range, extent and timing of evidence, approach to engagement as well as a high level programme for the review. The Committee heard that the review would bring forward the updated

evidence needs and the report before the Committee takes this forward expanding on the themes that would be subject to iterative engagement for the issues and options which included:

- Creating a better environment
- Developing a vision
- Climate Change
- Design and Place Making
- Health and wellbeing

The Place Strategy Manager detailed infrastructure need would be embedded in the plan making to ensure that it would be provided through the infrastructure audit and infrastructure delivery plan which would inform sustainable delivery options. The Committee heard that the initial engagement would be on the green network and waterways which was proposed to take place in late October 2023 and would be looking to engage stakeholders to create a better environment based on the green network and waterways as evidence. It was detailed that this was based on the best understanding of the constraints and opportunities for creating a better environment and how to plan for growth including key infrastructure which linked directly into place making. It was considered that this approach provided benefits to the local communities' health and wellbeing, wildlife, and took into account climate change. The Place Strategy Manager concluded by asking that the Committee approve the officer recommendation as detailed in the Committee report.

At the request of the Chair the Democratic Services Officer read out a statement as follows from Cllr Luxford-Vaughan, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Environment, and Sustainability:

"The best plans start from a review of what existing infrastructure provides, including transport networks and employment sites, and then builds on these to determine where the gaps are and where homes would be best situated. Any subsequent call for sites is tailored to facilitate this framework. The preservation and enhancement of existing green and blue infrastructure, and the creation of new ones, is also essential for a sustainable local plan. My frustration with the previous local plan was that it appears to have been approached the opposite way round. Where Landowners put forward sites and the subsequent strategy was then manipulated to suit these locations.

We are in a far more critical situation now. Our current local plan relies on investment in existing infrastructure that is yet to be secured. A significant example is the upgrades to the A120 which we assumed would go ahead and hasn't. Or a RTS, that is yet to demonstrate that it is more rapid than using a car and a link road that was supposedly of strategic importance and could release land for housing but now doesn't link anything.

A strong focus on green networks and waterways in the plan is of course completely welcomed and it may even be the right place to start regarding public consultation. However, I think it is an illogical place to start a planning exercise. Where transport and jobs are far more dominant factors in our daily lives and relate directly to where we live.

The infrastructure audit that was commissioned by the previous portfolio holder I believe was one of the most important pieces of work to prepare us for this local plan review. And should form the basis for any future strategy.

We are all aware that there is an infrastructure deficit in Colchester and the wider area and this needs to be resolved.

Health and wellbeing reviews are also welcomed. However, as health facilities are

commissioned once demand is present (i.e. the houses have been built) they can end up being vague and non-committal. Either concentrating on healthy living, or identifying where existing services have capacity. This review needs to predict and commit to where new services will go.

My recommendation therefore would be not to sign off this approach but to say it should be led by the infrastructure audit, whilst ensuring that the core value of the plan, is that it creates a better environment that respects the climate emergency.”

The Chair detailed their concern that the statement had not been sent round to the Committee from the Portfolio holder ahead of the meeting so that Members could digest the information.

The Joint Head of Planning, Karen Syrett, detailed that at the last meeting of the Committee it had been agreed unanimously that the report on the issues and options and engagement of the Local Plan be agreed as well as the proposed engagement and consultation. It was noted in paragraph 5.11 of the report that the first stage of the consultation would be around a green network and waterways which would be published online and would be followed by a call for sites. It was confirmed that the Local Plan Committee supported this approach at their previous meeting. The Committee heard that prior to the Local Plan Committee meeting in August the Cabinet were briefed on the approach and had signalled their support. It was confirmed that the Portfolio Holder had been briefed in the week prior to the Committee and that none of the issues in the statement were raised and detailed that they would be addressed after the meeting. The Committee heard that there were some issues that were mutually agreed upon which was the need for infrastructure and for it to support new development, but it required evidence and that if the Cabinet signed off for the infrastructure audit then it would be commissioned and would run alongside any other consultation starting with the blue and green infrastructure as well as the call for sites which underpins all the themes in the Local Plan Review approach agreed at the last meeting.

At the request of the Chair, the Democratic Services Officer advised Cllrs Smith and Sommers that they could continue to take part in the discussions and vote despite being Cabinet Members as they had not taken a formal decision on the reports previously in their Cabinet responsibilities. Further to this the Joint Head of Planning confirmed that the approach to the Local Plan was a decision that could be taken by the Local Plan Committee.

Members debated the proposal before the Committee with some Members agreeing with the points that had been raised by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Environment and Sustainability but detailed that it did cause Members difficulty having a Portfolio Holder that had a view that contrasted with that of the recommendation and that it would be helpful to have a meeting with the Chair and Group spokespersons on the issues with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Environment and Sustainability to run through some of the points raised in the statement. It was confirmed that the delay on Biodiversity Net Gain would not affect the review of the Local Plan process with debate continuing on the possible cycle routes and their role in the highway network as well as private estates with some Members showing support for the proposal. Members also debated the inclusion of tourism hotspots such as Mersea and Dedham especially since Covid as their popularity had exploded since the pandemic and needed to be looked at in infrastructure terms.

At the request of the Chair the Joint Head of Planning, Karen Syrett, responded that with regards to the cycle network Essex County Council had just consulted on this as well as walking routes and detailed that Officers did feel that this could go further and that for tourism hotspots there had been policies in the past in places like Dedham for a car park to relieve some of the pressure there as well as Mersea.

Members debated the proposal noting that some Members had been unable to attend the previous meeting and that the iterative approach did not mean that the Plan would be decided at a single meeting with some Members adding their agreement to the points raised by the Portfolio Holder putting the focus on housing numbers and infrastructure. It was queried that if this had been put through in the holiday period then this should be raised again. Members debated the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) which was currently at 920 dwellings per annum which some Members felt was a very high number and as such Colchester had received a high number of housing and population growth and that under the standard methodology this would be increased to 1061 dwellings per annum compared to Tendring District Council who had detailed that they would be retaining their OAN of 550 dwellings per annum and questioned whether the Council would be resisting these proposed numbers. Members debated the role of infrastructure and the proposed infrastructure audit and the status of the budget as it was fundamental to the plan and detailed that if Essex County Council could not provide an adequate developers guide then the Council should look into creating one as well as the possibility of creating a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or new infrastructure levy that was being proposed. Some Members questioned why the Council was rushing to review the Local Plan when it was being proposed that it could be completed in 30 months and thereby focus attention on infrastructure matters and that the review of the current Local Plan should be in name only and not start again with a new OAN and call for sites.

The Chair advised the Committee that the Local Plan Committee was a decision-making body of the Council and that if a Member missed a meeting there is nothing stopping Members submitting a statement to the Committee to be read out by the Democratic Services Officer.

The Joint Head of Planning, Karen Syrett, responded to the points raised and confirmed that the review was an iterative approach but it was not appropriate to revisit every decision the Committee had previously made and that moving away from the housing numbers as a starting point was exactly what was being proposed and that the idea of starting from the green and blue infrastructure. It was noted all parties wanted an appropriate housing number for Colchester but that this could not contend with Government commitments to deliver 300,000 new homes a year and that it was not indicated that the way housing targets were calculated would change from the standard methodology and as such the Council needed to create an evidence base in line with to move away from the standard methodology. The Committee heard that the infrastructure audit may be promised but detailed that it would be completed when required in the Local Plan review process to inform the evidence base. It was noted that the difficult financial position meant that all carry forwards were being heavily scrutinised and despite an internal effort this work could not be achieved in house. The Joint Head of Planning elaborated that they had been speaking to Essex County Council regarding CIL and that this would be investigated to see what sort of levy could be imposed and what this would mean for section 106 agreements and infrastructure levies. The Committee heard that with regards to delaying the review of the plan there was no reason to do so with the current uncertainty in the plan making system.

At the request of the Chair the Place Strategy Manager advised the Committee that waiting to review would be a risk and that no formal decision on housing numbers had been made at Tendring District Council, but they had had one verbal report that was minuted recently that they needed to do a Local Plan review and that they relied on the same process that Colchester had to follow with regards to OAN but nothing formally had been decided.

Debate continued with Members discussing the timeline of the plan and getting work on the plan done as soon as possible with some Members expressing sympathy with regards to the

call for sites and infrastructure, and that there were real world effects as there were currently 315 families were in temporary accommodation so there was clearly a need for social housing. It was note in section 5.7 a workshop would be held with health and wellbeing professionals. The Committee asked that this is widened to include the users of the service as well.

At the request of the Chair, the Place Strategy Manager outlined that it took over 7 years to create the previous Local Plan and that section 1 had been adopted in February 2021 with Section 2 being adopted in July 2022 but confirmed that Section 1 was the trigger point as it contained the strategic policies which framed the review. It was detailed that the high-level approach would take the Council to submission prior to June 2025 and outlined that there was not a lot of space in the project for time slippage. Further to this it was confirmed that the call for sites gave no status to any site that was put forward and that any and all sites could be discarded at this stage.

Members continued to debate the proposals on issues including: the timing and status of the statement from the Portfolio Holder and whether this represented a collective statement on behalf of the Cabinet, whether the review would connect with the Councils Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and the Essex Climate Actions Commissions work specifically with regards to the Essex Design Guide and ensuring that it was binding for developers. Debate continued with regards to Heritage Concerns and how these would be protected in the review as there were issues within the City of possible damage being caused to the Roman Circus through the ABRO development.

At the request of the Chair, the Place Strategy Manager responded that the Climate Change Team at Essex County Council were looking at how planning could keep up to date with the evidence and legislative changes and this review allows an opportunity to do more than the current plan has allowed and that the context and view on climate change had changed significantly but any new evidence from the climate commission and any other sources would be welcomed to inform the Local Plan as well as Heritage. The Joint Head of Planning, Simon Cairns, confirmed that the Essex Design Guide could not be enforced and was guidance only and that as it was a living document it was difficult to formalise and adopt. The Committee heard that there were mechanisms of protection for Heritage Assets through weighting as clearly laid out in statute and the NPPF. The Committee heard that for non-designated Assets the Council had a system in place of assessing these and adding them to a local list which had received support at Planning Appeals. It was noted that the adopted Local Plan did embrace the concept of non-designated heritage assets and a local list and that with regards to the specific site the SPD did have full weight and can ensure that appropriate weight is given and that if it did receive statutory designation then the full weight of the statute would be applicable.

Discussion continued with Members discussing that statutory requirements were a minimum floor and not best practice and will only get stronger controls and that developers did dodge targets and misuse data and that the Council needed to be robust in the plan that was being put forward. Debate continued with Members noting that the plan would come into main effect in 2030 and that the Council needed to be bold to get to Carbon Net Zero and that the Climate Change SPD should not be contradicted. Members asked whether this could be made a requirement as opposed to guidance and discussed the design code, the community and social infrastructure and questioned whether contact had been made to the Architect Climate Action Network (ACAM) regarding support for officers for advice and information.

At the request of the Chair, the Place Strategy Manager responded by thanking Members for their comments which were appreciated, and that further information would be coming

before the Committee on specific areas such as Health and Wellbeing and what was involved. The Committee heard that the review would be evidence based and would respond to what is appropriate and up to date with regards to climate change with the anticipation of going a step further than the Climate Change SPD.

Members discussed the role of Neighbourhood Plans and the work undertaken by communities with concern being raised regarding the overriding of the Myland Neighbourhood Plan by the Local Plan and the weight associated with Neighbourhood Plans. Members discussed the current position of the OAN and the examples of Tendring District Council and North Hertfordshire District Council and whether any learning could be found from them so that issues such as applications in Braiswick could be reviewed.

At the request of the Chair the Joint Head of Planning, Karen Syrett outlined that Myland Neighbourhood Plan had just been reviewed so if there were any issues around this then there was the opportunity to raise this and clarified that with regards to Tendring District Council it had done any work on its housing target and had not successfully challenged it. It was noted that Tendring District Council's last housing target was affected by Unattributable Population Change which may have affected their numbers as it was a rare occurrence. It was noted that since then the 2021 Census data had been published meaning that Tendring District Council had a more robust evidence base to inform their housing targets going forward. With regards to consultation the Committee heard that this had been agreed at the previous meeting as an ongoing basis.

Members discussed the role of the consultations and how some residents felt exhausted by the amount of consultation and the idea that they might dip in and out of consultation was unrealistic as it was all important to them rather than picking a specific area to comment on.

Further questions were raised by the Committee regarding the blue and green infrastructure approach and whether there were examples of other Councils undertaking this method. The Place Strategy Manager responded that there were not any other Councils undertaking this approach that they were aware of but confirmed conversations had taken place with the Planning Advisory Service on how to approach this and how the plan making process could be accelerated.

Following a question from the Committee regarding the priority of the Local Plan and housing need the Place Strategy Manager confirmed that the green and blue infrastructure was a starting point for the plan and that everything was a priority in the Local Plan as it needed to achieve all the required objectives. It was clarified that in the past the Council had looked at housing need first, but the approach proposed was to look at what was currently in place and what opportunities there were to create a better environment.

Members debated the strength of legislation and noted that there was no guarantee that there would be a stronger protection for the environment and that the Council should be doing whatever it can locally as it could not rely on central Government. Debate concluded with Members requesting that there was a definite need for the infrastructure audit, that a CIL was welcomed, that the infrastructure constraints would be used to inform the OAN and standard methodology, that the ratio for social housing should be higher and that some problems should be resolved with the existing housing stock.

It was noted that Cllr Luxford-Vaughan had joined the meeting and the Chair asked for clarification on whether the statement was on behalf of the Cabinet or as a personal statement. At the request of the Chair Councillor Luxford-Vaughan addressed the meeting and detailed that the statement was in their role as Portfolio Holder and confirmed that they

did not disagree with there being a review of the Local Plan but that the focus was off kilter with regards to prioritising the blue and green infrastructure.

RESOLVED (EIGHT votes FOR with TWO ABSTENTIONS) That the Local Plan Committee agree to the approach to the Local Plan Review of using the green network and waterways and the “creating a better environment” agenda as the starting point and key purpose of the Local Plan Review.

285. Colchester Local Plan Review – Call for sites and Strategic Land Availability Assessment

Bethany Jones, Principal Planning Policy Officer presented the Report to the Committee and assisted them in their deliberations. The Committee heard that the review of sites for the Local Plan would be assessed through the Strategic Land Availability Assessment which would look at sites that could be delivered. It was noted that this was a technical assessment whereby sites would be considered through the site assessment process. The Principal Planning Officer concluded by asking that the report be approved as detailed in the officer recommendation.

Councillor Andrea Luxford-Vaughan addressed the Committee as a visiting Councillor. The Committee heard that the approach proposed was a broad-brush approach which may be a bit advanced in the consultation feedback and that there was a question as to whether it was premature and that some 13% of the sites proposed would not come forward which would mean re-looking at the viability of existing sites and could possibly mean that these would have an increased number of dwellings. The Committee heard that one of the specific details suggested was the distance to a bus route or railway station would be a useful guideline and that it would be better to connect them. The speaker added that the brownfield site register was contradictory when it came to rural and green spaces when there was an emphasis on the rural location. The Committee heard that if a site was in a flood zone then it should not be considered and that if they had a percentage of the area within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) then they should not be considered or should at least have a buffer zone. The Committee heard that mineral safeguarding was an important consideration as well as querying whether the 2,500 homes in the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community would be in the reviewed Local Plan. The speaker concluded by detailing that there needed to be consideration regarding Anglian Water as to whether there was a shortfall in the provision that they could administer, because if this was an issue it would feed into a compelling case that Colchester’s housing numbers should not go up.

At the request of the Chair, the Principal Planning Policy Officer responded that the need for sites was an overall picture of the development potential across the city with the Committee report outlining that there will be another report after the Strategic Housing Land Assessment methodology which would be in 2024 that will bring the assessed sites forward. The Committee heard that there was the inclusion of infrastructure in the criteria and that the Brownfield Register is updated annually, and that guidance was taken from the Planning Practice Guidance with regards to Flood Zones and the AONB with sites falling away from the process if they were not appropriate. It was added that any site would be considered holistically and that any red rating would not automatically discount a site.

Members debated the proposal with the Committee discussing the call for sites and how the timing of sites being entered into the process was not limited to the timeframe of the

consultation and the use of a single criteria and whether this was the right approach. At the request of the Chair, the Principal Planning Officer responded that officers had learnt from the previous Local Plan on issues including how distances were measured and have proposed something different this time and included the settlement boundary review to look at settlement scale and not on an individual basis. It was noted that where there were not any settlement boundaries in the city area they had previously been categorised into North, South, East and West.

Members continued to debate the proposals on issues including the reflections from the work undertaken on the previous Local Plan which included the unintended consequences from the last iteration. Officers responded that some of these points were the reason why a workshop was being organised with officers at both the City and County Council to explore the possible consequences. Members continued to debate the report querying how much flexibility there was in the methodology when it came to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) as well as the infrastructure needs for schools and other facilities.

The Joint Head of Planning responded that anyone could put forward sites for consideration but that there was a need to ensure that they were deliverable and viable and whilst considering the different uses for the land and that this could be difficult on smaller sites.

Members continued to debate the proposal noting that there was a five-dwelling cut off point which did have an impact on small builders losing their competitiveness as well as microsites that would not be in the allocations. Some Members noted that there had previously been concern regarding the accuracy of the Brownfield register as well as a query being raised regarding the use of agricultural farmyards and their status as many were run down and with possible asbestos contamination.

At the request of the Chair the Principal Planning Policy Officer responded that the site threshold was a standard designation in Local Plan making and that there was no evidence to go below this amount so could not be justified. The Committee heard that Brownfield sites and other sites had been included in discussions with Councillors and outlined that if Members were aware of Brownfield sites that they wanted to be considered then these could be reported to Officers for analysis. It was noted by Officers that agricultural buildings did benefit from Permitted Development rights.

The Committee continued discussions with some Members noting their support for small housebuilders and an encouragement for developers to use Brownfield sites. It was noted by members that discussions were currently taking place regarding the definition of Green Belt. Members continued by discussing whether there was a specific allocation for windfall sites and smaller sites.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer outlined that the SLAA had been updated since the previous Local Plan had been created as well as the Planning Practice Guidance and National Guidance based upon research of what had and had not worked in previous plans.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY) that the Local plan Committee (LPC):

1. Agree to launch the Call for Sites
2. Agree to publish the Strategic Land Availability Assessment for public consultation in accordance with Planning Regulations and the Statement of Community Involvement.

3. Agree that minor changes to the Call for Sites proforma and Strategic Land Availability Assessment Methodology can be approved by the Joint Heads of Planning in consultation with the Chair of the Committee prior to the consultation commencing.

286. Consultation on implementation of Plan Marking Reforms

Bethany Jones, Principal Planning Officer, presented the report to the Committee and assisted the Committee in its deliberations. The Committee heard that the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities launched a consultation on the 25 July 2023 implementation of plan making. The Committee were being asked to review the proposed response from the Council which would be sent by Officers on behalf of the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Environment and Sustainability. The Committee heard that the proposal incorporated significant changes which included:

- Plan content
- The new 30-month plan timeframe
- Digital Plans
- The Local Plan timetable
- Evidence and the tests of soundness
- Gateway assessments during plan-making
- Plan examination
- Monitoring of plans
- Supplementary Plans
- Minerals and Waste Plans
- Community Land Actions
- Approach to roll out and transition
- Saving existing plans and planning documents.

The Principal Planning Officer concluded by detailing that the Committee were asked to provide comments which would be given to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Environment, and Sustainability.

Members discussed the proposals and responses contained within the report and appendix as summarised below:

- That the process for making Local Plans being shorter was welcomed.
- That the introduction of national policies was welcomed to stop duplication of policy at national and local levels.
- Some Members felt that infrastructure contributions should be bolder and should not be a tax on development.

At the request of the Chair the Principal Planning Officer detailed that the 30-month timescale as detailed did have added time scales that were not included in the 30 months which included early engagement which lasted 4 months, and the examination stage is listed for 3 months for modifications. The Principal Planning Officer added that officers were unable to advise on the impact of national policies due to a lack of detail which had been included in the draft response.

At the request of the Chair the Joint Head of Planning, Simon Cairns, detailed that there was a change in approach with regard to Section 106 Agreements but that it was a blunt approach with a spending schedule and added that it would not be appropriate to bring in sites into any review of a local plan that were not viable.

Members continued to discuss the proposals and debate the proposal with the Committee detailing:

- That it was not clear what the golden thread referred to in the document was and that more detail was required.
- That if it sped up the process then it would be welcomed and that it could be worth considering the development of land and whether a tax liability could be considered when developed.
- That if Councils were expected to speed up the process then further resources would be needed both on a Human Resources level but also a financial one.
- A question was raised regarding the requirement for three gateway assessments and whether they were required.

At the request of the Chair the Principal Planning Officer outlined that there was a running theme in the proposed responses that more information was needed to fully answer the questions. This included details required on how processes would work, and general issues surrounding this as well as concerns raised by other Local Authorities regarding the costs associated with an expediated timeline.



Local Plan Committee

Item
7

11 December 2023

Report of

**Sandra
Scott, Place
Strategy
Manager**

01206 282975

Title

**Colchester Local Plan Review proposed Vision
Engagement and progress update**

Wards affected

All wards affected

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Officers have commenced work on various aspects of the Local Plan Review. The committee agreed in October 2023 to work on the Local Plan Review with a focus on enhancing the green network and creating a better environment.
- 1.2 Workshops were held in October and November with Members and Officers to start thinking about a vision for the Local Plan Review. Officers will use all ideas to help inform draft a vision, together with feedback from wider stakeholder engagement proposed in the new year.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 Members are asked to note progress made on the Local Plan Review.
- 2.2 Members are asked to agree public engagement in early 2024 to inform a vision for the Local Plan Review.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 The Local Plan Committee oversees work on the Local Plan, and it is essential that the Committee are kept up to date with progress.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The alternative is to not to consult with the communities and stakeholders at this stage, however, this is considered to miss an opportunity to ensure that the Local Plan Review Vision is genuinely shaped by communities which is considered important to be effective.

5. Background Information

- 5.1 Local Plan Committee considered reports about the Local Plan Review at the June, August, and October meetings. The June report 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. The August report included a high-level programme for the Local Plan Review, including proposing an iterative Issues and Options engagement comprising multiple themed engagements rather than one composite Issues and Options consultation. An Engagement and Consultation Strategy, which sets out how stakeholders and the public will be engaged and consulted on the Local Plan Review, was included as a background paper and has been published on the [Council's website](#). The October report set out the approach to the Local Plan Review of using the green network and waterways and the 'creating a better environment' agenda as the starting point and key purpose of the Local Plan Review. The committee agreed to work on the Local Plan Review with a focus on enhancing the green network and creating a better environment.

Issues and Options

- 5.2 Members are aware that the iterative 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. Since October, progress has been made on the call for sites, green network and waterways, and initial engagement to help inform a future vision for the next Local Plan.
- 5.3 The call for sites and consultation on the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) methodology commenced in October. A separate report is presented to the Committee, which outlines the response to the SLAA methodology consultation and asks the Committee to agree the methodology.
- 5.4 Consultation on the green network and waterways is also underway and will be available for comments until early January 2024. Stakeholders have the opportunity to comment on how they use existing green spaces and waterways, views about the current condition of spaces and suggest any improvements which could be made. This consultation also enables stakeholders to suggest enhancements which could be made and suggest areas which may be considered suitable for new green spaces, which they can draw on an online map and will be asked to provide a justification to support this. Opportunities arising from this consultation will be considered as the work on the Local Plan progresses.

Vision

- 5.5 All members were invited to a workshop on 31 October 2023, the purpose of which was to start thinking about a vision for the Local Plan. A vision is required to provide high level principles upon which the plan is based. To be effective a vision should be focussed and specific; be genuinely shaped by communities and be informed by other stakeholders and baseline information. Members were asked, through different group exercises, to think about the best things about Colchester as a place, future opportunities, what success looks like, and what planning can do.
- 5.6 The best things about Colchester as a Place informed by the Member Workshop can be summarised as follows;
- Distinctive culture and heritage and the arts
 - Green and blue spaces
 - Inclusive communities
 - Quality of life
 - Environment and geography
- 5.7 Opportunities for Colchester up to 2041, informed by the Member Workshop can be summarised as follows;
- Better public transport corridors and routes and active travel
 - Sustainable communities – more social housing and diverse housing for lower incomes and better jobs
 - Future proofed infrastructure
 - Housing and infrastructure
 - Jobs
 - Tourism
- 5.8 The full list of points raised at the Member workshop is provided at Appendix A to this Report. All points raised will inform the work going forward to inform the Local Plan Review Vision, not just those listed as the best or most important.
- 5.9 The feedback from discussions at the Member workshop in response to questions about what success looks like and what planning can do, will also help shape the emerging thinking. The discussions demonstrated how intrinsically linked the themes identified as; Green Networks and Waterways, Climate Change, Design and Place and Health and Wellbeing are. Identifying successful outcomes under one theme also delivers positive outcomes for another. This will be important in ensuring the Plan's Vision and Objectives are effectively woven together recognising the connections between them.
- 5.10 Further key points arising from discussions about planning and success, at the Member workshop, relate to the importance of the Plan providing for the right infrastructure at the right time to support the growth and needs of the communities as they are identified by evidence to inform the Plan. Points were raised regarding housing numbers which is another matter that will be considered

following completion of the relevant evidence during 2024. Local Plan Committee will receive Reports on these issues at the appropriate time. These will be key considerations, informed by evidence as the Plan preparation progresses.

- 5.11 A Planning Officers workshop was held in November, and this raised similar responses in respect of the best things now and opportunities in the future. The best things about Colchester as a place identified below with the overall top 3 highlighted in bold;

- **Heritage**
- **Connectivity**
- **Diverse nature- Urban / Rural/ Coast**
- Green space and access to nature
- Leisure infrastructure

- 5.12 Opportunities for Colchester up to 2041, informed by the Officer Workshop can be summarised as follows;

- Improve transport infrastructure.
- Enhance public realm everywhere.
- Protect and enhance heritage.
- Balance infrastructure provision with growth
- Good quality housing
- Maximise city status
- Colchester as a destination
- Active environment and sustainable places
- Economic opportunities

- 5.13 To ensure the Local Plan Review Vision is genuinely shaped by communities and stakeholders it is proposed that high level, online engagement is also carried out with communities and stakeholders early in the new year. Building on the engagement with Members and Officers, it is proposed to invite thoughts on what should be included in the vision and what should be the main aims and objectives of the plan. It is proposed to host an engagement online, allowing the public and stakeholders to submit comments on the following questions. There will be background information provided to explain the context of this engagement and how it will be used to inform the Local Plan Review.

What 3 things do you like best about Colchester City (Local Authority Area) as a Place?

What do you think are the most important opportunities for Colchester looking ahead to 2041?

What 3 things would you most like Colchester to be known for in 2041 and beyond?

- 5.14 Officers will consider all comments made at the Member and Officer workshops together with the feedback from wider public and stakeholder engagement to inform a draft vision, which will be incorporated in a Preferred Options Plan and subject to public consultation at the appropriate time next year.

Update on other work

- 5.15 In addition to work on the Local Plan Review vision, over the next couple of months, Officers will work on the Strategic Land Availability Assessment. More information about this is included in a separate report. Officers will commence work on a Settlement Boundary Review, which will review the boundaries of all settlements in the city. Meetings will be arranged with Town and Parish Councils and Residents Associations to discuss the planning for a better environment approach to the Local Plan Review, opportunities and constraints within the town/village, requirements for green spaces, the call for sites submissions received and neighbourhood planning. As set out at the August meeting, officers are also reviewing the existing evidence base and identifying which require updating. Officers will also publish the Essex County Council recommended climate change policies early in the new year and seek views on whether these should be incorporated into the Local Plan Review. More information on these matters will be available at a future Local Plan Committee early next year.

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 Public consultation will commence in the new year on initial engagement to inform a draft vision for the Local Plan Review. 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.

APPENDIX A

Member Workshop summary table

Responses to the best things about Colchester as a Place now and opportunities for 2041

Best Things Now	Opportunities - 2041
<p>Environmental</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geography / location • Countryside • Estuaries and the sea • Green space • Urban / rural mix / • separate identity of places 	<p>Environmental</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of areas of ecological importance • Environmentally friendly • Less congestion • Improved links for active travel • Clean healthy and green • More efficient use of land (intensification / density in urban centre)
<p>Heritage and Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History / heritage • Distinctive culture / heritage • Arts 	<p>Heritage and Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise potential of heritage and cultural qualities and opportunities
<p>Economic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy (as a whole) • Castle Park • Regeneration • Diversity of hospitality • Urban district centres • Tourism – quality and range of destinations 	<p>Economic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse economy • Maximise opportunities from links between University and Military • Better quality jobs - Higher paid and higher skilled jobs • Jobs to be matched to housing in quantum and needs • Maximise potential of geographical position to promote and grow economy • Regenerated / thriving city centre
<p>Social and infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing / Infrastructure • Housing – relative affordability (compared to London) • Education opportunities • Quality of life • Transport connections 	<p>Social and infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organic growth in the villages • balance of growth between the town and countryside • Effective and adequate infrastructure • Better internal transport

Best Things Now	Opportunities - 2041
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No infrastructure deficit (catch up and maintain) • Infrastructure future proofed • Good housing supported by adequate infrastructure • Housing provision to match needs (Starter homes, retirement homes / villages/ mix of size and type) • better traffic links • Better public transport • Modern play parks • More opportunities for young people including access to sport and leisure • Intensification / higher densities in urban centre
<p>Quality / Cultural Characteristics of place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of belonging • Cultural – identify with places • Care about the place • Refugee action • Welcoming • Ambitious • Strong sense of identity 	<p>Quality / Cultural Characteristics of place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity recognised and celebrated • support for communities



11 December 2023

Report of	Bethany Jones Principal Planning Policy Officer	01206 282541
Title	Colchester Local Plan Review – Strategic Land Availability Assessment Methodology	
Wards affected	All wards affected	

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Draft Strategic Land Availability Assessment Methodology was subject to consultation for four weeks from 20 October to 17 November 2023. A total of 12 representations were received.
- 1.2 The Call for Sites was also launched on 20 October and will close on 5 January 2024. An update will be provided to Local Plan Committee in the new year to summarise which sites have been promoted for which uses.
- 1.3 The Strategic Land Availability Assessment Methodology has been updated to take account of the comments received during the consultation and following an officer workshop held with colleagues across the planning service and Essex County Council.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the summary of consultation responses and agree the Strategic Land Availability Assessment Methodology.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 To enable progression with work on the Local Plan Review.

4. Alternative Options

4.1 The Council could delay work on the Local Plan Review, but failure to keep the Local Plan up to date would leave the Council vulnerable to speculative planning applications.

5. Background Information

5.1 Following agreement at Local Plan Committee in October, the Call for Sites and Draft Strategic Land Availability Assessment Methodology Consultation have been launched. The Strategic Land Availability Assessment Methodology was available for comment for a four-week period (20 October to 17 November 2023). The Call for Sites also opened on 20 October and is due to close on 5 January 2024.

5.2 Both the Call for Sites and the Draft Strategic Land Availability Assessment Methodology Consultation have been advertised on the Councils website, the Planning Consultation Portal, social media, a Press Release was issued on 26 October 2023 and notifications sent to all Statutory Consultees, Parish Councils, Councillors and those on our Local Plan Database.

5.2 As the Call for Sites is still open, an update to Local Plan Committee will be provided in the new year on the details of sites that have been submitted.

5.3 The Draft Strategic Land Availability Assessment Methodology follows guidance set out in the national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). This appraises sites for their suitability, availability and achievability with the aim of objectively determining which sites will be deliverable over the plan period.

5.4 A total of 12 representations were submitted to the Draft Strategic Land Availability Assessment Methodology Consultation. These are summarised in Appendix A. The representations have been published in full and are available to view via the Council's [Consultation Portal](#).

5.5 Officers held a workshop with colleagues from across the planning service and Essex County Council to discuss the Draft Strategic Land Availability Assessment Methodology.

5.6 Taking into account the representations received and the debate at the October Local Plan Committee, the following changes have been made to the methodology:

- Clarity that sites below the site size threshold are not precluded from coming forward via the planning application process
- Initial Survey (Stage 1) now only applies to sites proposed for residential and commercial uses. Any sites proposed for infrastructure (including green infrastructure) will be assessed from Stage 2 of the process.

- The Initial Survey has been updated to clarify the survey takes into account national policy and designation to determine whether a site is suitable or not for future development. Wording has been updated to clarify the use of desktop review data sources to prevent predetermination.
- Update Initial Survey criteria to remove ambiguity of when a planning application may be submitted for sites already allocated in the Development Plan. Replaced “near future” with “2033” to align with the end of the plan period for the Adopted Local Plan.
- Update Initial Survey criteria to remove reference to existing settlements to align with the NPPF approach to development in the countryside
- Update Initial Survey criteria to be more specific that sites wholly within Flood Zone 3 will be considered unsuitable and not progress to the next stage of assessment to ensure more consistent approach to all physical constraints
- Further clarification added to access related criteria in both Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the assessment.
- Removal of criteria regarding landscape harm and key views as these are considered too specific and subjective to enable a consistent assessment and may be influenced by details not available at this stage. These matters will be considered through the Sustainability Appraisal and other evidence base documents as part of the plan making process.
- Update justification in relation to Minerals Safeguarding Area and Minerals and/or Waste Consultation Area to align with Minerals and Waste Local Plans.
- Clarify RAG Assessment for identifying issues that would prevent or limit the developable area of a site and agricultural land classification
- Access to key services is now measured via four questions (primary school, secondary school, supermarkets/convenience stores and GP surgeries) as opposed to one which captured a number of services. To enable a more consistent and comprehensive understanding of infrastructure, facilities and services for the Local Plan Review, this will be analysed at the settlement level within the Settlement Boundary Review, as opposed to individual sites. As identified through the debate at Local Plan Committee in October, this approach can easily be applied outside of the urban area of Colchester due to existing parish and settlement boundaries. Officers have considered how this can also apply to the urban area of Colchester, given that this is such an expansive geography, it is considered most appropriate to use ward boundaries. This enables data to be collected from Census 2021 and will enable all Members to input their knowledge of existing facilities and services across the administrative area.

- All data sources have been reviewed and updated where necessary to clarify what evidence will be used for each criterion.
- Delete reference to publication of Call for Sites Forms and SLAA Site Assessments. It will be considered further how and when the information will be published in the most user friendly way in accordance with GDPR.
- Clarification has been added into the introduction, prior to the Stage 2 Site Assessment section, and in a new section to clarify the overall outcome of the RAG Assessments and how the assessments will be used to inform the Local Plan Review.

5.8 The updated Methodology is outlined in Appendix B.

5.9 Subject to agreement of the revised Methodology, the first step will be for officers to begin the desktop study to identify additional sites for further assessment. Once the Call for Sites has closed on 5 January 2024, and the desktop study is complete, officers can begin assessing the sites. Local Plan Committee will continue to be updated on progress.

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 There is no requirement for further consultation on the Strategic Land Availability Assessment Methodology.

9. Publicity Considerations

9.1 There is likely to be continued interest in the new Local Plan preparation, particularly the proposed allocation of land for development. It will be important to manage publicity carefully, to help minimise misconception and concerns.

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.

Appendices

A – Summary of Consultation Responses to Draft Strategic Land Availability Assessment Methodology

B – Strategic Land Availability Assessment Methodology and Assessment Proforma

Colchester Local Plan Review - Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) Methodology Consultation
20th October to 17th November 2023 Consultation Responses Summary

Name	Summary of Representation	Officer Response
CAUSE	<p>I do not object to the methodology but the consultation forced me to choose support or object. I have additions to make. Ideally, a call for sites should not happen until a strategy is in place, and ideally this SLAA should then apply to see if sites comply with the strategy.</p> <p>The appraisals set out in the methodology need to go further, as follows, looking at capacity of the road network adjacent to the site capacity of public transport serving the site frequency of public transport (bus or train)? capacity of schools, doctors' surgeries? number of bike paths adjacent to site</p>	<p>As part of the Local Plan Review process a number of evidence base documents need to be prepared at similar timescales, however many do inform each other.</p> <p>The SLAA assesses a site's suitability, availability and achievability with the aim of objectively determining which sites will be deliverable over the plan period.</p> <p>The overall strategy and site allocations for the Colchester Local Plan Review will be informed by a range of evidence base documents and engagement.</p> <p>The Settlement Boundary Review and Sustainability Appraisal, among other evidence base documents, will consider the capacity of a number of facilities and infrastructure to inform the Local Plan Review. It is considered more appropriate for this to be at the settlement scale, as opposed to individual sites.</p>
Natural England	<p>Natural England does not have available staff resources to provide bespoke advice on SHLAAs or attend meetings in connection with them. In line with the National Planning Policy Framework, we offer the following generic advice on key natural environment considerations for use in producing or</p>	<p>Noted.</p>

Name	Summary of Representation	Officer Response
	<p>revising SHLAAs, which we hope is of use.</p> <p>Natural England does not have any specific comments on the draft Methodology.</p>	
Anglian Water Services	<p>3.4 Anglian Water welcomes the inclusion of infrastructure and green infrastructure to the wider range of uses considered in the SLAA. This helps to ensure that the Local Plan is able to plan holistically and ensure that critical infrastructure can be delivered in a timely way to support sustainable growth. We would suggest that this list could also be broadened to include sites for renewable energy.</p> <p>Table 2 – Initial survey constraints: Anglian Water recognise that some high level assessment is required to identify available and deliverable sites. However, the constraints should also consider that different conclusions may arise depending on the intended use of the site. Sites for infrastructure would not necessarily meet the same criteria as for residential development - for example, in terms of our water recycling infrastructure, it is considered less vulnerable in terms of flood risk.</p> <p>3.29 – we agree that the site suitability can be considered in terms of where any constraints can be overcome through reasonable mitigation.</p> <p>3.31 – Anglian Water suggests that the term infrastructure is broad but generally will provide a</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) clarifies that the SLAA process applies to sites for housing and economic development proposals. The Council have included infrastructure to apply a transparent and consistent approach to assessing sites.</p> <p>It is considered more appropriate for the Initial Survey to apply to sites proposed for residential and employment uses only. Any sites proposed for infrastructure will not be considered through the initial survey and will be assessed from Stage 2 of the assessment.</p>

Name	Summary of Representation	Officer Response
	wider role in supporting existing communities and future growth.	
W Sunnucks	<p>Officer Summary:</p> <p>1. Size No established pathway for smaller sites of 5 dwellings or less. Can SLAA explain that screening system only excludes small sites for administrative reasons and is not intended to block proposals.</p> <p>2. Transport Networks Methodology puts insufficient weight on transport networks – roads, railways and bus routes. This should be starting point for locating development, not an afterthought. Transport led growth would create development along each of the major routes into Colchester. Benefits for both town centre and countryside.</p>	<p>The SLAA methodology has been updated to outline that sites below the site size thresholds are not precluded from coming forward via the planning application process.</p> <p>The overall strategy for the Colchester Local Plan Review will be informed by a range of evidence base documents and engagement.</p> <p>The Settlement Boundary Review and Sustainability Appraisal, among other evidence base documents, will consider the capacity of a number of facilities and infrastructure to inform the Local Plan Review. It is considered more appropriate for this to be at the settlement scale, as opposed to individual sites.</p>
Historic England	As the Government’s adviser on the historic environment Historic England is keen to ensure that the protection of the historic environment is fully taken into account at all stages and levels of the local planning process, and therefore welcome the opportunity to comment on these proposals. I can confirm that while we do not have any specific comments to make at this stage, we will be interested in receiving subsequent consultations on this and related projects	Noted.
A Warnes	<p>Officer Summary:</p> <p>1. I am concerned they are considering developing any site that has any part of it in flood zone3.</p>	The Initial Survey criteria in relation to flood zone 3 has been updated.

Name	Summary of Representation	Officer Response
	<p>(Page11)</p> <p>2. The same goes for AONB's etc. Page 11)</p> <p>3. We should be considering sites of less than 5 dwellings (Page10)</p> <p>4. Sites in the development / neighbourhood plan are mentioned. Can we ensure that Great Tey neighbourhood plan is considered. (Page12)</p> <p>5. General - I know it is not currently at approval stage but can we push to ensure that our Neighbourhood Plan is at least taken into consideration. It highlights the villages preferred site.</p>	<p>The Initial Survey identifies any sites that have been proposed wholly within the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and removes these from further assessment.</p> <p>The SLAA methodology has been updated to outline that sites below the site size thresholds are not precluded from coming forward via the planning application process.</p> <p>The SLAA includes criteria related to sites that are allocated for development in the current adopted Local Plan, including Neighbourhood Plans to identify which allocations have been delivered, are likely to be delivered by 2033 or which require further assessment.</p>
Dandara	<p>General - Staged approach to site assessment logical, where mitigation put forward, pragmatic view must be taken. Most sites will need to be considered for further assessment as not possible to predetermine preferred strategy.</p> <p>Suitability Criteria - Sites should not be ruled out where mitigation can potentially be delivered.</p> <p>Main Access and Highways Constraints – A12 Chelmsford to A120 widening scheme should be taken into account as will increase capacity of local road network. Updated transport modelling required, historic views cannot be relied upon.</p> <p>Walking Distances to Key Services – ability of sites</p>	<p>The SLAA assesses a site's suitability, availability and achievability with the aim of objectively determining which sites will be deliverable over the plan period.</p> <p>The overall strategy and site allocations for the Colchester Local Plan Review will be informed by a range of evidence base documents and engagement.</p> <p>As part of the Local Plan Review process a number of evidence base documents need to be prepared at similar timescales, however many do inform each other.</p>

Name	Summary of Representation	Officer Response
	<p>to offer improvements should mean all sites are given fair consideration where delivering locally. Availability Criteria – Approach supported (landownership and promotion).</p>	<p>Transport modelling has been identified as being required for the Local Plan Review. This evidence base document will be prepared at the most appropriate time.</p> <p>It is not considered necessary to separately assess issues which may prevent or limit the developable area. The RAG assessment has been updated and considers whether each issue is likely to affect the sites deliverability.</p> <p>Noted.</p>
<p>Pegasus Group (Bloor Homes Eastern)</p>	<p>Stage 1 Physically isolated for existing settlement – not clear how will apply.</p> <p>Stage 2 Is RAG rating on each criterion subject to any weighting? Impact of receiving red rating under a criterion is not clear How is overall conclusion to site’s overall prospects reached? Object paragraph 3.26 (publication of Call for Sites’ forms)</p> <p>Section 1 Suitability Data sources do not include site specific technical evidence submitted by site promotor. Criterion 1 - update to include “or the built up area of the settlement?” Criterion 5 – Green rating, high and unrealistic</p>	<p>The Initial Survey has been updated to remove reference to existing settlements to align with the NPPF approach to development in the countryside.</p> <p>From Stage 2 of the SLAA assessment, one individual Red RAG assessment does not necessarily rule out the site from further consideration. A section has been included in the methodology report to provide more clarity on the outcome of the site assessments.</p> <p>Reference to publication has been deleted. The Call for Sites forms and Site Assessments will be published in accordance with GDPR at the appropriate time.</p> <p>Where appropriate, data sources have included information from the Call for Sites pro-forma. This</p>

Name	Summary of Representation	Officer Response
	<p>measure. Amendment proposed. Criterion 6 – Red rating, no evidence or explanation. Criterion 7 – Object. Remove criteria. Red and Amber rating unclear. Access to key services Criterion 1 – Object.</p> <p>Section 3 Achievability Criterion 3 – Object. Remove criteria.</p>	<p>will, where relevant, include information submitted by the site promoter.</p> <p>Clarification added to criteria on proximity to settlement boundary.</p> <p>Criterion 5: The RAG assessment has been updated and considers whether each issue is likely to affect the site’s deliverability.</p> <p>Criterion 6: This approach is reflective of the NPPF’s preference for utilising previously developed land, over greenfield land.</p> <p>Criterion 7: Data from Natural England is used for this criterion to provide a consistent approach to assessment. The RAG assessment has been updated to consistently assess all land classifications.</p> <p>Access to key services is now measured via four questions (primary school, secondary school, supermarkets/convenience stores and GP surgeries) as opposed to one which captured a number of services. This will also be assessed at the settlement and ward scale through the Settlement Boundary Review.</p> <p>The criteria related to Minerals and Waste has been reviewed and the justification updated to align with the Minerals and Waste Local Plans.</p>

Name	Summary of Representation	Officer Response
Gladman	<p>Stage 1 – Initial Survey No amber in RAG rating – potentially limits sustainable sites from progressing to next stage.</p> <p>Stage 2 – Site Assessment Greenfield/Brownfield Land – both are needed to meet housing need. Inappropriate red rating. Remove criteria and include information for context only.</p> <p>Green Infrastructure Enhancement Question ability to answer this question based on Call for Sites proforma and GIS alone. Only addressed through in-depth assessment. Revise source.</p>	<p>The Initial Survey criteria has been updated to be more specific that sites within Flood Zone 3 will be considered unsuitable and not progress to the next stage of assessment.</p> <p>The Initial Survey has been updated to clarify the survey takes into account national policy and designation to determine whether a site is suitable or not for future development.</p> <p>This approach is reflective of the NPPF’s preference for utilising previously developed land, over greenfield land.</p> <p>From Stage 2 of the SLAA assessment, one individual Red RAG assessment does not necessarily rule out the site from further consideration. A section has been included in the methodology report to provide more clarity on the outcome of the site assessments.</p> <p>The Green Infrastructure enhancement criterion has been updated to clarify various sources of data will be used.</p>
Hopkins Homes	<p>Previous SLAA as a data source for sites – predetermined conclusion? Concerned regarding the potential loss of the ‘Amber’ category within the Red-Amber-Green assessment.</p> <p>Red-Amber-Green approach to things like</p>	<p>Wording has been updated to clarify the use of desktop review data sources to prevent predetermination.</p> <p>The Initial Survey has been updated to clarify the survey takes into account national policy and</p>

Name	Summary of Representation	Officer Response
	<p>agricultural land classification, utilities and land ownership – without an Amber option, sites could be prematurely discounted from further assessment?</p> <p>Wording suggests that site visits will be undertaken where considered necessary, table confirms these are how evidence will be gathered - lack of consistency?</p> <p>Landscape, archaeology and heritage - What evidence base will be used for these and how will officers make informed judgements that can be consistent and “sound” in their approach/conclusions?</p> <p>Windfall allowance based on evidence of previous delivery.</p>	<p>designation to determine whether a site is suitable or not for future development.</p> <p>Stage 2 of the assessment includes a RAG assessment.</p> <p>All data sources have been reviewed and updated where necessary to clarify what evidence will be used for each criterion.</p> <p>Removal of criteria regarding landscape harm and key views as these are considered too specific and subjective to enable a consistent assessment. These matters will be considered through the Sustainability Appraisal and other evidence base documents as part of the plan making process.</p> <p>Noted.</p>
Boyer (Vistry Homes Ltd)	<p>Table 1 – benefit including sites from previous SLAAs?</p> <p>Para 3.18 – LPA could discount site only part within boundary and part outside.</p> <p>Table 2 - Agree</p> <p>Para 3.21 – Opportunity to review Council’s assessments and seek proposal amendments</p> <p>Para 3.30 – Unclear evidence base Utilities - fails to take into account capacity can be</p>	<p>Wording has been updated to clarify the use of desktop review data sources to prevent predetermination.</p> <p>The Initial Survey has been updated to clarify the survey takes into account national policy and designation to determine whether a site is suitable or not for future development. The Initial Survey does not rule out a site from further assessment if it is only part within a designated landscape.</p> <p>From Stage 2 of the SLAA assessment, one individual Red RAG assessment does not necessarily rule out the site from further</p>

Name	Summary of Representation	Officer Response
	<p>provided</p> <p>Prevent/limit developable areas – how identify constraints that are underground and impact may have on developable area.</p> <p>Landscape character – unclear evidence base or specialists and how rating determined.</p> <p>Key Services – include walking, cycling and wheeling</p> <p>Site Ownership – Has site been promoted recently?</p> <p>Existing Policies – not useful metric Reliance on another parcel of land – not unsurmountable</p> <p>Alternative use – how will be undertaken, especially for Neighbourhood Plans.</p> <p>Para 3.32 – evidenced based and reviewed each year</p> <p>Para 3.3 – How will sites be taken forward. Unclear what happens if site has red rating for any criterion.</p>	<p>consideration. A section has been included in the methodology report to provide more clarity on the outcome of the site assessments.</p> <p>It will be considered further how and when the SLAA information will be published in the most user friendly way in accordance with GDPR.</p> <p>The purpose of the SLAA is not to create the spatial strategy. A number of evidence base documents (including the SLAA, Sustainability Appraisal, Settlement Boundary Review, Green Infrastructure Strategy and others) will be used alongside engagement and consultation to develop a spatial strategy and preferred site allocations.</p> <p>There will be the opportunity for further engagement as part of the Local Plan process.</p> <p>All data sources have been reviewed and updated where necessary to clarify what evidence will be used for each criterion.</p> <p>The criterion in relation to utilities does not include an assessment of existing capacity.</p> <p>Removal of criteria regarding landscape harm and key views as these are considered too specific and subjective to enable a consistent assessment. These matters will be considered through the</p>

Name	Summary of Representation	Officer Response
		<p>Sustainability Appraisal and other evidence base documents as part of the plan making process.</p> <p>Access to key services is now measured via four questions (primary school, secondary school, supermarkets/convenience stores and GP surgeries) as opposed to one which captured a number of services. This will also be assessed at the settlement and ward scale through the Settlement Boundary Review. All active and sustainable travel modes will be considered throughout the Local Plan. The assessment criteria has been clarified as this will measure distance (proximity) to key services.</p> <p>The site ownership criterion has been updated.</p> <p>In accordance with the PPG, Section 3 of the assessment considers achievability (including viability) as known at the current time. Further viability assessment will be undertaken as part of the planning making process.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Plans are part of the Development Plan and will be reviewed as and when required.</p> <p>Noted.</p>
ADP (Mersea Homes)	Object RAG rating in Tables 2 and 3. RAG only for overall score of site. Examples proposed.	The Initial Survey has been updated to clarify the survey takes into account national policy and designation to determine whether a site is suitable or not for future development.

Name	Summary of Representation	Officer Response
	<p>Table 2 –Object Red for any site physically isolates from existing settlement.</p> <p>Table 3 – Object. Should be tailored to green infrastructure needs. 0.25ha threshold too restrictive.</p> <p>Section 1 – Suitability Settlement Boundary, coalescence, utilities, limits to developable area, brownfield/greenfield, neighbouring uses, landscape character, key views, green infrastructure, key services – too restrictive.</p> <p>Local Designations – object inclusion on Coastal Belt.</p> <p>PROW – too simplistic</p> <p>Section 2 – Availability Ownership – wrongly penalises sites with multiple owners. Working in partnership, current uses – too restrictive</p> <p>Section 3 Minerals, alternative use, contamination – too restrictive.</p>	<p>Initial Survey (Stage 1) now only applies to sites proposed for residential and commercial uses. Any sites proposed for infrastructure (including green infrastructure) will be assessed from Stage 2 of the process.</p> <p>From Stage 2 of the SLAA assessment, one individual Red RAG assessment does not necessarily rule out the site from further consideration. A section has been included in the methodology report to provide more clarity on the outcome of the site assessments.</p> <p>The Initial Survey has been updated to remove reference to existing settlements to align with the NPPF approach to development in the countryside.</p> <p>Clarification added to criteria on proximity to settlement boundary.</p> <p>No update considered necessary in relation to coalescence.</p> <p>The utilities criterion is seeking to identify if there are any potential barriers to delivery that could affect deliverability. It does not include an assessment of existing capacity.</p> <p>The RAG assessment has been updated and considers whether each issue (topography, pylons etc) is likely to affect the sites deliverability.</p>

Name	Summary of Representation	Officer Response
		<p>This approach is reflective of the NPPF's preference for utilising previously developed land, over greenfield land.</p> <p>The neighbouring uses criterion is seeking to assess the potential for impacts and not the implications.</p> <p>Removal of criteria regarding landscape harm and key views as these are considered too specific and subjective to enable a consistent assessment. These matters will be considered through the Sustainability Appraisal and other evidence base documents as part of the plan making process.</p> <p>The approach to public open space is in accordance with the NPPF.</p> <p>Access to key services is now measured via four questions (primary school, secondary school, supermarkets/convenience stores and GP surgeries) as opposed to one which captured a number of services. This will also be assessed at the settlement and ward scale through the Settlement Boundary Review. All active and sustainable travel modes will be considered throughout the Local Plan. The assessment criteria has been clarified as this will measure distance (proximity) to key services.</p> <p>The site ownership criterion has been updated.</p>

Name	Summary of Representation	Officer Response
		<p>The criteria related to Minerals and Waste has been reviewed and the justification updated to align with the Minerals and Waste Local Plans.</p> <p>In accordance with the PPG, Section 2 and 3 of the assessment considers availability and achievability as known at the current time.</p> <p>Where appropriate, data sources have included information from the Call for Sites pro-forma. This will, where relevant, include information submitted by the site promoter.</p>



Colchester Local Plan Review

Strategic Land Availability Assessment Methodology

December 2023

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council adopted the current Colchester Local Plan Section 1 in February 2021 and Section 2 in July 2022. This guides growth and development across Colchester to 2033. To ensure plans remain effective, they require reviewing and updating at least every five years.
- 1.2 The Council are now in the early stages of reviewing the Colchester Local Plan.
- 1.3 A Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) is an essential part of producing a Local Plan. Its purpose is to identify what land is capable of being developed and to assess the constraints and opportunities of developing that land. The SLAA process highlights issues which help inform future decisions regarding the allocation of land for housing, employment and other uses in the e Local Plan Review. The Council will also be assessing sites for green uses, such as for biodiversity net gain, open space, country parks. This will be the first time these uses have been included in the assessment.
- 1.4 The purpose of the SLAA is not to create the spatial strategy it is part of the technical evidence base for the Local Plan which complements other important sources of information such as public consultation and sustainability appraisal. Together these sources of evidence inform the strategic planning decision-making process. Therefore, the SLAA is not the sole source of evidence informing which sites should be allocated for development, but instead it contributes to the local planning authority's understanding of what land is developable.
- 1.5 The Council has reviewed and refined the SLAA methodology to reflect updates to national policy, local priorities and take account of the latest best practice. This document sets out the methodology for the Strategic Land Availability Assessment, including details of the Call for Sites.
- 1.6 This methodology has been subject to public consultation and following this, adopted by the Council's Local Plan Committee at the meeting in XXX.

2. Policy Context

2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 68 sets out the requirement for local authorities to prepare a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment:

“Strategic policy-making authorities should have a clear understanding of the land available in their area through the preparation of a strategic housing land availability assessment. From this, planning policies should identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites, taking into account their availability, suitability and likely economic viability”.

2.2 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) for Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessments expands on this by clarifying that:

“An assessment of land availability identifies a future supply of land which is suitable, available and achievable for housing and economic development uses over the plan period. The assessment is an important source of evidence to inform plan-making and decision-taking, and the identification of a 5-year supply of housing land.

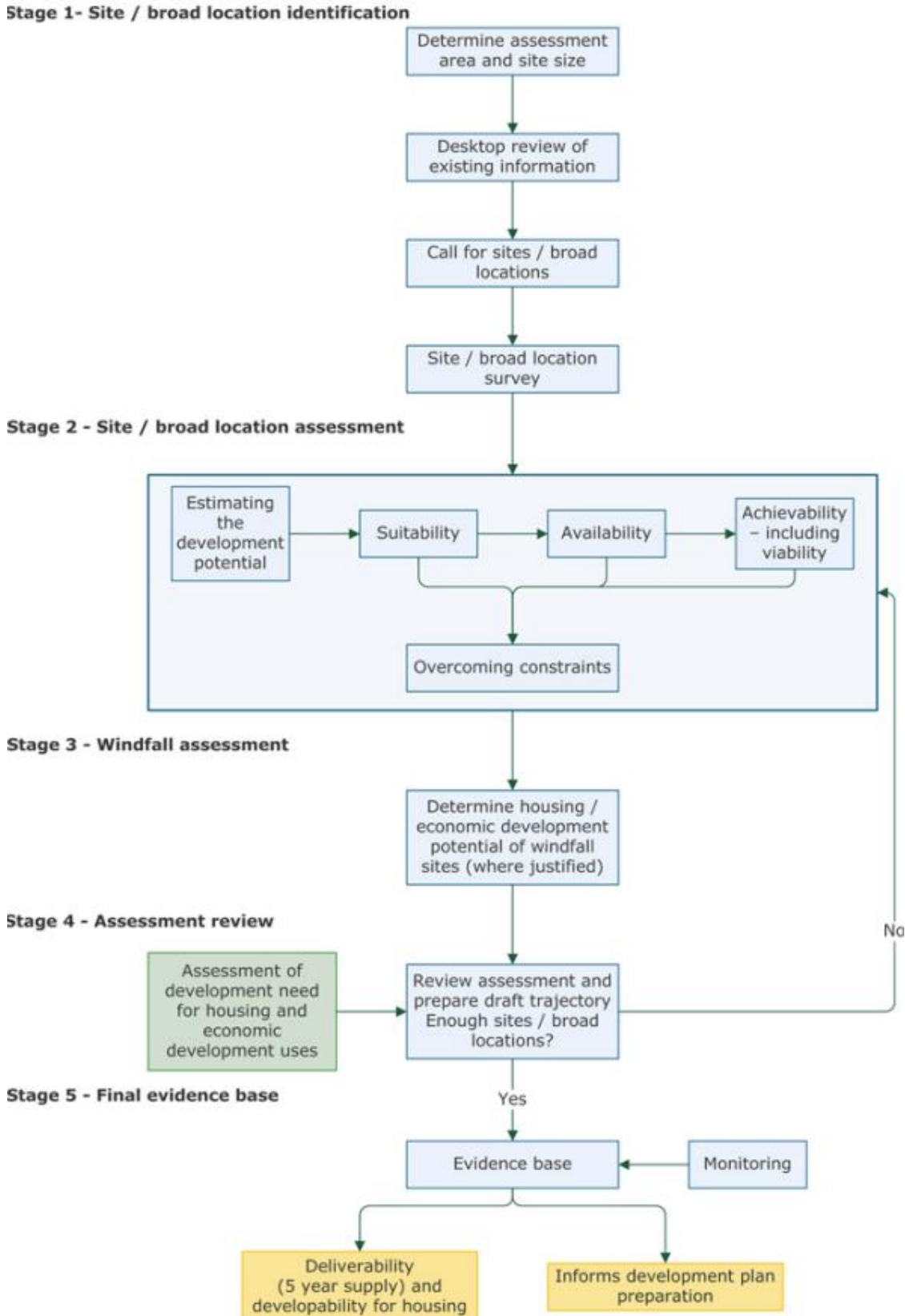
Plan-making authorities may carry out land availability assessments for housing and economic development as part of the same exercise, in order that sites may be identified for the use(s) which is most appropriate.

An assessment should:

- *identify sites and broad locations with potential for development;*
- *assess their development potential; and*
- *assess their suitability for development and the likelihood of development coming forward (the availability and achievability).”*

The PPG also provides a methodology flow chart (see figure 1 below) which indicates the inputs and processes that can lead to a robust assessment. Local Authorities must have regard to this guidance in the preparation and updating of their methodologies and where there are any departures from the guidance, an explanation must be provided.

Figure 1 – Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment Methodology Flowchart (as set out PPG)



3. Methodology

Overview

3.1 The Council's SLAA methodology has been prepared in accordance with the methodology set out in the PPG. This follows a five stage process, comprising:

- Stage 1 – Identification of sites and broad locations
- Stage 2 – Assessment of sites and broad locations
- Stage 3 – Windfall sites assessment
- Stage 4 – Review of assessment
- Stage 5 – Final evidence base

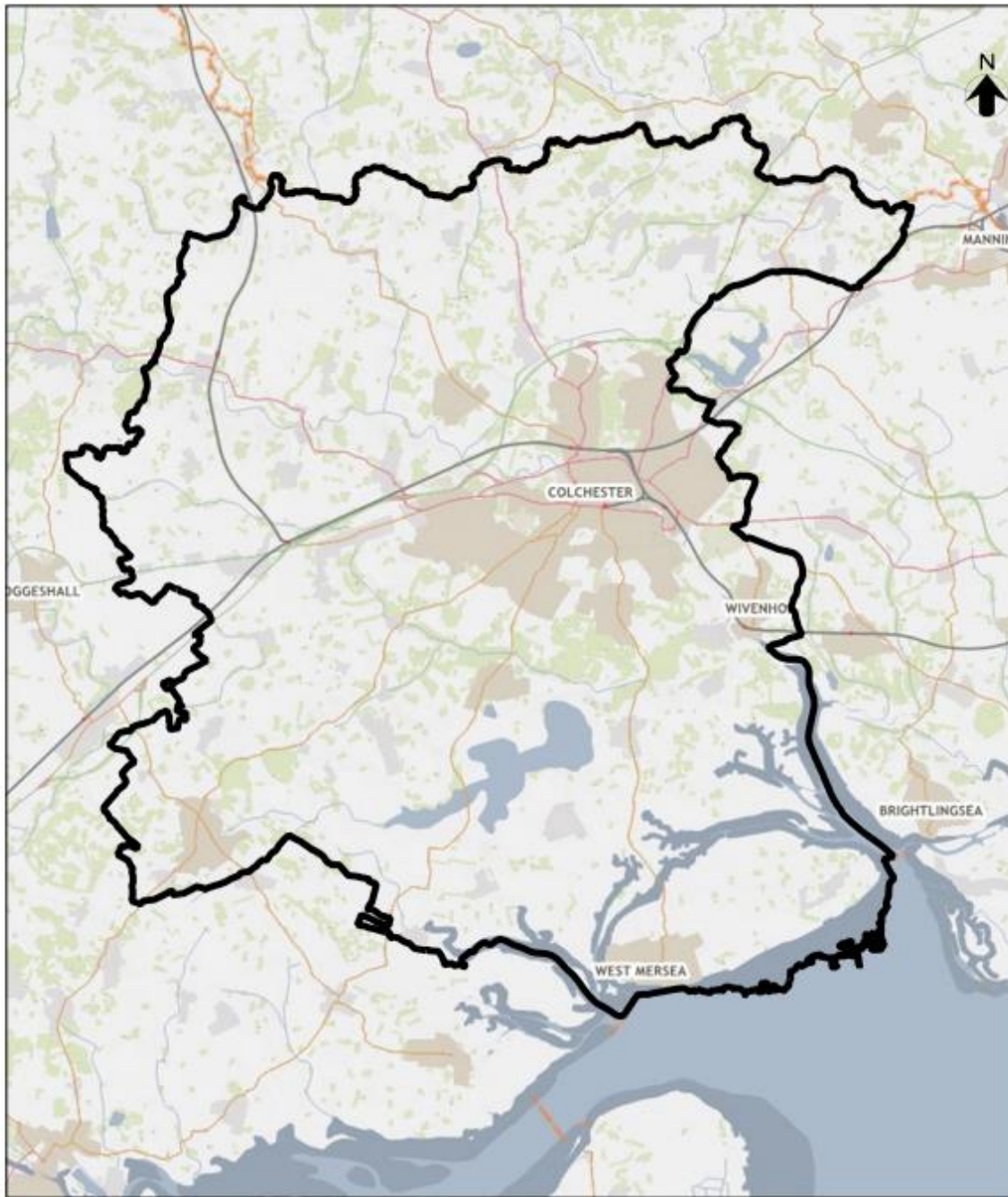
3.2 This report addresses the first two stages of the process in detail with Stage five being the final output of site assessments (from stages 1 and 2) and a separate evidence base document will be prepared to support the Local Plan.

Stage 1 – Identifying the sites

Geographical Area

3.3 The first stage of the SLAA is to determine the geographical area of the assessment. The PPG states this should be the plan making area. The geographical area of the assessment is the Colchester City Council administrative area. This is shown below in Figure 2.

Figure 2 – Colchester City Council Administrative Boundary



Scale: 1:140000
Date: 18/09/2023

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Proposed Uses

3.4 The following uses will be assessed through the SLAA:

- Residential
 - Market and Affordable Housing
 - Custom and Self Build
 - Older Persons Housing
 - Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation
- Commercial
 - Employment
 - Retail
 - Sports and Leisure
 - Restaurant/Café
 - Logistics
- Infrastructure
 - Education
 - Community Facilities
 - Health and Wellbeing
 - Transport
 - Renewable Energy
 - Telecommunications
- Green Infrastructure
 - Open Space
 - Park, Sport and/or Recreation Grounds
 - Country Park
 - Allotments
 - Biodiversity Net Gain

Site Thresholds

3.5 The PPG sets out that it may be appropriate to consider all sites capable of delivering 5 or more dwellings or economic development on sites of 0.25ha (or 500m² floor space) and above. These site size thresholds for built development have therefore been adopted.

3.6 Site proposals below these thresholds are not precluded from coming forward via the planning application process.

Desktop Review

- 3.7 The PPG sets out that plan makers need to be proactive in identifying as wide a range of sites and broad locations for housing and economic development as possible and do not simply rely on sites that they have been informed about.
- 3.8 Table 1 below sets out the data sources that the Council could use for the desktop identification of sites and broad locations.

Table 1 – Desktop Review Data Sources

Type of Site	Data Sources
Existing housing and economic development allocations and development briefs not yet with planning permission	Local and Neighbourhood Plans Development Briefs/Supplementary Planning Documents Planning Application Records
Sites considered through previous SLAAs	Currently adopted Local Plan Evidence Base Currently made Neighbourhood Plans Evidence Base
Planning Permissions for housing and economic development that are unimplemented	Planning Application Records Five Year Housing Land Supply Statements
Planning Applications that have been refused or withdrawn (in relation to spatial strategy) where decision issued after October 2017	Planning Application Records
Land in the local authority's ownership	Local Authority Records
Surplus and likely to become surplus public sector land	National register of public sector land Engagement with strategic bodies such as Essex County Council
Sites with permission in principle or identified brownfield land	Council's Brownfield Land Register
Vacant and derelict land and buildings	Local authority empty property register Council's Brownfield Land Register
Additional opportunities for unestablished uses (e.g., making productive use of under-utilised facilities such as garage blocks)	Planning Application Records Aerial Photography Ordnance Survey Maps Discussions with internal stakeholders including elected Members
Business requirements and aspirations	Enquiries received by Local Planning Authority Discussions with internal stakeholders including elected Members
Sites in rural locations	Local and Neighbourhood Plans

Type of Site	Data Sources
Large scale redevelopment and redesign of existing residential or economic areas	Planning Application Records Aerial Photography
Sites in adjoining villages and rural exception sites	Ordnance Survey Maps Discussions with internal stakeholders
Potential urban extensions and new free standing settlements	including elected Members
Existing green spaces	

Call for Sites

3.9 In addition to the desk top review, the Council have also issued a Call for Sites to enable people to promote sites for consideration and assessment. In accordance with the PPG, this will be aimed at as wide an audience as is practical so that those not normally involved in development have the opportunity to contribute.

3.10 A Call for Sites was launched in Autumn 2023, closing on 5 January 2024. The Call for Sites has been advertised on the Council’s website and notifications sent to those on the council’s Planning Database. This has been hosted on the Council’s Consultation Portal where site promoters, developers, landowners and members of public are required to complete an online survey covering a number of categories including:

- Contact Details
- Site Details
- Planning History
- Proposed Future Use
- Site Ownership
- Site Constraints
- Existing Infrastructure and Utilities
- Site Availability

3.11 Each site submission also includes the site boundary to either be drawn directly into the interactive map or a GIS file can be uploaded. There is also the opportunity to submit any additional information such as early site appraisals, indicative plans etc.

3.12 There has also been the opportunity to complete the form and return this to the council via email or post, for those who are unable to use digital resources. However, it was intended this will only be for members of the public with difficulty in accessing the online resource, and those working within the profession i.e., site promoters have to utilised the Consultation Portal.

Duplication of sites

3.13 There is potential for duplication of sites when using a variety of data sources. Where there is duplication of a site, this will only be assessed once within the SLAA.

Sites with overlapping boundaries

3.14 Where sites or broad location boundaries overlap, the first action will be to explore the reason for this overlap. This can be done by considering the source(s) of the sites/broad locations in the first instance. In the situation that a more recent submission or data source clearly supersedes an earlier submission or data source, the more recent boundary will be used. In the situation that two or more distinct sites or broad locations overlap, they will be assessed together as a whole, with commentary provided on the suitability, availability and achievability of individual parcels.

Initial Survey

3.15 As outlined above, the Call for Sites process will be managed through the Council's Consultation Portal. This system will also enable officers to complete the more detailed site assessments in a more digital and efficient manner. However, not all of this information will be accessible to the public, due to GDPR and commercial sensitivities.

3.16 In addition to the sites submitted via the Call for Sites, those sites identified through the desktop review outlined above will be integrated into the Consultation Portal for further assessment.

3.17 The PPG sets out that an initial survey can be undertaken at this stage to establish up to date, high level information on each site in relation to its character and key constraints. This is also a way to check if any sites have been duplicated through the Call for Sites and desktop review. At this stage, the PPG also enables the identification of any sites which, when taking into account national policy and designations, it would not be appropriate to carry out the more detailed assessment as it is clear they will not be suitable for development.

3.18 The first step in this process is to prepare a complete list of all sites which have been submitted through the Call for Sites and desktop review. Any duplicated sites will immediately be omitted from further consideration.

3.19 Tables 2 below sets out the constraints and criteria for the initial survey which will omit sites from any further detailed assessment. This will determine, when taking into account national policy and designations, whether a site is suitable or not for future development and whether a site should progress to the next stage of the SLAA.

3.20 Any sites promoted for infrastructure (including green infrastructure) development will not be considered through the initial survey. These sites will be assessed from Stage 2 of the assessment process .

Table 2 – Initial Survey Constraints and Explanation (Residential and Commercial–)

Assessment Criterion	Explanation	Assessment
Is the site for fewer than 5 dwellings or less than 0.25ha (or 500m ² of floor space)?	Site thresholds not met.	Unsuitable – site is below 0.25ha or does not have capacity to accommodate at least five dwellings Suitable – site is above 0.25ha or has capacity to accommodate more than five dwellings
Does the site have extant planning permission? Has development commenced?	If the site has extant planning permission and development has commenced there is no further development potential. If a site has extant planning permission but that has not been implemented, the site will not be ruled out at this stage.	Unsuitable - site has extant planning permission and has commenced development. Suitable - site does not have an extant planning permission or site has extant planning permission but development has not commenced.
Is the site already allocated for development in the Colchester Local Plan or a Neighbourhood Plan, with extant planning permission or is it allocated with a strong likelihood of planning application being submitted by 2033?	If the site is allocated and there is evidence to suggest it is going to be delivered in the near future i.e., pre application discussions with Local Planning Authority, Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) in place, Masterplan being progressed or adopted or information provided by the developer/landowner there is no requirement to assess the site for its deliverability as the	Unsuitable - site is allocated in the Development Plan and has extant planning permission or site is allocated in the Development Plan and there is a strong likelihood a planning application will be submitted by 2033. Suitable – site is not allocated in the Development Plan and does not have an extant planning permission or site is allocated in the

Assessment Criterion	Explanation	Assessment
	principle of development has already been established.	Development and does not have a strong likelihood of a planning application being submitted by 2033.
Is the site physically isolated in the open countryside?	Locating new development in close proximity to existing services and facilities is a key principle of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF. To not prejudice the Settlement Boundary Review (another evidence base document to support the Local Plan Review) those sites in close proximity to an existing settlement boundary will not be ruled out at this stage.	Unsuitable - the site is physically isolated in the open countryside Suitable - the site is not physically isolated in the open countryside
Is the site wholly located within flood zone 3?	Sites will be excluded for development the site is within Flood Zone 3. The NPPF is clear that development should be directed away from areas at the highest risk of flooding.	Unsuitable –the site is wholly in Flood Zone 3 Suitable –the site is not in Flood Zone 3
Is the site wholly located within any of the following designations? Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Special Protection Area (SPA) Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) Ancient Woodlands RAMSAR	Sites wholly located within a designation will be excluded. The NPPF contains many commitments to protecting sites nationally or internationally designated for their landscape, biological, geological, archaeological or historical importance.	Unsuitable – site is wholly located within a designation Suitable – site is partially or not at all located within a designation

Assessment Criterion	Explanation	Assessment
Can the site be access by vehicle from the public highway?	Highways access both for resident vehicles and service vehicles (as well as pedestrians and cyclists) is considered an essential component of new development.	<p>Unsuitable – site does not have highways access. Site is not adjacent to a classified road.</p> <p>Suitable – site has highways access. Site is adjacent to a classified road.</p>

3.21 A list of all omitted sites will be prepared, identifying the reason for their omission and this will be published on the Council’s website.

3.22 Following the initial survey, all remaining sites will proceed to the full site assessment as outlined in Stage 2 below.

Stage 2 – Site Assessment

- 3.23 Following the initial survey (Stage 1), the remaining SLAA sites will proceed to the full Stage 2 site assessment. All sites are considered against a range of constraints and their potential to be mitigated.
- 3.24 The site assessment criteria, as set out below, aligns with the approach set out in the PPG which requires assessment of a site's suitability, availability, and achievability. The initial Survey (Stage 1) is the only part of the assessment where a site can be excluded from further assessment.
- 3.25 The majority of the criteria within Stage 2 of the assessment can be met through a desktop study. However, site visits will be undertaken where it is considered necessary or additional benefits can be gained to help inform the assessment.
- 3.26 To ensure the SLAA is transparent, most of the criteria are assessed using maps, documents or websites that are accessible to the public. However, some information will also be drawn from information provided as part of the Call for Sites process.
- 3.1 From Stage 2 of the assessment one Red RAG Assessment does not necessarily rule out the site from further consideration. The RAG Assessment is not intended to rate the sites at this stage or identify preferred sites.
- 3.2 The SLAA represents a starting point for the consideration of sites with the potential for allocation in the new Local Plan. It is a proportionate study that considers a wide range of sites for a variety of uses in different locations across the City area.
- 3.3 The SLAA will be carried out without consideration of the overall housing and employment requirements of the City (in line with national policy) therefore the capacity of all the SLAA sites which have progressed to Stage 2 of the assessment will likely exceed the overall housing and employment requirement over the plan period.

Estimating Development Potential

- 3.4 The PPG states that the estimation of the development potential of a site can be guided by existing or emerging plan policy including locally determined policies on density. Plan makers should seek the most efficient use of land in line with policies set out in the NPPF. Development potential is a significant factor that affects the economic viability of a site and its suitability for a particular use. The PPG therefore suggests that assessing achievability (including viability) and suitability can usefully be carried out in parallel with estimating the development potential.
- 3.5 The development potential of the sites will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The housing potential is indicative only and does not prejudice assessments made through the Local Plan or planning application process.

Residential, Commercial or Infrastructure (Built Development)

Section 1: Suitability

- 3.6 Section 1 of the site assessment had the purpose of assessing sites' suitability. A site is considered to be suitable for development if it is free from significant constraints, or where any constraints affecting the land can potentially be overcome through reasonable mitigation.
- 3.7 Suitability constraints include physical constraints such as the site's relationship to the existing settlement boundary and the capacity for highways access to site. Additionally, there are environmental constraints which will be assessed.
- 3.8 Four criteria have been included in relation to access to key services including primary and secondary schools, supermarkets/shops and GP surgeries.. Distances to train stations, bus stops and the City Centre has been excluded as it is considered more suitable to look at certain infrastructure and services on a settlement scale, as opposed to individual sites. This will also enable a consideration of frequency of services to gain a better understanding of their sustainability. This will be addressed through the Settlement Boundary Review, which is proposed to be in two stages. The first stage providing an overview of the existing settlement and the second stage considering growth options and future development opportunities within settlements.

Assessment criterion	Justification	RAG Assessment
Physical Constraints		
<p>Is the site within or adjacent to the existing settlement boundary?</p> <p>Source: Colchester City Council: Maps (planvu.co.uk), Map Search - Colchester Borough Council, Neighbourhood Planning - Colchester City Council</p>	<p>Locating new development in close proximity to existing services and facilities is a key principle of sustainable development which is strongly supported by national policy.</p>	<p>Red – removed from settlement boundary with significant area separating site from boundary</p> <p>Amber – adjacent to or within close proximity an existing settlement boundary</p> <p>Green – within an existing settlement boundary</p>
<p>Would development of the site lead to coalescence between settlements?</p> <p>Source: Proposals Map, mapping, site visit</p>	<p>Protecting the individual identity of settlements is considered an important principle of planning and remains an important issue locally for settlements that are in close proximity to each other.</p>	<p>Red – significant contribution to coalescence</p> <p>Amber – some contribution which results in a reduction of green space between settlements</p> <p>Green – no contribution to coalescence</p>

Assessment criterion	Justification	RAG Assessment
<p>What is the main access point/s to the site? Is the access safe and suitable? Are there any highway constraints? Source: Mapping, & ECC</p>	<p>Establishing the capacity to deliver adequate highways access is essential to the operation of a development site. Following on from the Initial Survey, this criterion allows for any highways constraints to be explored. For example highway access to a site may be feasible (and would have passed the initial survey) but may be constrained in its capacity, thereby reducing the overall capacity of the site to accommodate new development. In addition to vehicle access, access by active modes will also be a consideration. Comments related to this criterion will be provided by Essex County Council Highways.</p>	<p>Red – significant constraints identified and access is not considered safe and suitable which are likely to affect the site’s deliverability</p> <p>Amber – some constraints identified but not significant enough to affect the site’s deliverability</p> <p>Green – no reasonable constraints and highways access is considered safe and suitable</p>
<p>Is there any evidence that it would not be possible to deliver the necessary utilities? Source: Call for Sites pro-forma & information from discussions with infrastructure providers</p>	<p>Utility provision is a key component of development viability. The Call for Sites proforma requests specific information on utility provision in order to gain a general understanding of provision in the locality.</p>	<p>Red – significant issues with utility provision which are likely to affect the site’s deliverability</p> <p>Amber – some issues with utility provision</p> <p>Green – no known issues with utility provision</p>

Assessment criterion	Justification	RAG Assessment
<p>Are there any issues that would prevent/limit the developable area of the site? e.g. topography/levels, pylons, canopy cover</p> <p>Source: Call for Sites pro-forma, mapping, site visit</p>	<p>The presence of site specific issues can significantly affect deliverability through the impact of achievability and availability. Identifying site specific issues early ensure sites are not allocated which are not capable of being delivered within reasonable timescales.</p>	<p>Red – significant site specific issues which are likely to affect the site’s deliverability</p> <p>Amber – some site specific issues which could be addressed</p> <p>Green – no known site specific issues or evidence has been provided which demonstrates that site constraints can be adequately addressed</p>
<p>Is the site brownfield or greenfield?</p> <p>Source: Call for Sites pro-forma, mapping, site visit</p>	<p>The inclusion of this criterion reflects the NPPF’s preference for utilising previously developed land (brownfield land) over greenfield land</p>	<p>Red – greenfield (approx. 75% plus)</p> <p>Amber – part brownfield, part greenfield</p> <p>Green – brownfield (approx. 75% plus)</p>
<p>What is the agricultural land classification?</p> <p>Source: mapping</p>	<p>The NPPF states that Local Planning Authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. The most obvious way of doing this is to identify the quality of agricultural land on potential development sites through the SLAA.</p>	<p>Red – Grades 1, 2 and/or 3a (50% or more)</p> <p>Amber – Grades 3b (50% or more) or a mix of categories</p> <p>Green – Grades 4-5 (50% or more)</p>

Assessment criterion	Justification	RAG Assessment
<p>Impact of neighbouring uses (e.g. noise, smell, amenity) – would development be likely to be negatively impacted by, or cause negative impact on, neighbouring areas? Source: Call for Sites pro-forma, mapping, site visit</p>	<p>The NPPF requires plan makers to achieve high quality design and good standards of amenity for occupants. Ensuring sensitive uses such as housing, are not located in close proximity to other uses which may compromise the health and wellbeing of occupants is fundamental to achieving these objectives</p>	<p>Red – there is a strong possibility development would be significantly affected by neighbouring use issues</p> <p>Amber – there is a possibility development would result in some neighbouring use issues</p> <p>Green – there are no neighbouring use issues</p>
<p>Natural and Historic Environmental Constraints</p>		
<p>Is the site partially located within any of the following designations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) • Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) • Special Area of Conservation (SAC) • Special Protection Area (SPA) • Ancient Woodlands • RAMSAR <p>Source: Mapping</p>	<p>The NPPF contains many commitments to protecting sites nationally or internationally designated for their landscape, biological, geological, archaeological or historical importance.</p>	<p>Red – more than 50% of the site is located within a designation.</p> <p>Amber – less than 50% of the site is located within a designation.</p> <p>Green – site is not located within any designations listed.</p>

Assessment criterion	Justification	RAG Assessment
<p>Is the site located within any of the following local designations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Wildlife Site (LoWS) • Local Nature Reserve (LNR) • Coastal Protection Belt <p><i>Source: Mapping</i></p>	<p>The NPPF encourages the protection and enhancement of sites of biodiversity and geological value and maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast.</p>	<p>Red – more than 50% of the site is located within a designation.</p> <p>Amber – less than 50% of the site is located within a designation.</p> <p>Green – site is not located within any designations listed.</p>
<p>Could development of the site enhance or create green infrastructure e.g Open Space, Park, Sport and/or recreation grounds, Country Park, Allotments,?</p> <p><i>Source: Call for sites proforma, mapping, Evidence Base</i></p>	<p>The Local Plan Review is taking an environment first approach. This criteria helps to identify opportunities for green infrastructure through development.</p>	<p>Red – no, there are no opportunities to enhance or create green infrastructure.</p> <p>Amber – possibility of opportunities to enhance or create green infrastructure.</p> <p>Green – yes, there are opportunities to enhance or create green infrastructure.</p>

Assessment criterion	Justification	RAG Assessment
<p>Would development of the site be likely to cause harm to any archaeological or heritage assets or their setting?</p> <p>Grade 1 Grade 2 Grade 2* Listed Building Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) Registered Parks and Gardens Conservation Areas Locally Listed Heritage Asset archaeological assets</p> <p><i>Source: Call for Sites pro-forma, mapping, Proposals Map, Colchester Local List & Historic Environment Characterisation Report</i></p>	<p>The NPPF states that Local Planning Authorities should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance.</p>	<p>Red – there is a strong possibility of harm arising from new development.</p> <p>Amber – there is a possibility of harm arising from new development.</p> <p>Green – no potential harm.</p>
<p>Would development of the site result in the loss of, or partial loss of, public open space, a Public Right of Way (PRoW), or a bridleway?</p> <p><i>Source: Call for Site pro-forma, Evidence Base, mapping</i></p>	<p>The NPPF promotes the protection and enhancement of existing open space, public rights of way and bridleways. It does this by stating that open space should only be built on if an assessment deems the spaces to be surplus to requirements, the loss resulting from the development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision, or the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision which clearly outweighs the loss. Public rights of way also have additional legal protection.</p>	<p>Red – development would result in the loss of public open space, public right of way or a bridleway.</p> <p>Amber – development would result in partial loss of public open space, public right of way or a bridleway.</p> <p>Green – development would not result in the loss of public open space, public right of way or a bridleway.</p>

Assessment criterion	Justification	RAG Assessment
<p>What flood zone is the site located in? <i>Source: mapping</i></p>	<p>The NPPF is clear that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk.</p>	<p>Green – Site is wholly located in Flood Zone 1</p> <p>Amber – site is partially located in Flood Zone 1 with some areas of the site within or adjacent to Flood Zone 2 or 3</p> <p>Red – Site is predominately within Flood Zone 2 or 3</p>
<p>Is the site within a Critical Drainage Area? <i>Source: Surface Water Management Plan, mapping</i></p>	<p>Essex County Council have undertaken a Surface Water Management Plan for Colchester which identifies Critical Drainage Areas. These are small catchments where there is an increased risk of surface water flooding.</p>	<p>Green – site is not located within a Critical Drainage Area</p> <p>Amber – site is partially within or adjacent to a Critical Drainage Area</p> <p>Red – site is wholly located within a Critical Drainage Area</p>
<p>Access to Key Services</p>		
<p>Distance to primary secondary schools, <i>Source: mapping</i></p>	<p>NPPF states that all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development. Limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health.</p>	<p>Red – Site is in excess of 801m of a primary school</p> <p>Amber – Site is within 401 and 800m of a primary school</p> <p>Green – Site is within 400m of a primary school</p>

Assessment criterion	Justification	RAG Assessment
<p>Distance to secondary school Source: mapping</p>	<p>NPPF states that all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development. Limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health.</p>	<p>Red – Site is in excess of 2km of a secondary school</p> <p>Amber – Site is within 2km of a secondary school</p> <p>Green – Site is within 800m of a secondary school</p>
<p>Distance to supermarkets/convenience stores Source: mapping</p>	<p>NPPF states that all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development. Limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health.</p>	<p>Red – Site is in excess of 2km of a supermarket/convenience store</p> <p>Amber – Site is within 2km of a supermarket/convenience store.</p> <p>Green – Site is within 800m of a supermarket/convenience store</p>
<p>Distance to GP surgeries Source: mapping</p>	<p>NPPF states that all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development. Limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health.</p>	<p>Red – Site is in excess of 2km of GP surgeries</p> <p>Amber – Site is within 2km of GP surgeries</p> <p>Green – Site is within 800m of GP surgeries</p>

Section 2: Availability

A site is considered to be available for development when, on the best information available, there is confidence that there are no legal or ownership impediments to development. For example, land controlled by a developer or landowner who has expressed an intention to develop may be considered available. The availability of a site could be adversely affected if it is in multiple ownership and the intentions of all interested parties are not known.

Assessment criterion	Justification	RAG Assessment
<p>Has the site been submitted for development through the Call for Sites for the Local Plan Review? <i>Source: Call for Sites pro-forma</i></p>	<p>The NPPF requires local planning authorities to have an up-to-date supply of deliverable housing sites to meet identified need. For sites to be considered deliverable they must be available to be developed.</p>	<p>Red – Site has never been submitted for development.</p> <p>Amber – No, but it was submitted in previous Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan by a site owner or developer or it was submitted through the Call for Sites for the Local Plan Review but not by the land owner of a developer.</p> <p>Green – Yes, the site has been submitted through the Call for Sites for the Local Plan Review by a site owner or developer.</p>
<p>What is the site ownership situation? <i>Source: Call for Sites pro-forma / any land ownership information the Council has obtained from the Land Registry</i></p>	<p>Assessing a site's availability is a key component of its overall deliverability. Information regarding any issues with ownership of the land are important to this assessment.</p>	<p>Red – ownership not known or complex ownership - not all intentions known.</p> <p>Amber – site owned by 2 or more different parties</p> <p>Green – Single ownership.</p>

Assessment criterion	Justification	RAG Assessment
<p>Is the land owner open to working in partnership and bringing the site forward in combination with others to enable a comprehensive approach to development? <i>Source: Call for Sites pro-forma</i></p>	<p>Where adjacent sites are promoted, it is important that development is comprehensively planned to make the most efficient use of land and deliver better local infrastructure.</p>	<p>Red – No, the land owner is unwilling to work in partnership to bring the site forward in combination with others.</p> <p>Amber – unsure/don't know.</p> <p>Green – Yes, the land owner is willing to work in partnership to bring the site forward in combination with others.</p>
<p>Is the site currently in use and is it likely to continue to be used for the foreseeable future / would that use prevent development on the site from coming forward? <i>Source: Call for Sites pro-forma, mapping, site visit</i></p>	<p>Information regarding a site's current use is important in determining availability and the timescale of it being available to be developed.</p>	<p>Red – site is occupied/in use and there are likely to be significant delays to relocating its current use.</p> <p>Amber – site is occupied/in use but its current use does not require relocation.</p> <p>Green – site is vacant or its current use can cease at short notice.</p>
<p>Does the site have a history of unimplemented permissions? <i>Source: Call for Sites pro-forma, mapping</i></p>		<p>Red – three or more unimplemented permissions.</p> <p>Amber – up to two recent lapsed permissions.</p> <p>Green – No unimplemented permissions.</p>

Section 3: Achievability (including viability)

A site is considered achievable if there is a reasonable prospect that the particular type of development will be developed on the site at a particular time and whether it is financially viable to do so. For example, a site could be both suitable and available, but the level of financial mitigation required to make it acceptable could result in the site being considered unviable.

Assessment criterion	Justification	RAG Assessment
<p>Is development of the site in line with existing policies requiring a contribution, i.e., affordable housing, is development of the site economically viable? Are there any factors which could limit its viability? <i>Source: Call for Sites pro-forma, additional information from site promoter / land owner</i></p>	<p>Economic viability is a key component of a site's deliverability as defined in the NPPF. Establishing the viability of development sites ensures that decisions on future allocations take into account any abnormal costs which may affect development outcomes.</p>	<p>Red – development is likely unviable.</p> <p>Amber – development is marginal.</p> <p>Green – development is likely viable.</p>
<p>Does the development of, or access to, the site rely on another piece of land, and has that land been put forward for development? <i>Source: Call for Sites pro-forma, mapping</i></p>	<p>Relying on another piece of land to come forward (e.g. ransom strips) can prevent development from coming forward or render development unviable. Establishing the presence of ransom strips through the SLAA process provides the Council with reasonable assumptions about a site's achievability.</p>	<p>Red – the site relies on another piece of land and that land has not been put forward for development and/or a ransom strip has been identified.</p> <p>Amber – the site relies on another piece of land but that land has been put forward for development.</p> <p>Green – the site does not rely on another piece of land.</p>

Assessment criterion	Justification	RAG Assessment
<p>Is the site within a Minerals Safeguarding Area and/or Minerals and Waste Consultation Area? <i>Source: Mapping, ECC data</i></p>	<p>Land may be protected for a number of different uses irrespective of the land ownership. For example the land may be safeguarded because of its value as a minerals extraction site. Where a promoted site lies within a Minerals Safeguarding Area, , ECC will be consulted to confirm whether a Minerals Resource Assessment is required (this applies where the area of a site within a Minerals Safeguarding Area is 5ha or over – this includes contiguous parcels i.e. cant split Site into 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d etc. to negate the threshold)</p> <p>Where a promoted site lies within a Minerals and/or Waste Consultation Area, a Minerals and/or Waste Infrastructure Impact Assessment is required.</p>	<p>Red – Site is wholly within a Minerals Safeguarding Area. Mineral could be sterilised as a result of the non-mineral proposal.</p> <p>Amber – Site is within a Minerals Consultation Area and/or a Waste Consultation Area.</p> <p>Green – Not within a Minerals Safeguarding Area, Minerals Consultation Area or Waste Consultation Area</p>

Assessment criterion	Justification	RAG Assessment
<p>Is the land currently protected for an alternative use within the Colchester Local Plan or a Neighbourhood Plan?</p> <p><i>Source: Source: Call for Sites pro-forma, Local Plan evidence base, mapping</i></p>	<p>Land may be protected for a number of different uses irrespective of the land ownership.</p>	<p>Red – the site is protected for an alternative use and there is no evidence to suggest that the site should be released for an alternative use.</p> <p>Amber – the site is protected for an alternative use but there is evidence to suggest that the site could or should be released for an alternative use.</p> <p>Green – the site is not protected for any alternative use.</p>
<p>Is the site contaminated or partially contaminated?</p> <p><i>Source: Call for Sites pro-forma</i></p>	<p>Contamination can have a significant effect on the achievability of sites. Establishing the presence of contamination in the SLAA ensures that the Council can make reasonable assumptions about the site’s achievability for development.</p>	<p>Red – there is a strong possibility of contamination and remediation measures are likely to affect development viability.</p> <p>Amber – there is possibility of contamination, but it can be remediated without affecting development viability.</p> <p>Green – no contamination issues foreseen.</p>

Green Infrastructure

As outlined above, it is proposed to include Green Infrastructure within the Call for Sites. Detailed site assessments will be prepared and informed by advice from specialists including Natural England and utilise their environmental benefits for nature tool.

The criteria will enable assessment of the site's suitability, availability and achievability.

Alongside this, other principles to be considered through the assessment will include:

- Connectivity to existing network
- Environmental constraints e.g., flood risk, water quality
- Access barriers e.g., roads, railways, water courses
- Current use of the site
- Importance of the site to local community

Stage 3 – Windfall Assessment

3.9 The Council have been able to justify a windfall allowance in recent years. However, the evidence to underpin this will need to be reviewed as part of this assessment. It is expected that some allowance will continue to be justified.

Stage 4 – Assessment Review

3.10 As other evidence base documents are prepared to support the Local Plan, including the outcome of the SLAA Stage 2 Assessments, site allocations will be identified. To support the Local Plan, an indicative trajectory of those allocated sites will be prepared and updated throughout the plan making process to demonstrate how housing needs will be met across the plan period.

3.11 The trajectory will be subject to risk assessment and will set out how much housing and economic development can be provided. If insufficient sites are allocated the assessment will be revisited and a further Call for Sites may be necessary.

Stage 5 – Final Evidence Base

3.12 In accordance with the PPG, the outputs of the SLAA will be:

- A list of all sites considered for development and cross referenced to their location on maps;
- An assessment of each site including:
 - Whether the site has been excluded and an explanation given;
 - Whether the site is considered suitable, available and achievable, the potential type and quantity of development, including a reasonable estimate of build out rates, setting out how any barriers to delivery could be overcome and when;
- An indicative trajectory of anticipated development based on the evidence available.

3.13 The assessments will be made publicly available via the Council's website and/or Consultation Portal.

3.14 The outcomes of the SLAA will not definitively allocate land for development but will contribute to the Local Planning Authority's evidence base and ensure that decisions regarding site allocations are backed by robust and objective evidence.

4. Site Assessment Outcomes

- 4.1 The SLAA represents a starting point for the consideration of sites with the potential for allocation in the new Local Plan. It is a proportionate study that considers a wide range of sites for a variety of uses in different locations across the City area.
- 4.2 The SLAA is a mandatory part of the plan making process and it will form an important part of the evidence base for the Local Plan Review. It provides a comparative record of assessment of sites which may have the potential for development. It comprises assessment of sites put forward by landowners and developers as well as those additionally identified through the desk top study as required by the PPG.
- 4.3 The SLAA identifies sites which have been assessed as potentially available, suitable, and deliverable but it does not recommend which sites should be allocated for development. It is critical to the future soundness of the Local Plan that the process for selecting and rejecting sites is robust and transparent.
- 4.4 The initial Survey (Stage 1) is the only part of the assessment where a site can be excluded from further assessment. In Stage 2 of the assessment one Red RAG Assessment does not necessarily rule out the site from further consideration. The RAG Assessment is not intended to rate the sites at this stage or identify preferred sites.
- 4.5 The SLAA will be carried out without consideration of the overall housing and employment requirements of the City (in line with national policy) therefore the capacity of all the SLAA sites which have progressed to Stage 2 of the assessment will likely exceed the overall housing and employment requirement over the plan period.
- 4.6 The purpose of the SLAA is not to create the spatial strategy. A number of evidence base documents (including the SLAA, Sustainability Appraisal, Settlement Boundary Review, Green Infrastructure Strategy and others) will be used alongside engagement and consultation to develop a spatial strategy and preferred site allocations. This aligns with the Local Plan Review being environment led and more focused on place shaping and making.



11 December 2023

Report of	Shelley Blackaby Principal Planning Policy Officer (Environment) and Rachel Forkin Principal Planning Policy Officer	01206 508635 or 01206 282625
Title	Adoption of Active Travel and Climate Change Supplementary Planning Documents	
Wards affected	All wards affected	

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Planning Policy Team have prepared three Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) to address the climate emergency. These SPDs are:
- Active Travel
 - Climate Change
 - Biodiversity (adopted June 2023).
- 1.2 This report summarises the comments received following consultation on the draft Active Travel and Climate Change SPDs and includes the amended SPDs. The Committee are asked to adopt the Active Travel SPD and Climate Change SPD.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 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 adopt the Active Travel SPD and revoke the existing Cycling Delivery Strategy SPD.
- 2.2 It is recommended that the Local Plan Committee adopt the Climate Change SPD.

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 adopt the SPDs 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 and should not add unnecessarily to the financial burdens on development.
- 5.2 Officers have drafted three SPDs to communicate Colchester City Council's ambitions in respect of the climate emergency and how they will apply to 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 these SPDs are:
- Policy ENV3: Green Infrastructure
 - Policy DM20: Promoting Sustainable Transport and Changing Travel Behaviour
 - Policy DM21: Sustainable Access to Development
 - Policy CC1: Climate Change
 - Policy DM25: Renewable Energy, Water, Waste and Recycling

Active Travel SPD

- 5.4 The Active Travel SPD is appended to this Report as Appendix A. It 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. Following the Local Plan Committee on 2nd October 2023, it was requested that further information was provided on public transport. Amendments were included in Chapter 6 to include reference to the Essex Bus Strategy and Bus Service Improvement Plan prior to consultation. Chapter 7 sets out planning application expectations in relation to active travel modes.

Climate Change SPD

- 5.8 The Climate Change SPD is appended to this Report as Appendix B. This SPD is ambitious – it recommends that development proposals go further than adopted planning policies. 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.
- 5.9 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.
- 5.10 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.
- 5.11 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.
- 5.12 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.
- 5.13 Chapter 6 explains the low energy transformation initiative (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. The LETI standard is good practice and has been included in a number of recently examined Local Plans.

- 5.14 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.
- 5.15 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening has been carried out for each SPD, which has concluded that neither SEA nor HRA are required. Natural England agrees.

Engagement and Consultation

- 5.16 Engagement with DM Officers, the cross-service Climate Opportunities Working Group, and Members took place as part of the process of drafting these SPDs. In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, the draft SPDs were published for a 4 week public consultation. Appended to this report is a statement for each SPD setting out who was consulted, a summary of the main issues raised and how those issues have been addressed in the SPDs.
- 5.17 Nine individuals and organisations made representations to the Active Travel SPD. These are summarised in the Statement of Representations in Appendix C. Overall, the responses were supportive of the ambitions in the SPD. Amendments have been made to the SPD in response to some of the representations and detail of these amendments are provided in the Appendix.

The key changes made to the draft Active Travel SPD include:

- Additional information relating to key national and local strategies, policies and guidance.
 - Additional detail on Public Rights of Way.
 - Further clarification that the SPD relates to the whole of the Colchester administrative area.
 - Reference to the design of public transport interchanges, ensuring that they are accessible for all.
 - Further detail on car clubs and mobility hubs.
 - Minor modifications for corrections, clarification, page numbers and date.
- 5.18 Seven organisations made representations to the Climate Change SPD. These are summarised in the Statement of Representations in Appendix D. Overall, the responses were supportive of the ambitions in the SPD and the provision of further guidance to help applicants meet and surpass the relevant climate change policies in the adopted Local Plan. Amendments requested to the SPD have been made and these include adding reference to Anglian Water Services Water Resources Management Plan and amending references to Essex Planning Officers Association documents.
- 5.19 Once the SPDs are adopted, Officers will incorporate the householder sections from all 3 climate emergency SPDs into one document, which will be added to the website as advice for householder applications. Officers will also prepare a

sustainability checklist, which will pull together the content of all 3 SPDs into a checklist to assist applicants and DM Officers.

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 these SPDs as the purpose of these SPDs is to respond to the climate emergency.

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. A statement for each SPD is appended to this report.

9. Publicity Considerations

- 9.1 The SPDs consultation was 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 has drafted 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: Active Travel SPD

Appendix B: Climate Change SPD

Appendix C Statement of Representations to Active Travel SPD

Appendix D Statement of Representations to Climate Change SPD



Colchester City Council's **Active Travel SPD**

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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 1.5°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.

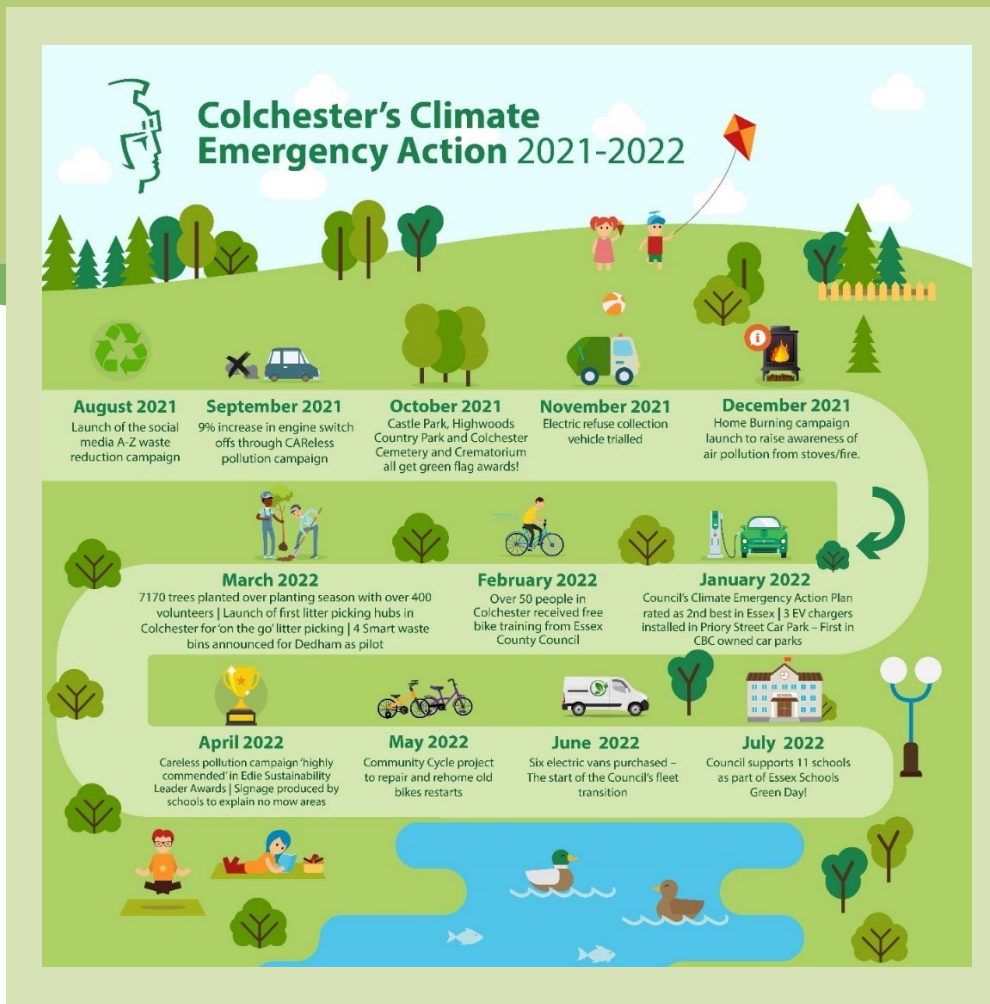
The 3 climate emergency SPDs will bring multiple benefits including benefits to health and wellbeing. A healthy environment plays a role in improving health and wellbeing. Many of the actions proposed in the 3 SPD's will also achieve

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 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,

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

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.

Chapter 2: The Active Travel SPD

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).



Changes to the Highway Code in January 2022 includes a new section on the 'hierarchy of road users'. The concept places road users most at risk at the top of the hierarchy. Those road users are pedestrians, in particular children, older adults and disabled people, cyclists, horse riders and motorcyclists, with particular importance on children, older adults and disabled people being more at risk.

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.

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.

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.

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 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 (NO₂) and CO₂ 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 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.



Chapter 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.

[Manual for Streets](#), first published by the Department for Transport in 2007, provides advice for the design of residential streets. A revised Manual for Streets is currently being developed which will update the existing Manual for Streets and Manual for Streets 2 and will provide guidance for local authorities on designing residential and busier urban streets.

National Planning Policy

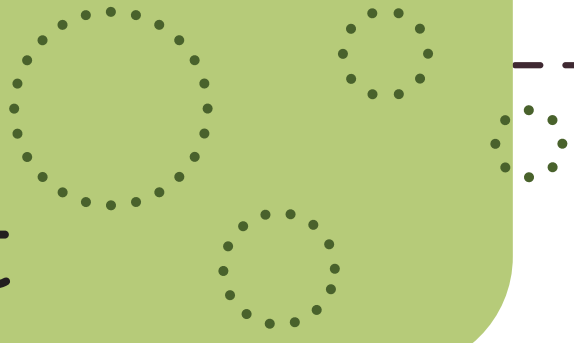
Paragraph 8 of the **National Planning Policy Framework** (NPPF) makes clear that mitigating and adapting to climate change is a core planning objective. To be in conformity with the NPPF, local development plans should reflect this principle, ensuring that planning policy clearly and comprehensively 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 (paragraph 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 (paragraph 104).

[Planning Practice Guidance](#) adds further context to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Guidance is available on a number of subjects including Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements.

Chapter 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

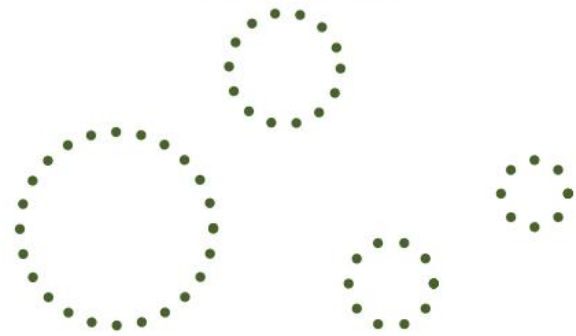
to site specific requirements, requires all proposals to make contributions to the cost of infrastructure improvements as required and supported by up-to-date evidence from appropriate sources. In addition, proposals must as relevant, address a number of borough wide requirements including 'safe pedestrian 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:

1. Give priority to the movement of people walking and cycling;
2. Create safe, secure, convenient and attractive layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic, cyclists and pedestrians;
3. Link the development to the surrounding walking, cycling and public transport networks taking into consideration the Cycle Strategy SPD;
4. Provide and give access to quality public transport facilities;



5. Ensure streets and junctions are designed to provide people-friendly street environments and to give priority to sustainable transport;
6. 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;
7. Ensuring accessibility for those with impaired mobility; and
8. 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 Transport Strategy](#) the Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Essex was published in June 2011. This strategy is the overarching transport plan for Essex and sets out the aspirations for improving travel in the county. The LTP sets out the focus on schemes that support the uptake of active and sustainable travel to enable and encourage healthy choices within our communities for their improved health and wellbeing.

[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.

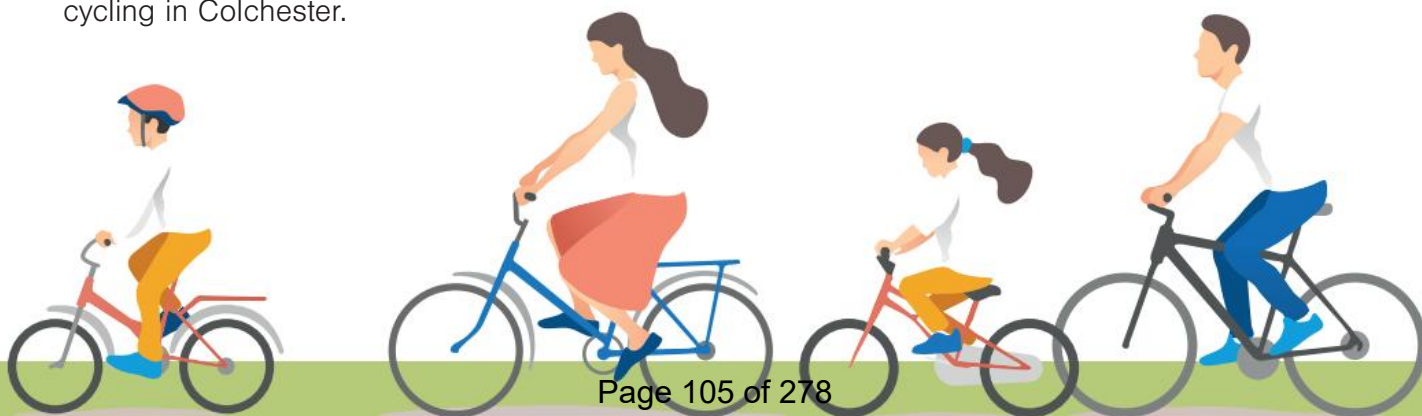
The [Colchester Cycling Action Plan \(CCAP\)](#) was published by Essex County Council in January 2018 as part of a commitment in the Essex Cycling Strategy to create Cycling Action Plans for every district. The CCAP aims to:

- 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 Colchester Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan \(LCWIP\)](#) was developed in 2021. 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. The Colchester LCWIP refresh was consulted on in September 2023. 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).



Chapter 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 \(essexhighways.org\)](#) provides more detail. All legal users should be considered

where plans are made for improvements to a route for active travel modes, on the Public Rights of Way network.

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) Routes 1, 13 and 51 run through the Colchester City area. 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.

Chapter 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 principles set out in this SPD relate to the whole of the Colchester City area

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

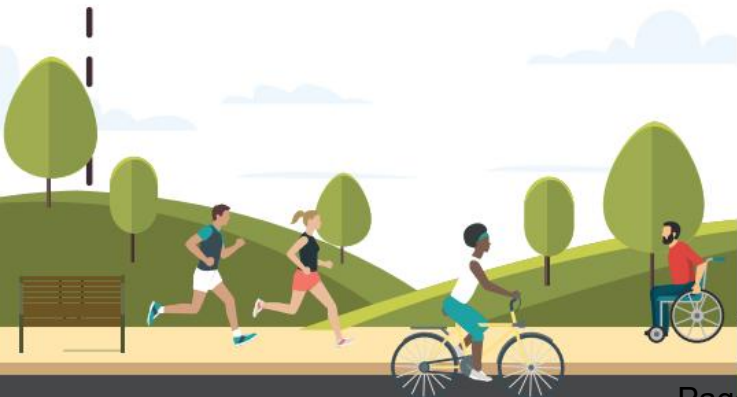
These elements are outlined in more detail below.

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 nearest surrounding network, ensuring there are no gaps in the active travel infrastructure when 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.

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.

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.

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 bicycle 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.
- 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, including those routes shown on the Colchester Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), and any refresh of this plan, therefore providing onward connections to key destinations.
- 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 placed securely on posts, be continuous and legible providing information on key destinations and travel time. Signage can also act as a promotional tool to highlight the existence of active travel 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’

- It is recommended that , pedestrians, cyclists and traffic should be segregated in line with guidance in LTN 1/20. The appropriate type of segregation will depend on the location, type of road, volume and flow of traffic.
- Active travel routes should be constructed to appropriate widths, considering comfort for all users with differing speeds and room for safe overtaking. 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.
- 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 new 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, health and well-being.

The School Design Guidance contained in the Essex Design Guide provides additional information, ensuring health and wellbeing principles are applied to development including features to support sustainable accessibility across all user groups.

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

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 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.

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.

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.

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).

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.



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. Car clubs are best located in areas where there are good public transport links and active travel infrastructure. 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.

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.

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](#).



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 considered when designing active travel routes so that any potential conflict between users is minimised. Public transport interchanges should be designed using the principles outlined above to ensure that they are accessible for all, safe and secure, comfortable and attractive.

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.

Further information on the Essex Bus Strategy and the Bus Service Improvement Plan can be found on the Essex County Council website [Getting Around in Essex Bus Strategy | Essex County Council \(essexhighways.org\)](#).

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

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

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. This can offer sustainable, flexible, accessible and cost effective 'first or last mile' connections to the nearest bus or railway services.

Larger developments could consider adopting a mobility hub approach, which co-locates mobility options and other community facilities. This could include bicycle and vehicle parking and access to a range of shared 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. Guidance is also available in the Essex Design Guide and 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

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.

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 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.



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

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 Cycling Action Plan \(CCAP\) \(January 2018\)](#)
- 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>
 - Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) (2021)
 - LCWIP Summary for Basildon, Braintree, Chelmsford & Colchester (August 2022)
- [The Essex Transport Strategy LTP \(June 2011\)](#)
- [Essex Cycling Strategy \(November 2016\)](#)
- 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

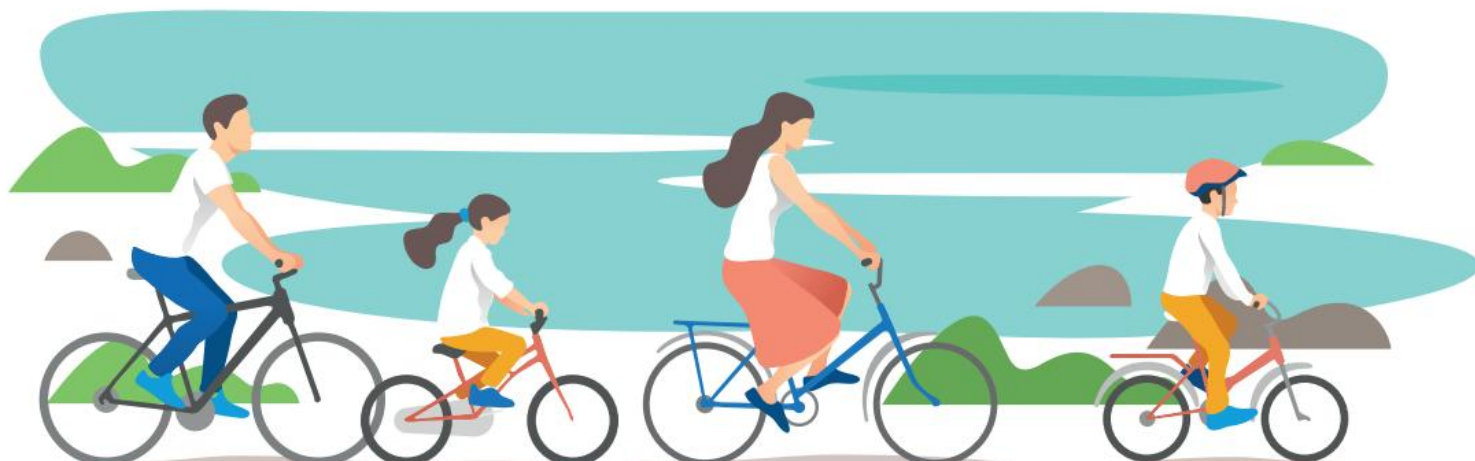
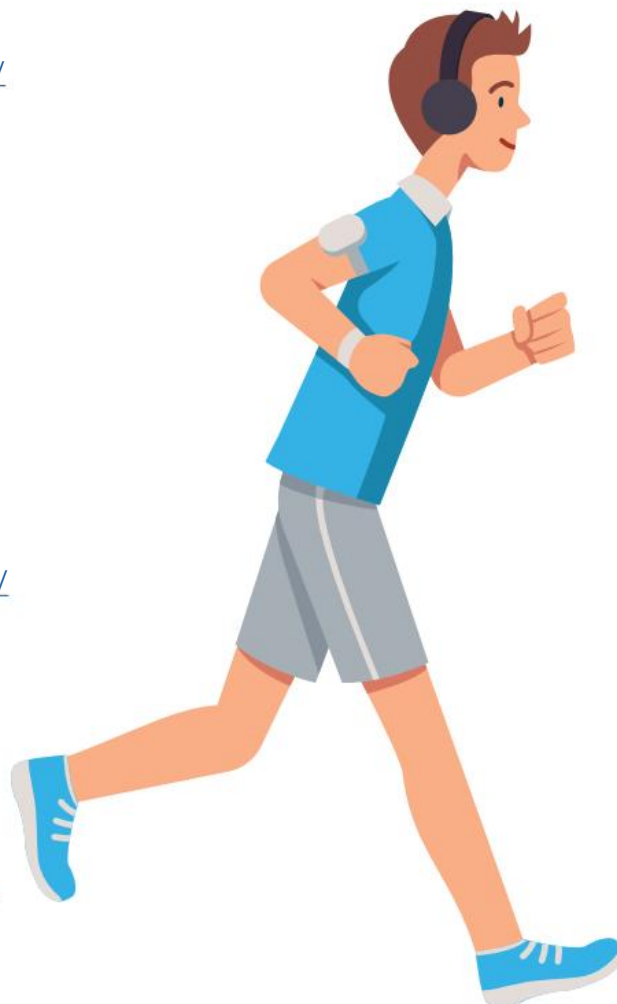
- Highway Code <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code/road-users-requiring-extra-care-204-to-225>
- Government Net Zero Strategy Build Back Greener (October 2021) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/net-zero-strategy>
- Government Transport Decarbonisation Plan: Decarbonising Transport 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>
- Planning Practice Guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>
- 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>
- 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/>





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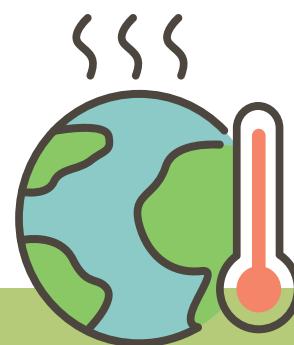
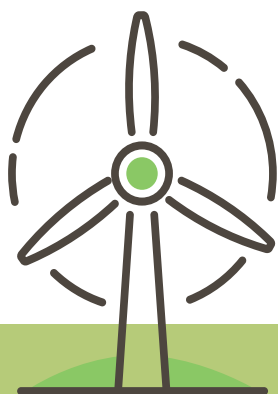
Climate Change SPD

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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

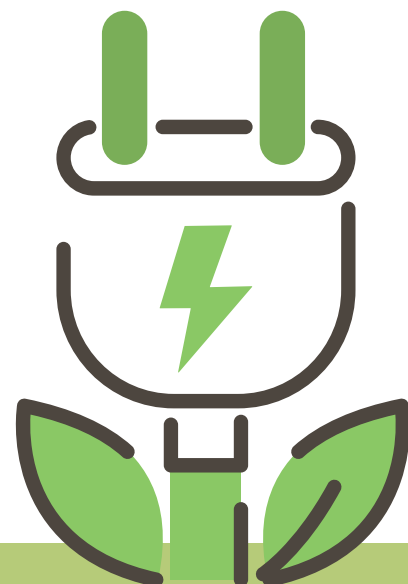
A rise in the Earth's temperature, often used with respect to the observed increase since the early 20th century.

Greenhouse gases

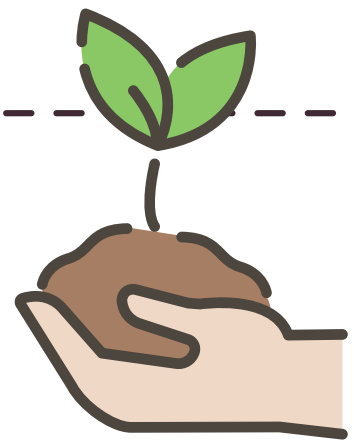
Gases in the atmosphere, which absorb thermal infra-red radiation emitted by the Earth's surface, the atmosphere and clouds e.g. water vapour, carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide.

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.



Chapter 1: Introduction

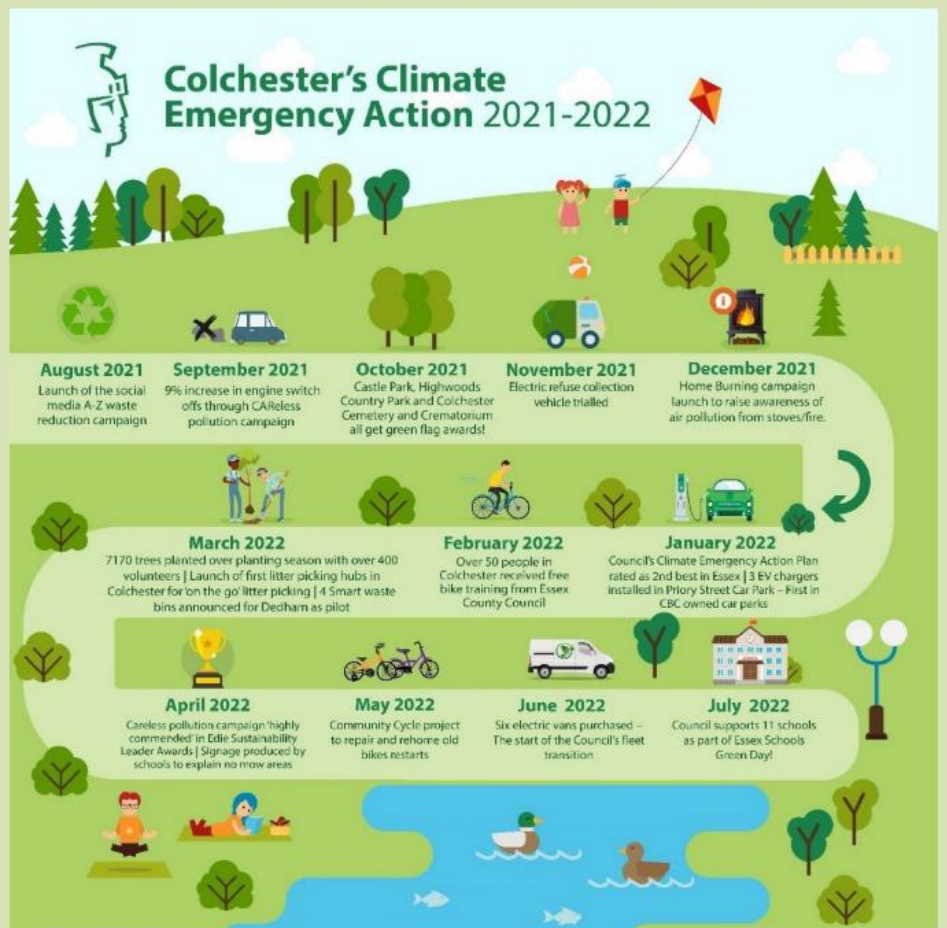
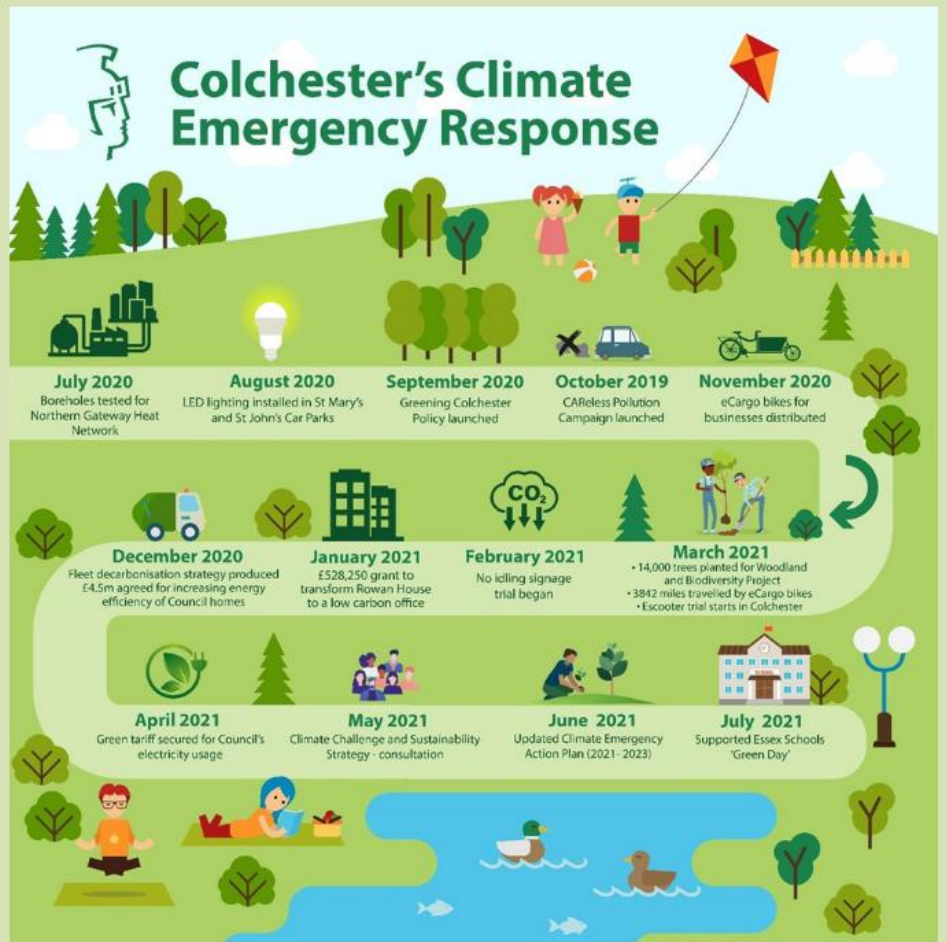
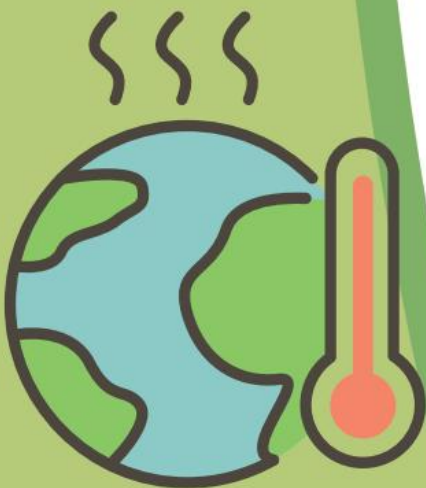


Climate change is a global issue affecting everyone. Co-ordinated action from all sectors, national and local governments, and individuals is needed to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The science tells us that to avoid catastrophic effects we need to limit the increase in global temperature to 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.







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.

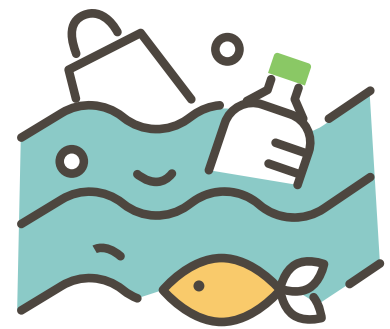
This is the Climate Change SPD. It aims to clearly set out the principles the Council expects to ensure that development proposals respond to the climate emergency by delivering sustainable buildings, which are highly energy efficient, include renewable energy and combine green infrastructure. This SPD 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

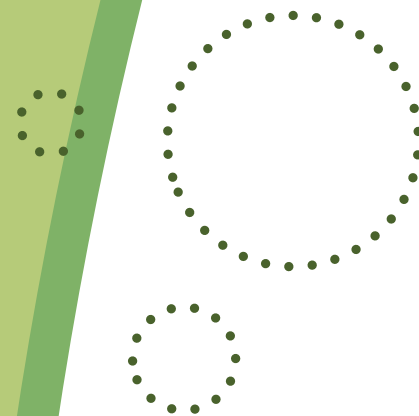
There is a strong duty placed on plan-making to mitigate and adapt to climate change by Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 Section 19. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) brings the Climate Change Act 2008 target regime (via footnote 53) into plan-making. The Planning and Energy Act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

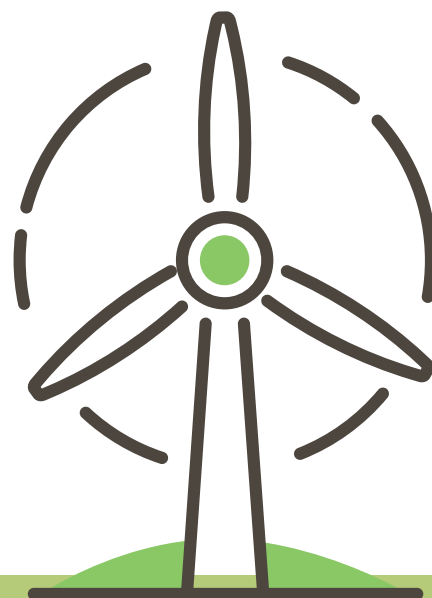
Essex County Council (ECC) has formed an Essex Climate Action Commission, which recognises the role of planning in mitigating and adapting to climate change. The first report – [Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral](#) was published in July 2021.

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.



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 CO₂e, a 46.7% reduction on 2008 levels (10,150 tonnes of CO₂e). The most recent emissions report for the Council showed the emissions to be 5887.2 tonnes of CO₂e in 2021/2022. The Council's baseline greenhouse gas emissions for measuring progress have been measured at 6549.3 tonnes of CO₂e 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.

Colchester's Local Plan

The most relevant policies to this SPD are Policies CC1 (Climate Change) and DM25 (Renewable Energy, Water, Waste and Recycling) of [Colchester's Section 2 Local Plan \(July 2022\)](#). 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.

(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.

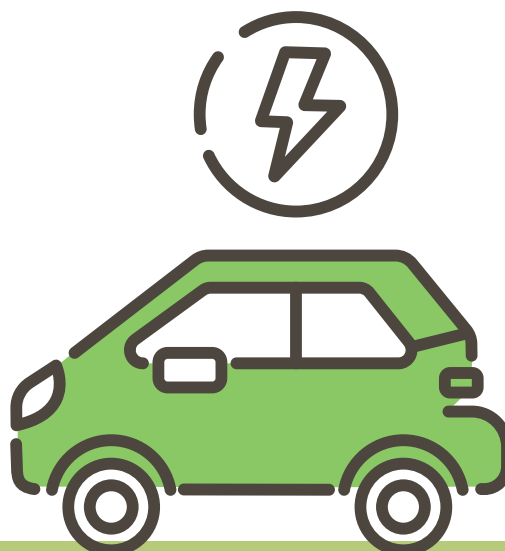
To help meet waste reduction and recycling targets, the Local Planning Authority will support proposals for sustainable waste management facilities identified in the Waste Management Plan which minimise impacts on the communities living close to the sites (noise, pollution, traffic) and on the local 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.

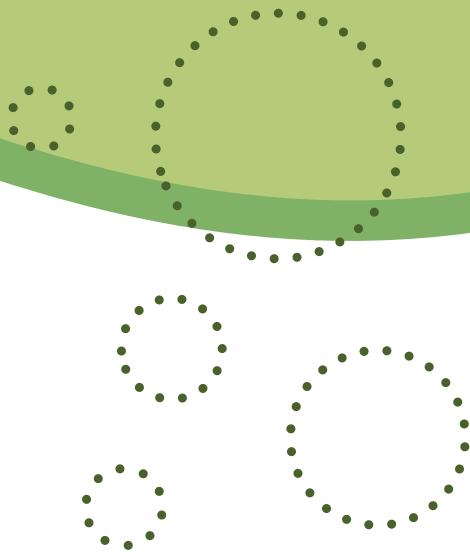
The Local Planning Authority will support proposals for renewable energy projects including micro-generation, offshore wind farms (plus land based ancillary infrastructure) solar farms, solar panels on buildings, wind farms, District Heating Networks and community led renewable energy initiatives at 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.

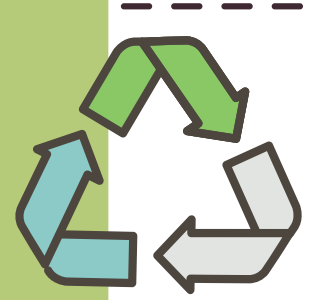
This SPD is ambitious – it recommends that development proposals go further than adopted policies. The adopted policies were written before the plan was submitted in 2017. Since then, the Council has declared a climate emergency and this SPD includes measures to address the climate emergency. Whilst 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 includes 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 daylight 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.



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.

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.

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

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 (MVHR). 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

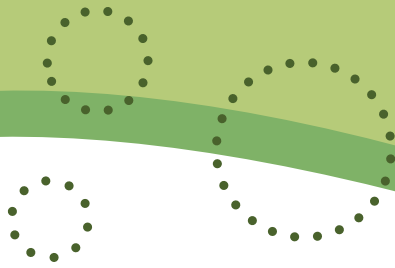
The Biodiversity SPD and Active Travel SPD both refer to green-blue infrastructure. Green-blue infrastructure, such as parks, open spaces, waterways, and the connections between them, is central to Colchester's climate change adaptation and resilience. Green-blue infrastructure can improve the resilience 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:

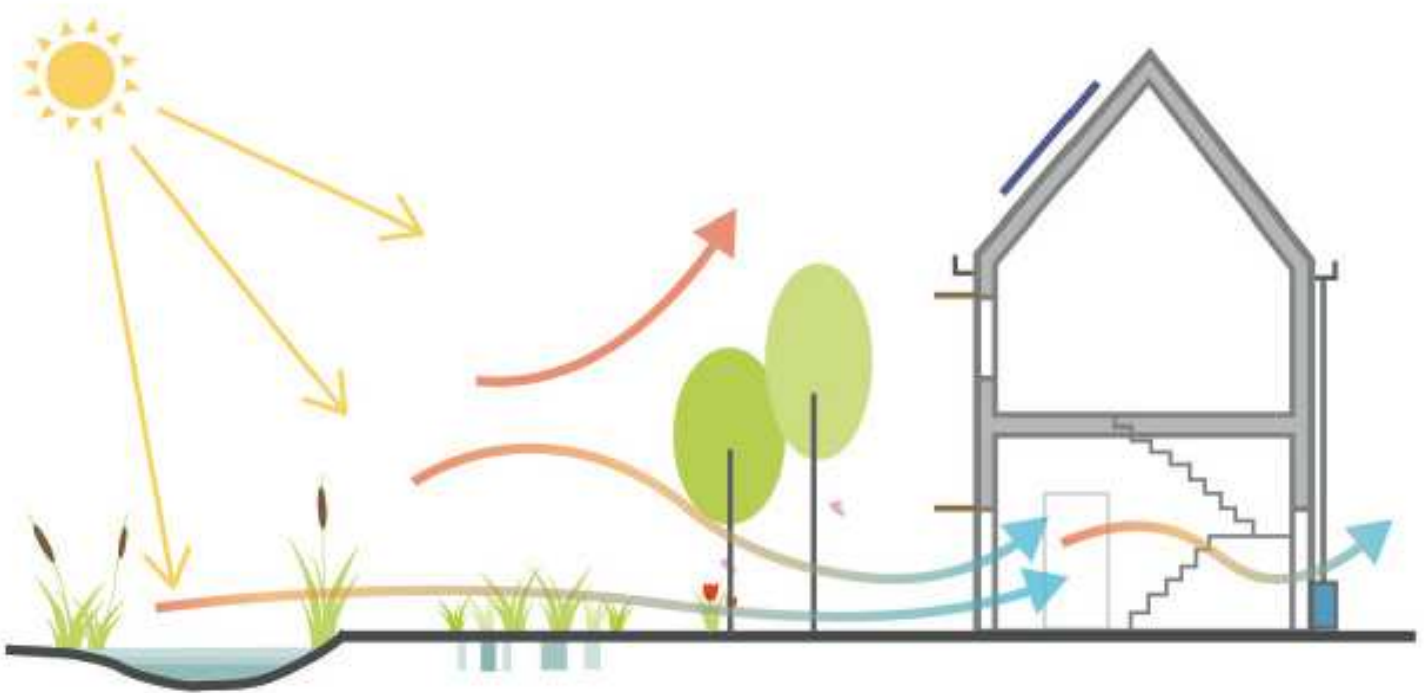
- 1. Multifunctional** – Whilst traditional grey infrastructure typically has one key function, green-blue infrastructure offers a range of functions. For example, increased tree coverage may provide flood protection, reduce heat, promote biodiversity, and provide aesthetic value.
- 2. Varied** – Varying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

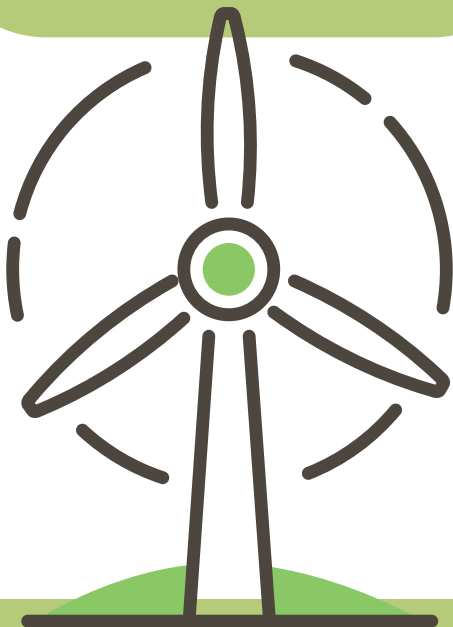
"The Local Planning Authority will support proposals for renewable energy projects including micro-generation, offshore wind farms (plus land based ancillary infrastructure) solar farms, solar panels on buildings, wind farms, District Heating Networks and community led renewable energy initiatives at 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.

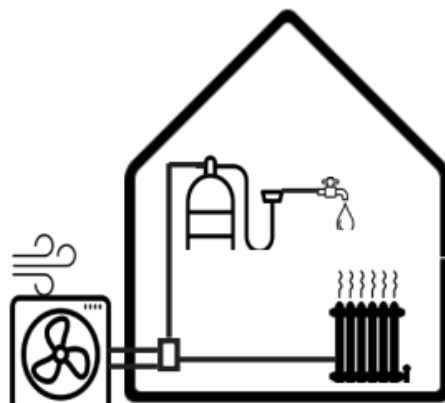
The aim should be to provide net zero or low carbon heating systems for heating and hot water so that new development does not connect to the gas grid. This is the direction we need to take to build sustainable, future proofed buildings. Net Zero carbon buildings do not burn fossil fuels for energy. 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 CO2 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 CO2 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)

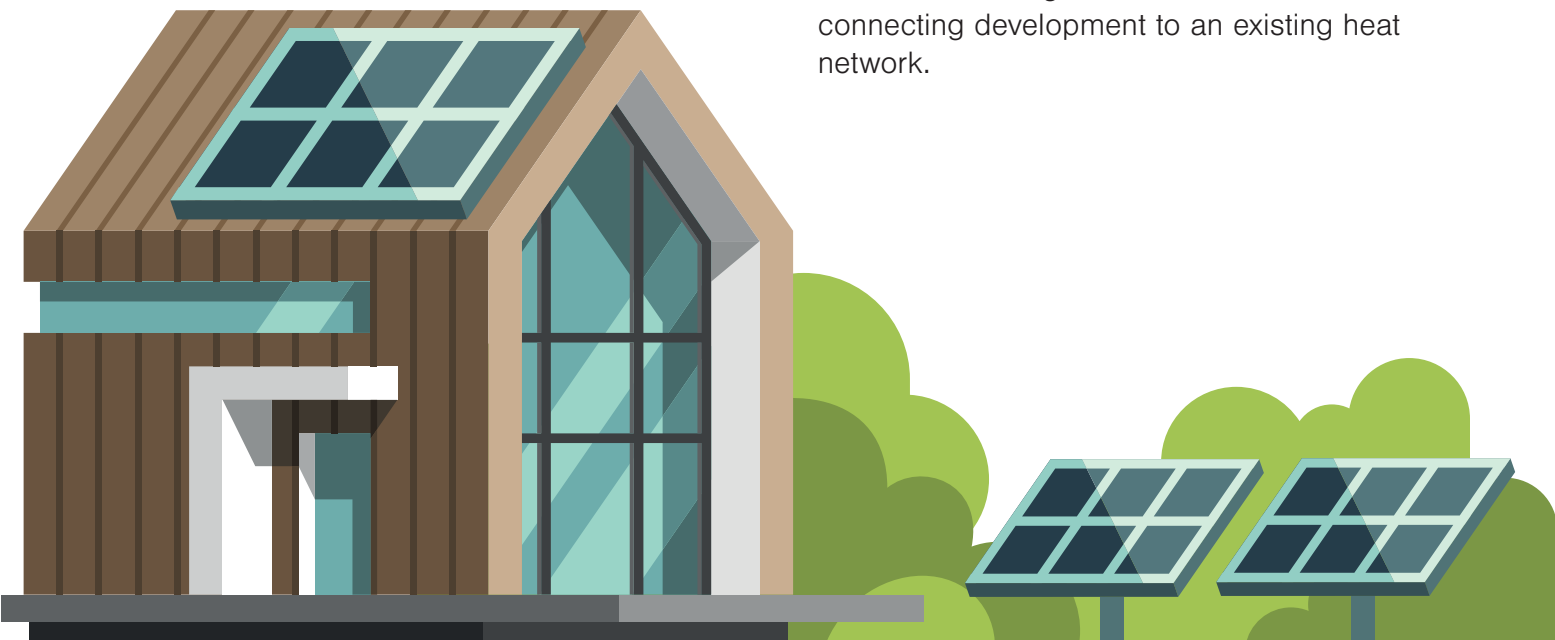
Solar photovoltaics (PV) are ideally suited to buildings. Solar photovoltaic (PV) panels generate electricity when exposed to sunlight. They are the most appropriate form of renewable energy generation for a building as they are a simple, mature, and durable technology and can be installed on both roofs 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.

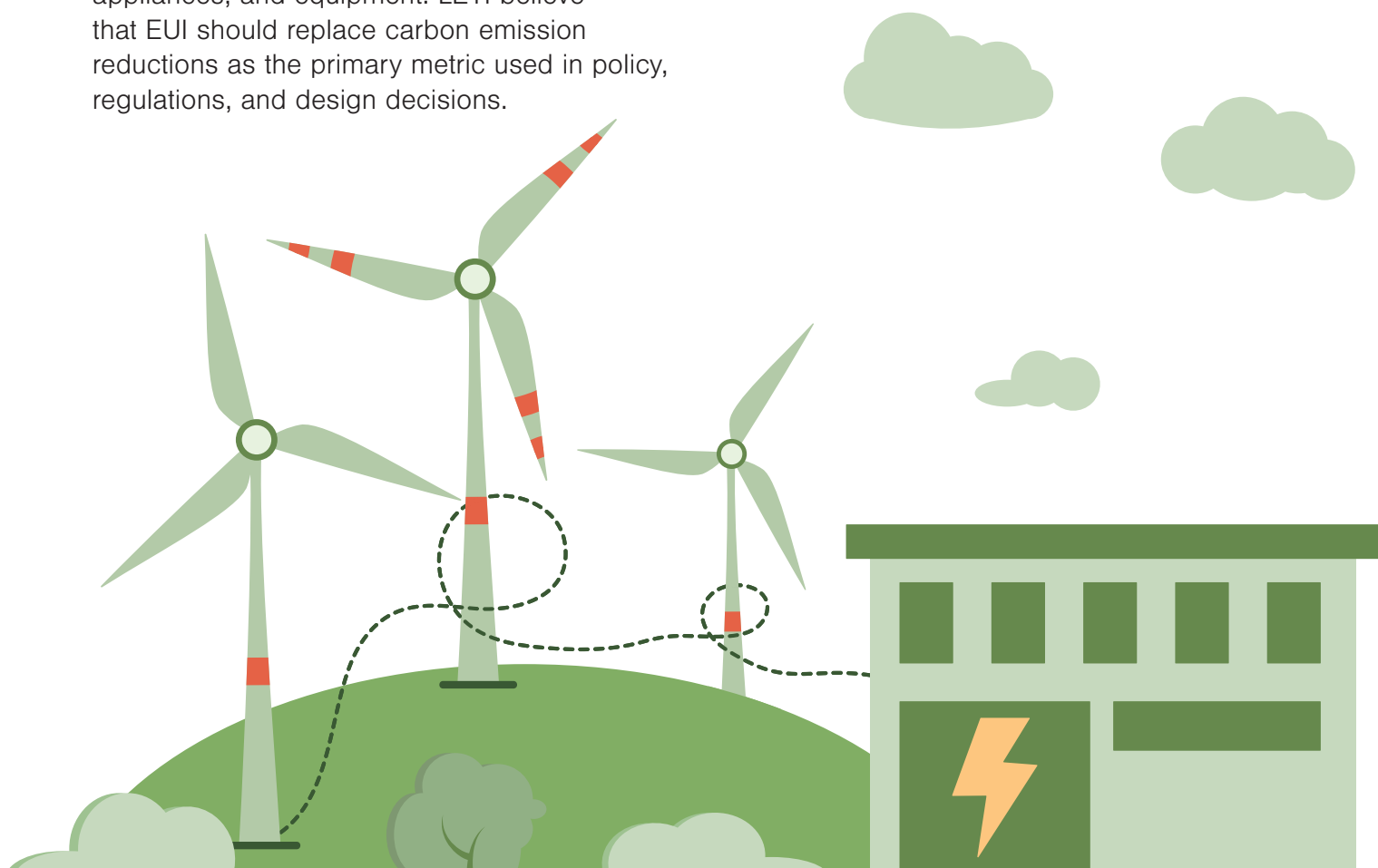
2 - Low carbon heating

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 residential¹

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 schools²
 - **70 kWh/m²/yr** (NLA) or **55 kWh/m²/yr** (GIA) for commercial offices³
- 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.⁴



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.

Notes:

Note 1 - Energy use intensity (EUI) targets

The above targets include all energy use in the building (excluding area unoccupied) as measured at the meter and include on-site generation. They have been derived from specific energy use modelling for each practice or review of the best performing buildings in the UK, and a preliminary assessment of the renewable energy capacity for UK buildings. They are likely to be revised as more knowledge is available on these three topics. All heating and hot water is not generated by fossil fuels, this assumes all off-site electricity building and other zero carbon fuels used. GHA has given the carbon as 0kWh/m²/yr. Check other zero carbon heating fuels are available. The metric will be updated.

Note 2 - Commercial offices

With a typical net to gross ratio of 0.75, 70kWh/m²/yr is equivalent to 93kWh/m²/yr. Building owners and developers are recommended to target a gross building rating of 4 stars using the BBP's Design for Performance process based on H0001.

Note 3 - Whole life carbon

It is recognised that operational emissions represent only one aspect of net zero carbon in new buildings. Building whole life carbon a crucial goal 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 expected that the role of overwatering in managed and heat cooling is minimised.

Developed in collaboration with



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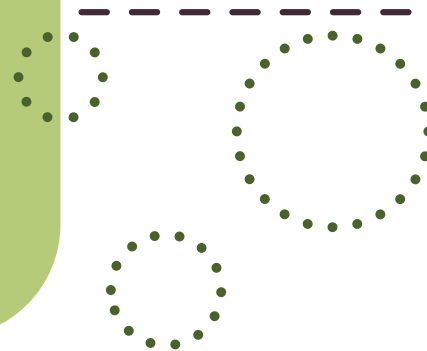
Calculations should be carried out using predictive energy modelling tools, such as Passivhaus Planning package (PHPP) or equivalent.

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 and make use of alternative fuel vehicles.

Electric vehicles are propelled by an electric motor powered using energy stored in internal batteries. Plug-in electric vehicle batteries are recharged by plugging them into the power grid.

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:

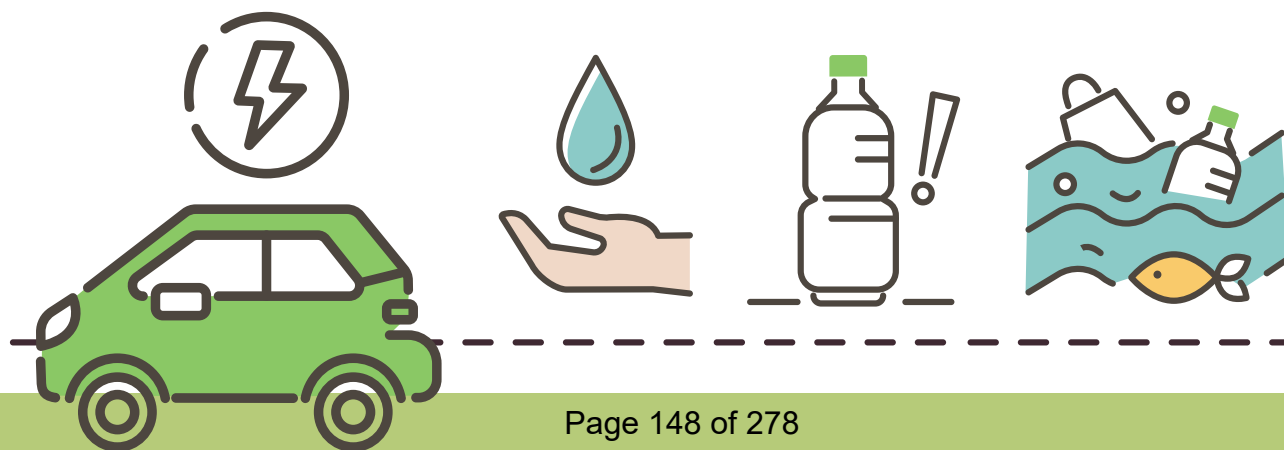
- Decreased air pollution in the vicinity due to the lack of exhaust emissions.
- Decreased noise pollution.
- Opportunity to provide ancillary services to the local power grid, enabling the use of higher share of variable renewable energy and potentially avoiding costly grid reinforcements.

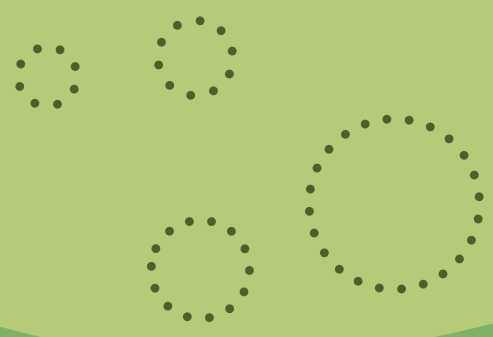
To successfully achieve EV parking and charging for terrace housing, ducting changes should be incorporated into the public realm from the outset.

Types of Chargepoint

There are three types of charging equipment, each with an associated charging time and typical application. The table below is included in the Essex Design Guide and whilst homeowners can use a normal 3-pin plug to charge EVs, the Council recommends that a home charging unit is installed.

Type of chargepoint	Typical power output	Typical charging time	Typical application
Standard	minimum 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 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.

Applicants should also have regard to Anglian Water Services Water Resources Management Plan (revised draft version of WRMP24 available on Anglian Water's [website](#) for 2025-2050) in terms of the challenges that need to be met and how demand management is key to ensuring that we can meet future demands for water as a result of population growth, climate change and leaving more water to support the natural environment in our region.



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 Planning Officers Association 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 Planning Officers Association 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 Design Guide. [Climate Emergency Design Guide | LETI](#)

Waterwise (2022) UK Water Efficiency Strategy to 2030. [J37880-Waterwise Water Efficiency Strategy Inners Landscape WEB.pdf](#)



Appendix C to Local Plan Committee 11.12.2023
Active Travel Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Consultation (6 September – 4 October 2023)
Schedule of Representations

9 Respondents

Who was consulted

Between 6 September 2023 and 4 October 2023, the draft Active Travel SPD was published for consultation in accordance with Regulation 13 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The SPD was 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.

Respondent	Representation (officer summary)	Response	SPD Modifications
Introduction			
Natural England	Whilst we welcome this opportunity to give our views, the topic of the Supplementary Planning Document does not appear to relate to our interests to any significant extent. We therefore do not wish to comment. Natural England agree with your conclusion that neither an SEA nor an HRA are required for the Active Travel Supplementary Planning Document.	Noted	No change required
Susan Allen-Shepherd	Without dates and figures the 1.5 degree temperature increase ceiling is unmeasurable and hence is not a SMART objective.	Comments noted – comment reference to all climate SPD introductions	No change required
Sir Bob Russell	Officer Summary: Active travel routes should not be at the expense of, nor to the detriment of, other users of the King’s Highway. Pedestrians greatly outnumber cyclists, but pedestrians are being discriminated against in order to satisfy the whims of the cycling lobby. I am all in favour of promoting cycling and	Comments noted. The Active Travel SPD will supersede the Cycle Strategy SPD. The Active Travel SPD aims to ensure that all modes of active travel	No change required

	pedestrian routes but not when they are to the detriment of other users of the King's Highway. Cyclists represent less than 5% of travel. Let's put things into perspective. Examples of cycle schemes also included in representation, including RTS, narrowing of pavements in Head Street to create a cycle lane, and East Hill.	including walking, wheeling (trips made by wheelchairs, mobility scooters, pushchairs and adapted bicycles) are taken into account in development proposals in addition to cycling. This will ensure that all modes of active travel benefit from safe and sufficient routes.	
National Highways	We have reviewed the supporting document related to those two above-mentioned SPD. In relation to these, Draft Climate Change and Active Travel Supplementary Planning Document/s. As we understand, SPDs are material considerations in planning decisions. National Highways do not have any comment on these above-mentioned SPDs.	Noted	No change required
Historic England	I can confirm that while we do not have any specific comments to make at this stage, we will be interested in receiving subsequent consultations on these and related documents.	Noted	No change required
Colchester Cycle Campaign	<u>Officer Summary</u> : Thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on the draft of this comprehensive document. We agree with all the points made. These are our additional observations (see below/full rep for full submission).	Comment noted	No change required

Essex County Council	<p>Officer Summary:</p> <p>Throughout the SPD: As well as making reference to LTN1/20 it would also be beneficial to reflect the forthcoming Manual for Streets (3) (MfS) update will reflect a stronger consideration as part of the Active Travel England's (ATE) assessment of planning applications. MfS will remain a good practice guide, but ATE have commented that they will be using the MfS in assessing active travel schemes, with a recommendation that it should inform local design guidance.</p> <p>It would be helpful if the SPD included page numbers.</p>	<p>As the revised Manual for Streets has not yet been published, reference to the document has currently been included in the further guidance sections in the SPD.</p> <p>Further reference to the current and forthcoming document has been added to Chapter 3.</p>	<p>Add following text to Chapter 3: <u>Manual for Streets</u>, first published by the Department for Transport in 2007, provides advice for the design of residential streets. A revised Manual for Streets is currently being developed which will update the existing Manual for Streets and Manual for Streets 2 and will provide guidance for local authorities on designing residential and busier urban streets.</p> <p>Page numbers added.</p>
2. The Active Travel SPD			
Susan Allen-Shepherd	<p>Officer summary:</p> <p>Non-polluting frequent public transport is key. Unfortunately, public transport is always being reduced, whilst we are being encouraged to not travel by car. There needs to be reliable public transport every 10-15 minutes in a big urban area or every 20 minutes between rural conurbations and the city to make it practicable. Networks of small feeder buses are needed. Rural areas do not have any meaningful transport in the evenings.</p>	<p>Comments noted. The active travel SPD acknowledges the importance of additional considerations in relation to integration of active travel modes with public transport. It is acknowledged that it is an important factor in reducing dependency on the</p>	<p>Add following text to p.21: <u>Public transport interchanges should be designed using the principles outlined above to ensure that they are accessible for all, safe and secure, comfortable and attractive.</u></p>

	<p>Not everyone is in a position to walk or cycle: either time constraints e.g., getting various children to different schools; age; disabilities; things to carry – luggage / shopping.</p> <p>The lack of thought about interchanges between means of transport makes it very difficult. Lack of lifts / escalators / powered walkways, somewhere to leave luggage when going to the toilet accessed down steep narrow staircases, being unable to keep an eye on your belongings in luggage compartments on public transport. Lack of seating when waiting and queuing.</p>	<p>private car, particularly when longer journeys are involved.</p> <p>A sentence has been included in the section on 'Integration with public transport' to ensure new public transport interchanges are designed to be accessible by all.</p>	
3. National Context			
Susan Allen-Shepherd	<p>Alternative options and rural access.</p> <p>The devil is in the detail. Without looking at all aspects of delivery of the strategy and joining all the loose ends, admirable intentions will fail.</p> <p>I believe more sustainable fuels are available with minimum conversion costs, so plan B is needed to combat the risks of the high costs of electric vehicles; lack of materials to make batteries; and to avoid the waste of scrapping older vehicles early and to have more flexible approach to converting in the intervening years.</p> <p>Whilst trying to reduce use of private transport in cities this must not be to the detriment of access to facilities from rural area</p>	Comments noted	No change required

<p>Essex County Council</p>	<p>It might be worth referencing recent changes to the Highway Code (January 2022), which strengthens active travel. The key changes to the Highway Code cover eight new rules about vulnerable road users and can be viewed in more detail here. A 'hierarchy of road users' has been introduced that prioritises those most at risk on our roads. Prior to this, all road users were on an equal footing so were equally responsible for their own safety and the safety of other road users. Now, drivers must be aware that pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders, carriage drivers and motorcyclists, as the most vulnerable road users, should take priority over cars. The full hierarchy prioritises road users in the following order: Pedestrians, Cyclists, Horse riders, Motorcyclists, Cars and taxis, Vans and minibuses, HGVs.</p> <p>It may also be worth referencing Planning Practice Guidance which supports the NPPF and provides guidance regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Overarching principles on Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements ○ Travel Plans ○ Transport Assessments and Statements 	<p>Reference to the hierarchy of road users in the Highway Code has been added to Chapter 2 and the further reading section.</p> <p>Reference added to Planning Practice Guidance in Chapter 3 and the Further Reading and References section.</p>	<p>Add following text to Chapter 2: <u>Changes to the Highway Code in January 2022 includes a new section on the 'hierarchy of road users'. The concept places road users most at risk at the top of the hierarchy. Those road users are pedestrians, in particular children, older adults and disabled people, cyclists, horse riders and motorcyclists, with particular importance on children, older adults and disabled people being more at risk.</u></p> <p>Add following text to Chapter 3: <u>Planning Practice Guidance adds further context to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Guidance is available on a number of subjects including Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements.</u></p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Transport evidence bases in plan making and decision taking 		
4. Local Context			
Susan Allen-Shepherd	<p>Whilst infrastructure to increase the uptake of cycling is admirable, the plans for it shouldn't destroy unique and valued environments such as Crouch Street (the western end in particular). A good amount of car parking is needed to maintain its village in a city feel, surely this is possible as there are already cycle lanes in place, just a bit of tidying up is needed. Also, I among many people use and appreciate the underpass as it takes us away from the traffic and the need to wait in a large throng to cross the road.</p>	Comments noted	No change required
Essex County Council	<p>Essex Transport Policy, page 13: LCWIP paragraph. Probably worth noting that ECC is currently in the process of consulting on a refresh of its existing LCWIP's across all districts. Colchester LCWIP was out to consultation until 29th September 2023. Following this, ECC will look to update its Strategic LCWIP network. An update reflecting the above – even in general terms would be helpful.</p> <p>Essex Transport Policy, page 13: Reference should be made to the Essex Local Transport Plan (LTP3, 2011) and the forthcoming Essex Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4), which will replace the LTP3. This sets out the county's transport policy but importantly the priorities</p>	<p>Comments noted. Sentence added to highlight the consultation in September 2023.</p> <p>Paragraph added at the start to highlight the Local Transport Plan.</p>	<p>Amend text on p.13: 'The <u>Colchester</u> Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) was developed in 202118. This...' <u>The Colchester LCWIP refresh was consulted on in September 2023.</u></p> <p>Add following text to p.13: <u>The Essex Transport Strategy: the Local Transport Plan for Essex was published in June 2011. This strategy is the overarching transport plan for Essex and sets out the</u></p>

	include schemes that support the uptake in active travel, and improve the health and wellbeing of the population. LTP policies also seek to encourage the use of more sustainable forms of travel. LTP4 is scheduled for consultation in 2024 and will place a greater emphasis upon the provision and use of sustainable transport and the decarbonisation of the transport network.		<u>aspirations for improving travel in the county. The LTP sets out the focus on schemes that support the uptake of active and sustainable travel to enable and encourage healthy choices within our communities for their improved health and wellbeing.</u>
5. Active Travel Infrastructure in Colchester			
Susan Allen-Shepherd	<p>Active Travel needs in Tiptree. Tiptree's Neighbourhood Plan tried to improve various aspects of rural transport. In particular, the fact that the bus provision doesn't lead to sustainable travel. The idea of a circular bus for in Tiptree travel and a park and ride style facility for travellers to the railway stations and elsewhere and for workers coming into Tiptree was considered. We were wrongly advised that we couldn't compete with the number 91 bus service, maybe we should have been advised to set up a club. But talk of "dial a ride" services does not cover the need for everyday transport needs that could be provided on a regular basis.</p> <p>Tiptree has various ideas about Active Travel in Tiptree and improving the street scene here. There needs to be an overall strategy for Tiptree through its</p>	<p>Comments noted – The principles set out in the SPD relate to the whole of the Colchester administrative area. The SPD acknowledges that the opportunities for specific active travel requirements of the rural communities can be identified through partnership working with the Parish and Town Councils. Further clarification added to the start of Section 6.</p> <p>A link to the Essex Bus Strategy has also been included in the SPD.</p>	<p>Add following text to first part of Chapter 6, p.15: <u>'The principles set out in this SPD relate to the whole of the Colchester City area.'</u></p>

	Neighbourhood plan and consultation with the parish council as efforts through the Local Highways Panel are piecemeal and are often rejected without considering the bigger picture and monies that could be obtained from Active Travel Schemes.		
Colchester Cycle Campaign	Officer Summary: National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 51 now only goes to Wivenhoe. The extension to Harwich was clipped from the network. As well as routes 1 and 51, route 13 runs north from New Farm Road, Stanway to near Wells next the Sea, Norfolk.	Noted. Text in Section 5 paragraph 4 updated	Add following text to Section 5: 'National Cycle Network (NCN) Routes <u>1, 13</u> and 51 run through the Colchester City area city linking Colchester to Tiptree and Harwich to Oxford. '
6. The elements needed to encourage active travel			
Susan Allen-Shepherd	Fully agree	Noted	
British Horse Society	Officer Summary: We wish to see equestrians included in new or improved provisions proposed within Colchester City Councils Local Plan unless there are evidence based reasons for their exclusion which cannot be overcome. When considering the Active Travel SPD where plans are made for "improvements" for walkers and cyclists using existing ways to which equestrians have a legal right of access (bridleways and byways for example) these "improvements" should not be to the detriment of the legal users (including horses). We believe that a number of policies, reviews, guidelines and objectives indicate that this request is	Local Plan Policy DM1 requires all development to be designed to provide 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. Further text to be added to the section referring to Public Rights of Way and legal users.	Add following text to Chapter 5: page 14: <u>All legal users should be considered where plans are made for improvements to a route for active travel modes, on the Public Rights of Way network.</u>

	<p>considered to be entirely valid by organisations other than the Charity.</p> <p>(for full submission see letter)</p>		
Colchester Cycle Campaign	<p>Officer Summary: Routes to school – we feel that this section should be strengthened.</p>	<p>Further detailed information on new school design is contained in the Essex Design Guide. Reference has been included at the end of this section.</p>	<p>'All <u>new</u> schools should be located within...' 'In addition to the environmental benefits...active travel, and health and well-being.'</p> <p><u>'The School Design Guidance contained in the Essex Design Guide provides additional information, ensuring health and wellbeing principles are applied to development including features to support sustainable accessibility across all user groups.'</u></p>
Colchester Cycle Campaign	<p>Officer Summary: The SPD should point to a dynamically updated map of current Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) schemes to help when making requests for planning gain for a particular development.</p>	<p>A link has been provided to the webpage that hosts the LCWIP information. The section on p.16 aims to ensure that routes provided within a new development link with other routes outside of the development area, including LCWIP routes. To</p>	<p>Amend text on p.16: 'Routes within a new development should link with existing and proposed pedestrian and cycle routes outside of the development area, <u>including those routes shown on the Colchester</u></p>

		ensure this is clear, the text has been reworded to state this.	<u>Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and any refresh of this plan, therefore 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.</u>
Colchester Cycle Campaign	Officer Summary: Paragraph on page 16 beginning 'All new developments that are expected..' could be strengthened. The responsibility to 'provide links' could be seen as ending immediately on the boundary of a development.	Comments noted. Amended second paragraph under 'Provision of Good Quality Infrastructure in New Developments' to clarify. Additional information has been added on the type of segregation and what is	Amend text on p. 15: All new developments... on the site itself and provide links to the <u>nearest surrounding network, ensuring there are no gaps in the active travel infrastructure when where appropriate</u> linking the development to key local amenity destinations. Amend text on p.17: <u>'It is recommended that</u> Where possible, pedestrians, cyclists and

	<p>We are also concerned about the 'Comfortable' paragraph on page 17. The 'where possible' in relation to segregating cyclists and pedestrians is too weak. May we suggest using the wording in Gear Change and/or LTN 1/20?</p> <p>On page 17 it says that surfacing should be level, smooth and well maintained'. Various cycling projects in Colchester are destined not to achieve their potential because the path is actually more undulating than the road.</p> <p>Direction signs during Cycle Town 2009-11 were put on square posts with the result that they all still face in the</p>	<p>recommended as per LTN/120 with 'where possible' removed.</p> <p>Split the first bullet point into two and expanded on the 'comfortability'.</p> <p>Additional information added about the legibility of the wayfinding and securely attached to posts within the</p>	<p>traffic should be segregated <u>in line with guidance in LTN 1/20</u>. The appropriate type of segregation will be dependent on the location, type of road, and the volume and flow of traffic.'</p> <p>'Active travel routes should be constructed to appropriate widths, <u>considering comfort for all users with differing speeds and room for safe overtaking. More...</u>'</p> <p>Amend text on p.16:</p> <p>'Routes should be legible, easy to find, and easy to follow. Signage and wayfinding should be <u>placed securely on posts, be continuous and legible providing information on key destinations and travel time.</u> Signage can also act as a promotional tool to highlight the existence of <u>active travel</u></p>
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	right direction. Is there any way the SPD can touch on this?	last bullet point on the 'Accessibility for all' section	walking and cycling routes and shortcuts.
Will Bramhill	<p>Shared transport</p> <p>On page 22 mention is made of car clubs. While these are the ideal it has proved hard to establish a culture in which they take root, let alone thrive. As someone who could easily give up owning a car, I think we should put greater stress on ordinary commercial car hire, with the planning authority ensuring that car hire depots are evenly spread throughout the city in areas where returning a vehicle at 9pm on a winter's night does not lead to a fear of being robbed (I'm thinking of the hire premises in Hawkins Road and Magdalen Street). Could the city council produce a plan for optimum cover by hire firms and offer incentives for hire companies to start business in those areas?</p>	<p>Comments noted</p> <p>To encourage take up of car clubs, further information has been included on location. CoMoUk have produced guidance on Car Clubs and a link is provided to this web page in the SPD.</p>	<p>Add following text on p.20 '...proposals, particularly in urban areas. <u>Car clubs are best located in areas where there are good public transport links and active travel infrastructure...</u>'.</p>
Improvements to Existing Infrastructure			
Susan Allen-Shepherd	Fully agree. There must be adequate provision in the sustainable areas outside the body of the city.	Comments noted. The principles set out in the SPD relate to the whole of the Colchester administrative area. Text added to Chapter 6 for clarification.	Add following text to first part of Chapter 6, p.15: <u>'the principles set out in this SPD relate to the whole of the Colchester City area.'</u>
Cycle Parking			
Susan Allen-Shepherd	Fully Agree	Noted	No change required
Colchester Cycle Campaign	<u>Officer Summary</u> : The current Essex parking guide is out of date.	Comments noted.	No change required

	<p>We would like to see all new homes have secure and accessible cycle parking either on the property itself or as part of a community parking scheme (lockable bike hangars funded in similar way to residents' car parking schemes). They should be high quality: at present developers put in place cheap sheds which last as little as two years.</p> <p>Cycle parking should be conveniently placed and accessible at all times, which rules out the use of garages unless they have extra room and a secondary specific cycle exit with no step. The ideal is a bespoke room.</p> <p>Current planning conditions appear to bar householders from erecting Asgard (or similar) cycle containers at the front of their homes. Is there any way the SPD can alter these so that structures can be put up without planning permission?</p> <p>Is there a way that the SPD can cover the funding of cycle parking (hangars) in nearby neighbourhoods?</p>	<p>The Essex Parking Guidance review is currently being consulted on and includes standards for cycle parking for all types of development. The guidance is referred to in Local Plan Policy.</p> <p>Permitted development rules cannot be amended by SPD.</p> <p>The SPD does not cover funding of infrastructure not associated with new development. However, provision of cycle parking in existing neighbourhoods is supported in the SPD where a need is identified locally.</p>	
Sustainable Travel, Promotion and Community Projects			
Susan Allen-Shepherd	Fully agree	Noted	No change required
Essex County Council	Essex is in the process of developing a Mobility Hubs Implementation Guide, reference to this future document could be made – this is currently in draft and should be ready by the end of the year.	Further information added and reference has been included to the guidance available on the Essex Design Guide as the Mobility	Add text to p.21: 'Mobility hubs bring together various forms of shared transport, public transport, active transport in spaces

		Hubs Implementation Guide is not currently available.	<p>designed to improve the public realm. <u>This can offer sustainable, flexible, accessible and cost effective 'first or last mile' connections to the nearest bus or railway services.</u></p> <p>Larger developments could consider <u>adopting a mobility hub approach,</u> which co-locates mobility options and other community facilities. This could include <u>bicycle and vehicle parking and access to a range of shared electric vehicles...</u></p> <p><u>Guidance is also available in the Essex Design Guide and Ffurther guidelines...</u></p>
7. Planning Application Expectations			
Susan Allen-Shepherd	It is important that ECC highways can support local needs on planning applications without the risk of being sued for costs by developers.	Noted	No change required
Colchester Cycle Campaign	Officer Summary: Discouraging motor traffic – this is the other side of the coin to encouraging active travel modes. In making observations on planning matters, we see that developers rely on Trics formula to estimate the likely level of motor traffic. In our view applying Trics data leads to an underestimate and the resultant vehicle movements deter people from cycling.	Comments noted. Essex County Council is the Highway Authority and provides advice on mitigation of impact on the highway network. Local Plan Policy refers to developments that	No change required

	Planning applications should take into account the level of intensity of contractors' traffic during any construction.	generate significant movement requiring Transport Assessments in line with the latest ECC policies.	
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Appendix D to Local Plan Committee Report
Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Consultation (6 September – 4 October 2023)
Schedule of Representations

Who was consulted

Between 6 September 2023 and 4 October 2023, the draft Climate Change SPD was published for consultation in accordance with Regulation 13 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The SPD was 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. 7 organisations responded to the consultation. The table, below, summarises each representation and how it is has been taken into account.

Respondent	Obj/Sup	Representation (summary)	Response
1. Introduction			
Natural England	Comment	Whilst we welcome this opportunity to give our views, the topic of the Supplementary Planning Document does not appear to relate to our interests to any significant extent. We therefore do not wish to comment	Noted
ECC	Support	ECC is very supportive and commends CCC on the content. ECC will continue to work with Colchester as it prepares its new local plan (and advice on planning applications) and provide ongoing advice through the County Council's Climate and Planning Unit.	Support welcomed
Historic England	Comment	I can confirm that while we do not have any specific comments to make at this stage, we will be interested in receiving subsequent consultations on these and related documents.	Noted
National Highways	Support	National Highways do not have any comment on these above-mentioned SPDs.	Noted

Anglian Water	Support	We support the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan which sets out the actions that Colchester CC plan to take to reach net zero by 2030. However, the webpage only highlights the progress made rather than a direct link to the Action Plan and what specific measures are included, particularly which are linked to the Local Plan and new development – and how it links to the Essex Climate Action Commission's Net Zero report. You may wish to consider setting out what is needed for the Council's area as a whole to get to net zero and how the Local Plan policies and this SPD can contribute to that – not only in terms of the operational standards of new homes, but also the embodied carbon. We agree with the Essex Climate Action Commission's recommendations on a central approach to monitoring actions and understanding the necessary indicators, baseline position, and measures needed to evaluate progress. It is unclear whether successes are to be measured at LPA level or county-wide, but perhaps this can be clarified in the SPD to demonstrate how carbon reductions will be recorded and measured so the links to the Local Plan AMR and the respective climate/net zero strategies are clear.	These comments relate to the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan and have been passed on to the relevant Officers.
2. Background and Context - no representations			
3. Colchester context - no representations			
4. Improving Layout and Building Design			
Tiptree Parish Council	Object	Increasingly it is recognised that everyone should have access to natural greenspace 'on their doorstep'. This need became particularly apparent during the COVID lockdown but is also needed to reduce the need for car journeys in order to find space for recreation. Unfortunately, these areas just outside the settlement boundary, even when designated as Local Wildlife Sites, are often the most at risk of speculative planning applications. We would like to see better protection for such sites of recognised value to the	It is agreed that access to natural greenspace is important. Protecting and enhancing the city's green network and the 'creating a better environment' agenda will be the

		community and the SPD should be more strongly worded in support of the desire to protect such areas.	starting point and key purpose of the Local Plan Review. The adopted Biodiversity SPD sets out the principles the Council expects to ensure that development proposals protect and create space for nature.
5. Renewable and low carbon energy			
Anglian Water	Support	Anglian Water is supportive of the policy approach and the SPD. Renewable and low carbon energy is important in reducing our own operational carbon, and we are on track to generate 45% of our energy from our own renewable sources by 2025 in our ambition to become net zero by 2030. We are achieving this by installing up to 238MWp of solar generation capacity on and around our sites, with a further 90GWh from renewable energy installations in our region between 2025 and 2030. In addition, we continue to generate over 115GWh of renewable power through our biogas CHP engines, including at our Colchester sludge treatment centre. We consider that the positive support for renewable energy in the SPD will help residents and businesses achieve their net zero aspirations. For Anglian Water, our renewable energy generation also provides a resilient energy supply to our critical infrastructure including our water treatment centres.	Support welcomed
6. Net Zero Carbon Buildings (the LETI approach)			
Anglian Water	Support	We welcome reference to LETI and its definition of net zero including whole life carbon including embodied carbon – we consider that this approach is important to tackle climate change and the carbon emissions of buildings and construction. The Built Environment Carbon Database states that the built environment is responsible for 38% of greenhouse gas emissions globally so there is a significant role for this sector in reducing carbon	Support noted. The Council will continue to monitor the impact of adopted Local Plan policies through the Annual Monitoring

		emissions. We support the section on measuring and reporting upfront embodied carbon on major development proposals, which we factor in on our own capital investment schemes. Will the Council be seeking to measure and monitor the impact the Local Plan policies and SPD have on reducing carbon emissions in new development to support its own net zero ambitions for the city council area?	Report (AMR). The Council's progress in meeting its net zero target will be reported separately (but referred to in the AMR).
7. Electric Vehicles - no representations			
8. Water efficiency measures			
Anglian Water	Support	<p>Anglian Water notes that the adopted Colchester Local Plan policy includes the optional higher water efficiency standard of 110 litres per person per day, which we have promoted across all local planning authorities within our region – with 54 of our 59 LPAs adopted or proposing to include this standard in their local plans. We are currently working with the Environment Agency, Natural England and Cambridge Water on a Joint Protocol for Water Efficiency which endorses the Government's Environmental Improvement Plan intention to improve the building regulation water efficiency for 100 litres per person per day for water stressed areas, as a minimum – which can be addressed through water efficient fixtures and fittings. However the Joint Protocol will also to encourage local planning authorities to go beyond this towards 80 litres per person per day. We will be supporting the Joint Protocol with an evidence base that will be regularly updated as new data and information is published – including from the Ofwat Innovation Fund project we are leading with other organisations and developers – Enabling Water Smart Communities. Once agreed, the Joint Protocol will then be circulated to local planning authorities across our region to help promote and support a more ambitious approach to water efficiency and future growth in local plans.</p> <p>We fully support the SPD to encourage consideration of a lower water efficiency standard of 80 litres per person per day. We consider that such standards are achievable where integrated water management is</p>	Support welcomed. Information about the Joint Protocol is noted and will be considered as the Local Plan Review progresses. Reference to the Water Resources Management Plan has been added.

	<p>implemented, and forms of water reuse are utilised (rainwater harvesting and reuse, and greywater recycling for example). Whilst individuals that make an environmental choice to install such systems into self/custom build homes, it is most likely it will be larger sites where such integrated water management systems can be implemented in a cost-effective way, whilst also maximising the positive benefits of marketing water and energy efficient new homes. Economies of scale are likely to be achieved for larger major developments that implement integrated water management across the site utilising a centrally managed water reuse system linked to SuDS attenuation and/or greywater reuse. This would require a dual pipe system install to all properties so that non-potable water can be used for flushing toilets, outdoor use (car washing/watering the garden) and for washing machines.</p> <p>We agree that SuDS play a critical component in providing water efficient development through integrated water management measures. SuDS and green infrastructure need to be planned in at the start of designing new developments, particularly where attenuation is needed to support integrated water management through reuse in domestic and commercial properties.</p> <p>It is the Government's intention to implement Schedule Three of The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 to make SuDS mandatory in all new developments in England in 2024. However, we welcome references in the SPD to further guidance produced by Essex County Council, ensuring that SuDS are designed appropriately in new developments, until the Schedule is formally implemented and the necessary measures are in place.</p> <p>Page 33 Water efficiency measures: Anglian Water welcomes the references to water efficient fittings, rainwater harvesting systems and water reuse systems to further reduce potable water use, in addition to the link to our tips on water saving on our website. We consider that this particular</p>	
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		<p>section for householder development is useful for homeowners given the proportion of householder applications received by local planning authorities.</p> <p>Reference could also be made to our Water Resources Management Plan (revised draft version of WRMP24 available on our website for 2025-2050) in terms of the challenges that need to be met and how demand management is key to ensuring that we can meet future demands for water as a result of population growth, climate change and leaving more water to support the natural environment in our region.</p> <p>The Council could also consider including specific water efficiency guidance for non-household/commercial development in the SPD, which dependent on scale, can have significant rainwater harvesting potential for example.</p>	
9. Householder applications - no representations			
10. Conclusion			
Feering Parish Council	Support	Feering Parish Council think that, in principle, this document is a very aspirational and positive document	Support welcomed
ECC	Support	Further reading and references, page 36: Reference is made to the Essex Design Guide. This is not an “Essex County Council” publication but one that is managed and reviewed by the Essex Planning Officers’ Association on behalf of all borough, district, and city councils, including ECC. Where the Essex Design Guide is referenced, please remove ‘Essex County Council’. Likewise the Essex Green Infrastructure Standards were developed with Natural England, and while ECC played a lead role, this was done on behalf of all Essex borough, district, and city councils. The GI standards were launched in Summer 2023 and the recommendation is that each local authority adopts/endorse the standards, which have been approved by NE.	Noted, these references have been amended.

Anglian Water	Support	Anglian Water welcomes the ambitious measures included in the SPD which reflects the declaration of a climate emergency by Colchester City Council and providing further guidance to developers/applicants in meeting and in some cases surpassing the requirements of climate change related policies in the Local Plan.	Support welcomed
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	Local Plan Committee	Item 10
	11 December 2023	
Report of	Karen Syrett, Joint Head of Planning	01206 506477
Title	Infrastructure Funding Statement	
Wards affected	All wards affected	

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report is for Members' information and provides a summary of the amount of developer contributions obtained, allocated and spent in the previous financial year.
- 1.2 In the IFS for the period between the 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023 the following information is presented;
- the total amount of money to be provided under any planning obligations which were entered into during the reported year is £7,726,158.57.
 - 144 affordable homes are to be delivered as a result of S106 agreements entered into.
 - In 2022/23, 74 affordable housing units were delivered via S.106 Agreements. This compares to 29 in 2021/22.
 - the total amount of money under any planning obligations which was received during the reported year was £3,595,678.59.
 - the total amount of money (received under any planning obligations) which was spent by the authority (including transferring it to another person to spend); £4,793,314.53.
 - the total amount of money (received under any planning obligations) which was allocated to a project but not spent during the reporting year amounted to £1,063,142.30.
 - the total amount of money under any planning obligations which was received before the reported year which has not yet been allocated by the authority is £8,133,162.63.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 No decision is required since the report is for information only. The information contained within the statement is factual and the statement must be published before the 31st December.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 To ensure members are aware of the amount of developer contributions obtained, allocated and spent in the previous financial year.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 There are no alternative options as the Council is required to publish an Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations.

5. Background Information

- 5.1 Since December 2020, planning authorities have been required to publish an Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) (England) (No. 2) Regulations 2019: "Part 10a Reporting and monitoring on CIL and planning obligations; paragraph 121A. The purpose of an IFS is to give communities a better understanding of how developer contributions have been or are planned to be used to deliver infrastructure in their area.
- 5.2 Infrastructure Funding Statements must be published annually, before 31 December, and cover the previous financial year running from 1 April to 31 March.
- 5.3 Developer contributions in the Borough of Colchester include section 106 planning obligations and unilateral agreements secured as part of the planning application process. Planning Obligations (also known as S106 Agreements) are legal agreements which can be attached to a planning permission to mitigate the impact of development.
- 5.4 It is important to note that obligations can only be sought where they are directly related to the development, fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development, and necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms. S106 obligations include:
- Site specific financial contributions- these are secured and must be used for defined purposes; for instance, the provision of community facilities, sport provision, open space contributions and affordable housing contributions (when accepted in lieu of on-site provision)
 - Provision of on-site affordable housing; and
 - Non-financial obligations, including requirements such as employment and skills strategies, construction management plans and travel plans.
- 5.5 Colchester City Council is responsible for securing funding and the delivery of affordable homes, community facilities, sport and recreation including public open space. The IFS provides details of how funds have been spent in these service areas. The CCC Infrastructure Funding Statement does not include details of contributions secured for Education, Highways and Transportation. Essex County Council are responsible for these matters and details of planning obligations to provide things like additional school places and highway improvements can be found by referring to the Essex County Council Infrastructure Funding Statement as they are the responsible authority.
- 5.6 The data collected is split into three files;
1. Developer Agreements 2022/23
 2. Developer Agreement Contributions 2022/23
 3. Developer Agreement Transactions 2022/23
- 5.7 The IFS should include a register in a format provided by the Government (a CSV file).

- 5.8 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) recommends that local planning authorities follow their specification on how to format, label and publish their development contributions data. DLUHC recommend publishing infrastructure contributions in three steps:
1. Create three developer contribution CSV files to store the data: one showing developer agreements; one showing the amount and purpose of the contributions; and a third one showing the transactions and their current status ('secured', 'received', 'allocated', 'transferred', 'spent' and 'returned').
 2. Publish the CSV files and a short, written report illustrating the data.
 3. Submit the data to the national register of developer contributions; set up and maintained by MHCLG.
- 5.9 The Infrastructure Funding Statement is attached as Appendix A. This will be published on the website following the committee meeting.
- 5.10 In the IFS for the period between the 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023 the following information is presented;
- the total amount of money to be provided under any planning obligations which were entered into during the reported year is £7,726,158.57. The new agreements included
 - Land at The Folley, Layer-de-la-Haye,
 - Lookers Renault "72-78", Military Road, Colchester,
 - Land adjoining "The Gables", Kelvedon Road, Tiptree,
 - Land to the east of, Newbarn Road, Great Tey
 - In 2022/23, 74 affordable housing units were delivered via S.106 Agreements. This compares to 29 in 2021/22. The new homes were built on sites including Severalls, Gosbecks, But Road and Wyvern Farm in Stanway.
 - 144 affordable homes are to be delivered as a result of S106 agreements entered into.
 - the total amount of money under any planning obligations which was received during the reported year was £3,595,678.59.
 - the total amount of money (received under any planning obligations) which was spent by the authority (including transferring it to another person to spend); £4,793,314.53.
 - the total amount of money (received under any planning obligations) which was allocated to a project but not spent during the reporting year amounted to £1,063,142.30.

- the total amount of money under any planning obligations which was received before the reported year which has not yet been allocated by the authority is £8,133,162.63.

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 to 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 NA.

9. Publicity Considerations

- 9.1 The publication of information in relation to S106 agreements may generate publicity for the Council. Although it should be seen in a positive light there will always be criticism that not enough infrastructure is provided to support new development.

10. Financial implications

- 10.1 S106 funding is used to mitigate the impact of new development.

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 S106 agreements have been used specifically to deliver green infrastructure, electric charging points and sustainable travel measures.

Appendix A– Infrastructure Funding Statement 2022/23

Infrastructure Funding Statement



2022/2023

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- 2. INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT 2022/2023**
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- 13. SUMMARY OF INFORMATION TO COMPLY WITH SCHEDULE 2 OF THE COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (AMENDMENT) (ENGLAND) (NO.2) REGULATIONS 2019**

1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Colchester City Council's Infrastructure Funding Statement 2022/2023. Councils are now required to produce an Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) on an annual basis.

The Statement sets out income and expenditure relating to contributions secured through s106 Agreements on developments throughout Colchester. It is important to note that Colchester City Council is only responsible for some infrastructure, such as community facilities. This IFS does not therefore detail those contributions which relate to Essex County Council functions such as schools and transportation. Neither does the statement include information on open space provision delivered on-site as part of new development in the City.

S.106 agreements are used to mitigate the impacts of development and ensure that Colchester City Council's planning policy requirements are fully met. All contributions have to meet statutory tests; they can only be sought where they are directly related to the development, fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development, and necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

Planning obligations or 'developer contributions' are used to help fund:

- The provision of, or improvements to, open space provision, community facilities and affordable housing contributions accepted in lieu of on-site provision.
- Provision of on-site affordable housing; and
- Non-financial obligations, including requirements such as travel plans.

The information included in this statement will be updated annually and published on the Council's website.

The data on contributions is imperfect as it represents estimates at a given point in time and can be subject to change. However, it is the most robust available at the time of publication.

Infrastructure Funding Statements are required to comply with regulations published by the Government and are only concerned with financial and non-financial obligations secured through S106 agreements. Financial developer contributions are always secured through S106 agreements but there are occasions where some non-financial obligations are secured through planning

conditions. These obligations are not listed within this statement. This Statement only relates to S106 obligations for which Colchester City Council is legally responsible for ensuring compliance. The data in this IFS therefore does not cover S106 obligations applying to land in the City in the following cases:

- (A) Where the S106 obligation is given to Essex County Council and where the County Council are signatory to the legal agreement (e.g., education; highway works; sustainable transport; Public Rights of Way)
- (B) Where Essex County Council is the Local Planning Authority and is responsible for determining the application (e.g., mineral and waste applications)
- (C) Section 278 Highways works agreements between the developer and Essex County Council
- (D) Where Colchester City Council determined a planning application, but where Essex County Council is signatory of the S106 to the effect that it is directly responsible for compliance — this mainly relates to certain highway payments.

Therefore, this Infrastructure Funding Statement should be read in conjunction with the IFS produced by Essex County Council to obtain the complete picture of all financial and non-financial developer contributions originating from developments in Colchester. The Essex County Council IFS will be made available on their website: [Welcome to Essex County Council](#)

2. INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT 2022/2023

S106 Contributions Summary

For the financial year 2022/23 the Council received a total **£3,595,678.59** in financial contributions. **£4,793,314.53** was spent across the City. The contributions received can be received and spent over a number of years which is why these figures never match. The tables below provides more detail on the money received and spent by the Council in the reporting year.

2022/2023	
Infrastructure Type	S106 Contributions Received
Affordable Housing	£379,250.37
Archaeology	£8,511.38
Community	£1,594,672.60
Health	£388,651.37
Parish Highway Works Contribution	£37,228.10
Leisure/Open Space	£926,115.85
RAMS	£155,219.85
Sustainable Transport	£106,029.07
<u>Total</u>	<u>£3,595,678.59</u>

2022/2023	
Infrastructure Type	S106 Contributions spent
Affordable Housing	£153,000.00
Business Enterprise	£69,613.90
Community	£1,035,921.04
Transport & Sustainability	£358,742.28
Health	£15,817.52
Highways Bus Service	£2,000,000.00
Leisure/Open Space	£1,110,365.79
RAMS	£49,854.00
<u>Total</u>	<u>£4,793,314.53</u>

Section 106 agreements signed

Developments with notable s106 agreements signed in the last financial year (2022/23) include:

- 202829 - Land Known as Catchbells, land rear of 296 London Road Stanway – Full Application for 66 Dwellings with associated parking landscaping, open space, drainage and infrastructure and formation of vehicular access to London Road Stanway Colchester.
- 212810 - Land Known as St. Leonards Works, Port Lane Colchester CO1 2NX– Outline application with all matters reserved save for access., for the demolition of all existing buildings and structure and the creation of a residential development with associated open space and infrastructure.
- 211392 - Land at The Folley, Layer-de-la-Haye, Colchester –Outline Application for up to 39 market homes and 16 affordable homes with vehicular access from Greate House Farm Road and The Folley with all other matters reserved.
- 211393 - Land at The Folley, Layer-de-la-Haye, Colchester – Outline Application for a Rural Exception Site to provide up to 8 affordable homes and 7 market homes with vehicular access from Greate House Farm Road with all other matters reserved.
- 220747 - Lookers Renault "72-78", Military Road, Colchester, Essex – Full Application Demolition of existing car showroom buildings and construction of two no. residential apartment buildings, block one comprising 45no. 1- and 2-bedroom apartments, and block two comprising 10no. 1- and 2-bedroom dwellings, together with associated access, basement, above ground parking and landscaping, and communal roof terrace.
- 190647 - Land adjoining "The Gables", Kelvedon Road, Tiptree, Colchester - Full Planning Application Demolition of existing buildings on the site and redevelopment to provide 130 residential dwellings with access, link road to allow for potential future connections, associated parking, private amenity space and public open space.
- 212646 - Land to the east of, Newbarn Road, Great Tey – Outline Application for 30 dwellings and 1ha of public open space and access from Newbarn Road. Some matters reserved.

3. OUR PROCESSES

The Planning Application:

S.106 Agreements are a mechanism that makes a development proposal, that would not otherwise be, acceptable in planning terms.

The tests for when a S.106 Agreement can be used, are:

- a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms
- b) directly related to the development; and
- c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

Once signed, the S.106 Agreement is binding on successive owners of the land.

The Obligations:

Details of the obligations, and the point at which they become due, are detailed within the Agreement. This may, for example, be on commencement of development or after a certain number, or percentage, of properties are built or sold. It should be noted that it can often be years between the signing of an agreement and the contribution being due.

Collection of Monies Due:

Where the obligation is financial, the amount due will be calculated and the developer invoiced at appropriate times. The sum due is index linked and given a specific budget code to allow us to monitor spend and balance.

Requests to Spend:

Many S.106 Agreements contain specific covenants that detail where the monies must be spent or provision of housing, located.

For open space, sport, leisure and community facilities monies, it is important that up to date, local information is used to inform spend. This can be provided by Town & Parish Councils as well as ward Councillors. S.106 contributions may be used for the provision or upgrade of open space, play areas and community facilities in accordance with Council policy.

Once a payment has been made, the financial database is updated to show the amount now available to spend. The S.106 financial report is available by following this link [S.106 Financial Report](#)

4. MONITORING FEES

The Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment)(England)(No.2) Regulations 2019 allow Local Authorities to charge a monitoring fee through section 106 agreements, to cover the cost of the monitoring and reporting on delivery of the section 106 obligations it contains. Monitoring fees can be used to monitor and report on any type of planning obligation, for the lifetime of that obligation. The regulations allow monitoring fees to be either a fixed percentage of the total value of the section 106 agreement or individual obligation; or could be a fixed monetary amount. Monitoring fees must be proportionate and reasonable and reflect the actual cost of monitoring and authorities are required to report on monitoring fees in their Infrastructure Funding Statements. Colchester City Council set monitoring fees at £400 per trigger for financial contribution clauses and £570 for all other clauses per trigger.

£27,617.71 was received in monitoring fees during the period 2022/23.

5. BUSINESS ENTERPRISE

In 2022/23, £69,613.90 of S.106 monies were spent on Business Enterprise across the City.

The S.106 financial report is available by following this link [S.106 Financial Report](#)

Below we have detailed the Business Enterprise project delivered in 2022/23

Business Enterprise projects delivered off-site by S106 Contributions in 2022/23		
Development Site	Amount	Project Delivery
172935 - Stane Park Site, Essex Yeomanry Way, Stanway	£69,613.90	Town Centre promotional campaign

**please note – spend may be over more than one financial year*

6. COMMUNITY

In 2022/23, £1,035,921.04 S.106 monies were spent on Community projects across the City.

Below we have detailed nine of the community projects funded during 2022/23.

Community projects delivered off-site by S106 Contributions in 2022/23		
Development Site	Amount	Project Delivery
200269 - 7 East Stockwell Street, Colchester 201228 - First & Second floor 1-3, 1 Pelhams Lane, Colchester 202562 - 44-45 St. Botolphs Street, Colchester	£1,371.79 £1,098.95 £2,529.36	Provision of stair lift at Colchester Chinese Association.
090725 - Land to the East of, Port Lane, Colchester	£5,945.23	Disabled access at Colchester Mosque
120848 - Stanway Railway Depot, Halstead Road, Stanway, Colchester	£5,368.20	Collingwood Road Scout Hut
144976 - 99 London Road, Copford, Colchester	£8,924.63	Copford Village Hall Improvements
152826 - Land to the east of Warren Lane & West of Dyers Road, Warren Lane, Stanway, Colchester, Essex 172049 - Land west of Chitts Hill, Stanway 172272 - Land to rear of "Field House", Dyers Road, Stanway, Colchester 181859 - Land North of Wyvern Farm", London Road, Stanway, Colchester	£49,907.90 £171,912.31 £60,546.21 £169,578.63	New Stanway Community Centre
160906 - Land adj. Church of All Saints, London Road, Great Horkesley, Colchester	£174,487.59	All Saints Church, Great Horkesley
170997 - Hill Farm, Carters Hill, Boxted, Colchester, CO4 5RD	£15,815.21	Improvements to Community Hub, Boxted

180873 - Land North of Dyers Road, Stanway, Colchester	£185,050.50	Refurbishment of Stanway Evangelical Church
202028 - 53 North Hill, Colchester	£2,304.18	Refurbishment of St Peters Church & church hall, Colchester

**please note – spend may be over more than one financial year*

7. TRANSPORT & SUSTAINABILITY

In 2022/23, £255,422.28 of S.106 monies were spent on Transport & Sustainability.

The S.106 financial report is available by following this link [S.106 Financial Report](#)

Below we have detailed four of the off-site Transport & Sustainability projects delivered in 2022/23.

Transport & Sustainability projects delivered off-site by S106 Contributions in 2022/23		
Development Site	Amount	Project Delivery
120380 – The Maltings, King Edward Quay, Colchester	£20,874.00	Study to enable costings for work to upgrade Lightship Way
171646 - Aim Hire Site, Hawkins Road, Colchester	£47,100.00	Towards LCWIP4, Essex County Council delivering the project
181281 - Former Bus Depot, Magdalen Street, Colchester	£45,000.00	
98/1047 – Land at Former Moler Works, Colchester	£150,000.00	
192090 - Western Knowledge Gateway Site; Land Adj Capon & Annan Road, Colchester	£32,340.00	Improvements to Wivenhoe Trail
120380 – The Maltings, King Edward Quay, Colchester	£3,000.00	Annual Membership of Travel Plan Club

**please note – spend may be over more than one financial year*

8. HEALTHCARE

In 2022/23, £15,817.52 of S.106 monies were spent on Healthcare

The S.106 financial report is available by following this link [S.106 Financial Report](#)

Below we have detailed the Healthcare project delivered in 2022/23 (*spend may be over more than one financial year*)

Healthcare projects delivered off-site by S106 Contributions in 2022/23		
Development Site	Amount	Project Delivery
191997 - Land Adj West Bergholt CC & "Stable Cottage", Colchester Road, West Bergholt	£15,817.52	Transferred to NHS for additional clinical space at West Bergholt Surgery

9. HIGHWAYS & BUS SERVICES

In 2022/23, £2,000,000.00 of S.106 monies were spent on Highways Busway

The S.106 financial report is available by following this link [S.106 Financial Report](#)

Below we have detailed the Highways Busway transferred to ECC in 2022/23

Highways Bus Service project delivered off-site by S106 Contributions in 2022/23		
Development Site	Amount	Project Delivery
151401- Phase 2 Former Severalls Hospital site	£2,000,000.00	Transferred to Essex County Council for provision of segregated 2-way single carriageway to the west of and parallel to NAR2

**please note – spend may be over more than one financial year*

10. OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION

In 2022/23, £474,475.58 of S.106 monies were spent on open space/sport and recreation provision or improvement across the City.

The S.106 financial report is available by following this link [S.106 Financial Report](#)

Below we have detailed eight of the off-site open space projects delivered in 2022/23

Open Space projects delivered off-site by S106 Contributions in 2022/23		
Development Site	Amount	Project Delivery
131385 - 10 Williams Walk, Colchester 130195 - 18-22 Sir Isaacs Walk, Colchester	£10,000.00	Improvement works North Station Road footbridge
170997 - Hill Farm, Carters Hill, Boxted, Colchester, CO4 5RD	£178,794.25	Improvements to King George playing sports field and community hub
O/COL/02/0563 - Turner Road, Colchester	£86,612.56	Floodlights and resurfacing Gilbert School Sports Facility
102068 - 15 High Street, Colchester, CO1 1DA 110285 - 5 George Street, Colchester CO1 1TP 102595 - John Cole House, 20-22 Crouch Street, Colchester	£4,185.34 £2,933.80 £12,083.46	Towards extending and upgrading Colchester East Essex Cricket Club pavilion and facilities in Castle Park.
101018 - Crown Street, Dedham Colchester, CO7 6AS	£529.51	Dedham Therapy Farm
192249 - Land at Brook Road, Great Tey, Colchester	£6,626.61	Great Tey Recreation Ground & Playground.
202562 - 44-45 St. Botolphs Street, Colchester	£11,398.01	Improvements to Imola Pond, Castle Park
145494 - Wyvern Farm, London Road, Stanway, Colchester	£629,450.39	New Stanway Community Centre

**please note – spend may be over more than one financial year*

11. AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment updated Dec 2015 summarised that there is a requirement in Colchester to deliver 920 homes per annum, of which 278 should be affordable homes. These numbers have been incorporated into the Council's Local Plan 2017-2033.

In 2022/23, 74 affordable units were delivered via S.106 Agreements

Examples of Affordable Housing delivered On Site by S106 Contributions 2022/2023	
Development Site	Project Delivered
Gosbecks Farm	21 affordable rented homes and 3 shared ownership homes were delivered by CHP.
Severalls P5/6	5 affordable rent and 5 shared ownership were delivered by Eastlight this year.
Eight Ash Green	13 shared ownership properties were delivered by Eastlight.
Colchester Road, West Bergholt	8 affordable rent and 4 shared ownership were delivered by Eastlight.
Wyvern Farm, Stanway	5 affordable rent and 3 shared ownership were delivered by Sage.
Butt Road	5 affordable rent and 2 shared ownership properties were delivered by Peabody.

Monetary Affordable Housing Contributions

In 2022/23, £153,000 of S.106 monies were spent on affordable housing provision across the City.

The S.106 financial report is available by following this link [S.106 Financial Report](#). Below we have detailed the off-site Affordable Housing project delivered in 2022/23;

Affordable Housing project delivered off-site by S106 Contributions in 2022/23

Development Site	Amount	Project Delivery
144693 - "Rowhedge Wharf", Former Rowhedge Port, Rowhedge, Colchester, Essex	£153,000.00	Affordable Housing acquisition through the 2022-23 programme

**please note – spend may be over more than one financial year*

12. RECREATIONAL DISTURBANCE AVOIDANCE MITIGATION STRATEGY (RAMS)

The Essex coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (the ‘Essex coast RAMS’) aims to deliver the mitigation necessary to avoid significant adverse effects from ‘in-combination’ impacts of residential development that is anticipated across Essex; thus protecting the Habitats (European) sites on the Essex coast from adverse effect on site integrity.

The whole of Colchester City is within the Zone of Influence. All residential proposals within the City should make a contribution towards the measures in the RAMS to avoid and mitigate adverse effects from increased recreational disturbance to ensure that Habitat Sites are not adversely affected, and the proposal complies with the Habitat Regulations.

Bird Aware Essex Coast is a tool being used to lessen potential impacts from increased local housing development. The initiative is run by the Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Partnership (Essex Coast RAMS). This is made up of twelve local councils, Essex County Council and Natural England, and funded by contributions from all new residential dwellings within the Zones of Influence via S106 agreements.

The planned mitigation measures are set out in the Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (Essex Coast RAMS). The mitigation measures include a team of rangers to help coastal visitors and communities understand the importance of the different bird species and the impact of disturbance. Additional work will take place to

encourage responsible dog walking and visits to less sensitive parts of the coast. Mitigation measures will also include new habitat creation.

RAMS Contributions in 2022/23		
Development Site		Contribution Received
182014/210398 - "Land Off", Barbrook Lane, Tiptree, Colchester		£27,191.79
190335 - Land Rear of Weston Business Centre, The Colchester Centre, Hawkins Road, Colchester		£22,671.37
191830 - Land South of School Road, Langham, Colchester		£6,212.76
192837 - Garrison Area K2, Butt Road, Colchester		£4,364.97
202025 - Land south of Berechurch Hall Road, Colchester		£19,476.90
210648 - Parcels R01, R02 & R03, G1, G3, G4 And Osf1 North Colchester Urban Ext Mile End Road, Colchester		£29,534.01
212506 - Chesterwell Day Nursery, Cordelia Drive, Colchester		£545.77
Unilateral Undertakings from a range of schemes		£45,222.28
	Total	£155,219.85

13. Summary of Information to comply with Schedule 2 of The Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) (England) (No.2) Regulations 2019

The matters to be included in the section 106 report for each reported year are —

- a) the total amount of money to be provided under any planning obligations which were entered into during the reported year; **£7,726,158.57**
- b) the total amount of money under any planning obligations which was received during the reported year; **£3,595,678.59**.
- c) the total amount of money under any planning obligations which was received before the reported year which has not yet been allocated by the authority; **£8,133,162.63**

Infrastructure Type	£106 Contributions
Affordable Housing	£619,125.61
Archaeology	£32,050.10
Art	£255,809.98
Business Enterprise	£62,512.95
Education Pre School	£119,385.18
CCTV	£8,997.67
Community	£933,519.91
Transport & Sustainability	£1,235,707.48
Health	£510,062.64
Leisure	£4,294,508.29
RAMS	£51,048.18
Waste & Recycling	£10,434.64

- d) summary details of any non-monetary contributions to be provided under planning obligations which were entered into during the reported year, including details of—
 - (i) in relation to affordable housing, the total number of units which will be provided; **144**

(ii) in relation to educational facilities, the number of school places for pupils which will be provided, and the category of school at which they will be provided; N/A – Essex County Council are the Education Authority, and they have responsibility for Education related planning obligations. Refer to Essex County Council IFS for details.

- e) the total amount of money (received under any planning obligations) which was allocated but not spent during the reported year for funding infrastructure; **£1,063,142.30**. See g) below for how this is broken down. Essentially projects falling in this category have been identified but not yet delivered/funding has not yet been released.
- f) the total amount of money (received under any planning obligations) which was spent by the authority (including transferring it to another person to spend); **£4,793,314.53**.
- g) in relation to money (received under planning obligations) which was allocated by the authority but not spent during the reported year, summary details of the items of infrastructure on which the money has been allocated, and the amount of money allocated to each item.

Infrastructure Item	Amount Allocated
Business Enterprise	£34,460.03
CCTV	£20,350.05
Community	£294,925.65
Transport & Sustainability	£131,105.73
Leisure	£598,118.36
Total	£1,063,142.30

Some examples of Projects where the money has been allocated to a specific project but is not yet shown as spent

Infrastructure Item	Development	Amount Allocated	Project
Community	110088 - Mulberry Cottage, Mersea Road, Langenhoe, Colchester, CO5 7LF	£1,205.40	Replacement heating at Abberton & Langenhoe Village Hall.
Community	120380/145328 – The Maltings, King Edward Quay, Colchester	£88,352.72	Animating King Edward Quay

Community	144976 - 99 London Road, Copford, Colchester, CO6 1LG	£8,748.98	Copford Village Hall
Community	191997 - Land Adj West Bergholt CC & "Stable Cottage", Colchester Road, West Bergholt, Colchester	£72,410.93	Works at St Mary's Church Hall
Community	192249 - Land at Brook Road, Great Tey, Colchester	£25,349.77	Swimming pool at Great Tey primary school.
Community	171529/192841/20252 2 - "Land Off", Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green	£30,192.84	Provision of a new community facility
Leisure	F/COL/08/0300 - 84 Chapel Road, West Bergholt Colchester CO6 3HL	£3,692.65	West Bergholt Playing fields & Playground
Leisure	090551 - 90 Wimpole Road, Colchester CO1 2FN	£8,030.68	Towards refurbishment of footpaths at Old Heath Rec Ground
Leisure	110373 - Land at Junction of, Drury Road & Maldon Road	£20,000.00	IRARA Community Orchard Project
Leisure	160551 - Rowhedge Wharf Phase 2, High Street, Rowhedge, Colchester, CO5 7ET	£180,700.00	Purchase land for allotments
Leisure	192249 - Land at Brook Road, Great Tey, Colchester	£75,580.97	Towards Great Tey Rec grounds & Playground.

	122005 - Bourne Barn Farm, Bourne Road, West Bergholt Colchester, CO6 3EN	£1,963.11	West Bergholt Playing Fields & Playground
Transport & Sustainability	171646/181096 - Aim Hire Site, Hawkins Road, Colchester	£106,584.50	Walking with Words wayfinding design & delivery
Business Enterprise	172935/193163 - Stane Park Site, Essex Yeomanry Way, Stanway	£25,386.10	Promoting Colchester
CCTV	F/COL/07/0233 - Colchester Institute, Sheepen Road, Colchester CO3 3LL	£7,013.71	CCTV Sheepen Road

h) in relation to money (received under planning obligations) which was spent by the authority during the reported year (including transferring it to another person to spend), summary details of;

(i) the items of infrastructure on which that money (received under planning obligations) was spent, and the amount spent on each item;

2022/2023	
Infrastructure Type	S106 Contributions spent
Affordable Housing	£153,000.00
Business Enterprise	£69,613.90
Community	£1,035,921.04
Transport & Sustainability	£358,742.28
Health	£15,817.52
Highways Bus Service	£2,000,000.00
Leisure/Open Space	£1,110,365.79

RAMS	£49,854.00
<u>Total</u>	£4,793,314.53

(ii) the amount of money (received under planning obligations) spent on repaying money borrowed, including any interest, with details of the items of infrastructure which that money was used to provide (wholly or in part); **N/A**

(iii) the amount of money (received under planning obligations) spent in respect of monitoring (including reporting under regulation 121A) in relation to the delivery of planning obligations; **£27,617.71** was received in monitoring fees during the period 2022/23 and used to fund the costs directly associated with the monitoring of s.106 clauses.

i) the total amount of money (received under any planning obligations) during any year which was retained at the end of the reported year, and where any of the retained money has been allocated for the purposes of longer-term maintenance (“commuted sums”), also identify separately the total amount of commuted sums held. **Total amount of commuted sum retained £2,105,088.20. Total amount allocated for longer term maintenance £97,973.12**





Local Plan Committee

Item

11

11 December 2023

Report of

Laura Goulding

☎ 0330 053 8063

Title

Authority Monitoring Report 2023

Wards
affected

All wards affected

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Authority Monitoring Report provides an annual summary of key statistics that allows the Council to monitor the effectiveness of its Local Plan and report on other key information.
- 1.2 Key statistics for the monitoring period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 include:
 - Colchester awarded City Status with Colchester Borough Council becoming Colchester City Council on 23 November 2022
 - The King and Queen Consort visit Colchester during the Year of Celebration.
 - Section 2 Colchester Local Plan adopted by Full Council on 4 July 2022
 - Colchester City Council awarded £19.66m funding for Levelling Up to support improvements to Colchester's city centre.
 - 711 new dwellings were built in Colchester City
 - 1,722 planning applications received
 - 172 new affordable homes were delivered in Colchester (of which 42 homes were Council new builds or acquisitions)
 - 100 E-bikes launched in Colchester

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To approve the 2023 Authority Monitoring Report for publication on the Council's website.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 Until the Localism Act came into effect in April 2012, Section 35 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act required that every Local Planning Authority (LPA) should prepare and publicise and Annual Monitoring Report containing information on the implementation of the Local Development Scheme (LDS) and the extent to which the policies set out in Local Development Documents (LDDs) and Local Plans are being achieved.

3.2 The Localism Act removed the requirement for local authorities to submit their Annual Monitoring Report to Government but retains a duty for local authorities to monitor policies. The Council accordingly still needs to demonstrate the effects of its policies in what is, as of 2015, termed an Authority Monitoring Report providing the opportunity for updates as and when data is available.

4. Alternative Options

4.1 There are no alternatives as the Council needs to provide a monitoring source of information on the delivery of its planning functions.

5. Background Information

5.1 The Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) provides key information that helps the City Council and its partners evaluate planning policies in the context of current trends and delivery levels. The full report covering the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 is attached as Appendix 1 and will be available to view on the Council's website, and in hard copy upon request to the Planning Policy team. Some information has been included outside of the monitoring period to provide a more accurate and up to date position.

5.2 As part of the Localism Act, authorities can now choose which targets and indicators to include in their monitoring reports as long as they are in line with the relevant UK and EU legislation. Their primary purpose is to share the performance and achievements of the Council's planning service with the local community. The format of this AMR accordingly is designed to clearly demonstrate how the Council is meeting targets and indicators arising from the adopted policies in the Local Plan, grouped by themes.

5.3 The AMR measures progress on the adopted Local Plan for the monitoring period, which was the Section 1 Colchester Local Plan 2021 and Section 2 Local Plan 2022. Although three months of the monitoring period covered the Core Strategy 2010 (amended 2014), Site Allocations DPD 2010, Development Policies DPD 2010 (amended 2014), these indicators have not been reported as they are no longer relevant having been superseded by adoption of the Section 2 Colchester Local Plan.

5.4 As a result, the indicators have been updated this year in accordance with the monitoring framework of the Section 2 Colchester Local Plan.

5.5 Indicators relating to the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community (TCB GC) have not been included this year as there is not sufficient information available to monitor these currently. Once the DPD has been examined and adopted, this position will be updated and likely reflected in the 2025 AMR.

5.6 Indicators relating to travel to work patterns have not been included as the Office for National Statistics (ONS) collected information for the Census 2021 which has been impacted by coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic which have affected the reliability of the data. Officers will continue to find alternative sources of data to enable this indicator to be monitored in the future.

5.7 Under Section 102 of the Environment Act it 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. A section has

been included under the Environment chapter, setting out the first considerations of what action to take for biodiversity.

- 5.8 The Housing chapter outlines historic delivery rates and provides a detailed list of housing units delivered during the monitoring period. The requirement for the Council to demonstrate how it intends to meet the five year housing land supply requirement has been addressed by the publication of a separate [Housing Land Supply Statement](#) which was published in November 2023 and demonstrated that the Council has a five year land supply.
- 5.9 Key findings within the AMR include:
- The total number of applications (major, minor and others i.e., change of use and listed building consent) received between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023 of 1,722 shows a decrease on last year's total of 1,982. This figure however does not include all applications i.e., discharge of condition and preliminary inquiries.
 - Decision rates remain high with 96% of minor applications decided within 8 weeks; a slight increase from the previous figure of 95% recorded in the previous year.
 - A net of 711 dwellings were built between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023. This is lower than the previous year's total of 1,034 and below the Objectively Assessed Need target of 920 dwellings a year for Colchester, this is largely caused by a short delay to completion of a student accommodation development at the University of Essex.
 - A total of 172 affordable homes have been delivered across Colchester. During the monitoring period 130 new build affordable housing units were delivered consisting of 49 Affordable Rent, 20 were Social Rent, 10 First Homes and 51 were Shared Ownership. The comparable figures for the previous three years were 117 in 21/22, 42 in 20/21, 202 in 19/20. This demonstrates a rise in the number of new build affordable housing units delivered since the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - 100 of the new build affordable homes were delivered through Section 106 obligations. with the remaining 30 units delivered via the Council's Development Company – Amphora Housing Ltd.
 - Outside of Section 106 and the Council's development company, a further 42 affordable units have been delivered through the Council's acquisitions programme.
 - Colchester City Council were awarded £310,770 by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to fund schemes that aim to reduce air pollution and make Colchester's air cleaner for residents and visitors.
 - The Council have taken on an additional area of 157,595.58m² of open space during the monitoring period. This includes a large open space of 154,944m² at Iron Latch Lane and 2,587m² at Maximus Drive.
- 5.10 Neighbourhood planning has remained high on the national government's agenda since regulations were introduced in 2012. Revisions to national policy, guidance and regulations continue to demonstrate the importance of Neighbourhood Plans for housing provision and local planning matters.

5.11 A number of Neighbourhood Plans have progressed during the monitoring period.

- Great Horkesley Neighbourhood Plan area designated in June 2022;
- Copford Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 Consultation held from 4 August to 19 September 2022. Examination commenced in October 2022;
- Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 Consultation held from 30 August to 12 October 2022. Examination commenced in October 2022 concluding subject to modifications, the Plan can proceed to Referendum; and
- Myland and Braiswick Neighbourhood Plan review Regulation 14 consultation commenced in August/September 2022. Regulation 16 Consultation commenced 27 March 2022.

5.12 The following key milestones have occurred in the next monitoring period (2023/24) but for completeness have also been recorded:

- Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan proceeded to a successful referendum and was made in May 2023;
- Myland and Braiswick Neighbourhood plan review commenced its examination in July 2023. The Examiner issued his final report on 13 September 2023 and concluded that the Review Plan meets the Basic Conditions, and a referendum is not required. The plan was formerly made by Full Council on 17 October 2023; and
- Copford Neighbourhood Plan examiner concluded, subject to modifications it could proceed to referendum which took place on the 21 September 2023. The plan was formerly made by Full Council on 17 October 2023.

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 [here](#).

7. Strategic Plan References

7.1 [The Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026](#) is relevant in particular contributing to priorities under the following themes:

- Respond to the climate emergency
- Deliver modern services for a modern city
- Improve health, wellbeing and happiness
- Deliver homes for those most in need
- Grow our economy so everyone benefits
- Celebrate our city, heritage and culture

8. Consultation

8.1 The AMR considers the effectiveness of Local Plan policies which have been through a comprehensive consultation programme as set out in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

9. Publicity Considerations

- 9.1 The AMR provides a wealth of statistical information on Colchester which may warrant press attention.

10. Financial implications

- 10.1 There are no direct financial implications. The AMR however, provides evidence to evaluate the effect of wider economic influences on Council planning policies and highlights the potential for the Council to benefit from Government funding linked to housing delivery.

11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 There are no health, wellbeing or community safety implications for the Council.

12. Health and Safety Implications

- 12.1 There are no health and safety implications for the Council.

13. Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 Monitoring policies to ensure their effectiveness is intended to reduce the risk of inappropriate development. It will provide consistent advice to landowners, developers, officers, Councillors and members of the public.

14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

- 14.1 The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and has committed to being carbon neutral by 2030. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. These are economic, social and environmental objectives.
- 14.2 The AMR includes a chapter titled 'Climate Change' which highlights the Council's latest initiatives in relation to reducing the impacts of climate change across the City.

Appendices

Appendix A – Authority Monitoring Report 2023

AUTHORITY MONITORING REPORT

2023



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www.colchester.gov.uk

All references to the county of Essex are to Essex as it is currently constituted i.e., without the unitary authorities of Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock unless stated otherwise.

All references to 'Colchester' refer to Colchester Borough and Colchester City unless stated otherwise, e.g., Colchester Town. On 23rd November 2022 Colchester Borough became Colchester City following City Status being awarded. However, this report continues to refer to both Colchester Borough and City as the date of city status fell inside the monitoring period.

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Key Headlines from the 2022 – 2023 AMR
Colchester awarded City Status with Colchester Borough Council becoming Colchester City Council on 23 November 2022
The King and Queen Consort visit Colchester during the Year of Celebration.
Section 2 Colchester Local Plan adopted by Full Council on 4 July 2022
In Colchester, the population size has increased by 11.3%, from 173,100 in 2011 to 192,700 in 2021. This is higher than the overall increase for England (6.6%), where the population grew by nearly 3.5 million to 56,489,800.
<p>Colchester City Council awarded £19.66m funding for Levelling Up to support improvements to Colchester's city centre.</p> <p>Colchester Museums awarded £228,850 Museums Estate and Development Fund Grant.</p> <p>Colchester City Council awarded £310,770 by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to fund schemes that aim to reduce air pollution and make Colchester's air cleaner for residents and visitors.</p> <p>Colchester City Council awarded a further £532,195 by DEFRA to strengthen the rural economy and rural communities via business growth and diversification and through community infrastructure projects.</p> <p>Colchester + Ipswich Museums to receive £1,194,048 grant from Arts Council England</p>
Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community Development Plan Document (DPD) was subject to public consultation for 6 weeks from 14 March 2022 to 25 April 2022
100 E-bikes launched in Colchester
711 new dwellings were built in Colchester City
172 new affordable homes were delivered in Colchester (of which 42 homes were Council new builds or acquisitions)

Colchester City Council has donated 23 bikes to Bridgeway Mission, Community360 and a local family, as part of its ongoing Community Cycle initiative.

Key headlines to be noted that occurred outside the AMR monitoring period:

The TCBGC Submission Plan Consultation ran from 15 May to the 25 June 2023. The DPD was submitted to the Secretary of State for independent 'Examination in Public' by a Planning Inspector on the 21 September 2023.

Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan proceeded to a successful referendum May 2023 and is now adopted.

The Copford with Easthorpe Neighbourhood Plan Referendum took place on Thursday 21st September 2023 and is now adopted.

The Myland Neighbourhood Plan Examiner concluded that the Review Plan meets the Basic Conditions and is now adopted.

1. Introduction

Background to the Report

- 1.1 This Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) contains information about the extent to which the Council's planning policy objectives are being achieved. The monitoring indicators and monitoring of policies cover the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. However, further information from outside of this period is included, particularly within the overview and context sections, to reflect the latest information.
- 1.2 The Localism Act removed the requirement for Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to produce an annual monitoring report for Government, but it did retain an overall duty to monitor planning policies. Authorities can now choose which targets and indicators to include in their monitoring reports as long as they are in line with the relevant UK legislation. Their primary purpose is to share the performance and achievements of the Council's planning service with the local community. The monitoring report also needs to demonstrate how councils are meeting the requirement to cooperate with other authorities on strategic issues.

Monitoring Information

- 1.3 The AMR includes information on the progress the Council is making in a number of key areas. The information provided reflects the monitoring requirements set forth in the Localism Act 2010, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and associated regulations and guidance. The format focuses on key areas of delivery, including monitoring progress in plan making and in assessing the success of policies concerned with delivery of development, protection of our environments and responding to climate change.
- 1.4 As the AMR largely reports on data over the last financial year (1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023) the AMR measures progress on the adopted Local Plan for that time, which was the Section 1 Colchester Local Plan 2021, and Section 2 Colchester Local Plan 2022. Although 3 months of the monitoring period covers the Core Strategy 2010 (amended 2014), Site Allocations DPD 2010, Development Policies DPD 2010 (amended 2014) and Proposals Maps 2010 this has not been reported on as these indicators are no longer relevant having been superseded by adoption of the Section 2 Colchester Local Plan.
- 1.5 The indicators within the AMR have been updated this year to reflect the monitoring framework of the Section 2 Colchester Local Plan.
- 1.6 The Section 1 Colchester Local Plan was adopted in February 2021, indicators have been added where relevant although it is not possible to monitor the policies relating to the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community (TCBGC) Development Plan Document (DPD) as it has not yet been examined and subsequently adopted. The AMR for 2025 is likely to be updated to include the remaining indicators from the Section 1 Local Plan relevant to the TCBGC.
- 1.7 Indicators relating to travel to work patterns have not been included as the Office for National Statistics (ONS) collected information for the Census 2021 which has been

impacted by coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic which have affected the reliability of the data.

1.8 Under Section 102 of the Environment Act it 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. A section has been included under the Environment chapter, setting out the first considerations of what action to take for biodiversity.

Colchester Local Plan

1.9 Information on the timetable for preparation and adoption of the Development Plan Documents is contained in the Local Development Scheme (LDS) which is updated on a regular basis, most recently February 2023.

1.10 The Shared Strategic Section 1 Local Plan 2013 to 2033 was adopted in February 2021.

1.11 On 19 May 2022, the Council received the Inspectors' Final Report on the Examination of the Colchester Local Plan 2017-2033 (Section 2). The Inspectors' Report concludes that subject to a number of main modifications, set out in the Appendix to their report, the Colchester Local Plan 2017-2033 Section 2 is sound, legally compliant and capable of adoption.

1.12 Local Plan Committee on 13 June 2022, recommended to Full Council that the modified Section 2 Local Plan was adopted.

1.13 Full Council adopted the Colchester Borough Local Plan Section 2 Plan on 4 July 2022. Further information can be found on the Council's [Examination Website](#).

1.14 There is a Statutory requirement to review a Local Plan every 5 years. For Colchester this means by February 2026 based on the Adoption of Section 1. As a result, the Council have commenced evidence gathering and early engagement on Issues and Options for the Colchester Local Plan Review. Although this falls outside of the current monitoring period, further information regarding the Local Plan Review can be found [online](#).

1.15 Information on the timetable for preparation and adoption of the Development Plan Documents, including the Local Plan review is contained in the Local Development Scheme (LDS) which is updated on a regular basis, most recently February 2023. Further information is provided in Chapter 4 below.

2. Statistical Profile of Colchester

2.1 The City of Colchester is located in North East Essex, bordered by Braintree District, Tendring District, Maldon District and Babergh District Councils. The borough is diverse with the main town being Colchester, other large settlements include Stanway, Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe, and large areas of countryside. Table 1 below summaries key statistics for the Borough of Colchester.

Table 1: Statistical Profile of Colchester

Indicator	Data	Source
POPULATION		
Total Population (2021)	192,700	Population estimates, ONS
Population Rank	99 th out of 309 Local Authorities	2021 Census (ONS)
Population Density	587 people per square Kilometre	2021 Census (ONS)
Population Increase since 2011 Census	11.3%	2021 Census (ONS)
HOUSING		
Number of dwellings	84,199 as at 1 st April 2022	Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) live tables
Total new homes delivered (2022/23)	711	Colchester City Council
Affordable Homes delivered (2022/23)	172 (of which 42 homes were new built or acquired by the Council).	Registered Providers Returns
Number of households	79,700	2021 Census (ONS)
Average household price	£373,664 (February 2023)	Hometrack.com
Lower quartile house/flat price	£250,000 (February 2023)	Hometrack.com
Total Empty Properties ¹ (classified as empty for Council Tax purposes)	There were 1,982 empty properties as at April 2023	Colchester City Council

¹ These figures also include properties that fall under the exemption categories. Empty properties may be exempt if they:

- are owned by a charity (these are exempt for up to 6 months)
- are left empty by someone who has gone into prison
- are left empty by someone who has moved to give personal care, or who has moved to receive personal care
- are waiting for probate or letters of administration to be granted (after someone has died) and for up to six months after
- have been repossessed
- are the responsibility of a trustee on behalf of someone who is bankrupt
- have no-one allowed to live in them by law
- are waiting to be lived in by a minister of religion.

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Indicator	Data	Source										
	(1,870 privately owned or owned by Registered Providers and 112 owned by CCC)											
Length of time Total Empty Properties have been empty	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>0 – 6 months</td> <td>1,065</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7 – 12 months</td> <td>412</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1 – 2 years</td> <td>301</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2 – 5 years</td> <td>134</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5+ years</td> <td>70</td> </tr> </table>	0 – 6 months	1,065	7 – 12 months	412	1 – 2 years	301	2 – 5 years	134	5+ years	70	Colchester City Council
0 – 6 months	1,065											
7 – 12 months	412											
1 – 2 years	301											
2 – 5 years	134											
5+ years	70											
Households on the Housing Register	On 31 st March 2023 there were 2,561 households	Gateway to Homechoice										
Homelessness Households	For the year 2022-23 CCC accepted a full homeless duty for 90 households. Action was taken to prevent homelessness for 209 households and relieved homelessness for 77 households.	Colchester City Council										
Households in Temporary Accommodation	On 31 st March 2023 there were 285 households in temporary accommodation	Colchester City Council										
Further information on housing in Colchester	Colchester Housing Strategy	<u>Housing Strategy 2022-27 - Colchester Borough Council</u>										
EMPLOYMENT												
Economically active population	101,600	Annual population survey, ONS										
In employment	99,900	As above										
Total employees	89,000	As above										
Self-employed	10,900	As above										
Unemployed (model-based)	2,800	As above										
Universal Credit (including Job Seekers Allowance)	3,425	Claimant count, ONS										
Economically inactive population	26,000	Economic inactivity, ONS										
Full-time employees	50,000 (2021)	Business Register and Employment Survey, ONS										
Part-time employees	31,000 (2021)	As above										
Number of businesses (total)	7,440 Enterprises	UK Business Counts (ONS)										

Indicator	Data	Source
	(2023), accounting for 8,640 "Local units"	
Visitor trips numbers	6,207,000 Day trips; 229,000 Staying visitor trips; 832,000 Staying visitor nights.	Cambridge Model to measure Economic Impact of Tourism in Colchester 2022
Visitor spend/value	£382.6 million	Cambridge Model to measure Economic Impact of Tourism in Colchester Borough 2022
Tourism related employment	7132	Cambridge Model to measure Economic Impact of Tourism in Colchester Borough 2022
Further information on Colchester's economy	Colchester Economic Strategy Annual Economic Report 2021/22	Colchester's Economic Strategy 2022 - 2025 (windows.net) CAER 2021 22-FINAL-ACTUAL.pdf (colchesterultraready.co.uk)
ENVIRONMENT		
Area of Ancient Woodland	573 ha	Ancient Woodland Inventory (2021)
Number of houses at risk from surface water flooding within Critical Drainage Areas	940 (1 in 100 years event risk level)	Colchester Surface Water Management Plan
Number of Historic Parks & Gardens	4	Historic England
Nationally designated sites - Special Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSIs)	9 SSSIs- Marks Tey Brickpit, Upper Colne Marshes, Roman River, Abberton Reservoir, Blackwater Estuary, Tiptree Heath, Bullock Wood, Cattawade Marshes and Wivenhoe Gravel Pit	Natural England
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	1 (Dedham Vale AONB)	Natural England

Indicator	Data	Source
Internationally Designated Sites (Special Areas of Conservation – SAC and Special Protection Area – SPA)	Essex Estuaries SAC	Natural England
	Colne Estuary SPA	
	Abberton Reservoir SPA	
	Blackwater Estuary SPA	

2021 Census

2.2 The first phase of data from the 2021 Census was released in June 2022. Further data has continued to be released since with the aim that all data is published within 2 years of the Census date.

2.3 In Colchester, the population size has increased by 11.3%, from around 173,100 in 2011 to 192,700 in 2021. This is higher than the overall increase for England (6.6%), where the population grew by nearly 3.5 million to 56,489,800.

2.4 Nearby areas like Maldon and Tendring have seen their populations increase by around 7.4% and 7.3%, respectively, while others such as Braintree saw an increase of 5.5% and Babergh saw smaller growth of 5.2%.

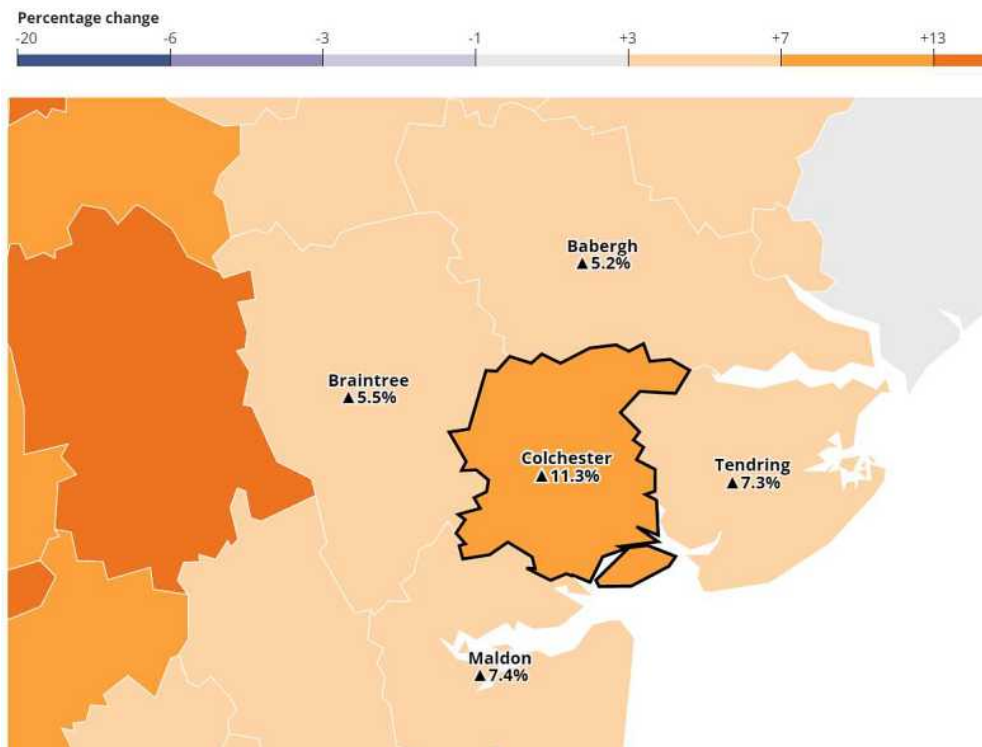


Figure 1: Population change local authority surrounding Colchester between 2011 and 2021

2.5 At 11.3%, Colchester's population increase is higher than the increase for the East of England (8.3%).

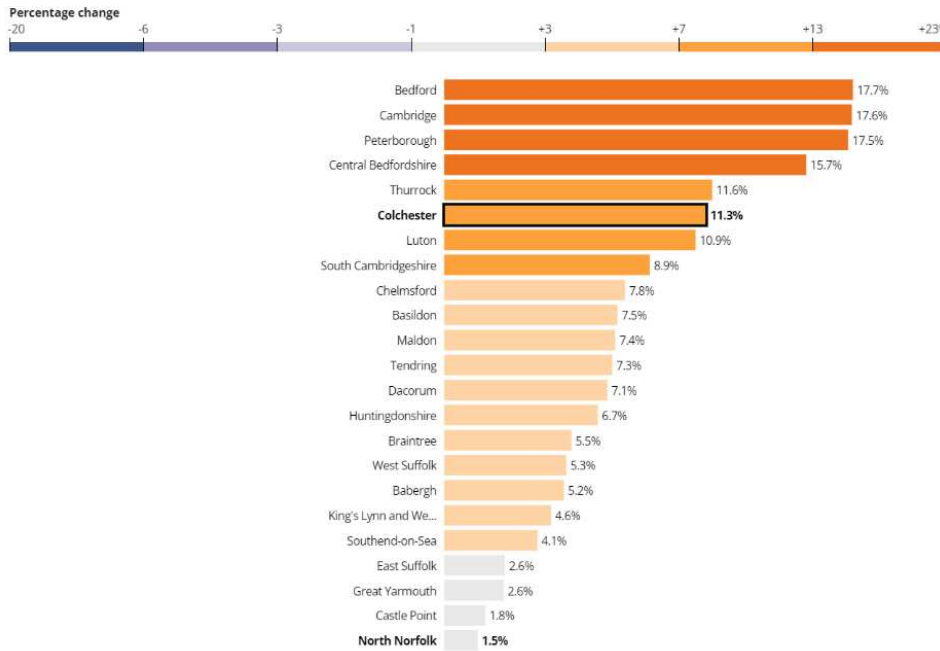


Figure 2: Population change of selected local authority areas in the East of England between 2011 and 2021

2.6 In 2021, Colchester ranked 99th for total population out of 309 local authority areas in England, moving up six places in a decade.

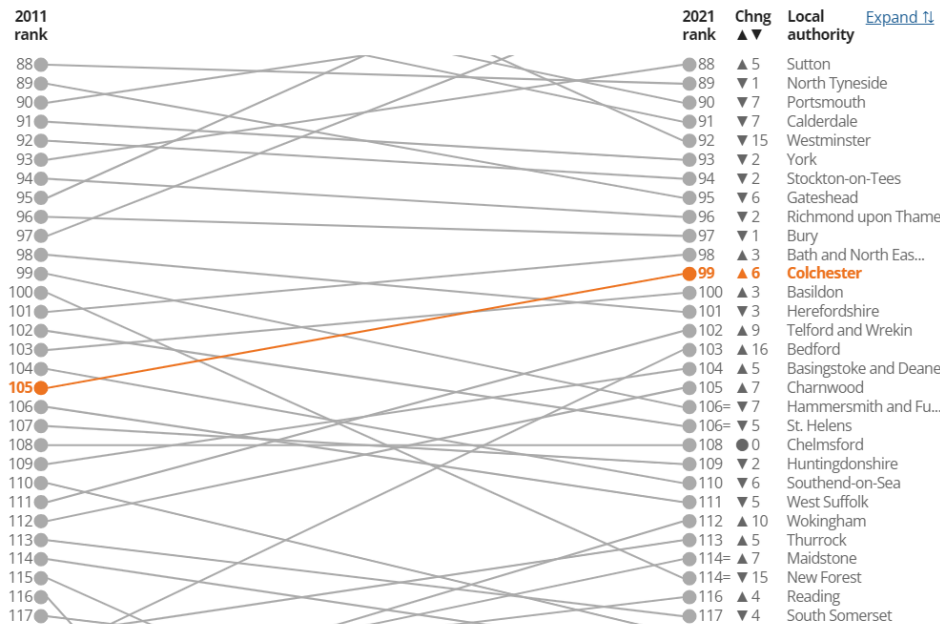


Figure 3: Population rank of Colchester at the time of the 2011 and 2021 Census.

2.7 As of 2021, Colchester is the 19th most densely populated in the East of England's 45 local authority areas, with around four people living on each football pitch-sized area of land.

2.8 In Colchester there has been an increase of 25.6% in people aged 65 years and over, an increase of 7.0% in people aged 15 to 64 years, and an increase of 15.3% in children aged under 15 years.

2.9 Further information regarding the first release of Census 2021 data for Colchester is available via the [Census Website](#).

3. Duty to Cooperate

3.1 The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 require that the LPA's monitoring report must give details of what action has been taken during the monitoring year to satisfy the duty to cooperate.

Colchester Local Plan

3.2 The Section 1 [Inspector's Final Report](#) (10 December 2020) concluded that each of the Local Plan Authorities (Braintree, Colchester and Tendring Councils) has met the duty to cooperate in preparation of the Section 1 Local Plan.

3.3 The Section 2 [Inspector's Final Report](#) (19 May 2022) concludes that there are no other cross boundary issues with neighbouring authorities and other organisations which have not been considered through the Section 1 Examination. The Inspector found that the duty to cooperate in preparation of the Section 2 Local Plan has been met.

3.4 As work on the Colchester Local Plan Review progresses, further information will be provided on how the duty to cooperate has been satisfied.

Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community Development Plan Document (DPD)

3.5 Following adoption of the Section 1 Local Plan, Colchester, Tendring and Essex Councils have continued to work together to prepare the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community Development Plan Document (DPD).

3.6 Although published outside of this monitoring period, the [Duty to Cooperate Statement](#) sets out how Colchester City Council and Tendring District Council have met the requirements of the duty to cooperate in preparing the Development Plan Document for the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community. It follows the suggested format contained in the August 2015 Planning Advisory Service Duty to Cooperate Statement Template.

3.7 This Statement provides an overview of how cooperative working was approached between the Councils and prescribed bodies. It should be read in conjunction with the [Strategic Statement of Common Ground](#), which provides more detailed commentary on the topics and issues about which the Councils and prescribed bodies either agree or disagree.

3.8 Further details of progress of the DPD are outlined in Chapter 4 below.

4. 2023-26 Progress on Plan Preparation

- 4.1 The current Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the programme for plan preparation from 2023 to 2026. This is available on the [Council's website](#) and a summary chart is included at Appendix C.
- 4.2 The LDS was updated in February 2023. The table below summarises the progress of the Development Plan Documents and identifies key milestones in this monitoring period.

Table 2: Local Development Scheme Progress

Development Plan Document	Progress / Current stage Comments	Target Date/ Key Milestones
Local Plan Review	<p>This document will develop the overall strategic objectives and areas for growth in the city. The Local Plan will replace both the Section 1 and Section 2 Local Plan.</p> <p>Initial document preparation and evidence base collation has commenced. Early engagement has also commenced covering the themes of green networks and waterways, Call for Sites and the vision.</p>	<p>Member Approval of Preferred Options Autumn 2024</p> <p>Full Adoption Spring 2026</p>
Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community Development Plan Document (TCB GC DPD)	<p>Planning Framework Document related to strategic allocation for new development at the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community.</p> <p>Issues and Options Consultation November 2017 to February 2018</p> <p>Public Consultation on Draft DPD (Regulation 18) 14 March – 25 April 2022</p> <p>Submission Version Consultation (Regulation 19) 15 May 2023 to 25 June 2023</p> <p>The DPD along with other publication and submission documents was submitted to the Secretary of State for independent 'Examination in Public' by a Planning Inspector on the 21 September 2023.</p>	<p>Currently awaiting further details on Examination from Planning Inspector</p> <p>Adoption 2024</p>

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Development Plan Document	Progress / Current stage Comments	Target Date/ Key Milestones
Planning Obligations SPD	The scope of this SPD will be reviewed once further information has been provided by government on the proposed Infrastructure Levy (as set out through in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act)	Adoption Winter 2024
Affordable Housing SPD	Updated SPD adopted February 2023	Updated SPD adopted February 2023
Self and Custom Build and Specialist Housing SPD	Work programmed to begin Spring 2024	Adoption Autumn 2024
Climate Change SPD	Public Consultation 6 September to 4 October 2023 Revised draft to be considered for adoption in December 2023	Adoption December 2023
Biodiversity SPD	SPD adopted June 2023	Adopted June 2023
Active Travel SPD	Public Consultation 6 September to 4 October 2023 Revised draft to be considered for adoption in December 2023	Adoption December 2023
Shop Front Design Guide SPD	Public Engagement February 2023 Work ongoing including further engagement with specific bodies Exploring range of measures to compliment SPD to address wider related issues and further actions following implementation of Levelling Up Fund funding	Adoption Winter 2024
City Centre Masterplan SPD	Public Consultation 19 June to 31 July 2023 Revised draft to be considered for adoption to be considered in January 2024	Adoption January 2024
Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)	Statement of Community Involvement Updated in February 2023	Will consider need for review annually and/or in line with national policy and guidance.

Section 2 Colchester Local Plan

- 4.3 On 19 May 2022, the Council received the Inspectors' Final Report on the Examination of the Colchester Local Plan 2017-2033 (Section 2). The Inspectors' Report concludes that subject to a number of main modifications, set out in the Appendix to their report, the Colchester Local Plan 2017-2033 Section 2 is sound, legally compliant and capable of adoption.
- 4.4 Local Plan Committee on 13 June 2022, recommended to Full Council that the modified Section 2 Local Plan was adopted.
- 4.5 Full Council adopted the Colchester Borough Local Plan Section 2 Plan on 4 July 2022.
- 4.6 Further information can be found on the Council's [Examination Website](#).

Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community Development Plan Document (DPD)

- 4.7 Following the approval from the members of the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community (TCBGC) joint committee at their first meeting in February 2022, a public consultation was held for six weeks for members of the public and stakeholders to have their say on a Draft Plan. The Consultation commenced on 14 March 2022 and concludes on 25 April 2022 (Regulation 18 Consultation).
- 4.8 The Draft Plan for the TCBGC contains policies, visions, and a preferred masterplan layout option for the development. The policies in the Draft Plan include: Development at the Garden Community; Land Uses and Spatial Approach; Community and Social Infrastructure; Buildings, Places and Character; Economic Activity and Employment; Movement and Connections; Sustainable Infrastructure; Nature; and Infrastructure Delivery and Impact Mitigation.
- 4.9 The Councils took into account the comments made, commissioned further evidence including a strategic masterplan and considered what updates are required to work towards the final submission draft.
- 4.10 In February 2023 the joint committee recommend to the Full Councils of both Tendring and Colchester that they agree for the Submission Version of the Plan be published for a six-week public consultation. Subsequently the Full Council meetings of Tendring (2 March 2023) and Colchester (23 March 2023) agreed that the DPD, SA and supporting evidence base be published for a six-week public consultation period. The Submission Plan Consultation ran from 15 May to the 25 June 2023 (Regulation 19 Consultation).
- 4.11 Although outside of this monitoring period the DPD along with other publication and submission documents was submitted to the Secretary of State for independent 'Examination in Public' by a Planning Inspector on the 21 September 2023.

4.12 On 13 October 2023, the Councils received notification that G Wyatt BA (Hons) MRTPI has been appointed as the independent Planning Inspector. The Councils are currently awaiting further communication from the Planning Inspector regarding the Examination.

4.13 All information and updates will be provided on the [Examination Website](#).

Neighbourhood Plans

4.14 Neighbourhood planning has remained high on the national government's agenda since regulations were introduced in 2012. Revisions to national policy, guidance and regulations continue to demonstrate the importance of Neighbourhood Plans (NPs) for housing provision and local planning matters.

4.15 A number of Neighbourhood Plans have progressed during the monitoring period. Table 3 summarises the current position of NPs across the administrative area.

4.16 During the 2022-23 monitoring period the following has occurred:

- Great Horkeley Neighbourhood Plan area designated in June 2022;
- Copford Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 Consultation held from 4 August to 19 September 2022. Examination commenced in October 2022;
- Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 Consultation held from 30 August to 12 October 2022. Examination commenced in October 2022 concluding subject to modifications, the Plan can proceed to Referendum; and
- Myland and Braiswick Neighbourhood Plan review Regulation 14 consultation commenced in August/September 2022. Regulation 16 Consultation commenced 27 March 2022.

4.17 The following key milestones have occurred in the next monitoring period (2023/24) but for completeness have also been recorded in this report:

- Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan proceeded to a successful referendum and was made in May 2023;
- Myland and Braiswick Neighbourhood plan review commenced its examination in July 2023. The Examiner issued his final report on 13 September 2023 and concluded that the Review Plan meets the Basic Conditions, and a referendum is not required. The plan was formerly made by Full Council on 17 October 2023; and
- Copford Neighbourhood Plan examiner concluded, subject to modifications it can proceed to referendum which took place on the 21 September 2023. The plan was formerly made by Full Council on 17 October 2023.

Table 3: Neighbourhood Plans Progress

Neighbourhood Plan	Area Designated	Current Stage
Boxted	October 2012	Adopted December 2016, part of the Development Plan used for decision making.
Myland and Braiswick Review	January 2013	The Myland and Braiswick Review was formally made by Full Council on 17 October 2023.
Wivenhoe	July 2013	Adopted May 2019, part of the Development Plan used for decision making. Considering scope of plan review.
West Bergholt	July 2013	Adopted October 2019, part of the Development Plan used for decision making. Considering scope of plan review.
Eight Ash Green	June 2015	Adopted December 2019, part of the Development Plan used for decision making.
Marks Tey	September 2015	Adopted March 2022, part of the Development Plan used for decision making.
West Mersea	November 2016	Adopted March 2022, part of the Development Plan used for decision making.
Tiptree	February 2015	Adopted May 2023, part of the Development Plan used for decision making.
Copford with Easthorpe	May 2015	Adopted October 2023, part of Development Plan used for decision making.
Great Horkesley	June 2022	Evidence gathering and plan preparation
Great Tey	June 2017	Regulation 14 Consultation held 15 th March 2023-28 th April 2023 Finalising plan and submission documents. Submission to Council anticipated Winter 2023.
Messing	July 2013	Work abandoned. No active NHP group currently.
Stanway	June 2014	Work abandoned. No active NHP group currently.

5. Planning Applications

Planning Applications Indicator 1	Record of planning decisions including appeals	Section 1 Policy SP1
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5.1 The level of planning applications provides a useful backdrop against which the effects of policies can be considered. Table 4 below summarises planning applications determined in this monitoring period.

Table 4: Planning Applications Summary 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023

Planning Applications from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023	
The number of applications received (major, minor and other)	1,722
The number of applications approved	1,284
The number of applications refused	219
The number of appeals made	61
The number of appeals allowed	11 (0 Partial, 2 Withdrawn & 38 Dismissed)
The number of departures	0
Minor applications decided within 8 weeks	96%
Major applications decided within 13 weeks	100%

5.2 The total number of applications (major, minor and others i.e. change of use and listed building consent) received between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023 of 1,722 shows a decrease on last year's total of 1,982. This figure however does not include all applications i.e. discharge of condition and preliminary inquiries.

5.3 Decision rates remain high with 96% of minor applications decided within 8 weeks; a slight increase from the previous figure of 95% recorded in the previous year.

5.4 Performance in the major applications category has remained the same as the previous monitoring period 2021/22 at 100%. This is higher than the previous monitoring year (2020/21) of 98% and (2019/20) of 95% and demonstrates that year on year majority of applications are being determined with all applications being dealt with in this monitoring period within the specified decision time limits.

5.5 Overall, it can be seen that the Council's implementation of project management measures for applications, including pre-application advice and Planning Performance Agreements have and continue to enhance consistency and quality in processing applications.

6. Key Theme: Housing Indicators

Overview

6.1 In line with the NPPF, the Council is required to ensure sufficient housing land is supplied to meet local housing needs. The Council has developed an Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) target for the Colchester Local Plan of 920 houses a year which takes into account the requirements of the NPPF 2012; and will ensure the City provides a 5 year supply of specific deliverable sites and identifies a supply of specific developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15.

6.2 The target of 920 homes a year reflects a comprehensive evidence base which includes the following:

- Objectively Assessed Housing Need Study produced by Peter Brett Associates (PBA) in July 2015 and updated November 2016 for Braintree, Chelmsford, Colchester and Tendring Councils:
- Review of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) work in Chelmsford, Colchester, Braintree and Tendring to bring it into compliance with the NPPF and PPG - HDH Planning and Development Ltd, December 2015.

6.3 In February 2021, Section 1 of the Colchester Local Plan was adopted. This included Policy SP4 which confirms the objectively assessed need for housing as 920 dwellings per annum.

6.4 The Council has published the [2023 Housing Land Supply Position Statement](#) for the current 5 year period. This demonstrates that Colchester has a sufficient supply of deliverable housing sites against the Local Plan target (920 dwellings per annum). A total of 5.17 years is deliverable within the period 2023/24 to 2027/28.

Brownfield Register

6.5 The Council has a statutory requirement to publish and maintain a Brownfield Land Register. The Council has published a register which provides up-to-date and consistent information on brownfield sites that local authorities consider to be appropriate for residential led development. The register is in two parts, Part 1 comprises all brownfield sites appropriate for residential development and Part 2 outlines those sites granted permission in principle. There are currently no sites in Colchester which has been granted permission in principle.

6.6 The Council has granted planning permission on a number of brownfield sites via the traditional planning application process only. There a number of brownfield sites across the city where building works have now commenced. The register is live and is published on the Council website and provides transparent information about sites

within the register. The Council continues to have an open call for sites for the register as advertised on the Council website.

6.7 There are 22 sites on the current register and several sites are currently going through the planning application process. If applications are successful, these sites will be removed from the register as and when building works commence. One site was removed and one site was added to the register during this monitoring period.

6.8 Further information can be found [online](#).

Housing Indicator 1	Housing Completions per annum	Section 2 Policy SG2
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6.9 Colchester has delivered 20,528 new homes between 2001/02 and 2022/23 at an average rate of 934 dwellings per year. During the last monitoring period, a total of 711 units were delivered across the City. See Table 5 and Figure 1 below.

Table 5: New Dwelling Completions in Colchester 2001/2 to 2022/23

Year	Total Units
2001/2002	566
2002/2003	980
2003/2004	916
2004/2005	1,277
2005/2006	896
2006/2007	1,250
2007/2008	1,243
2008/2009	1,028
2009/2010	518
2010/2011	673
2011/2012	1,012
2012/2013	617
2013/2014	725
2014/2015	943
2015/2016	1,149
2016/2017	912
2017/2018	1,048
2018/2019	1,165
2019/2018	1,124
2020/2021	741
2021/2022	1034
2022/2023	711
Total from 2001 to 2023	20,528

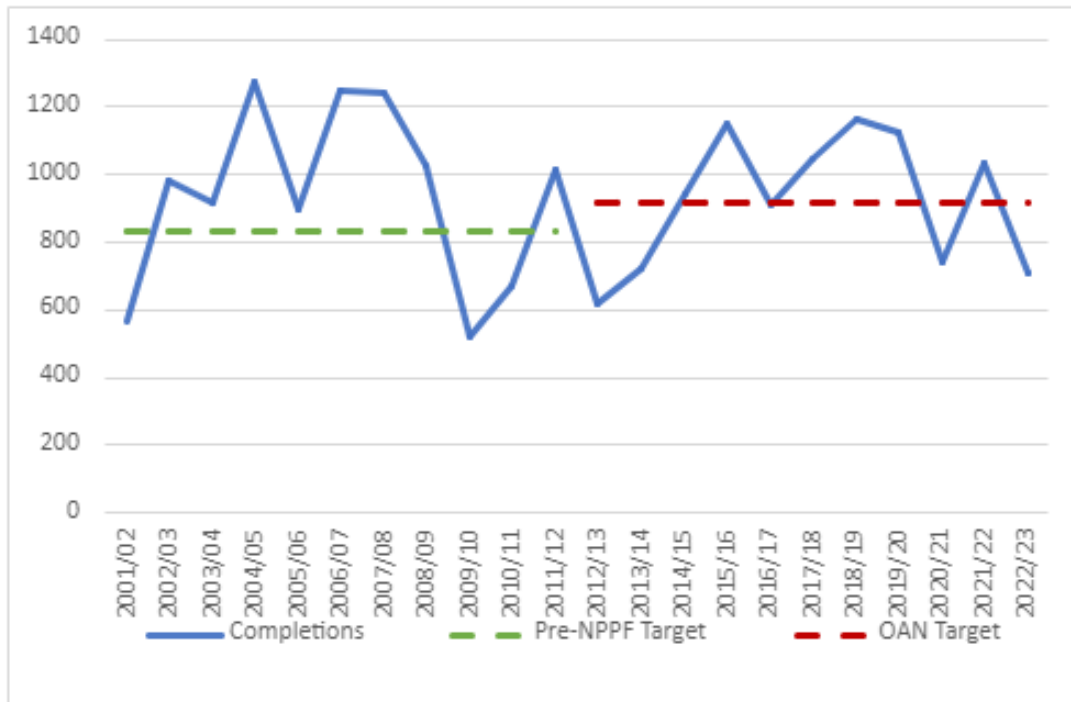


Figure 4: New Dwelling Completions in Colchester 2001/02 to 2022/23

6.10 Table 6 illustrates the context of delivery rates across other Essex authorities where figures are available; Colchester continues to demonstrate a good track record against housing requirement.

Table 6: Essex Local Authority Housing Delivery

Authority	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total Units
Basildon	412	341	340	464	317	438	222	2534
Braintree	291	492	534	883	861	1,064	1,097	5222
Brentwood	150	213	246	200	168	407	TBC	1384
Castle Point	114	150	200	71	166	205	TBC	906
Chelmsford	1,002	1,008	1,256	832	829	866	822	6615
Colchester	912	1,048	1,165	1,124	741	1,034	711	6735
Epping Forest	149	526	426	223	198	328	TBC	1850
Harlow	340	351	676	725	535	416	560	3603
Maldon	243	166	306	462	426	330	449	2382
Rochford	117	299	262	347	349	456	495	2325
Tendring	658	565	915	784	646	777	810	5155
Uttlesford	727	966	981	519	362	208	747	4510
Essex Total	5,115	6,125	7,307	6,634	5,598	6,529	5913	43,221

Source: Essex County Council, District/Borough and Unitary Councils

6.11 Colchester’s build rate has been on target in recent years. A slight drop was seen in this monitoring period and in the 2020/21 monitoring period which was in part caused by a short delay to completion of a large student accommodation scheme at the University of Essex. When taking an average over the past five years, Colchester has provided a net additional 1,016 new homes per year, which provides reassurance on future target delivery. The Council accordingly expects to be able to continue a sufficient rate of delivery.

6.12 Of the 711 dwellings completed in this monitoring period, 143 units were from windfall sites. This is lower than previous years where we see an average delivery rate of 299 windfall units over a five-year period. See Figure 5 and table 7 below.

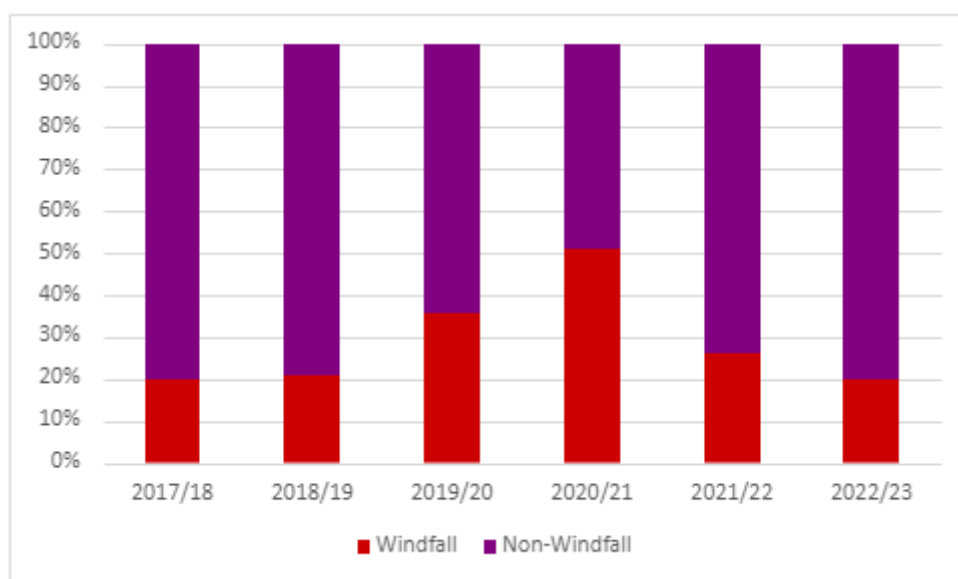


Figure 5: Percentage of Windfall Site Completions 2017/18 to 2022/23

Table 7: Colchester Historic Windfall Completions

Year	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	5 Year Average	2022/23
Number of Dwellings from Windfall	207	243	399	377	271	299	143

6.13 The housing completions included in this report show that a net of 711 homes were built between 1 April 2022 and 31st March 2023.

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Table 8: Housing Completions (site by site basis) 1 April 2022 to 31st March 2023

Planning Reference	Site location	Windfall	22/23
Berechurch			
202025	BERECHURCH HALL ROAD (PERSIMMON)	No	19
Castle			
180045	COWDRAY CENTRE, MASON ROAD, COLCHESTER	No	73
191336	26 TRINITY STREET, COLCHESTER	Yes	1
211361	32 CROUCH STREET, COLCHESTER	Yes	27
201228	1 PELHAMS LANE, COLCHESTER	Yes	2
210112	1 EAST BAY, COLCHESTER	Yes	1
221865	58 PRIORY STREET, COLCHESTER	Yes	1
Greenstead			
192733	SCARFE WAY, COLCHESTER	Yes	6
192777	BUFFET WAY, COLCHESTER	Yes	6
Lexden & Braiswick			
152322	LITTLE PORTERS, PORTERS LN, FORDHAM HEATH	Yes	1
202596	LAND OFF HALSTEAD ROAD, EIGHT ASH GREEN	No	43
200987	114 BRAISWICK, COLCHESTER	Yes	2
191997	STABLE COTTAGE, COLCHESTER ROAD, WEST BERGHOLT	No	16
200332	THE TREBLE TILE, WEST BERGHOLT	Yes	2
Mile End			
100502	FORMER SEVERALLS HOSPITAL PHASE 2, COLCHESTER	No	60
150473	CHESTERWELL, (Both Outlets)	No	66
192890	MILE END ROAD, COLCHESTER	Yes	10
Old Heath & Hythe			
163197	RISING SUN PH & WAREHOUSES, HYTHE STATION RD, COLCH	No	16
Shrub End			
211058	MARETH PLAYGROUP, MARETH ROAD	Yes	4

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Planning Reference	Site location	Windfall	22/23
190522	GOSBECKS PHASE 2, COLCHESTER	No	60
Stanway			
VARIOUS	LAKELANDS	No	94
172049	CHITTS HILL, STANWAY	Yes	39
181859	WYVERN FARM, LONDON ROAD, STANWAY	No	13
222814	THE SCHOOL ROOM, STANWAY	Yes	1
Marks Tey & Layer			
193057	CHURCH VIEW, THE STREET, SALCOTT	Yes	1
210829	132 HIGH ROAD, LAYER DE LA HAYE	Yes	1
192249	BROOK ROAD, GREAT TEY	No	15
210349	41 SCHOOL ROAD, COPFORD	Yes	2
Rural North			
160906	HORKESLEY HAMLET, GREAT HORKESLEY	Yes	13
210775	LAND EAST OF CARTERS HILL, BOXTED	Yes	1
222973	NOAKES FARM, STRAIGHT ROAD, BOXTED	Yes	2
192219	WAKES HALL, WAKES COLNE	Yes	8
221133	THE CARTLODGE, LITTLE CREPPING, WAKES COLNE	Yes	1
Tiptree			
122134	FLORENCE PARK, GRANGE ROAD, TIPTREE	No	39
191414	LAND ON NORTH EAST SIDE OF FACTORY HILL, TIPTREE	No	15
161462	SPRINGFIELD, KELVEDON ROAD, TIPTREE	Yes	4
180136	86 CHURCH ROAD, TIPTREE	Yes	6
210398	BARBROOK LANE, TIPTREE	No	39
Wivenhoe			
201955	75C RECTORY ROAD, WIVENHOE	Yes	1
CITY TOTAL NEW DWELLINGS 2022/23			711

Housing Indicator 2	Affordable Housing Completions	Section 1 & 2 Policies SP4 & SG2 and DM8
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- 6.14 During this monitoring period, a total of 172 affordable housing units were delivered as noted below.
- 6.15 130 new build affordable housing units were delivered, 49 were Affordable Rent, 20 were Social Rent, 10 First Homes and 51 were Shared Ownership. The comparable figures for the previous two years were 45 in 21/22, 42 in 20/201. Although delivery may have been impacted by the covid-19 pandemic and uncertainty within the housing market previously, the high level of affordable homes delivered this year demonstrates this is no longer the case.
- 6.16 100 of the new build affordable homes were delivered through section 106 obligations, with the remaining 30 units delivered via the Council's Development Company – Amphora Housing Ltd.
- 6.17 Outside of Section 106 and the Council's Development Company, a further 42 units have been delivered through the Council's acquisitions programme.
- 6.18 For the year 2022/23, no commuted sums were received for affordable housing.

7. Key Theme: Economic Growth

Overview

7.1 Colchester has a diverse and relatively resilient economy. This combined with significant investments from the Government's Town Deal (£19.2m) and Levelling Up Fund (£19.6m) and private sector investments in Ultrafast Broadband and 5G, means that Colchester is well placed to support economic recovery. Complementary to this growth is a steadily growing population, estimated to be at 197,200 in 2021.

7.2 Future economic growth through job and business creation is outlined in the [Colchester's Economic Strategy 2022-25](#) which has four themes for economic recovery and growth:

- People
- Partnerships
- Place
- Planet

7.3 The North Essex Economic Strategy (NEES) 2040 has been developed in partnership with Braintree District, Colchester Borough, Essex County, Tendring District and Uttlesford District Councils. This provides a platform for strategic intervention at a scale which will achieve transformation in the overall economic prosperity of the North Essex area and compliment local economic activity delivered by the partners. The overall vision of the strategy is as follows:

“North Essex is a high-value, productive and sustainable economy. People choose to live and work locally, in new and established communities that are well connected and inspire innovation and creativity.”

7.4 To deliver this vision, four key missions have been identified that will focus the partners shared activity over the next five years:

- Driving innovation and technology adoption;
- Developing a skilled and resilient workforce;
- Creating a network of distinctive and cohesive places; and
- Growing a greener, more sustainable economy.

7.5 The North Essex Economic Board's (NEEB) North Essex Economic Strategy was approved by Cabinet on 20 November 2019. The Strategy can be viewed [online](#). A review of this strategy has been undertaken and is in the process of being formally adopted by all NEEB member districts, which are: Maldon, Braintree, Uttlesford and Tendring District Councils and Chelmsford City Council as well as Colchester City Council.

Business Demography

7.6 As of 2022, Colchester had 7,415 enterprises consisting of 8,650 local units. The type of enterprise is defined by the number of employees. A micro enterprise has 0-9 employees, small 10-49, medium 50-249 and large has more than 250.

7.7 Micro enterprises are the most dominant across Colchester, making up 84% of total enterprises in 2022, and remaining largely the same as the 2019 figure of 88.8%. The number of small businesses over the past year has risen from 9% in 2021 to 13%. The number of large enterprises is 3.1% of the total.

Employment Growth

7.8 The latest figures available from the ONS (2022) demonstrate that the working age population of Colchester was 121,600 (people aged 16-64). Some 93,300 people were in employment, which included 50,000 (61%) full time workers and 31,000 (37.8%) part time workers.

7.9 In 2022, there were 94,600 people within the Borough were Economically Active. Self-employment comprises 11,700 people. Within the working age population, 33,500 people are economically inactive which includes students, sick, retired or homemakers and there are a further estimated 3,400 unemployed.

7.10 Although the number of people registered as claimants for out of work benefits appears high at 3,425 people (2.8% of the total working age population in Colchester), as Universal Credit is rolled out across the Country, the number of people recorded as being on the Claimant Count is likely to rise due to the broader span of claimants who are required to look for work than previously required under Jobseekers Allowance. However, the Colchester figure of 2.8% of the total population, does compare favourably with the eastern region figure of 2.9% and the Great Britain figure of 3.7%.

7.11 The total number of people unemployed was 2,800 in this monitoring period. This represents 2.7% of the Colchester population and is below both the Regional and National averages of 3% and 3.6% respectively.

7.12 In 2022, 38,412 people aged 16-64 had achieved an NVQ Level 4+ qualification (degree or higher-level) representing 27.2% of the working age population in Colchester.

7.13 In 2022/23, 560 apprenticeships were started; ranging from intermediate (150), advanced (390) and higher (310) levels. The apprenticeships also cover a wide age range with 190 apprentices aged 19, 230 aged 19-24 and 430 aged over 25.

7.14 In 2022/23, 3,740 people enrolled in a course in a Further Education College, with a training provider, in their local community.

Key Programmes Update

7.15 Colchester Borough Council's commercial arm Colchester Amphora Trading is driving the development of the £200m Northern Gateway development which surrounds the Community Stadium, home of Colchester United FC. This landmark development is themed around health and leisure reflecting the need to keep the area's rapidly ageing population fit, active and healthy and encouraging participation

in sport and leisure activities. Construction completed in Spring 2021, bringing 76 acres of new sport and leisure facilities to Colchester's booming population including a new cycling track, a new sports centre with café, gym, studio and sports hall and a new Club House for Colchester Rugby Club. New homes, a healthcare campus and potentially 500,000sq ft of new office space will also be developed to the south of the A12.

- 7.16 A review is currently underway as to how the remaining development at Northern Gateway could be brought forward in light of current economic uncertainty.
- 7.17 Colchester Amphora Trading, working on behalf of CBC and DCMS, completed the deployment of Colchester's Local Full Fibre Network programme. This government-financed scheme saw the creation of a Town Centre datacentre; dedicated, high-capacity fibre links to Telehouse (the UK's main internet exchange in London); and the build of a large fibre optic distribution network across the town centre and many of Colchester's suburbs. The target reach for the network is 25,000 properties, residential and business alike. The new networks are at the centre of several redevelopment programmes and will bolster Colchester's attractiveness to the creative and tech sectors in particular.
- 7.18 The University of Essex's £250m expansion plan is also spearheading local growth, which is well under way, servicing a double-digit rise in student population as well as the University's global ambitions. Spring 2023 saw the topping out of the £10.7m Parkside Office phase 4. The Grade A, 41,571 sq. ft. building is the largest headquarters style office currently under construction in the eastern region and will be completed later in 2023.
- 7.19 Following Colchester's award of £18.2m from the Government's Town Deal fund, a suite of regeneration and placemaking projects are now moving into their delivery phase. Colchester is working with partner organisations to maximise the opportunities this programme will bring. Coupled with the emerging City Centre Masterplan and a range of other initiatives, it will help to make Colchester a healthier, greener place which celebrates and respects its history, heritage and culture and brings access to opportunity for all.
- 7.20 A further £1m was awarded to Colchester in September 2020 from the Town Fund and has delivered the first phase of improvements adjacent to the refurbished Mercury Theatre and Balkerne Gate. The next project which will commence in 2024 will transform St Nicholas Square (bounded by Three Wise Monkeys, the rear of the new St Nicholas Hotel and the former Co-op building) into a high-quality square for the benefit of visitors, residents and in particular the adjacent businesses. Together these schemes boost impressions and sense of pride in our City Centre through enhancing its setting and sense of place.
- 7.21 Colchester was awarded £19.6m from the Government's Levelling Up Fund. This will enable the regeneration of the St Botolph's area of the city centre and will deliver a redesigned roundabout which brings balance to all road users and pedestrians,

shop front improvements in this area and a new heritage interpretation trail from the Castle to Colchester Town Station taking in key heritage assets such as the Roman Wall and St Botolph's Priory.

Economic Growth Indicator 1	Permissions granted for Employment and Leisure	Section 1 & 2 Policies SP5 & SG3 and SG4
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7.22 Colchester City Centre is the Borough's most significant centre in relation to the scale and mix of retail and non-retail uses, retailer representation, and its market shares of expenditure (particularly 'high street' comparison goods retail expenditure) secured from a sub-regional catchment. District Centres, whilst varying in terms of their scale and nature, each perform an important role serving their local populations as well as providing access to shops and services for a wider than local catchment (but not to a level comparable with Colchester Town Centre).

7.23 Demand for commercial space is largely a derived demand from the levels of business formation and expansion in the economy. It is also subject to wider changes in working practices, such as flexible and homeworking in jobs leading to changes in the use of existing space.

Table 9: Approved Changes of use in Economic areas between 1 April 2022 to 31st March 2023

7.24

Location	Original use	Changed use
Acorn Place, Heckworth Close	Office/Warehouse	Dog Grooming Parlour
The Tollgate Centre	Car parking spaces	Waterless hand car wash and valeting operation with associated canopies and portacabin.
Unit 4 Tollgate East	Car park	Windscreen repair kiosk, associated store and canopy to existing car park
The Pink Cottage, Stanway	Residential	Office
Lodge Lane, Langham	Mixed Employment site	Storage Containers
4 Davey Close	Retail Outlet	Take away
2 Moorside Business Centre	General Storage	Axe and Knife Throwing venue
100 First Floor, The Crescent	Office	Eye Clinic
10 Commerce Park, Commerce Way	General Industrial	Indoor Sports

8. Key Theme: Transport and Infrastructure

Overview

- 8.1 Continued engagement with the community has illustrated that transport, traffic issues and infrastructure are still very high on the public's list of priorities.
- 8.2 The City Council worked with Essex County Council and others to develop schemes which take forward the Colchester Future Transport Strategy. The Strategy's vision is to *'transform Colchester into a place which prioritises active and safe sustainable travel to bring about health, environmental and economic benefits'*. The Strategy is now being used to help prioritise investment across Colchester.
- 8.3 The Council continues to work with developers to ensure sustainable and active travel infrastructure is included within planned developments as well as linking them to destinations.
- 8.4 The Council regularly engages with key stakeholders and has been working with Transport East on higher level plans for the eastern region and responded to Transport East's Transport National Highways and Members consultations. The Council has also responded to the County Council's Supported Bus Service consultation, as well as the consultation of the Park and Ride service.
- 8.5 Accessible services and facilities are vital to the development and maintenance of communities. Community facilities should be located within or near centres and other accessible locations to maximise community access and build a sense of local community identity. The Council supports the retention and enhancement of existing community facilities that can provide a range of services to the community at one accessible location. In addition, the Council works with local partners, such as Parish and Town Councils to plan and manage community facilities.
- 8.6 The Council will safeguard existing facilities where appropriate and will work with partners including the local community to bring together funding from a variety of public and private sources to improve existing facilities and deliver new community facilities where needed. Development proposals will be required to review community needs (e.g., through a Health Impact Assessment) and provide community facilities or contributions towards them to meet the needs of the new population and mitigate impacts on existing communities.

Sustainable travel in Colchester

- 8.7 Colchester City Council continues to work with Essex County Council on the Colchester Cycling Action Plan and the Walking Strategy and as part of the Government's Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan (LCWIP). Following their successful bid to Government, ECC worked with CCC and the local community on implementing the Active Travel investment in line with LCWIP proposals.

8.8 In addition to this, free Adult Cycle training has been on offer funded through a Defra grant, offering Learn to Ride, Advanced Cycle Skills and Cycle Confidence sessions to adults and groups. 107 adults have been trained to March 2023.

8.9 The Council continued to offer local businesses the opportunity of an eCargo Bike short term loan. By March 2023 the overall eCargo Bike fleet including community business champions had ridden over 30,000 miles.

Shared Transport

8.10 A number of shared transport schemes have been supported or are in the process of being set up to help give residents and businesses transport choice and to encourage a reduction in car use and car ownership.

E-scooters

8.11 Colchester has continued to be part of the DfT trial for e-scooters in Essex. Tier have delivered the eScooter on street service during 2022/23. The trial was extended to May 2024.

eBike/Cargo bike hub

8.12 Progress was made with implementing a Defra funded City Centre run shared eBike/eCargo Bike hub which will be based in the Secure Bike Park in Portal Precinct and a community led hub which will be based on Old Heath Recreation Ground. Both hubs are expected to be launched later in 2023 following delays due to suitable storage arrangements.

E-Carclub

8.13 The first Defra funded electric car club car was launched in Priory Street car park in October 2022. The location for the second car is still being looked into. This is the start of a network of pay as you go cars that will be delivered through external, developer and other funding opportunities. Where appropriate car club cars continue to be requested as part of new developments.

Transport Infrastructure

8.14 Work continues on the design of the Rapid Transit route, which will link the new Garden Community with the town centre, rail station and the park and choose site. This route will also improve accessibility for active travel modes.

8.15 The Town Deal route linking the High Street to Greenstead and the University, has been subject to design work and a start date of 2023/24 is planned.

8.16 The City Council is working with partners on the town centre masterplan, which will set out how people access the town centre, including better bus facilities and managing car parking. The Council will continue to lobby for investment to realise the improvements needed to align with the Masterplan proposals.

8.17 The City Council continues to work with Greater Anglia, the rail operator, to help promote investment in the Colchester, Colchester Town, Hythe, Wivenhoe, Marks Tey and Chapel and Wakes Cone rail stations, allowing better access for all and encouraging rail use instead of the private car.

8.18 Work continued on the Fixing the Link project with measures to help encourage more people to walk from the Colchester rail station to the City Centre.

Transport Indicator 1	To obtain an agreed Travel Plan for all major commercial/community developments	Section 1 & 2 Policies SP6 & DM21
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8.19 The Colchester Travel Plan Club (CTPC) has continued to work closely with CTPC members and Essex County Council to further develop their travel plans, and to continue the process of gaining Modeshift STARS accreditations.

8.20 CTPC has continued to work closely with existing members, including The Oaks Hospital and The Maltings student accommodation. CTPC and CCC have also worked closely with East Suffolk and North Essex Foundation Trust and the University of Essex who have both had further development on their sites that have resulted in Travel Plan reviews. New developments continue to join CTPC both through voluntary membership and planning conditions.

8.21 CTPC has worked closely with the Rowan House project teams across all three tenant organisations to ensure CCC's move back to Rowan House meets travel plan objectives, and that active and sustainable travel is embedded in working practices. This work will continue into 2023/24.

8.22 CTPC has continued to work with Colchester City Council officers to develop and facilitate CCC active and sustainable travel projects to benefit CTPC members. An important function of CTPC is to serve as a point of contact, knowledge sharing and consultation between CCC and CTPC members.

8.23 A Travel Plan has been requested for all major developments and existing Travel Plans provided have been reviewed to ensure they are robust and progressing to meet their goals.

8.24 The Council continues to work closely with the train operating company under the Station Travel Plan. The City continues to be an active partner in the Community Rail Partnership scheme. CTPC have lobbied bus companies for improved services and flexible fares to ensure convenient and reliable services. This also includes working with Essex County Council to promote the park and ride service and lobby on behalf of CTPC members for improved services. In particular, the Hospital, CCC and ECC are now offering free park and ride tickets to their staff in order to reduce congestion, improve air quality and relieve car parking pressures.

8.25 CTPC is now made up of 18 full members and 60 associate members.

8.26 A total of 140 Residential Travel Information Packs have been provided to new residents of residential developments in Colchester in 2022/23 as detailed below:

Table 10: Residential Travel Information Packs Issued 2022/23

Developer	Number of packs provided	Development name
Bloor Homes	100	Gosbecks Farm
Bellway Homes	40	Aspen Walk

Air Quality Indicator 1	Number of AQMAs	Section 2 Policy ENV5
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8.27 Colchester City Council has three Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs).

AQMAs are declared when there is an exceedance or likely exceedance of an air quality objective. The areas are shown in the below table taken from 2023 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR).

8.28 These air pollution hotspots have been declared due to emissions from road traffic causing exceedances of Nitrogen Dioxide concentrations at relevant exposure.

8.29 During 2022 work continued on a new Air Quality Action Plan as the current one expired in 2021. This is being produced in partnership with Essex County Council.

8.30 During 2022 Essex County Council installed nine new air quality sensors within the AQMA's with Defra funding, this is in addition to Colchester City Council's diffusion tubes and continuous monitoring station in Brook Street.

8.31 To reduce air pollution a number of projects are in place. In early 2022 the Council successfully secured a 4th Defra bid and were awarded a further £188k in funding to deliver a new eCargo Bike City Centre to support sustainable travel into the city centre by providing smart lockers for bikes and parking in car parks outside the AQMA to improve air quality.

8.32 Phase 2 of the CAREless Pollution campaign continued throughout 2022/23 working with residents, schools and businesses. The campaign was evaluated in 2023 through on street and school gate surveys. High level results indicated that 34% - 44% of people spoken to were switching off their engine either 'always' or 'most of the time' and a further 31-34% had on/off technology.

8.33 The roadside signage trial in Brook St and at East Gates that started in early 2021 (Air quality management area 1) finished in September 2022. Four messages based on psychological theory asking drivers to switch off their engines were tested. Data was collected from 150,705 vehicles over the course of the study. Evaluation showed a peak average engine switch off rate of 26%, an increase of 11% from the baseline. The most effective sign was the Health Threat alleviation message 'Exhaust fumes build-up in your car while you wait. Switch off your engine. Protect your health'.

8.34 In 2022, Colchester City Council measured one marginal exceedance of the Air Quality Objectives at relevant exposure. This exceedance is located at site CBC3 Mersea Road within the existing Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) 1 Central Corridors

AQMA Name	Date of Declaration	Pollutants and Air Quality Objectives	One Line Description	Is air quality in the AQMA influenced by roads controlled by Highways England?	Level of Exceedance: Declaration (µg/m³)	Level of Exceedance: Current Year (µg/m³)	Number of Years Compliant with Air Quality Objective
Area 1 - Central Corridors	Declared May 2001 Amended February 2013 Amended June 2018	NO ₂ Annual Mean	High Street, Head Street, North Hill, Queen Street, St Botolph's Street, St Botolph's Circus, Osborne Street, Magdalen Street, Military Road, Mersea Road, Brook Street, East Street and St Johns Street	NO	65.9	40.3	Not Compliant
Area 1 - Central Corridors	Declared May 2001 Amended February 2013 Amended June 2018	NO ₂ 1 Hour Mean	High Street, Head Street, North Hill, Queen Street, St Botolph's Street, St Botolph's Circus, Osborne Street, Magdalen Street, Military Road, Mersea Road, Brook Street, East Street and St Johns Street	NO	Annual Mean > 60(µg/m³)	No Exceedance	8
Area 2 - East Street and the adjoining lower end of Ipswich Road	Amended June 2018	NO ₂ Annual Mean	East Street and Ipswich Road	NO	45.2	No Exceedance	3
Area 4 - Lucy Lane North, Stanway	Declared January 2012, Amended February 2013	NO ₂ Annual Mean	Lucy Lane North, Stanway	YES	55.3	No Exceedance	3

Figure 6 - Air Quality in 2022 taken from the 2023 Annual Status Report

Infrastructure Indicator 1	Key Infrastructure projects delivered	Section 1 & 2 Policies SP6 & SG7
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8.35 Local Planning Authorities are required to publish an Infrastructure Funding Statement to provide a better understanding of how developer contributions have been or are planned to be used to deliver infrastructure.

8.36 Developer contributions in Colchester are secured through Section 106 planning obligations and unilateral agreements secured as part of the planning application process.

8.37 The Infrastructure Funding Statement covers the same period as the AMR (i.e., 1 April to 31 March) and is also published annually.

8.38 The Infrastructure Funding Statement can be found on the [Council's website](#).

9. Key Theme: Environment and Heritage

Overview

- 9.1 The natural environment of Colchester has been shaped by both physical process and land management over time. These processes have created the high quality landscapes and diverse habitats and biodiversity/geodiversity found throughout the City. These include internationally significant areas of coastal and intertidal habitats, mudflats and salt marsh and shell banks, which constitute some of the features of interest within the Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
- 9.2 New development has the potential to fragment or lead to the loss of habitat. The Council seeks to conserve and enhance Colchester's natural environment, countryside and coastline as well as preserving its archaeological and built heritage through the protection and enhancement of sites of international, national, regional and local importance.
- 9.3 The Council continues to direct development away from land at risk from all types of flooding and will also seek to ensure that new development does not increase the risk of flooding either on or off site through the increased use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS).

Strengthened biodiversity duty

- 9.4 Section 102 of the Environment Act 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.
- 9.5 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.
 - A summary of the action taken by the authority in carrying out its functions under the biodiversity net gain 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.
- 9.6 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.
- 9.7 Below, the Council sets out its first consideration of what action to take for biodiversity.

- The Council will continue to engage with Essex County Council as the Responsible Authority for the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) as part of our role as Supporting Authority.
- The Council adopted a Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in June 2023. This SPD sets out the principles the Council expects to ensure that development proposals create space for nature. The SPD includes advice on protected species as a check of what information is likely to be required, with links to guidance and Natural England's standing advice. It explains the mitigation hierarchy and includes creating space for nature design principles. These are principles the Council expects applicants to incorporate into their proposals to enhance biodiversity. Advice for householder applications on measures householders can incorporate into their proposals to enhance biodiversity is also included.
- As part of the Local Plan Review, the existing green network and waterways in Colchester has been mapped. Key stakeholders and residents are going to be given the opportunity to comments on these baseline maps, as well as being able to propose new green spaces and suggest ways that these could be improved.
- The Local Plan Review Call for sites will include a green call for sites – green spaces and habitat banks for offsite biodiversity net gain.
- Officers have worked with other Essex Planners and Essex County Council to draft a template Biodiversity Net Gain Supplementary Planning Document.
- Numerous training sessions have been arranged for Planners, Sustainability Officers and Members regarding biodiversity net gain.
- Maintaining Site Management plans for each of our country parks and nature reserves that the Council manages, ensuring these continue to support biodiversity and public access to green spaces.
- The Council is exploring the opportunity to put forward habitat improvements occurring on its own green spaces for offsite biodiversity net gain. The Council intends to work with Essex County Council on this, as they have already developed some outline plans for delivering offsite biodiversity net gain on two of their owned sites.
- The Council has introduced a 'greening policy' which has involve phasing out the use of glyphosate on its owned green spaces, trialling other alternatives including hand weeding and other non-glyphosate weedkillers.
- Areas of green space are being trialled for rewilding approaches where they are mown less times throughout the year; reducing from monthly cuts to cut once a year in September. The Council has worked with town and parish councils, who are also leading on this work on their managed green spaces.

- Increase public awareness about the natural environment by involving them in tree planting events, encouraging residents to become ‘tree guardians’ to look after trees in their area by watering them and replacing stakes. ‘No mow’ signage has also been installed on our ‘nature recovery sites’ explaining how we are managing the sites for biodiversity improvements. The Council also run a yearly tree and shrub giveaway for residents, community groups and parish councils to support greening of their gardens and community green spaces.
- Working with local charities and schools to increase awareness of protection of the natural environment. For example, working with a special needs charity and a school to provide opportunities for tree planting on Council owned land, as well as conducting park maintenance tasks.

Environment Indicator 1	Number of planning applications approved contrary to Environment Agency	Section 2 Policy ENV1
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9.8 No applications were granted contrary to Environment Agency advice during the monitoring period.

Environment Indicator 2	Number of major schemes incorporating water management schemes (Sustainable Urban Drainage – SUDs).	Section 2 Policy DM23 and DM24
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9.9 All major planning applications received and determined during the monitoring period included Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) Schemes.

Environment Indicator 3	Number and area of sites/habitats within Colchester	Section 2 Policy ENV1
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9.10 In this monitoring period Colchester has:

- 73 Ancient Woodland Sites covering 577.97 hectares.
- 10 Local Nature Sites covering 262.10 acres and
- 175 Local Wildlife Sites covering 2061.3 hectares.

9.11 There have been no changes to the number of Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) Local Wildlife Sites (LoWs) or Ancient Woodlands during the monitoring period.

Environment Indicator 4	Amount of development in designated areas (SSSI, AONB)	Section 2 Policy ENV1
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9.12 Policy ENV1 seeks to protect Colchester’s biodiversity within designated sites. During this monitoring period, 48 applications have been approved in the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a further 61 applications within other designated sites (SSSIs (2), SAC (1), SPA (1), SINC (52), RAMSAR (1) sites.

Environment Indicator 5	Record number of visitors to habitat sites	Section 2 Policy ENV1
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9.13 Visitor numbers to habitat sites are not monitored annually, however it is recognised there is a need for this which will be explored through the Essex Coast RAMS.

Environment Indicator 6	Delivery of public open space, green infrastructure and streetscape improvements	Section 2 Policy DM17, DM18 and DM19
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9.14 The Council have taken on an additional area of 157,595.58m² of open space during the monitoring year 2022/23. This includes 87.16 m² at East Bay Mill, 2,587.11m² at Maximus Drive and 154,944.29 m² at Iron Latch Lane. All three areas have been legally formalised.

9.15 As of October 2022, across the borough 2.2% of land is used for outdoor recreation, and a further 8.0% of land is residential gardens. Of the total land within Colchester Borough, 10.7% of all land is developed, 89.1% of land is undeveloped and 0.2% is vacant.²

Environment Indicator 7	Recorded loss of listed buildings	Section 2 Policy DM16
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9.16 In the 2022/23 monitoring period, no Listed Buildings (Grade I & II) were lost due to demolition, development or dereliction.

9.17 No Scheduled Monuments were lost as part of development proposals in the monitoring period.

9.18 In February 2023 Local Plan Committee resolved that a six-week public consultation shall be carried out concerning the designated Colchester Conservation Area No 4: North Station and Environs.

9.19 The consultation exercise seeks the public's views on the following:

- The revised Character Appraisal and Management Proposals.
- A proposed minor extension to the boundary of the Conservation Area.
- The introduction of two Article 4 Directions (one Direction for dwelling houses and a separate Direction for commercial properties).

9.20 The consultation commenced on Friday 17 November 2023 and will close on Tuesday 2 January 2024. Further details can be found on the [Council's website](#).

² Land Use Statistics England 2022 – Live Table P400a – Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Table 11: Colchester Heritage Assets

Heritage Asset	2022/23	Comment
Grade I, II and II* Listed Buildings (National Heritage List for England)	1,560	<p>No change to the overall number during the monitoring period. One asset removed and one asset added.</p> <p>Outside of this monitoring period On 26 October 2022, Barrow Hill House, West Mersea became a Grade II Listed Building. List Entry number:1482436.</p> <p>On 8 March 2022, Quaker Meeting House was removed from the List.</p>
Scheduled Monuments (National Heritage List for England)	49	No Schedule Monuments added in this monitoring period.
Number of heritage assets on the National Heritage at Risk Register	9	<p>No changes during the monitoring period.</p> <p>Place of Worship Church of St Peter</p> <p>Conservation Area Birch</p> <p>Archaeological Sites Tudor blockhouse at East Mersea Roman villa South of Warren's Farm at Great Tey Remains of St Mary the Virgin's Church</p> <p>Buildings/Structures Municipal Water Tower (Jumbo) Former Church of Holy Trinity Ruins of Church of St Mary (North of Birch Hall Barn South of Marks Tey Hall</p>
Number of assets on Colchester's City's Local List	780	No changes during the monitoring period.
Number of Conservation Areas	24	No changes to the number of conservation areas during this monitoring.

Environment Indicator 9	Essex Coast RAMS mitigation contributions received	Section 1 Policy SP2 Section 2 Policy ENV1
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- 9.21 12 Essex LPAs have been working together, for several years, on a mitigation strategy to protect the internationally designated Essex Coast from the effects of increased recreational disturbance as a result of population growth throughout Essex.
- 9.22 The Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) sets out the necessary measures to avoid and mitigate the effects from increased recreational disturbance. The RAMS sets a per dwelling tariff, which is index linked with a base date of 2019 (£122.30 in 2019/20). For the year 2022/23, the tariff was £137.71 per dwelling. The tariff will be reviewed periodically and published accordingly. This tariff will apply to all residential proposals, even proposals for one dwelling. This is because the whole of the city is within the Zone of Influence and the RAMS seeks to avoid and mitigate the in-combination effects from all new dwellings.
- 9.23 In September 2019, the project become part of the ‘Bird Aware’ brand and launched a website: [Bird Aware Essex Coast](#). The Bird Aware brand was developed by a mitigation partnership on the south coast (Bird Aware Solent) to communicate the importance of the birds and their habitats that breed and winter at the coast. Joining the Bird Aware brand and launching the website is an early avoidance measure and will help to spread the message of the importance of the Essex coast and the need to protect the birds in a positive way.
- 9.24 Chelmsford City Council (CCC) became the Accountable Body for the project on 1 November 2020. As the Accountable Body, CCC hold all contributions from the 12 LPA partners, employ the project Delivery Officer and the Rangers. The Delivery Officer manages and co-ordinates the project. The Delivery Officer started in November 2021, and this launched the project into the delivery and implementation stage. 2022/23 was year 1 of the project. The Priorities for year 1 were to recruit the two Coastal Rangers and set up; to support the monitoring of nesting birds for the spring / summer; start collecting baseline year data on disturbance and recreational activities; audit existing recreational clubs and groups and start engaging coastal users and providing educational materials; developing first year campaigns and raising the profile of Bird Aware Essex Coast; and the starting of creating additional resource through volunteer recruitment.
- 9.25 The Essex Planning Officers Association (EPOA) Chief Officer’s group are the Project Board, with the role of governing and overseeing the project. The Essex Coastal Forum form part of the governance arrangements and provide a high-level

elected member oversight into the project. A steering group of Officers is responsible for managing the project.

9.26 In 2022/23, the Council transferred £49,854 of RAMS contributions to Chelmsford City Council.

10. Key Theme: Climate Change

Overview

- 10.1 Colchester City Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019, committing the organisation to become carbon neutral in all its operations by 2030. The Council worked with the Carbon Trust to measure the emissions from its operations, and those of related organisations, such as its wholly owned companies Colchester Borough Homes and Colchester Commercial Holdings Limited. In January 2020, the Council published its first Climate Emergency Action Plan, with updates to this made in June 2021, and the most recent update in January 2023, this is available to view on the [Council's website](#).
- 10.2 Several key actions have been achieved since the climate emergency declaration. For example, the Council's main office Rowan House received £528,250 of Government funding to help with reducing emissions from the building by replacing ageing gas boilers with air source heat pumps, mechanical ventilation and heat recovery (MVHR) system, roof insulation and LED lighting, with the building reopening in July 2023. The Council has also started its transition away from diesel vehicles with the introduction of 6 electric vans, 5 electric cars and 4 hybrid cars in early 2022.
- 10.3 In 2022/2023, 125 street trees were planted as part of the Council's Woodland and Biodiversity Project, as well as planting of trees at the Stanway Lakelands Centre in partnership with special educational needs charity Market Field Grows alongside planting 22 Jubilee Oak trees with Town and Parish Councils. The Council has also supported tree planting projects with other organisations, including the planting of a 'tiny forest' working with The Conservation Volunteers at Unity Primary Academy. The Council continues to learn from the changes to maintenance and management of its green spaces where the Council is phasing out its use of glyphosate herbicide and reducing mowing of some of its green spaces in order to 'rewild' them and support enhancement of biodiversity including pollinators. The Council is working to share these approaches and collaborate with other organisations in the community such as Colchester Borough Homes and town and parish councils on this.
- 10.4 The Council has also been a key part of an electric cargo (eCargo) bike revolution in Colchester, as outlined in paragraph 8.9 above. For information regarding a Defra funded project regarding air quality, is outlined in Chapter 8.

Climate Change
Indicator 1

Green House Gas Emissions reporting

Section 2
Policy CC1

- 10.5 The Council monitors its greenhouse gas emissions on an annual basis, with a new 'emissions baseline' set in financial year 2018/19 for which progress on the transition to carbon neutral by 2030 is measured. Due to an error in calculations made in previous financial years, greenhouse gas emission figures have been updated for all financial years 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22. Therefore, the emissions baseline for 2018/19 was 6196.26 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e). The emissions for financial year 2022/23 are still being finalised but indicate a decrease

in emissions of approximately 10-11% on figures for 2018/19. Projects such as introducing electric vehicles into the fleet and replacing inefficient gas boilers with heat pumps or more modern boilers are helping to reduce emissions, alongside a gradual decarbonisation of the electricity grid.

Climate Change Indicator 2	Local Authority Carbon Management Plan	Section 2 Policy CC1
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- 10.6 The Council has a Climate Emergency Action Plan which is monitored routinely through reports taken to the Council’s cross party Environment and Sustainability Panel approximately every 2 months. The aim is for the Action Plan to be updated annually, reviewing and updating existing actions, whilst also adding in new actions where relevant. The Council’s Climate Emergency Action Plan, and implemented climate action has also been reviewed and ‘scored’ in the last 2 years by not for profit co-operative [Climate Emergency UK](#), who have published [Climate Plan Scorecards](#) in January 2022 and October 2023 respectively for all UK local authorities.
- 10.7 The Council had a Carbon Management Plan from 2016-2020 which identified a set list of ‘priority’ projects, alongside some ‘aspirational’ projects in order to reduce the Council’s greenhouse gas emissions. Many of these projects were completed, including extensive replacement of LED lighting in Leisure World and new efficient boiler installation in Town Hall amongst others. The Council has not had a Carbon Management Plan in place between 2020-2023 but is currently writing a new one for 2023-2030 to outline more projects for increasing the energy efficiency and decarbonisation of key Council buildings such as Leisure World, Town Hall and many of the Council’s museum sites. This will be monitored, and updates provided accordingly to bring in new projects as and when they are developed.

Appendix A – Local Plan Policies

Section 1 Local Plan Policies

SP1	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SP2	Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS)
SP3	Spatial Strategy for North Essex
SP4	Meeting Housing Needs
SP5	Providing for Employment
SP6	Infrastructure and Connectivity
SP7	Place Shaping Principles
SP8	Development and Delivery of a New Garden Community in North Essex
SP9	Tendring/Colchester Borders Garden Community

Section 2 Local Plan Policies

Sustainable Growth	
SG1	Colchester's Spatial Strategy
SG2	Housing Delivery
SG3	Economic Growth Provision
SG4	Local Economic Areas
SG5	Centre Hierarchy
SG6	Town Centre Uses
SG6a	Local Centre's
SG7	Infrastructure Delivery and Impact Mitigation
SG8	Neighbourhood Plan
Environmental Assets	
ENV1	Environment
ENV2	Coastal Areas
ENV3	Green Infrastructure
ENV4	Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
ENV5	Pollution and Contaminated Land
Climate Change	
CC1	Climate Change
Place Policies	
PP1	Generic Infrastructure and Mitigation Requirements
TC1	Town Centre Policy and Hierarchy
TC2	Retail Frontages
TC3	Town Centre allocations
TC4	Transport in Colchester Town centre
NC1	North Colchester and Severalls Strategic Economic Areas
NC2	North Station Special Policy Area
NC3	North Colchester
NC4	Transport in North Colchester
SC1	South Colchester Allocations
SC2	Middlewick Ranges
SC3	Transport in South Colchester

Authority Monitoring Report 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023

EC1	Knowledge gateway and University of Essex Strategic Economic Area
EC2	East Colchester / Hythe Special Policy Area
EC3	East Colchester
EC4	Transport in East Colchester
WC1	Stanway Strategic Economic Area
WC2	Stanway
WC3	Colchester Zoo
WC4	West Colchester
WC5	Transport in Colchester
SS1	Abberton and Langenhoe
SS2	Boxted
SS3	Chappel and Wakes Colne
SS4	Copford
SS5	Eight Ash Green
SS6	Fordham
SS7	Great Horkelesley
SS8	Great Tey
SS9	Langham
SS10	Layer de La Haye
SS11	Marks Tey
SS12a	West Mersea
SS12b	Coast Road West Mersea
SS12c	Mersea Island Caravan Parks
SS13	Rowhedge
SS14	Tiptree
SS15	West Bergholt
SS16	Wivenhoe
OV1	Development in Other Villages
OV2	Countryside
Development Management	
DM1	Health and Wellbeing
DM2	Community Facilities
DM3	Education Provision
DM4	Sports Provision
DM5	Tourism, leisure, Culture and Heritage
DM6	Economic Development in Rural Areas and the Countryside
DM7	Agricultural Development and Diversification
DM8	Affordable Housing
DM9	Development Density
DM10	Housing Diversity
DM11	Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
DM12	Housing Standards
DM13	Domestic Development
DM14	Rural Workers Dwellings
DM15	Design and Amenity
DM16	Historic Environment
DM17	Retention of Open Space

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DM18	Provision of Open Space and Recreation Facilities
DM19	Private Amenity Space
DM20	Promoting Sustainable Transport and Changing Travel Behaviour
DM21	Sustainable Access to development
DM22	Parking
DM23	Flood Risk and Water Management
DM24	Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
DM25	Renewable Energy, Water Waste and Recycling

Appendix B – Glossary

Affordable Housing – housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

- **Affordable housing for rent:** meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government’s rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).
- **Starter homes:** is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household’s eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.
- **Discounted market sales housing:** is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.
- **Other affordable routes to home ownership:** is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) – The Authority Monitoring Report sets out how well the Council is performing in delivering the objectives of its Local Development Framework. It was previously called the Annual Monitoring Report.

Brownfield (also known as Previously Developed Land (PDL)) – Previously developed land that is unused or may be available for development. It includes both vacant and derelict land and land currently in use with known potential for

redevelopment. It excludes land that was previously developed where the remains have blended into the landscape over time.

Colchester Local Plan - The Colchester Local Plan includes all major planning policy for the District in a single document. This is in two sections with the Section 1 of the Local Plan including policies on strategic cross boundary issues including infrastructure and housing numbers including proposals for a new Garden Community, in partnership with Braintree District Council and Tendring District Council. Section 2 of each Local Plan considers the individual local authority policies and allocations.

Community Facilities – Buildings, which enable a variety of local activity to take place

including, but not limited to, the following:

- Schools, Universities and other educational facilities
- Libraries and community centres
- Doctors surgeries, medical centres and hospitals
- Museums and art galleries
- Child care centres
- Sport and recreational facilities
- Youth clubs
- Playgrounds
- Places of worship
- Emergency services

Some community activities can also be provided via privately run facilities (e.g. pubs and village shops).

Evidence Base – The evidence base for Colchester’s Local Plan includes all the documents used to inform its policies and allocations, including studies, strategies, and national, regional and local policies. Evidence Base documents can be viewed via the Council’s website.

Flood Risk Assessment – An assessment of the likelihood of flooding in a particular area so that development needs and mitigation measures can be carefully considered.

Greenfield – Land which has never been built on before or where the remains of any structure or activity have blended into the landscape over time.

Local Development Scheme (LDS) – This is the project plan for a three year period for the production of documents including the Local Plan, Supplementary Planning Documents and Neighbourhood Plans.

Natura 2000 – The European network of protected sites established under the Birds Directive and Habitats Directive (SPA, SAC).

Neighbourhood Planning - Neighbourhood planning is a way for communities to decide the future of the places where they live and work. The government introduced this new tier of planning through the Localism Act 2011.

North Essex Authorities (NEAs) – joint authorities working to progress large scale strategic development known as Garden Communities in North Essex. This includes Braintree District Council, Colchester Borough Council and Tendring District Council.

Planning Contributions – the principle of a developer agreeing to provide additional benefits or safeguards, often for the benefit of the community, usually in the form of related development supplied at the developer's expense.

Previously Developed Land (PDL) – See Brownfield.

Private Open Space – Open spaces usually in private ownership that can fulfil similar functions as public open spaces, but which tend to have significant access restrictions to the members of the public imposed through ownership rights or a requirement to pay to use facilities.

Public Open Space – includes all spaces of public value, usually in public ownership, which are generally accessible to the public and which provide important opportunities for sport, outdoor recreation as well as fulfilling an amenity function.

Public Realm – Public realm relates to all those parts of the built environment where the public has free access. It encompasses all streets, square and other rights of way, whether predominantly in residential, commercial or community/civic uses; open spaces and parks; and the public/private spaces where public access is unrestricted (at least during daylight hours). It includes the interfaces with key internal and private spaces to which the public has normally has free access.

Ramsar Site – An area identified by an international agreement which supports endangered habitats.

Town and Country Planning Regulations ('The Regulations') – The identification of a consultation stage in relation to a Regulation, i.e. Regulation 25, 27, etc. refers to the relevant section of the June 2008 amendments to the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004. The Regulations cover the various stages in preparing and consulting on Local Plan documents.

Travel Plan – These provide information and incentives for new residential and employment sites to use public transport. Travel Plans typically include the issuing of travel pack to new residents and businesses which may include vouchers for 12 months free or discounted travel on public transport.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – A SSSI is an area that has been notified as being of special interest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. They include the best examples of the Country's wildlife habitats, geological features and landforms.

Special Area of Conservation (SAC) – A site of European Community importance designated by the member states, where necessary conservation measures are applied for the maintenance or restoration, at favourable conservation status, of the habitats and/or species for which the site is designated.

Special Protection Area (SPA) – A site designated under the Birds Directive by the member states where appropriate steps are taken to protect the bird species for which the site is designated.

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) – This document sets out the standards that the Council intend to achieve in relation to involving the community and stakeholders in the preparation, alteration and continuing review of the Local Plan in the determination of significant planning applications.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) – The SHMA is a study carried out every few years to appraise the local housing market area and identify the need and demand for different housing types and tenures within that area.

Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) – The SLAA is a collective term for housing and employment land availability assessments. This is a process carried out as part of Local Plan preparation to identify new sites for housing and employment uses, required by national policy.

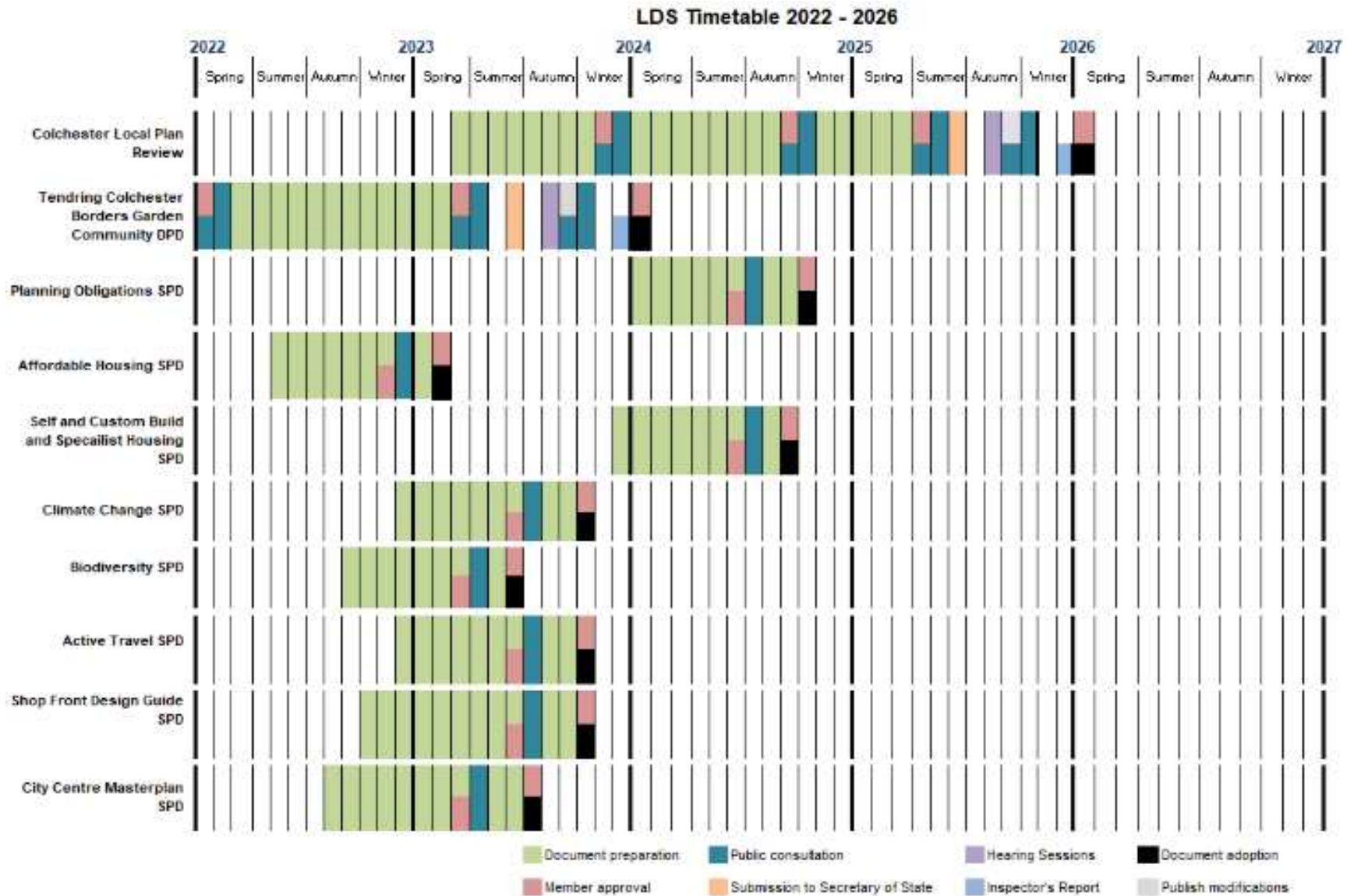
Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – A document produced by the Council to add further detailed guidance and information on a particular subject. An SPD is subject to a formal consultation period and then is used as a material consideration when determining planning applications.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) – A range of techniques for managing the runoff of water from a site. They can reduce the total amount, flow and rate of surface water that runs directly to rivers through storm water systems.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) – An appraisal of the economic, social and environmental effects of a plan from the outset of the preparation process, so that decisions can be made that accord with sustainable development.

Sustainable Development – Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Appendix C – Local Development Scheme 2022-2026



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 Horkeley, 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.